



Safest People, Safest Places

Local Government Act 1972

A Meeting of the Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington will be held in the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters on Friday 9 December 2022 at 10.00 am to consider the following business:-

PART A

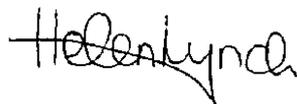
1. Commendation
2. Declarations of interest, if any
If Members are aware of a private or personal conflict of interest in relation to any items on the Agenda, this should be disclosed at this stage or when the conflict of interest arises during consideration of an item in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Members
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2022 (Pages 3 - 6)
4. Current Correspondence - Report of Chief Fire Officer (Pages 7 - 30)
5. Changes in Membership - Verbal Report of the Clerk
6. Minor Amendment to the Constitution - Report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (Pages 31 - 32)
7. Bonfire Report 2022 - Report of the Director Community Risk Management (Pages 33 - 38)
8. Serious Violence Duty - Report of the Director Community Risk Management (Pages 39 - 40)
9. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration
10. Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of items containing exempt information

Part B

Items during which it is considered the meeting is not likely to be open to the public (consideration of exempt or confidential information).

11. Update on Pay and Industrial Action - Report of Chief Fire Officer (Pages 41 - 50)
12. Estates Update - Report of Director of Corporate Resources (Pages 51 - 52)
13. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

PURSUANT to the provisions of the above named Act, **I HEREBY SUMMON YOU** to attend the said meeting



H LYNCH

Clerk to the Combined Fire Authority
for County Durham and Darlington

County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UL

TO: The Members of the Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington

Durham County Councillors:

Councillors J Atkinson, A Batey, R Bell, J Blakey, J Cairns, T Duffy, C Hampson, N Jones, B Kellett, L Kennedy, R Manchester, C Marshall, L Mavin, M McGaun, I McLean, J Quinn, S Quinn, G Richardson, K Rooney, J Shuttleworth and S Zair

Darlington Borough Councillors:

Councillors B Jones, G Lee, C McEwan and A J Scott

Minutes of a **meeting** of the **Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington** held at **Fire and Rescue HQ, Durham** on **11 November 2022** at **10.00 am**.

Present:

Durham County Councillors:

Councillors J Atkinson, A Batey, A Bell, R Bell, J Cairns, T Duffy, C Hampson, J Howey, N Jones, B Kellet, R Manchester, L Mavin, I McLean, M McGaun, E Peeke, S Quinn, K Rooney, K, Shaw, J Shuttleworth, S Zair

Darlington Borough Councillors:

Councillors B Jones, A Scott

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Blakey, L Kennedy, G Lee, C Marshall, J Quinn, G Richardson, and Independent Person N Johnson

Independent Persons:

No independent persons present.

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and announced that just before 11:00 hours the meeting will pause, to observe a two-minute silence to remember all those who've fought and died for their country. This would take place outside the front of the building.

A1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

A2 Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2022 were considered. Cllr Batey queried section A3 on behalf of Cllr Marshall stating that the wording was not a true reflection of what was discussed at the meeting regarding the request for the authority's support for an increase in salary for firefighters. Cllr Batey requested a change to the minutes on behalf of Cllr Marshall. The Clerk suggested that if an amendment was proposed then a form of words for the amendment should be put forward and the meeting could consider them. Cllr Richard Bell stated that he believed that the minutes in their current form reflected the discussion at the meeting. Cllr Duffy proposed that the minutes be accepted. A vote was taken and the minutes in their original form were accepted on a majority vote.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair (for copy see file of minutes).

A3 Current Correspondence

The Authority received an update from the Chief Fire Officer in relation to current correspondence received from government and other bodies relevant to the Authority and the status of each (for copy see file of minutes).

A4 Notes of the Audit and Finance Committee

The Authority received a report of the Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee which provided an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Committee held on the 28 September 2022 (for copy see file for minutes).

Cllr Richard Bell stated that more discussion around finance will take place at the next committee meeting.

Members **noted** the report.

A5 Notes of the Human Resources Committee

The Authority received a report of the Chair of the Human Resources Committee which provided an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Committee held on the 22 September 2022 (for copy see file for minutes).

Members **noted** the report.

A6 Tri-Service Community Safety Responders

The Authority received a report providing an update on the expansion of the Tri-Service Community Responder scheme to the Teesdale and East Durham Coastal area.

Members were informed that implementation of the scheme will be dependent on the budget settlement announced later in the year.

Members **noted** the report.

A7 Any other Business

Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

A8 Exclusion to the Public

That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the said Act.

Part B

B9 Vital Fire Solutions Business Update

The Authority received a presentation regarding the latest position regarding Vital Fire Solutions performance for the year 2021/22.

Vital Fire Solutions have been recognised as the pinnacle of fire safety. They are national leads for Fire Investigation and High-Volume Pump training, attracting services countrywide. Turnover going forward was predicted to be positive due to the contract secured with AIS Survivex.

Members **noted** the presentation.

B10 Strategic Planning Day – 10 October 2022

The Authority received a report of the Chief Fire Officer summarising the areas explored, debated and agreed at the Combined Fire Authority Strategic Planning Day that took place on the 10th October 2022.

Members **noted** and **agreed** the report.

B11 Update on Pay Claims

The Authority received a report of the Chief Fire Officer outlining the latest position in relation to pay claims in the Fire and Rescue Service sector.

Members **noted** the report and **agreed** to receive further updates as more information becomes available.

B12 Delay of Appointment of Deputy Chief Fire Officer

The Authority received a report of the Chief Fire Officer informing members of the decision to delay the appointment of the vacant Deputy Chief Fire Officer post. Cllr Batey and Cllr McLean expressed concern that the decision was due to the financial situation facing the Authority and the increased workloads for the rest of the Leadership Team.

A review of work carried out by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) is to be undertaken to ensure critical aspects of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer post are covered and that sufficient capacity existed with the remaining SLT members.

The Chair thanked the Senior Leadership Team for their continued hard work.

Members **noted** the report.

Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration.

CLOSE OF MEETING

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Current Correspondence: November 2022 – December 2022

| No | Release Date | Subject | Summary | Action CFA Report | Action CFA Response | Action Info |
|----|--------------|--|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | 16/11/22 | Chief and Chairs 2022 Event Follow Up | Roy Wilsher, HMICFRS. Seeking views regarding CFO meetings in the New Year to continue dialogue throughout the third round of inspections. Appendix A | | | X |
| 2 | 22/11/2022 | Letters to Dehenna Davison MP, Kevan Jones MP, Grahame Morris MP, Mary Foy MP, Paul Howell MP, Peter Gibson MP and Richard Holden MP | Letter from Chair and CFO regarding support for request for precept flexibility. Appendix B | | | X |
| 3 | 28/11/2022 | Fire and Rescue Service Inspection 2023/2025 | Letter from Roy Wilsher, HMICFRS confirming the inspection programme for 2023/2025 and providing an update on the second round of fire and rescue inspections. Appendix C | | | X |

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Promoting improvements
in policing and fire & rescue
services to make everyone safer

**His Majesty's Inspectorate of
Constabulary and Fire & Rescue
Services**

23 Stephenson Street,
Birmingham, B2 4BH

Direct Line: 07831 615237

Email: roy.wilsher@hmicfrs.gov.uk

Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM

His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary
His Majesty's Inspector of Fire and
Rescue Services

By email:

Chief fire officers

November 2022

Dear Colleagues,

CFO meetings

I really enjoyed seeing those of you who attended our Chief and Chairs event on 31 October. With continuous engagement in mind, I am writing to ask you about how you would like to meet in the new year. Earlier in the year, I had several catch-up meetings with chiefs that were organised by governance group. I and the team want to continue this dialogue throughout our third round of inspections, but a few of you commented that you'd like us to consider bringing groups of chiefs together in a different way in future. Please can you therefore let me know if you would like to meet as we have previously by governance group, or in another format. Please can you send your responses to Kathryn Richardson at Kathryn.Richardson1@hmicfrs.gov.uk

Additionally, as requested at our Chief and Chairs event, attached in Annex A is our monitoring approach. This was sent to services in December 2021. An overview of the process was published on our website in July 2022 and can be viewed via the following link [Our approach to monitoring services - HMICFRS \(justiceinspectors.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/our-approach-to-monitoring-services-hmicfrs). A letter describing our move to publishing when services enter the 'engage' status was sent by HMCI Andrew Cooke 11 July 2022.

Thank you for your continued attendance and contributions at such events. I look forward to meeting with you in the new year.

Yours sincerely,

Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
His Majesty's Fire & Rescue Services

Annex A: FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

Monitoring is an important part of our work to help promote improvements. This involves engaging with services to ensure they are taking the necessary remedial action where we have identified problems. The process will apply to every FRS in England. Our monitoring activity will primarily be focused on services who have a cause(s) of concern.

2. Monitoring is long established in our police inspection work (known as Scan and Engage). Our new FRS approach isn't a direct lift and shift. It's more proportionate and considers the different support arrangements already in place for FRSs, such as from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and Local Government Association. We have created a process of escalation if we consider a service is not making sufficient progress against their cause(s) of concern.

3. This document provides detail of our new process. We propose an incremental implementation over the coming months, and I will convene a chiefs and chairs event, probably in July, where we can discuss this in greater detail. We will also run a separate event for service liaison officers.

4. The approach proposed is like the way in which we monitor police forces (Scan and Engage) but takes account of the different support arrangements already in place for fire and rescue services by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) such as the NFCC improvement boards. It also includes a process of escalation if we consider a fire and rescue service is not making sufficient progress against their cause(s) of concern.

Causes of concern

5. If, during an inspection, we identify a serious, critical, or systemic shortcoming in a fire and rescue service's practice, policy, or performance, it is considered a cause of concern. A cause of concern is always accompanied by one or more recommendations. We recommend that the FRS (and sometimes other bodies) make changes to alleviate or eradicate it.

6. If a service has been identified as having a cause of concern, then the graded judgment that they can achieve for that question will be no higher than 'requires improvement'.

7. A service will be made formally aware of their cause(s) of concern at the earliest opportunity. If there is low risk to public safety, this will follow HMI moderation and approval, through the pre-publication check process. This will allow the service to take immediate action to address the cause(s) of concern, prior to receiving their inspection report. The service will be required to produce an action plan to outline how they will address the cause of concern. In discussions with the regional HMI, we will then agree a tailored approach with the regional HMI, which may include a revisit.

8. Where we identify a CoC which indicates a potential risk to the public (for example failures to carry out risk-based inspection programme) we will notify the service by letter when the relevant HMI has approved the cause of concern. We will send the letter notifying the service of the CoC as soon as possible after the post fieldwork evidence review, and no more than 6 weeks after the inspection fieldwork has concluded.

9. We will notify services of these causes of concern (where there is a potential risk to public safety) within this timeframe regardless of the pillar (we expect most of these will be in the effectiveness pillar). This means the public will be notified of this risk when the full inspection report is published, but we will make it clear that we notified the service of this sooner.

10. All causes of concern are confirmed by the regional HMI at the FRS moderation meetings. Decisions are reached following extensive discussions about a service's performance, and in comparison, with other services. This is to make sure a consistent approach is applied to graded judgments and causes of concern across the sector. The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) will also maintain a thorough overview of all causes of concern.

11. Due to the serious nature of these shortcomings identified in causes of concern, we want to regularly review what progress has been made to remedy the cause of concern.

Tracking and monitoring progress against a cause of concern

12. As stated above, a service with a cause of concern will be required to produce an action plan to outline how they will address it. At any point, the service can seek support with the action plan and cause of concern from the sector.-

13. The Service Liaison Officer (SLO) will be responsible for providing a quarterly update to the SLL on progress against recommendations.

The table below outlines what is required by when:

| Task | Timeline |
|--|--|
| Production of an action plan by the service, provided to HMICFRS | Within 28 working days of the date of the letter or 28 days after publication of the report. |
| If the cause of concern relates to a potential risk to public safety, a revisit will be arranged with the service | The timeline for the revisit will be determined on an individual basis. |
| If the cause of concern does not relate to a potential risk to public safety, we will advise the HMI whether a revisit is necessary. Chiefs of staff will monitor progress with the SLL. | Chiefs of staff to discuss next steps with the regional HMI following evidence of improvements made by the service. This can include a follow up activity. |
| The SLL will update the monitoring portal with progress against the causes of concern (i.e., open or closed) | This is an ongoing process until the cause of concern is agreed by the CoS/HMI as closed |

14. It is the on-going responsibility of the SLL to monitor a service’s progress against their action plan. This should be done on a regular basis and at the very least there should be engagement with the service about their cause(s) of concern every 3 - 6 months.

15. Chiefs of staff will be expected to provide oversight to this process. They should closely monitor their services together with the SLL to make sure that sufficient progress is being made against the cause(s) of concern. This should include providing regular updates to the respective HMI.

16. Progress can be determined through a variety of different methods. This will require close liaison between the SLL and the service’s SLO to obtain evidence of the improvements made. For example, this could be evidence of revised policies, procedures or new processes being put in place. If enough evidence is provided which demonstrates that the necessary improvements have been made, there may not be a need for a revisit. The level of assessment and triangulation of evidence required to satisfy recommendations, is not of any lower standard than that required for inspections.

17. Where a potential risk to public safety has been identified, we will then assess the service’s plan and take a risk-based and proportionate approach to revisits. For example, a cause of concern which relates to cultural changes required will take longer to rectify than a more immediate problem (such as risk information not being provided to operational crews). This will be decided by HMIs, with advice from BIP monitoring and FRS colleagues.

18. We will publish our consideration of the proposed action plans that relate to the potential risks to public safety cause of concerns alongside the service report. We will revisit the service if

the cause of concern represents a potential risk to the public. We may revisit more than once depending on the issue being considered.

19. Where there is no potential risk to the public, we will consider whether a revisit is necessary when we have reviewed the service plan and considered progress made through monitoring activity. If insufficient action is being taken on the CoC, we will revisit the service.

20. All follow up activity (including revisits) must be overseen by the respective chief of staff and approved by the respective HMI. This may include the need for, and resourcing, a small inspection team to support the SLL.

21. Following every revisit, the relevant HMI will write to the service detailing our findings and recommendations. This letter will be published. It should include information on next steps.

Deciding if a service should be more closely monitored

22. There are several ways that an HMI could decide to increase monitoring and formally engage with a service more closely. Primarily, this would be when a service is failing, or is likely to fail, to respond adequately and promptly in respect of a cause of concern. Possible triggers could include, but not be limited to:

- Evidence that the service is not progressing at a reasonable pace in managing, mitigating, or eradicating the cause of concern (reasonable pace would need to be considered against the specific issue)
- The effect that insufficient progress is having on public safety
- Information from our independent reporting line
- The likelihood that a service may need to be recommended for further intervention to the Home Secretary in line with their intervention powers in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

There may also be a need to move a service direct to this stage should the findings from an inspection be considered so serious by the HMI (e.g., multiple causes of concern and inadequate grades) that closer monitoring is considered necessary.

23. Should more closer monitoring be considered by the HMI to be necessary; the following options could then be considered:

- Encouraging enhanced support for the service in tackling problems, for instance through the NFCC or through peer support from LGA/other services.
- Convening a 'by exception' meeting – the Fire Performance Oversight Group (akin to our Police Performance Oversight Group) - chaired by the HMI responsible for fire and rescue service inspections to discuss the ongoing performance issues. Consideration may be given to inviting the chief fire officer, chair of the fire and rescue authority (or equivalent) and representatives from the NFCC (e.g., chair or appropriate committee lead). Attendance will be agreed on a case-by-case basis. Discussion will focus on what steps the service is taking to remedy the issue and what barriers they are facing.
- Discussions with the Home Office if concerns are of a more serious nature and may require greater intervention.

Completion of causes of concern

24. Once the SLL is satisfied that there is substantial evidence that a recommendation has been completed by the service, they will update the monitoring portal with progress including how

they have validated the improvements made by the service. The SLL will discuss this with their respective chief of staff. It is the responsibility of the chief of staff to be satisfied with the evidence, and to make a recommendation to the HMI that the cause of concern is now complete.

25. Once all recommendations associated with a cause of concern have been signed off as complete by the HMI, the regional HMI will send a letter to the chief fire officer and chair of the fire and rescue authority informing them that the cause of concern is now officially closed. Each letter will be tailored to the service and will confirm our findings and reasons for closure of the cause(s) of concern. The monitoring portal will be updated accordingly.

26. We intend to introduce quarterly public reporting of progress against recommendations (i.e., whether the recommendation is open or closed). We will write with further details on this in due course.

27. If an open cause of concern or recommendation is identified again in future inspections, then the original cause of concern/ recommendation will remain open, and the monitoring portal will be updated with the evidence from the most recent inspection.

Areas for improvement

28. If, during an inspection, we find an aspect of practice, policy or performance which falls short of the necessary level of quality, but which is not a serious or critical shortcoming, this may be reported as an area for improvement. Areas for improvement will not usually be accompanied by a recommendation.

29. A service can be graded no higher than “good” for a question where an area for improvement has been found.

30. All areas for improvement will be recorded on the Monitoring Portal. It is the responsibility of the SLL to update the progress of areas for improvement. We will formally review what progress a service has made against an AFI during their scheduled inspection (as per the FRS inspection programme). Once the SLL has changed the status of the AFI to complete, the chief of staff will be responsible for closing the AFI on the Monitoring Portal.

External bodies

31. We may make recommendations to external bodies, for example, when completing an inspection tranche or cycle, or in a national report including State of Fire & Rescue. These recommendations may, or may not, have a connected cause of concern.

32. These recommendations will be added to the Monitoring Portal. It is the responsibility of the deputy portfolio director, working to the portfolio director, to update the progress of these recommendations on the Monitoring Portal. When they are satisfied that the recommendations are complete, the deputy portfolio director will update the HMIs and the SRO and request for the matter to be closed.

Additional information

Powers of Intervention (Taken from Fire and Rescue National Framework for England)

Home Office

33. It is a requirement under section 23 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (the 2004 Act) that an intervention protocol be prepared, and for the Secretary of State to have regard to it in the exercise of their power of intervention.

34. The Secretary of State’s order-making powers under section 22 of the 2004 Act are to ensure that fire and rescue authorities act in accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Page 13

Framework for England (the Framework). Intervention is by order, subject to the negative Parliamentary procedure, and can only be made if the Secretary of State considers it would promote public safety; and the economy, efficiency or effectiveness of the relevant fire and rescue authority, or the services it provides.

35. To date there has been no formal intervention in the operations of a fire and rescue authority by the Secretary of State under these powers. Use of this power is seen as a last resort. The expectation is that the political and professional leadership of the fire and rescue authority will put in place processes to ensure that sector-led support is provided to any fire and rescue authority that needs it.

36. This intervention protocol (“the protocol”) broadly sets out the arrangements between the Secretary of State, the Local Government Association (LGA), the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and fire and rescue authorities should formal intervention be considered necessary.

37. In this protocol the term 'intervention' is used to refer to action by the Secretary of State in exercise of their powers under section 22 of the 2004 Act. Although the Secretary of State also has other powers of intervention (for example, under section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999) this protocol does not apply to an intervention under those powers.

38. Our ongoing monitoring arrangements for fire and rescue services will play a vital role in determining whether any further formal intervention should be considered. This will include the number of revisits made to a service, information and improvements outlined on the Monitoring Portal and our escalation process which can determine whether any home Office intervention may be necessary.

Role of other interested parties in supporting FRAs at risk

39. We will have a leading role in identifying any fire and rescue service that is failing, or is likely to fail, in providing efficiency, effectiveness and looking after their people. The NFCC and the LGA and/or APCC will play an important liaison role in engaging the wider sector in supporting those authorities at risk, and work collaboratively with others, identifying at an early stage, serious risks to performance or the requirement to act in accordance with the Framework. The NFCC and/or Local Government Association and/or the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners will work with these bodies to prevent the escalation of those risks to avoid any risk to public safety or any negative impact on the reputation of the sector.

40. If there are specific concerns in respect of performance, or if there is evidence that indicates a fire and rescue authority is failing or is at risk of failing to act in accordance with the Framework, either through inspection by HMICFRS or through sector-led processes, the NFCC and/or the Local Government Association, and/or the Police, Fire and Crime Panel, and/or the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners will work with the authority to help them address the issues and seek improvement.

Circumstances leading to statutory intervention

41. It is for the Home Secretary to determine whether any further intervention is needed. We can suggest that an intervention may be appropriate, but before we do, all possible options should’ve been explored, and support provided to the fire and rescue service to make the necessary improvements. The Home Secretary would not seek any intervention unless there was clear evidence that an authority was failing to act in accordance with the National Framework and that the failure was sufficiently serious as to require Government intervention.

42. If, following a sustained and determined attempt to resolve problems through sector-led improvement an issue cannot be resolved, or if a fire and rescue authority is unwilling or unable to engage with sector-led improvement measures, the Secretary of State can, under section 28 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, commission HMICFRS to lead an investigation. Under

this provision, the Secretary of State also has the power to require HMICFRS to undertake any further inspection of fire and rescue authorities in England as required for the purpose of furthering their efficiency and effectiveness. The Secretary of State may also seek advice and information from other persons/bodies (for example, the NFCC) in respect of specific identified issues.

43. The Secretary of State has a range of powers including to request information about a fire and rescue authority's functions and conferring on a fire and rescue authority functions relating to emergencies. Inspection powers – powers to obtain information and access premises – are also held by HMICFRS' inspectors.

What happens upon statutory intervention

44. In the event that statutory intervention is considered necessary, the Secretary of State will consult the authority concerned and any other body or authority which is considered necessary, such as HMICFRS, the NFCC and the Local Government Association, before exercising powers of intervention under section 22 of the 2004 Act.

45. The form or extent of any formal intervention will be a matter for determination on a case-by-case basis, considering the views of the fire and rescue authority, HMICFRS, the NFCC, the Local Government Association, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the Police Fire and Crime Panel and any other consultees, depending on the nature and the severity of the failure under consideration. Following such deliberations, the Secretary of State will agree a course of action, and how the required improvement will be delivered.

Fire and Rescue National Framework for England:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/705060/National_Framework_-_final_for_web.pdf

Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/21/contents>

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Safest People, Safest Places

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Service

This matter is being dealt with by: Stuart Errington
 Ext: 5555
 Date: 22 November 2022
 Our Ref:
 Your Ref:

Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters,
 Belmont Business Park, Durham, DH1 1TW

Chief Fire Officer: Stuart Errington QFSM

Dehenna Davison MP
 Constituency Office
 16 Tenters Street
 Bishop Auckland
 DL14 7AD

Dear Dehenna,

I am writing to update you on the latest developments regarding our financial situation and to seek your urgent assistance in supporting our position.

The attached letter, and subsequent support from County Durham and Darlington MPs, has been positive in gaining traction for our request for fire precept flexibility of £5 pa for Band D from April 2023 within both the Home Office and HM Treasury. The referendum principles will be contained within the draft Local Government Finance Settlement that will be published by DLUHC in December. This settlement is being finalised now.

On behalf of Councillor John Shuttleworth and myself, we are seeking your support, and that of all County Durham and Darlington MPs to lobby:

- **Lee Rowley MP (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State DLUHC)**

over the next week to ten days and urge him to grant £5 precept flexibility for fire and rescue authorities.

As we have evidenced to you, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service is a lean, highly efficient and highly performing Service. However, we are now already making cuts to frontline services in order to balance our budget. We desperately need to get this modest precept flexibility in order to secure critical funding to protect essential front line emergency services within the Bishop Auckland constituency and our wider Service area.

Thank you in anticipation of your support.

Best regards,

Stuart Errington QFSM
 Chief Fire Officer

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Promoting improvements
in policing and fire & rescue
services to make everyone safer

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70 Petty France
Westminster SW1H 9EX
Direct line: 020 3513 0523
Email: roy.wilsher@hmicfrs.gov.uk

HMI Roy Wilsher
His Majesty's Inspector of Fire and
Rescue Services

Chief Fire Officers
Chairs of Fire Authorities
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioners
Police and Crime Commissioners
Lead Fire Authority Members
Locally elected Mayors
Other FRS interested parties

28 November 2022

Dear colleague,

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (FRS) INSPECTION 2023-2025

I am writing as the SRO for FRS inspections to confirm our inspection programme for 2023-2025 and to update you on progress on our second round of fire and rescue (FRS) inspections.

Round 3

The inspection programme is reviewed at the end of each cycle to consider changes in the fire and rescue landscape and findings from our inspections. We also embedded evaluation into the approach. Thank you for sharing your views and supporting the development of the programme.

Our next round of inspection will report on the progress a service has made since the second round. Round 3 will also involve several changes from the previous round. These include:

a) Grading system

Activity will be focused on the evidence needed to demonstrate the 'characteristics of good' and we will move to a 5-tier grading system, with an additional grade of 'adequate'. This will provide a greater degree of information on where service improvements are needed, better reflect the performance of each service, and provide a common grading approach throughout our FRS and policing inspections.

The characteristics of good reflect those contained within our existing judgement criteria and can be found at Annex A. HMIs will use these characteristics when making their assessment. The categories of graded judgement in Round 3 will be:

- Outstanding – The FRS has substantially exceeded the characteristics of good performance.
- Good – The FRS has substantially demonstrated all the characteristics of good performance.
- Adequate – The FRS has demonstrated some of the characteristics of good performance, but we have identified areas where the FRS should make improvements.
- Requires improvement – The FRS has demonstrated few, if any, of the characteristics of good performance, and we have identified a substantial number of areas where the FRS needs to make improvements; and
- Inadequate – We have causes for concern and have made recommendations to the FRS to address them.

b) Pillar judgements

We will remove our graded judgements at pillar level for effectiveness, efficiency and how a service looks after its people, to better focus service improvements on the 11 principal areas of inspection. The 11 questions within the pillars will still be graded.

c) Report publication

To report in a timelier fashion, we will report our inspection findings in smaller batches, rather than the larger tranches used for previous rounds of our inspections.

Notification process

This letter is the initial notification to all FRSs of the preliminary inspection schedule, subject to confirmation of the Programme and Framework by the Home Secretary. Annex B provides you with this indicative schedule. This running order may be subject to change, which could be due to several reasons, including changes in performance or risk. Services affected by this will be informed of any planned changes at the earliest opportunity.

If industrial action is taken, then the inspectorate will need to consider the extent to which it is appropriate or feasible to continue with inspection activity as currently planned. I will write to you separately to outline any changes in our arrangements in more detail should this happen. Should any amendment or delay become necessary, it will be kept under review, and we will let you know in good time.

Document Request and Self-assessment

Our document request and self-assessment template, along with full instructions and guidance will be issued to your service liaison officer (SLO) 6-weeks before inspection fieldwork is due to start. Whilst we recognise that a service may feel it necessary to send additional documents within this period and throughout the inspection window, we ask that you:

- keep this to a minimum.
 - make clear why the document is being sent e.g., why the document is necessary.
- and
- highlight the section(s) you wish to be reviewed.

Staff Survey

As with previous inspections, we will be conducting a staff survey for all staff currently working for English fire and rescue services. We rely on your help to promote this survey and I would be very grateful for anything you can do to encourage your staff to complete it and ensure we have a good representation of their views.

We will coordinate the launch of the staff survey with each inspection and will send all SLOs a separate email with further details, including wording that you may use on your intranet to advertise both the staff survey and our reporting line. I would be grateful if you could promote the survey within your service.

Independent Reporting Line

Our independent reporting line remains open. The purpose of this line is to provide all fire and rescue service staff with a mechanism to inform us of any issues or areas of good practice which they feel should be taken into consideration as part of a service's inspection. Please note that this is not a whistleblowing service, nor a route for complaints. It is simply a way in which we can gather additional evidence outside of fieldwork which, can be accessed through the HMICFRS website via this link: [Independent reporting line - HMICFRS \(justiceinspectorates.gov.uk\)](https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/).

Round 2 revisits

We are currently carrying out revisit activity for some services who were given a cause – or causes – of concern in round 2 to consider what progress is being made. We also intend to publish several reports early in 2023:

- Inspection reports for those services in Tranche 3
- State of Fire 2023

inspections to take place.

In the meantime, if you need any further information, please contact either me or Alex Hill, FRS Portfolio Director via alex.hill@hmicfrs.gov.uk

Thank you for your continued support of our inspection programme.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RW', written in a cursive style.

HMI Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM

His Majesty's Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services

ANNEX A

HMICFRS Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) Inspection commencing January 2023

In our Round 3 inspections, we measure fire and rescue services against the 'characteristics of good performance'. These characteristics describe the levels of performance needed for a fire and rescue service to achieve a grade of 'good'. These characteristics allow our inspectors to make consistent assessments across all services. They also mean that services can see what they are being graded against.

The characteristics are examples to help inspectors to determine appropriate judgments. They are not intended to prescribe specific standards or to be exhaustive lists of how we expect services to perform.

The characteristics have regard to national standards and take account of operational guidance and evidence from research, but we are not limited to these. We are entitled to establish our own view of efficiency and effectiveness. We will take into account new guidance, standards and research as they become available.

1 Effectiveness assessment

1.1 How well does the FRS understand the risk of fire and other emergencies?

1.1.1 The FRS engages in dialogue with communities and interested parties to understand local risk.

1.1.2 The FRS routinely gathers a wide range of data to produce an accurate and clear risk profile and risk management plan.

1.1.3 The FRS risk management plan identifies and clearly sets out current and future changes in risk. The plan clearly establishes how the FRS will manage risk to the public.

1.1.4 The FRS risk management plan has clear links to community risk registers. In its risk management plan, the FRS clearly outlines the strategic direction it is taking for prevention, protection and response activity.

1.1.5 The FRS routinely gathers relevant risk information about people, places and threats. It makes sure that the information it has gathered is accurate and up to date.

1.1.6 The FRS has easily accessible systems in place that help staff to access risk information. The FRS can assure itself staff are aware of any material changes to risk information.

1.1.7 The FRS uses emerging information from operational activity to test its risk profile and challenge its risk management plan. The FRS has an up-to-date risk assessment of reasonably foreseeable fire-related risks and other risks.

1.2 How effective is the FRS at preventing fires and other risks?

1.2.1 The FRS has developed and implemented an ambitious prevention strategy which is informed by local risk and complies with statutory requirements. The FRS

prevention plan clearly sets out where the greatest risks lie within its area and has a clear rationale for the level of activity to prevent fires and other risks. The FRS uses findings from prevention, protection and response activity to adapt its prevention plan. FRS prevention activity meets community expectations and its core functions are sustained regardless of other discretionary priorities for the FRS.

1.2.2 The FRS tailors its communications to provide information about fire prevention and to promote community safety. The FRS has a comprehensive understanding of the diverse needs of its communities and makes sure that its engagement and communication is designed to be appropriate and accessible to meet those diverse needs.

1.2.3 FRS staff are able to recognise the opportunity to prevent fires and other risks and take appropriate action. The FRS works with other FRSs, a wide range of partner organisations and diverse sections of the community to reduce the number of fires and other risks. The FRS evaluates the impact of its prevention activity and uses this to improve its own and partners' approaches.

1.2.4 Staff understand how to identify vulnerability and take action to safeguard vulnerable people as a result.

1.2.5 The FRS promotes road safety to reduce the numbers of people killed and seriously injured on the roads.

1.2.6 The FRS identifies and targets individuals who display signs of fire-setting behaviour for intervention activity and routinely shares information with partner organisations to support the prosecution of arsonists.

1.3 How effective is the FRS at protecting the public through the regulation of fire safety?

1.3.1 The FRS has developed and implemented a fire safety enforcement strategy and risk-based inspection programme which is informed by local risk. The FRS regulatory activities comply with statutory requirements to reduce the risk of fire. The FRS enforcement plan prioritises the highest risks and includes a proportionate level of activity to reduce risk. The FRS carries out a programme of fire safety audits in line with its enforcement plan.

1.3.2 The FRS carries out systematic, consistent and robust fire safety audits. The FRS assures itself that fire safety audits are being carried out in a systematic, consistent and robust way.

1.3.3 The FRS uses its enforcement powers in a proportionate way. The FRS regulatory activities keep people safe and secure from the risk of fire.

1.3.4 The FRS systematically and routinely shares relevant information on fire safety risk with staff who use it to carry out fire safety audits. FRS staff work, and share information with, enforcement partners and take appropriate enforcement action in line with the FRS plan.

1.3.5 The FRS has a risk-based system in place to manage its response to unwanted fire signals.

1.3.6 FRS staff engage with local businesses or large organisations and share information and expectations on compliance with fire safety regulations. The FRS has a system to help all local businesses to have easy and timely access to clear guidance on how to comply with fire safety regulations.

1.4 How effective is the FRS at responding to fires and other emergencies?

1.4.1 The FRS understands what action it needs to take to adopt fire standards and national operational guidance, including joint and national learning. The FRS is implementing a plan to achieve this.

1.4.2 The FRS has developed a response strategy that is based on a thorough assessment of risk to the community. The FRS has an appropriate range of resources (people and equipment) available to respond to personal, property and environmental risk in line with its risk management plan. The FRS understands and actively manages the resources and capabilities available for deployment. The FRS is able to handle calls in a timely manner to ensure public safety. The FRS is able to manage the fair deployment (and temporary redeployment) of resources to meet operational need.

1.4.3 The FRS is able to make relevant risk information accessible to staff responding to emergency incidents in an easily usable format.

1.4.4 FRS staff are able to command fire service assets assertively, effectively and safely at incidents. FRS staff make sure the public are protected at incidents.

1.4.5 The FRS can mobilise sufficient resources to respond to local and cross-border incidents.

1.4.6 The FRS provides relevant information to the public about ongoing incidents to help keep them safe during and following incidents.

1.4.7 FRS staff use learning to improve operational response and incident command.

1.5 How well prepared is the FRS to respond to major and multi-agency incidents?

1.5.1 The FRS understands national and cross-border risks, and has sufficiently assessed reasonably foreseeable local community risks that are likely to require a major or multi-agency response.

1.5.2 The FRS uses risk assessments to develop plans to respond to major or multi-agency incidents.

1.5.3 The FRS carries out a joint exercise programme to test arrangements for major and multi-agency incidents. The FRS uses the learning to improve its capabilities and inform local and national developments.

1.5.4 FRS staff can work with neighbouring FRSs and form part of a multi-agency response in line with Joint Emergency Services Interoperability principles. The FRS actively participates in its local resilience forum and is well-prepared for, or routinely contributes to, multi-agency debriefs.

1.5.5 The FRS local arrangements comply with, and support, the requirements within the [National Co-ordination and Advisory Framework](#).

1.5.6 The FRS is aware of joint organisational and national operational learning. The FRS takes sufficient action to improve the services it provides in line with industry good practice.

2 Efficiency assessment

2.1 How well does the FRS use resources to manage risk?

2.1.1 The FRS budget and resource allocation is proportionate and supports the activity set out in its risk management plan and strategic priorities.

2.1.2 FRS plans are built on sound planning assumptions, including scenario plans. The plans are subject to informed external independent challenge and meet financial requirements. The FRS has an affordable workforce model that provides the right skills and capabilities, linked to its risk management plan and priorities. The FRS's financial plans help it to make sure it can provide a sustained service to the public and continuously improve, as well as result in a balanced budget. The FRS has financial controls and financial risk control mechanisms in place to reduce the risk of inappropriate use of public money.

2.1.3 The FRS has allocated sufficient resources to prevention, protection and response activity. There is a clear rationale for the levels of such activity linked to its risk management plan. The FRS workforce model allows it to carry out its core functions effectively and efficiently.

2.1.4 The FRS arrangements for managing performance make sure resource use is clearly linked to its risk management plan and strategic priorities. Productive worktime should include making sure that staff contribute as much as possible when they are available.

2.1.5 The FRS is making use of new ways of working, including flexible workforce patterns, to make sure the services it provides are proportionate to risk and public safety. The FRS can demonstrate how this is cost-effective.

2.1.6 The FRS proactively meets its statutory duty to consider emergency service collaboration. The FRS collaborative activity fits with the priorities set out in its risk management plan and improves the provision of core functions or achieves work force efficiencies. The FRS comprehensively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration and can demonstrate that it improves the provision of its core functions or achieves work force efficiencies.

2.1.7 The FRS has business continuity arrangements in place for high-risk areas, which are updated and tested regularly.

2.1.8 The FRS can demonstrate savings from non-pay costs. It routinely reviews non-pay costs and regularly challenges itself to make sure that it is achieving value for money.

2.1.9 The FRS can demonstrate that the efficiencies it has made have helped it to sustain an appropriate level of service to the public. Savings identified are subjected to benefits/impact analysis to make sure there is no disproportionate impact on operational performance and on service to the public.

2.2 How well is the FRS securing an affordable way of managing the risk of fire and other risks for both now and in the future?

2.2.1 The FRS understands the likely financial challenges (beyond the current spending review) on the basis of relatively robust, realistic and prudent assumptions, which take account of the wider external environment and include some scenario planning for future spending reductions.

2.2.2 The FRS identifies savings and investment opportunities that improve service to the public and/or generate further savings.

2.2.3 The FRS has a plan for using reserves and is able to provide good evidence of using reserves in a sensible and sustainable way.

2.2.4 The FRS estate and fleet strategies have clear links to the risk management plan. The FRS actively considers how changes in fleet and estate provision and status and future innovation may affect risk, and the FRS exploits opportunities presented by changes in fleet and estate to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

2.2.5 The FRS actively considers how changes in technology and future innovation may affect risk, and it exploits opportunities presented by changes in technology to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

2.2.6 The FRS has the capacity and capability it needs to change. It has the skills to achieve sustainable change.

2.2.7 The FRS routinely seeks opportunities to work with others to improve efficiency in future. It has ambitious plans to improve efficiency.

2.2.8 The FRS secures funding to invest in improvements to the service it provides to the public and is proactive in identifying additional funding sources.

3 People assessment

3.1 How well does the FRS service promote its values and culture?

3.1.1 The FRS has well-defined values and behaviours that are understood and demonstrated at all levels in the organisation.

3.1.2 FRS senior managers act as role models and show that they are committed to service values through their behaviours.

3.1.3 The FRS has well-understood and effective wellbeing policies and procedures. These policies and procedures are available to and understood by staff. The FRS promotes effectively the mental and physical health and well-being of staff. FRS staff understand and have confidence in the well-being support processes the service provides.

3.1.4 The FRS has well-understood and effective health and safety policies and procedures. These policies and procedures are available to, and help to afford protections to, staff. The FRS effectively promotes the health and safety of staff.

3.2 How well trained and skilled are FRS staff?

3.2.1 The FRS regularly reviews its understanding of the skills and risk-critical safety capabilities of the workforce to make sure that it meets current and future organisational needs.

3.2.2 The skills and capabilities of FRS personnel are aligned with the implementation of the risk management plan. Staff are appropriately trained for their roles. The FRS training plans are used to develop and maintain competence and capability. Risk-critical safety training is given sufficient priority. The FRS has an effective mechanism to monitor and assure staff competence and service provision to the public. The FRS has systems in place to identify gaps in workforce capability and resilience issues. The FRS is tailoring its future workforce plans to meet longer-term changes in risk in a financially sustainable way.

3.2.3 The FRS has established a culture of continuous improvement and has effective systems in place for staff and the organisation to continually learn and develop.

3.3 How well does the FRS ensure fairness and diversity?

3.3.1 The FRS regularly requests feedback from staff at all levels. The FRS feedback mechanisms carry credibility with staff and help to gather valuable information.

3.3.2 FRS leaders can demonstrate that they act on and have made changes as a direct result of feedback from staff. The FRS engages with all representative bodies and staff associations. The FRS resolves staff grievances, discipline and at-work issues in a timely, effective and supportive manner.

3.3.3 The FRS operates an open, fair and honest recruitment process for staff or those wishing to work for it. The FRS exploits opportunities to make sure that its workforce better reflects the community it represents and it promotes diversity at all levels within the organisation. The FRS has an effective system to understand and remove the risk of discrimination in recruitment and promotion processes. It has firmly established equality throughout strategies, plans, training and practice.

3.3.4 The FRS promotes equality, diversity and inclusion and engages with under-represented groups in the workforce to resolve staff concerns and make sure that there are fair and open opportunities for all.

3.4 How well does the FRS develop leadership and capability?

3.4.1 The FRS has arrangements in place to assess and develop the individual performance of all staff. FRS staff have clear, personal and specific goals and objectives and have regular assessments of performance.

3.4.2 The FRS has open and transparent selection processes and actively manages the career pathways of all staff, including those with specialist skills.

3.4.3 The FRS has an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.

3.4.4 The FRS has an open and fair process to select staff for leadership roles and this is reflected in the diversity of staff represented at all levels of the organisation.

ANNEX B - FRS Inspection Schedule

| Order | Service | Document Request, Self-Assessment & Staff Survey | Inspection Fieldwork starts w/c – week commencing |
|-------|----------------------------|--|---|
| 1 | Bedfordshire | w/c 09-Jan-23 | 27-Feb-23 |
| 2 | Cambridge | w/c 09-Jan-23 | 27-Feb-23 |
| 3 | Cheshire | w/c 09-Jan-23 | 06-Mar-23 |
| 4 | Warwickshire | w/c 06-Feb-23 | 27-Mar-23 |
| 5 | Cornwall | w/c 06-Feb-23 | 27-Mar-23 |
| 6 | Surrey | w/c 06-Feb-23 | 27-Mar-23 |
| 7 | Lincolnshire | w/c 20-Mar-23 | 08-May-23 |
| 8 | Buckinghamshire | w/c 20-Mar-23 | 08-May-23 |
| 9 | Merseyside | w/c 20-Mar-23 | 08-May-23 |
| 10 | Avon | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 11 | Hereford & Worcester | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 12 | Northumberland | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 13 | Greater Manchester | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 14 | Norfolk | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 15 | Essex | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 16 | West Yorkshire | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 17 | Gloucestershire | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 18 | Northamptonshire | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 19 | Oxfordshire | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 20 | Nottinghamshire | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 21 | Staffordshire | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 22 | London | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 23 | West Sussex | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 24 | Devon & Somerset | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 25 | Tyne & Wear | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 26 | Shropshire | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 27 | Humberside | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 28 | Lancashire | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 29 | Hertfordshire | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 30 | Isles of Scilly | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 31 | Suffolk | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 32 | Dorset & Wiltshire | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 33 | West Midlands | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 34 | Hampshire & Isle of Wight | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 35 | East Sussex | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 36 | South Yorkshire | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 37 | North Yorkshire | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 38 | Cleveland | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 39 | Derbyshire | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 40 | County Durham & Darlington | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 41 | Cumbria | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 42 | Leicestershire | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 43 | Royal Berkshire | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| 44 | Kent | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

9 December 2022

Minor Amendment to the Constitution

Report of the Director of People and Organisational Development

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a proposed minor amendment to the Combined Fire Authority's (CFA) Constitution.

Background

2. County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority has agreed a constitution which sets out how the Authority operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.
3. A review of internal processes has resulted in a proposed amendment being put forward.

Suggested Amendment

4. The amendment is as follows:

4.1 Section 3 – Committee delegations and referrals

The Appeals Committee currently has the following functions delegated as part of their responsibilities in the constitution:

- 1) Considering and deciding upon appeals on grievances referred to the Authority under the Grievance policy and procedure.

- 2) Considering and deciding upon appeals referred to the Authority under the Disciplinary policy and procedure.
 - 3) Considering and deciding upon appeals referred to the Authority under Stage Two of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme: Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP).
5. The Services Grievance Policy and Procedure has been reviewed. The previous versions of these documents included a second stage appeal process which was heard specifically by the Appeals Committee. This has been removed from both processes which now aligns to the ACAS code of practice meaning there is no requirement for the appeals panel to be involved in processes related to point one outlined above.
 6. Leaving this in the constitution poses a risk to the Authority if challenged by an employee of the Service as this clearly states an appeals panel would hear any Grievance appeals.
 7. It is proposed to remove this responsibility (point 1) from the Appeals Committee to alleviate this risk and ensure internal processes are followed correctly and are clear to those utilising them.
 8. The revised responsibilities of the Appeals committee would be as follows:

The Appeals Committee shall have the following functions:

1. Considering and deciding upon appeals referred to the Authority under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
2. Considering and deciding upon appeals referred to the Authority under Stage Two of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme: Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP).

Recommendations

9. The Authority is requested to:
 - i. **note** the contents of the report and the revised responsibilities of the Appeals Committee.
 - ii. **approve** the amendment to the constitution as set out in paragraph 8 above.

County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

9 December 2022

Bonfire Report 2022

Report of the Director Community Risk Management

Purpose of Report

1. To provide members with a summary of the outcomes of the Joint Bonfire Delivery Plan (2022) and give an overview of the activities conducted by County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) and their partners as part of a deliberate fire reduction strategy over the Bonfire Period 25 October to the 7 November 2022.

Background

2. The latest version of the Joint Bonfire Delivery Plan was developed in 2021 with the aim of providing a formal process to follow for Emergency Response, the Community Safety and Arson Reduction Team, Communications Team together with key partners, with specified activities, designated outcomes, and target dates for completion of tasks and data returns.
3. The original Joint Delivery Plan was reviewed and recirculated for consultation in July this year with partners asked to provide feedback and comment on their experiences of the 2021 Delivery Plan.
4. Much of the original plan was found to be valid and operable, with some minor changes made to aid better interoperability amongst a diverse range of partners, such as Tesco.com, Housing Associations, Schools, Trading

Standards and Environmental Service teams in Durham County Council (DCC) and Darlington Borough Council (DBC) and Durham University.

5. One of the key benefits of working in collaboration is the opportunity for partners to spread the various bonfire safety messages with the wider community, and into specific sections of the community, (such as young people and families), focusing on the benefits of attending organised displays and the potential danger of bonfires.

Key Points from the 2022 Bonfire Period

6. **Calls over the Bonfire Period:**
There were 25.5% fewer calls made, (659), over the bonfire period in 2022 compared to 2021, (and 15.5% reduction in calls compared to 2020), which demonstrates a downward trend given the change in Bonfire Delivery Strategy and rise in educational provision.
7. **Calls on Bonfire night:**
CDDFRS Control Room received a total of 115 calls on Bonfire Night in 2022, a reduction of 130 calls compared to the 245 calls received on Bonfire Night of 2021. This equates to a 53% fall in the number of emergency calls in 2022.
8. **Incidents Attended on Bonfire Night:**
Emergency Response crews attended 50 incidents on Bonfire Night, which is a 67% reduction, down by 103, on incidents in 2021.
9. **Deliberate and Not Known Fires on Bonfire Night:**
The downward trend in deliberate and not known fires on bonfire night has continued into 2022 with a 21% reduction this year compared to 2021 and is a substantial 63% difference to 2020.
10. Whilst it is hard to be absolute on the cause of the downturn, it is felt that a combination of education delivered across the year to specific age groups and greater interaction with young people at secondary schools has played a part. In addition, the collaborative work between agencies to remove flammable waste materials rapidly, removes the availability of fuel in the community.
11. **Emergency Response Planning**
In preparation for the expected peak on bonfire weekend additional resources were utilised. An additional Targeted Response Vehicle (TRV) was staffed in Darlington to protect appliances for life risk incidents and a joint police and fire vehicle was deployed in the Easington area focussed on community engagement to keep people safe and reduce anti-social behaviour.

12. Police operators attended CDDFRS's Control Room to coordinate response effectively across police and fire. Additionally, one of our trained National Incident Liaison Officers attended police Silver Command at Aykley Heads to further assist effective coordination at incidents.
13. **Violence Against Staff**
During the bonfire period there was one incident of violence against our staff. This was in the Easington area on 6 November, and a group of youths who had made a bonfire using a wheelie bin and wood, threw objects at the appliance and crew as well as giving the staff verbal abuse. The Police were requested and attended the incident promptly.
14. **Environmental Visual Audits (EVA):**
The Emergency Response crews committed a significant workload to local area EVA's in partnership with Environmental Services from DCC and DBC, in total 257 EVA's were conducted.
15. **Blue Route Patrols:**
Blue route patrols increase visibility in high-risk areas, provide an opportunity to assess areas for fly tipping or fire setting indicators and utilise known intelligence as a deterrent to prospective fire setters, in total 218 blue route patrols were conducted.
16. **Leaflet Drops (Targeted Areas):**
As part of analysis of activity in station areas, Watch Managers and Divisional Managers will review Power Bi and other intelligence sources and target specific areas to conduct leaflet drops. In addition, Emergency Response crews may utilise a visit to a high-footfall area, (supermarket entrance), or react to an incident with a warm strike leaflet drop, following a fire. In total 45 targeted leaflet drops were conducted.
17. In addition, Tesco.com delivered 5000+ CDDFRS fireworks safety leaflets across the bonfire period and DCC Trading Standards Team delivered 2000+ CDDFRS fireworks safety leaflets to retailers officially registered to sell fireworks.
18. **Joint Arson Initiatives:**
In partnership with other agencies, Emergency Response crews conduct targeted arson prevention initiatives to mitigate the potential for fire setting, target hardening and site assessments of insecure / at risk premises and high-profile joint patrols with local authority staff and Police Officers. In total 13 Arson Initiatives were undertaken.

19. **Education (Prevention Activities):**
Over the bonfire period, Emergency Response crews undertook 88 school educational sessions at Key Stage 2, to approximately 2,600 children. The Community Safety and Arson Reduction Team conducted inputs to approximately 600 Key Stage 3 students at schools that allowed time for the educational input.
20. When these figures are combined with the education provided by the Community Safety and Arson Reduction Team from early 2022 up to the last week of term in July, CDDFRS provided targeted arson reduction education, over and above Emergency Response routine school visits at Key Stage 2, to 13,600 young people across County Durham and Darlington.
21. **Social Media campaign:**
Our social media campaign is divided between the formal media provision by the Communications Team and volunteer Emergency Response crews who disseminate social media content 'as live' on platforms such as TikTok. Views for the different platforms were:
- TikTok = 6,582 views
 - Twitter = 5,261 views
 - Facebook = 30,914 views

Summary

22. The 2022 Joint Bonfire Delivery Plan has brought together a diverse range of partners, agencies, and delivery methods to seek to drive down the effect of arson and deliberate fires on County Durham and Darlington. The delivery plan built on the success of the 2021 plan, to further reduced incidents.
23. Emergency Response crews worked diligently within their station areas to seek out flammable materials and reported this through various pathways to Environmental Service teams to remove the materials before it could be set alight. Joint patrols and targeted activities, similarly highlighted materials for recovery.
24. The number of young people educated continues to be a positive investment in the safety of our communities and education will remain an ongoing priority for Key Stage 2 and 3, to aim to reduce deliberate fire setting in the community.
25. Planning for the 2022 Bonfire Period began in late July 2022, which indicates how complex the coordination of the various agencies, specialist teams and preparation of initiatives can be. The Community Safety and Arson Reduction Manager will conduct a review of the Joint Bonfire Delivery Plan, across the

various agencies and partners, to understand what worked well and what could be improved upon for future campaigns.

Recommendations

26. Members are requested to **note** the contents of the report.

Director Community Risk Management Keith Carruthers, Ext. 5564

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County Durham and Darlington
Fire and Rescue Authority



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

9 December 2022

Serious Violence Duty

Report of the Director Community Risk Management

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to inform members of the new Serious Violence duty outlined in new legislation under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022.

Background

2. In 2018, the Government published a national, cross governmental Serious Violence Strategy. This was followed by the announcement of funding to tackle serious violence in 18 priority areas, through the introduction of Violence Reduction Units in line with the successful model developed within Scotland.
3. The following year, the Government announced that it would bring forward legislation introducing a new serious violence duty (“the duty”) on public bodies which will ensure relevant services work together to share data and knowledge and allow them to target their interventions to prevent serious violence altogether.
4. The Government also announced that it would amend the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to ensure that serious violence is an explicit priority for Community Safety Partnerships by making sure they have a strategy in place to tackle violent crime.
5. Serious violence has not been specifically defined in the PCSC Act or the draft guidance. This is to allow responsiveness to new and emerging trends and to enable different areas to focus on issues of local prevalence.
6. The Serious Violence strategy (2018) focused on public space violence, including homicide, knife crime, gun crime, robbery, gang crime and ‘County Lines’ activity.

Serious Violence Duty

7. Legislative provision for a Serious Violence duty has been made in the PCSC Act which was brought into law on 28th April 2022.
8. The 'Duty' requires the following specified authorities within a local government area to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence:
 - Police
The Chief Officer of police for police areas in England and Wales
 - Fire and Rescue
All fire and rescue authorities operating in England and Wales
 - Justice
Probation Services and Youth Offending Teams
 - Health
 - Local Authorities
9. The requirements for the 'duty' holders are:
 - By March 2023, all areas will need to have a Strategic Needs Assessment.
 - By June 2023, all areas will need to have effective multiagency working structures in place.
 - By September 2023, all areas should be able to demonstrate how their local response is rooted in evidence of effectiveness.
 - By December 2023, all areas will have published their strategies.

Approach in County Durham and Darlington

10. The Safe Durham Partnership and Darlington Community Safety Partnership have agreed to a joint approach covering both areas, with the Police taking on the lead role.
11. A strategic group has been formed and a 'Task and Finish' group to deliver a Strategic Needs Assessment for Durham & Darlington.

Recommendations

12. Members are requested to **note** the report.

Keith Carruthers, Director Community Risk Management, Ext. 5564

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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