

County Durham and Darlington  
**Fire and Rescue Service**



Review of the Joint Durham & Darlington  
Bonfire Delivery Plan  
2021

**Aim:**

To provide an overview of the planned activities within the Joint Durham & Darlington Bonfire Delivery Plan for 2021.

To provide a summary of planned activities and the outcomes.

**Scope:**

The Bonfire period for 2021 ran from the 25th of October to the evening of the 7th November, with Bonfire night falling on a Friday in 2021.

There was an anticipation of an increase in secondary fire incidents attended by the Service, particularly in the East coastal areas of Peterlee and Seaham

Trading Standards, (DCC), believed that because of the impact of Covid-19 globally, the supply of fireworks into the UK has been limited, (and consequently, created a rise in unit price). The supply of Illicit fireworks had not been to the same as in previous years, again this may be due to the lack of actual product available due to Covid-19.

**Publicity & Communications:**

1. As Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council did not hold council organised fireworks displays, some smaller organised displays went ahead, (parish events, sports or youth clubs etc), it was envisaged that most displays would be in a domestic garden setting with families attending, (across the weekend).
2. To maximise publicity of the safety aspects of home fireworks displays, CDDFRS produced 10,000 Fireworks Code leaflets; these were circulated to all registered retailers visited by DCC Trading Standards, (1000 leaflets), and through home delivery conducted

by Tesco.Com, (Tesco Extra, Durham – 5000 leaflets), and the community interaction / hand out by CDDFRS operational crews, (particularly in the East coast area), another 2000 leaflets were circulated.

3. DCC, DBC, Police and CDDFRS used social media platforms to publicise the fireworks code and bonfire safety in a coordinated manner. This approach worked well with telephone and website addresses circulated in DCC and DBC for residents to arrange for waste materials to be recovered in anticipation of bonfire night.
4. Joint communications information was shared with Durham University, AAP Reps, MAPS and via Housing Associations.

**Outcome:** Overall the publicity and communication aspect of the strategy worked well. The additional outreach that Tesco.Com provides is a significant advantage to the joint strategy.

### **Coordination between Agencies:**

1. The suggested Combined Bonfire Management Meeting (via MS TEAMS) was suggested to assist with the organisation the different elements and agencies involved in bonfire period to enable partners to work together effectively
2. Initially, this was arranged for a short daily 'Buzz' style briefing and sharing of information. However, this was difficult to arrange given the changing nature of shifts and duty staff.

**Outcome:** In this instance and in the initial format suggested, this aspect of the Bonfire Delivery Plan did not work as hoped; however, it is still worthy of further examination as a planning resource for the 2022 Bonfire Delivery Plan.

### **Trading Standards (TS):**

1. 1000 Firework Code leaflets were distributed via DCC TS direct interaction with registered retailers, (70 x outlets), to be handed out on each purchase.
2. Two reports of illegal sales were investigated. One was malicious & the other a young person via Snapchat, (parents spoken to).
3. DBC Trading Standards conducted visits to all licenced premises in the lead up to bonfire night.
4. DBC Trading Standards created a Comms strategy requesting members of the public to report any unlicenced firework sellers.

**Outcomes:** The contact maintained with fireworks retailers through the retailer outreach by DCC & DBC Trading Standards officers was a significant success to the delivery plan for 2021.

### **Joint Divisional based activities:**

1. Over a short run-up to the Bonfire period, (4<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> of November), CDDFRS conducted joint patrols out of Peterlee and Seaham stations over three nights.
2. Joint patrols were conducted in partnership with Police and Neighbourhood Wardens, which also included a multi-agency walkabout in the numbered streets of Horden, (to put bins back into the rear yards on the morning of the 5<sup>th</sup> of November - bin collection day).
3. As an example of the activities undertaken; in the higher output area of the East coast the four watches at Peterlee conducted 48 EVA's, 31 x Blue Routes patrols in high-risk areas, 7 x School (fire safety) presentations, 9 x Fly tipping referrals as well as Firestoppers leaflet drops.
4. Wheatley Hill conducted 3x EVA'S, 1x blue route patrol, 1x hot strike campaign, and 3x primary school visits to reinforce the fire safety message; Seaham conducted regular EVA's and blue runs conducted during bonfire period. Interestingly, there were no flytipping incidents reported by the Seaham crew during their enhanced Eva patrols.
5. DBC Civic Enforcement Officers and Darlington ER Crews conducted patrols and back lane EVA's in high-risk ward areas, (based on intelligence generated by previous years and partnership inputs), with materials located and removal arranged.

**Outcome:** Joint patrols, with DCC and DBC together with the Police and CDDFRS sharing resources, personnel, and expertise, (backed up by specific legislation), provides the public with high-visibility reassurance that agencies are coordinating their activities.

Joint patrols also ensures that waste materials that may be misappropriated for bonfires are reported and recovered quickly.

The validity of high visibility EVA patrols and joint patrolling generally is evidenced by the lack of Flytipping in the Horden and Seaham areas during the active patrol periods.

## **Bonfire Removal Activities:**

1. Both DBC and DCC maintained their commitment to provide an on-call service to be available throughout the bonfire period. DCC Clean and Green services were to be available on a heightened response to clear any flammable materials.
  - a. DCC Clean & Green services were to be informed of ASB / fire incidents within 'hot spot' areas and be available on a day-to-day basis, with recall availability facility.
  - b. However, for DCC on the evening of the 5<sup>th</sup> November this was stopped as a Duty Supervisor stated that historically it would not be safe for Clean & Green staff to operate.
2. DBC CEO Officers carried out joint patrols with partner agencies, (CDDFRS / Police), with waste and potential bonfire materials removed during the 29<sup>th</sup> Oct - 7<sup>th</sup> Nov. Identified waste was collected by Streetscene during the bonfire period within 24hrs on reporting.
3. The DCC Bonfire Removal telephone number, (03000 260 000), and online reporting tool '[Do it online Durham](#)', were widely circulated to agencies.
4. The target date for data and statistical information relating to the Bonfire Delivery plan was the 12<sup>th</sup> November. After a month wait and several requests for information, Clean & Green and the Streetscene waste recovery services have not provided any statistical information on their activities during the Bonfire Delivery plan period.

**Outcomes:** No statistical information has been forthcoming from DCC Clean & Green or DBC Streetscene in relation to waste recovery or bonfire removal outcomes / quantities and high-volume areas, (allowing greater understanding of the areas to target in 2022 Delivery Plan).

In all other areas of the strategy, (other than the evening of 5<sup>th</sup> November), the removal process in DCC and DBC areas worked well.

### **Education and Schools:**

1. Secondary Schools across DCC & DBC areas received direct input / presentations from the AR Team during October and early November.
2. A range of targeted Secondary / Junior schools in known hot-spot areas received bonfire safety talks from AR Team & ER Operational crews during October and November.
3. Junior School Head Teachers shared CDDFRS Bonfire Safety messages via the Parent's email message system, (200+ Schools).
4. CDDFRS ER Ops Crews provided Bonfire Period / Fireworks Awareness presentations to Years 5 & 6 (Primary school years), within their station (low risk), areas.
5. Digital bonfire safety posters, screen savers and short presentations were produced by CDDFRS Comms & AR Teams to be shown on Secondary school digital systems.
6. In total, over the October & November run-in to Bonfire delivery plan period, (up to 5<sup>th</sup> November), CDDFRS presented to 3,210 children and young people.



**Outcome:** The educational aspect of the Bonfire Period Delivery Plan ran very smoothly with coordination between AR Team, ER Operational Crews and School Head Teachers, (in DBC & DCC).

Priority was given to hotspot and high-risk ward schools, (bonfire and secondary fire awareness presentations), in advance the bonfire period, (3,210 Children and Young People received direct educational input).

Areas close to schools in high-risk wards had all-weather Corex Arson Reduction signage fitted to lampposts.

The digital media shared with Secondary Schools allowed the fire safety and arson reduction messages to be shown with elevated and enhanced regularity in schools.

## **Overall outcomes of the Joint Bonfire Period Delivery Plan 2021:**

- 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 and Durham County Council areas.
- 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.
- 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.
- Asking schools to share CDDFRS digital firework code leaflets via their Parent's email system accessed a wide range of families.
- 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.
- It is hard to put any reflective data on the actions of DCC and DBC in terms of bonfire materials removal as this information was not provided.

- The new version of the Bonfire Period Delivery plan has shown that there are areas to improve on, and some lessons have been learned, such as;-
  - A daily briefing system to share active intelligence between partners needs further development.
  - Better recording of activities undertaken jointly between agencies, (number of joint patrols, number of people spoken to, specific interventions etc).
  - Better recording and data circulation of bonfire materials removal, (quantities, locations / hotspot locations).
  - Potentially one central agency to act as data recipient during the Bonfire Period Delivery Plan cycle.

The 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.

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