

COUNTY DURHAM AND DARLINGTON FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

At a **MEETING** of the **PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE** held at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, **Thursday, 7 March 2019 at 10.00am**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR C Carr in the Chair
DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL: Cllr D Hicks
DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL: Cllr B Jones
OFFICERS: T Hope, K Metcalfe and K Wanley

Item

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs J Bell and D Stoker

2 Minutes of the previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 10 December 2018 were noted as a true and accurate record.

3 Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics: England, April 2017 – March 2018

KW referred to the document which was previously presented to the CFA on 22 February 2019. The Committee had no further questions on the document and thanked Keith for a comprehensive report which had been well received by all members.

ACTION: Members **noted** the report.

4 Performance Report Quarter Three 2018/19

The organisational performance indicators for quarter three were presented to the Committee.

The Committee noted that 66% of the strategic PIs maintained or improved when compared to performance last year.

Both primary and secondary fires numbers are above target for the quarter but have reduced on the same period last year. The trend of deliberate vehicle fires remains at a high level and CRM and DMTs are working closely with the police to understand the criminality aspect of these incidents as well as to gain a better understanding of any trends that are occurring. Darlington has also seen an increase in deliberate secondary fires which is linked to an increase in fly tipping. Work is ongoing with partners who have contracts for removing rubbish and with the local authority in order to report incidences of fly tipping. CRM have also established an arson reduction email system for the referral of information and intelligence that may assist in the identification of trends.

Unfortunately, there has been one confirmed fire death in the quarter and a further two are still under investigation. There is a commonality in that the source of ignition in all three incidents was attributable to smoking materials. Fire risk from smoking materials will be promoted via social media and by crews and CROs during SWVs and referrals made to smoking cessation services where the resident consents. There were seven ADF injuries in Q3, with an overall total for the year of 10 which is better than predicted and improved on the previous year.

The top five property types in which non domestic property fires occur are accountable for 50% of the total fires which occurred in this category in Q3. Business Fire Safety continue to work closely with businesses to offer advice and conduct fire safety audits, taking appropriate enforcement action where necessary. It must be noted, however that, although they continue to work closely with and offer advice to the prisons (which is the most common property type for fires in non domestic properties), as Crown premises they do not fall under any regulatory powers the service has under the Fire Safety Order.

70% of false alarms can be attributed to the top five property types, with student accommodation generating a significantly higher volume of calls. Business Fire Safety continue to work with landlords in order to reduce false alarms from these premises and from April 2019 the service will be introducing two trials: one will use alternative arrangements to respond to AFAs and the second to introduce a charge to repeat offenders (see **attached**). KW advised that he would report back to future meetings regarding any charges that are made.

The service has responded to a similar volume of incidents at the end of quarter three, with a breakdown broadly similar to those attended at the end of Q3 the previous year.

Four of six response standards were met at the end of Q3 which was an improvement on quarter two. Where the service have failed to meet the eight and 11 minute standards, this has been by a very small percentage and has seen an improvement on Q2. Emergency response continue to work to address issues around RDS availability.

Although there have been six vehicle accidents reported in the quarter, this is one less than the same period last year and health and safety staff continue to work with staff to reduce these further by adopting latest national guidance on influencing human behaviour and the new risk assessment mnemonic ARC (Access/Risk Assessment/Control Measures) which should be followed prior to all slow speed manoeuvres (which account for most of the accidents).

There has been a slight dip against last year regarding invoices paid on time however this is considerably over target and Finance continue to liaise with suppliers to ensure improvements.

ACTION: Members **noted** and **commented** on the report.

5 **Sickness Report Quarter Three 2018/19**

KM gave a brief update on sickness absence performance for the first nine months of the reporting year. Overall KPIs for sickness are above target at this point in the year and performance has regressed in comparison with this point last year. Significant decreases in absence levels can be seen in the Wholetime (WT) category when compared with Q2

although there has been an increase in December due to a new case of sickness which will come to an end when the personnel retire in Q4. Control has seen a decrease of 41% based on the same period last year and projected figures for this category are below target for the year. Levels of sickness across the RDS, although they remain relatively high, have seen a decrease of 34% this reporting period, Wheatley Hill has had no sickness absence at all and a further three RDS stations are all below target. Non-uniformed staff absence has seen an increase of 28% on Q2 however, those personnel who had triggered long term sickness have all returned to work and, although absence in this category is above target, improvement is expected within Q4.

The service continues to perform reasonably well nationally being in the lower quartile for most categories and the improvements in Control absence have meant that it is within the top performing FRS nationally. Absence for RDS nationally remains a cause for concern.

ACTION: Members **noted** and **commented** on the position regarding the sickness absence performance – Q3.

6 Letters of appreciation

The Committee considered the various letters of appreciation that had been submitted to the Service. Fifteen letters, covering the full remit of what the Service does, have been received.

ACTION: Members **noted** the report.