

COUNTY DURHAM AND DARLINGTON FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

At a **MEETING** of the **PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE** held at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, **Monday, 10 December 2018 at 10.00am**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR C Carr in the Chair

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL: D Hicks and D Stoker

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUCIL: B Jones

OFFICERS: D Brown, K Metcalf, C Davis and S Luke

Item

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs J Bell and H Nicholson

2 Minutes of the previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 11 September 2018 were noted as a true and accurate record.

3 Presentation – Monitoring and Maintenance of Operational Competence

C Davis and S Luke gave a short presentation on the monitoring and maintenance of operational competence covering the following areas:

- Planning for maintaining competence
- Management practices in place to monitor operational competence at both local and service level
- Management practices in place to ensure staff maintain operational competence
- Process adopted when a member of operational staff drops out of competence
- Current position in terms of operational competence
- Problems encountered in maintaining competence across all operational roles
- Recording of competence on Firewatch.

Cllr Carr queried whether operational staff at HQ could attend the courses and C Davis confirmed that both they and FDOs could attend in order to maintain their own operational competence. In response to a query from Cllr Stoker, C Davis advised that minimum attendance on a course was six (apart from BA which was based upon risk) and that, where courses ran below that attendance, all learning outcomes needed to be met. Following a query from Cllr Stoker about whether staff would be taken off the run if their operational competence was out of date, there was a discussion around interim assessments and the pros and cons of that. C Davis advised that, due to working closely with District Management teams, the total number of staff who were out of competence was coming down on a daily basis. C Davis confirmed to Cllr Jones that an action plan, which would be available to the Inspectorate if required, was in place to address the issue with a target that all operational staff would be competent in role by end March. The members requested that they be updated on this matter in April and requested that the full CFA Committee be briefed which D Brown is to arrange at the end of the period.

4 Performance Report Quarter Two 2018/19

The organisational performance indicators for quarter two 2018/19 were presented to the Committee.

The Committee noted overall 66% of the strategic PIs met or exceed the target with 55% either maintaining or improving on performance compared with the previous year.

Discussion took place around the fatal fire which occurred on 1 June 2018 and the issues surrounding trigger points and the reporting procedure from the housing association. Work is ongoing regarding the degradation in health/skills of vulnerable residents and a revisit programme.

There has been a gradual decline in deliberate primary fires with a possible factor being the arrest and imprisonment of two males from the Easington area who have been responsible for a significant number of car fires and deliberate structural fires during the previous two years. In addition, the Fire Investigation, Arson Reduction and Young People Team (FIAR) was formed and has begun work with the District Management teams to assist and facilitate arson reduction best practice strategies, measurement developing collaborative links with other partner agencies and co-ordinating with crews as they work in schools.

The number of accidental fires are down by 5.6% and current initiatives are focussing on reducing kitchen fires and those fires which are linked to distraction, loneliness and isolation evolving over time to encompass seasonal issues. CRM have also launched a new Fire Reduction Super Hero (Flamin Nora) and members viewed a video featuring the character which will also be played at the upcoming CFA meeting. Injuries arising from accidental dwelling fires have reduced being 72.7% less than the same period last year.

Loose refuse and scrubland continue to be the main area of concern and growth in deliberate secondary fires remains above target with the trend mirroring the same growth pattern for 2017. FIAR are currently working with partners on an effective and efficient fuel management and removal programme across the County. Current targeted working has helped to see notable reductions in areas of previously high activity such as Haughton, Central Ward, Framwellgate Moor, Eden Hill and Annfield Plain.

Although the figure for SAW being 2.1% lower (221) than the same point last year, this should be seen in the context of more intelligence led targeting of the most vulnerable in our communities. In addition, improvements in mapping has enabled crews to more accurately focus their activity on the people and areas which are most vulnerable. There has also been an increase in the number of lifestyle questionnaires completed as a result of a focus on the quality of the SAW delivered. Crews are also now asking residents whether they consider any of their friends and neighbours to be high risk or vulnerable. This has resulted in a subsequent uplift in the number of those most in need receiving a visit. Moreover, the crews have been focussed on broader CS initiatives including drowning campaigns and RTC reduction.

The main premises for AFA actuations this quarter has been student accommodation in the Durham area. More than 2,000 bedrooms have been opened in the Durham area alone and this is set to increase., This may see an upturn in the numbers of AFA actuations and so the central FS team are actively engaged with the landlords of these new facilities.. Cllr Stoker asked about working smoke alarms and false alarms in student premises (not halls of residence). S Wharton acknowledged that, although it was a legal requirement that smoke alarms worked on the first day of the tenancy, it was harder to police when students were insitu and, as a general rule, there are few actual incidents in these premises. Work is ongoing with private landlords and during freshers week to raise awareness of fire safety. There has been a significant reduction in calls during the Summer school shut down for maintenance following some proactive work by the central FS team..

Four out of the six response standard indicators have been achieved and this has remained consistent across the quarter. This is in contrast to achieving 4/6 response standards at the end of the same quarter last year.

There have been challenges to RDS availability such as a number of resignations, fixed term contracts offered, live applications for WT positions in other services and, more widely, the loss of the two Community Safety Responders (CSR). A two year plan specifically aimed at increasing RDS availability has been developed, a District Manager has been given the specific reference as the RDS/On Call Liaison Officer and work is ongoing with the Police to recruit two new CSR, with potential expansion into others areas such as Sedgfield and Barnard Castle in order to address these issues.

There has been a small number of incidents where firefighters presented fainting symptoms with the heat over the Summer period being a factor. In response to two recent incidents the Service Health and Fitness Advisor was requested to ensure that during any communications with crews the key messages of over exertion during a PT session and the importance of good food and hydration are emphasised. These circumstances will be monitored over the forthcoming reporting periods.

At the end of the reporting period, the Service had surpassed the annual target for vehicle accidents. The trend associated with vehicle accidents continues to be slow speed reversing manoeuvres and the action plan which was originally established for Crook station has now been broadened out for each district. Progress against this action plan will be monitored and reported in future performance returns. Additionally, driver training have completed a review of their training materials and this work will continue with a review of driving training documentation.

ACTION: Members noted the report.

5 Sickness Absence Report Quarter Two 2018/19

KM introduced the report which provided the committee with an update on sickness absence performance at the end of Quarter Two 2018/19. All KPIs for sickness are above target at the half way point with an increase of 61% in shifts lost in comparison with the same period last year. There have been significant increases in both the WT and RDS categories predominantly due to long term sickness. It is projected that figures for RDS sickness for the year will be above target however, over September and into October, sickness levels in both categories have started to decline and it is expected that this will continue into Quarter Three.

Control have continued with the downward trend of absence carried on from a reduction last year, this year has seen a 77% reduction in absence this period and Control is well below target. Cllr Carr commented this was an excellent reflection on control staff.

Non uniformed absence levels have increased by 44% in comparison with the same period last year due to a combination of both long and short term sickness. Projected figures for the year are slightly below target.

When compared against other services nationally, performance for WT, Control and non uniformed are all in the lower quartiles and below the national average.

6 Letters of Appreciation

The Committee considered the various letters of appreciation that had been submitted to the Service. In total 17 letters had been received for the quarter two period.

ACTION: Members noted the report.

