

Safest People, Safest Places

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Performance Committee

10 March 2022

Bonfire Period 2021 Evaluation

Report of Area Manager for Community Risk Management

Purpose of Report

1. To provide members of the Performance Committee with an update on the key outcomes from the bonfire period 2021 evaluation.

Background

2. The seasonal bonfire celebrations each year is a period of increased activity and risk in relation to secondary fires / bonfires and firework related incidents. The Service works with partner organisations to deliver a range of activities to both educate the public and minimise the risk over this period.
3. Information from the previous year is used in the review and preparation of the bonfire plan for the following year. The Service's Arson Reduction Manager reviewed and agreed the plan for 2021 with Divisional Managers and partners across County Durham and Darlington during August and September before delivery commenced in October.
4. For statistical analysis, the monitoring period is the two-week period that runs from 25 October to 7 November each year.

Statistical analysis

5. The Information Services Team created a PowerBI report which allowed both Community Risk Management and Emergency Response Teams to monitor real time data throughout the bonfire period.
6. The statistical analysis of the data provided by the Information Services Team is provided in the presentation attached as Appendix A.
7. In summary:
 - a. There was a 7.6% increase in calls received over the bonfire period during 2021 compared to the previous year, this increased to 27.1% on bonfire night itself which fell on a Friday this year.

- b. Although deliberate primary fires are not the main focus of the bonfire plan, they have increased each year over the bonfire period, with 45% of all deliberate primary fires occurring in Peterlee's area in 2021.
 - c. In 2021, there was a 14% reduction in deliberate and not known (DNK) secondary fires across the bonfire period compared to 2020 and a 39% reduction on bonfire night alone which is good when considering it fell on a Friday this year compared to Thursday in 2020.
 - d. Four station areas had increased DNK secondary fire activity this year compared to 2020, the greatest increase being in Bishop Auckland (+15). However, eleven station areas had decreased DNK secondary fire activity, with the greatest reduction being in Peterlee (-17).
 - e. The variation in false alarms compared to the previous year was fairly evenly spread, with six stations increasing, five stations had no change, and four stations had a reduction. 68% were good intent, 30% were due to apparatus and 2% were malicious.
 - f. Attacks on crews have reduced each year since 2018 which had seven, to two in 2021.
 - g. Incidents where fireworks were recorded in the report reduced from seventeen in 2020 to seven in 2021, of these only three involved fires, the other four were false alarms.
8. Overall, although there was an increase in calls and deliberate primary fires, there has been a good reduction in DNK secondary fires, attacks on crews and firework related incidents which is the main focus of the joint bonfire delivery plan.

Evaluation of the joint bonfire delivery plan

- 9. The document attached as Appendix B summarises the key activities delivered under the bonfire plan during 2021, it also captures data, notes and outcomes from partner agencies for evaluation by the Fire Service Arson Reduction Manager.
- 10. Appendix C is the review and evaluation of the joint bonfire delivery plan for 2021 conducted by the Fire Service Arson Reduction Manager.
- 11. In summary, the outcomes were:
 - a. Overall, the plan delivered the expected outcomes and was in the round a success, delivering what it set out to achieve in both Darlington Borough Council (DBC) and Durham County Council (DCC) areas.
 - b. Joint patrols were conducted in DCC and DBC between a mix of agencies and using a range of resources and locally based tactics aimed to reduce the impact of fires during the bonfire period.

- c. The educational approach taken by CDDFRS over the run-up to the bonfire period covered a significant number of Children and Young People, (3,210 children and young people), using a range of traditional teaching and digital media methods.
- d. Asking schools to share CDDFRS digital firework code leaflets via their parents' email system accessed a wide range of families.
- e. In a similar vein, Tesco.com acting as a public safety partner, delivered 5000 safety leaflets directly into County Durham homes; indicating that we should always be aware that our arson reduction and public safety partners can be from commercial as well as public sector bodies.
- f. It is hard to put any reflective data and analysis on the actions of DCC Clean and Green or DBC Street Scene teams in terms of bonfire materials removal as this information was not provided by them, however in all other areas of the strategy, the removal process in DCC and DBC areas worked well.
- g. The evaluation of the new version of the joint bonfire delivery plan has shown that there are areas to improve on, and some lessons have been learned, such as:-
 - i. A daily briefing system to share active intelligence between partners needs further development.
 - ii. Better recording of activities undertaken jointly between agencies, (number of joint patrols, number of people spoken to, specific interventions etc).
 - iii. Better recording and data circulation of bonfire materials removal, (quantities, locations / hotspot locations).
 - iv. Potentially one central agency to act as data recipient during the Bonfire Period Delivery Plan cycle.

Conclusion

12. When considering the outcomes of the evaluation of both the joint bonfire delivery plan provided by the Arson Reduction Manager and the statistical analysis provided by the Information Services Team, the joint bonfire delivery plan 2021 was in the main a success, and all the partners involved should be commended for their commitment to making our communities safer during this challenging period.

Recommendations

13. Members are requested to:

- a. **Note and comment** on the content of the report.

AM Keith Wanley, 0191 3755630

Appendix A – Bonfire period activity 2021

PowerPoint presentation by Information Services - attached separately

Appendix B – Joint Durham and Darlington bonfire delivery plan: Data gathering tool 2021

Word document provided by the Arson Reduction Manager - attached separately

Appendix C – Review of the Joint Durham and Darlington bonfire delivery plan 2021

Document provided by the Arson Reduction Manager – attached separately