



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 Monday 20 January 2025 at 10.00 am to consider the following business:-**

### **PART A**

1. 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*
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2024 (Pages 3 - 6)
3. Current Correspondence - Report of Director of Emergency Response (Pages 7 - 18)
4. Notes of the Human Resources Committee held on 26 November 2024 - Report of the Chair of the Human Resources Committee (Pages 19 - 20)
5. Notes of Audit and Finance Committee held on 27 November 2024 - Report of the Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee (Pages 21 - 24)
6. Notes of the Performance Committee held on 10 December 2024 - Report of the Chair of the Performance Committee (Pages 25 - 38)
7. Bonfire Campaign Evaluation 2024 - Report of the Director of Community Risk Management (Pages 39 - 44)
8. Integrated Fire Control Collaboration (IFCC) Update Report - Report of the Director of Emergency Response (Pages 45 - 48)
9. Local Resilience Forum Update - Report of the Director of Emergency Response (Pages 49 - 56)
10. PCC - Request to Join the Combined Fire Authority - Report of the CFA Clerk (Pages 57 - 60)

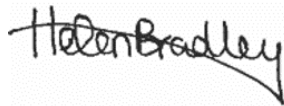
11. English Devolution White Paper - Report of the Chief Fire Officer (Pages 61 - 62)
12. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgent to warrant consideration
13. Any resolution relating to the exclusion of the public during the discussion of items containing exempt information

Part B

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

14. Strategic Planning Day 21 November 2024 - Report of the Chief Fire Officer (Pages 63 - 68)
15. Serious Fire Learning Review - Report of the Director of Community Risk Management (Pages 69 - 80)
16. Service Leadership Team Pay Review (Pages 81 - 106)
17. 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



Helen Bradley  
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 Shuttleworth, C Martin, J Atkinson, A Batey, R Bell, J Cairns, C Hampson, B Kellett, L Maddison, R Manchester, C Marshall, I McLean, E Peeke, J Quinn, S Quinn, G Richardson, K Rooney, K Shaw and S Zair

**Darlington Borough Councillors:**

Councillors A Anderson, G Lee, D Ray and M Snedker

Minutes of **the meeting of the Combined Fire Authority for County Durham and Darlington held at Fire and Rescue HQ, Durham on 21 October 2024 at 10.00 am.**

### **Present:**

#### **Durham County Councillors:**

Councillors A Batey, R Bell, J Cairns, T Duffy, C Hampson, L Howvells, R Manchester, C Martin, E Peeke, J Quinn, S Quinn, G Richardson, K Rooney, and J Shuttleworth.

#### **Darlington Borough Councillors:**

Councillors A Anderson, G Lee and M Snedker

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Atkinson, I Cochrane, N Jones, C Marshall, D Ray, K Shaw and S Zair.

### **Independent Persons:**

The Chair advised that on the 27 and 28 September the services extrication team attended the UK rescue operations competition which was held in Portsmouth. The service came 6th place from 30 teams, including international teams for the RTC extrication event.

On the 12 October a team from the service competed in the National Breathing Apparatus Challenge. The team did well and for some members of the crew it was their first time at the National Breathing Apparatus Challenge.

The chair announced the sad passing of former Fire Control Project Manager SM Christine Robson on the 6 October 2024. Christine served from 1977 until retiring in June 2023.

### **A1 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **A2 Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair (for copy see file of minutes).

The Chair noted that there was one action under Item A6, Annual Report which was a request for the contact details for the Fire Authority and CDDFRS services to be added to the Annual Report. The Chair confirmed that this has been actioned.

### **A3 Current Correspondence**

The Authority received an update from the Director of Emergency Response 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 Performance Committee held on 5 September 2024**

The Authority received a report of the Chair of the Performance Committee which provided an update on discussions and recommendations from the Committee held on the 5 September 2024 (for copy see file of minutes).

Members **noted** the content of the report.

#### **A5 Notes of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 26 September 2024**

The Authority received a report of the Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee which provided an update on discussions and recommendations from the Committee held on the 26 September 2024 (for copy see file of minutes).

Cllr Bell noted that the backstop date for the 2023/24 accounts is the 28 February 2025. Although our accounts have been ready since the end of May, external audit will not start work on these until November due to capacity.

Members **noted** the content of the report.

#### **A6 Notes of the Human Resources Committee held on 27 September 2024**

The Authority received a report of the Chair of the Human Resources Committee which provided an update on discussions and recommendations from the Committee held on the 27 September 2024 (for copy see file of minutes).

Members **noted** the content of the report.

#### **A7 Fire Standards Progress Report**

The Authority received a report from the Deputy Chief Fire Officer providing members with an update on the National Fire Standards and alignment of County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service against the approved standards.

Members **noted** the report.

#### **A8 Community Safety and Arson Reduction Member Champion Update Report**

The Authority received a report from the Community Safety and Arson Reduction Member Champion. Members were provided with a strategic update on the community safety and arson reduction initiatives within the Community Risk Management directorate of the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service.

Cllr Lee questioned if actions identified through referrals taken for other partner agencies, during Home Fire Safety Visits, are logged and monitored centrally. K Carruthers explained that we are reliant on individual organisations to act upon their referrals. We are not aware of any cases whereby actions have not been followed up.

Cllr S Quinn noted that some individuals do not want to accept the support offered to them and that any interventions are recorded against their address.

Cllr Anderson asked if there are any Fire Cadet schemes operating in the Darlington area. K Carruthers explained that the schemes are run by staff on a voluntary basis and unfortunately there are no volunteers in Darlington at this current time, but we continue to encourage volunteers from the area.

Cllr Hovvells asked how we make ourselves accountable in terms of what we as a Fire Authority and other partner agencies do for our most vulnerable residents. K Carruthers noted that there are opportunities for multi-agency meetings to be called to discuss high risk cases where action plans are put in place, therefore holding each individual agency to account. S Helps explained that we are looking at how we can strengthen our referrals to other agencies so that we can improve our approach in helping those most vulnerable in our communities.

Members **noted** the report.

### **A9 Business Fire Safety Member Champion Report**

The Authority received a report of the Business Fire Safety Member Champion. Members were provided with a strategic update on the business fire safety initiatives within the Community Risk Management directorate of the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service.

Cllr Kellett noted that he has requested to attend a Fire Safety Audit so that he can familiarise himself further with the audit process.

The Director of Community Risk Management presented the report on behalf of Cllr Kellett.

Cllr Bell queried the reasoning behind businesses' noncompliance with fire safety regulations for their premises. B Cairns explained there are a wide range of reasons including lack of understanding of the guidance to blatant disregard for fire safety. We will support businesses during the process, but it is up to them to move forward with an appropriate solution. There are cases where there is no choice but to prosecute due to the gravity of issues presented.

Cllr Cairns noted from personal experience that dealing with private Fire Safety Consultants to agree a Fire Strategy for a building can be difficult and a lengthy process. Cllr Cairns asked if CDDFRS could extend their service offer and provide this for businesses. S Helps explained that it is our responsibility to uphold the legislation therefore we are unable to do this in our Service area, although noted VFS have historically offered this service to clients across the country.

Cllr Lee asked for clarification regarding the figures for unsatisfactory audits identified through the Risk Based Inspection process. B Cairns confirmed that unsatisfactory audits are premises that flag up any deficiencies including those that are very minor. This highlighted that we are targeting the correct premises and making a real difference to improving fire safety through our audits.

Cllr Lee queried the building regulations process in terms of fire safety, suggesting that the order in the way it proceeds should be amended so that issues are identified and rectified to achieve compliance of fire safety legislation prior to construction.

B Cairns explained the process for planning permission and building regulations, noting that the fire service is a statutory consultee within the process. He further highlighted that our fire safety order only applies once a premises is occupied.

Cllr Snedker highlighted that through previous experience in Scotland, the fire service had the right to veto a premises being occupied if deemed not safe and asked whether there was any appetite for this in England. S Helps noted that at this time there were no plans to change legislation in that direction.

Cllr Maddison highlighted that some tenants of housing associations experience difficulties in accessing windows due to their height and the use of safety equipment. S Helps explained that these issues would not be addressed through a building fire safety audit as the premises are classed as a residential dwelling. Issues could be picked up through a Home Fire Safety Visit and referred to the landlord.

Members **noted** the report.

### **A10 Grenfell Tower Inquiry: Phase 2 Report**

The Authority received a report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer providing Members with a summary of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase Two report, published on 4 September 2024.

Members **noted** the report.

### **A11 Any Other Business**

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

The Chair confirmed that there was no other business.

### **CLOSE OF MEETING**



**Current Correspondence: October 2024 – January 2025**

No	Release Date	Subject	Summary	Action CFA Report	Action CFA Response	Action Info
1	22/10/24	Local Government Services Pay Agreement	2024 Pay Agreements LGS Green Book and Chief Executives Appendix A, B and C			X

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**To: Chief Fire Officers, Chairs/PFCCs/Deputy Mayors, Directors of HR**

Please see details below/attached of the green book pay award agreed yesterday afternoon.

**Dated: 22 October**

**For immediate transmission to all council Chf Execs, HR and Finance Dirs, and school leaders**

Agreement has this afternoon been reached on the 2024 pay awards for local government services ('Green Book') employees and local authority Chief Executives. Both agreements cover the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. The details are set out in the **attached circulars**.

For a fourth consecutive year, Unite has refused to have its details included in the NJC pay agreement circular. This is disappointing but does not prevent a formal collective agreement from being reached as the necessary Constitutional requirement for a majority on each Side of the NJC to be in favour has been met, which means the pay award can now be implemented.

### **Local authority Craftworkers**

I am unable to give any indication of when the pay deal for JNC ('Red Book') Craftworkers might be reached. We advise very strongly against imposing the pay offer ahead of a national collective agreement being finalised. To do so would not only fragment the unity of the employers' position but would also leave councils vulnerable to questions being asked by auditors about why, in the absence of a national collective agreement, expenditure had been unnecessarily incurred. Perhaps more importantly, councils would need to consider very carefully the wider legal issues, including those arising out of the cases of [Kostal UK Limited v Dunkley](#) and [INEOS Infrastructure Grangemouth Limited v Jones & others](#).

A reminder that the [2024 pay award for local authority Chief Officers](#) was reached on 22 July.

Kind Regards,

**Jamie Osowski** | Adviser – Workforce

**Local Government Association**

**Mobile:** 07795 312570

**Email:** [jamie.osowski@local.gov.uk](mailto:jamie.osowski@local.gov.uk)

18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

## Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Executives of Local Authorities

**To: Chief Executives in England and Wales (N Ireland for information)  
(to be shared with Finance Director and HR Director)  
Regional Employer Organisations  
Members of the Joint Negotiating Committee**

22 October 2024

Dear Chief Executive,

### CHIEF EXECUTIVES' PAY AGREEMENT 2024

Employers are encouraged to implement this pay award as swiftly as possible.

Agreement has now been reached on the pay award applicable from **1 April 2024** (covering the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025).

The individual basic salaries<sup>1</sup> of all officers within scope of the JNC for Chief Executives of local authorities should be increased by **2.50 per cent** with effect from 1 April 2024.

#### **Backpay for employees who have left employment since 1 April 2024**

If requested by an ex-employee to do so, we recommend that employers should pay any monies due to that employee from 1 April 2024 to the employee's last day of employment.

When salary arrears are paid to ex-employees who were in the LGPS, the employer must inform its local LGPS fund. Employers will need to amend the CARE and final pay figures (if the ex-employee has pre-April 2014 LGPS membership) accordingly.

Further detail is provided in [section 15 of the HR guide](#) and [the Backdated Pay Award FAQs](#), which are available on the [employer resources section](#) of [www.lgpsregs.org](http://www.lgpsregs.org).

Yours faithfully,

*Naomi Cooke*

*Kathryn Hall*

#### **Joint Secretaries**

<sup>1</sup> Basic salary should exclude other separately identified payments such as Returning Officer fees etc.

<p><b>Employers' Secretary:</b> Naomi Cooke Local Government Association 18 Smith Square London SW1P 3HZ <a href="mailto:info@local.gov.uk">info@local.gov.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Officers' Secretary:</b> Kathryn Hall Honorary Secretary ALACE  <a href="mailto:Kathryn.Hall@midsussex.gov.uk">Kathryn.Hall@midsussex.gov.uk</a></p>
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# National Joint Council for local government services

**Employers' Secretary**  
Naomi Cooke

**Trade Union Secretaries**

Mike Short, UNISON  
Sharon Wilde, GMB

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**To: Chief Executives in England, Wales and N Ireland  
(to be shared with Finance Director and HR Director)  
Regional Employer Organisations  
Members of the National Joint Council**

22 October 2024

Dear Chief Executive,

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES PAY AGREEMENT 2024**

Employers are encouraged to implement this pay award as swiftly as possible.

Agreement has been reached on rates of pay applicable from **1 April 2024** (covering the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025). The new pay rates, each increased by £1,290 per annum, are attached at **Annex 1**.

All locally determined pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer, should be increased by 2.50 per cent, in accordance with Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4<sup>1</sup>.

The new rates for allowances, uprated by 2.50 per cent, are set out at **Annex 2**.

### **Joint work**

It has been agreed that there will be joint discussions on how the NJC can capture gender, ethnicity and disability pay gap information that will be of most benefit to the sector.

### **Backpay for employees who have left employment since 1 April 2024**

If requested by an ex-employee to do so, we recommend that employers should pay any monies due to that employee from 1 April 2024 to the employee's last day of employment.

When salary arrears are paid to ex-employees who were in the LGPS, the employer must inform its local LGPS fund. Employers will need to amend the CARE and final pay figures (if the ex-employee has pre-April 2014 LGPS membership) accordingly.

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<sup>1</sup> The Green Book Part 2 Para 5.4 provides that posts paid above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer are within scope of the NJC. The pay levels for such posts are determined locally, but once fixed are increased in line with agreements reached by the NJC.

Further detail is provided in [section 15 of the HR guide](#) and the [Backdated Pay Award FAQs](#), which are available on the [employer resources section](#) of [www.lgpsregs.org](http://www.lgpsregs.org).

Yours faithfully,

*Naomi  
Cooke*

**Naomi Cooke**



**Mike Short**



**Sharon Wilde**

SCP	01-Apr-23		01-Apr-24	
	per annum	per hour	per annum	per hour
1	<i>Deleted wef 01 Apr 23</i>			
2	£22,366	£11.59	£23,656	£12.26
3	£22,737	£11.79	£24,027	£12.45
4	£23,114	£11.98	£24,404	£12.65
5	£23,500	£12.18	£24,790	£12.85
6	£23,893	£12.38	£25,183	£13.05
7	£24,294	£12.59	£25,584	£13.26
8	£24,702	£12.80	£25,992	£13.47
9	£25,119	£13.02	£26,409	£13.69
10	£25,545	£13.24	£26,835	£13.91
11	£25,979	£13.47	£27,269	£14.13
12	£26,421	£13.69	£27,711	£14.36
13	£26,873	£13.93	£28,163	£14.60
14	£27,334	£14.17	£28,624	£14.84
15	£27,803	£14.41	£29,093	£15.08
16	£28,282	£14.66	£29,572	£15.33
17	£28,770	£14.91	£30,060	£15.58
18	£29,269	£15.17	£30,559	£15.84
19	£29,777	£15.43	£31,067	£16.10
20	£30,296	£15.70	£31,586	£16.37
21	£30,825	£15.98	£32,115	£16.65
22	£31,364	£16.26	£32,654	£16.93
23	£32,076	£16.63	£33,366	£17.29
24	£33,024	£17.12	£34,314	£17.79
25	£33,945	£17.59	£35,235	£18.26
26	£34,834	£18.06	£36,124	£18.72
27	£35,745	£18.53	£37,035	£19.20
28	£36,648	£19.00	£37,938	£19.66
29	£37,336	£19.35	£38,626	£20.02
30	£38,223	£19.81	£39,513	£20.48
31	£39,186	£20.31	£40,476	£20.98
32	£40,221	£20.85	£41,511	£21.52
33	£41,418	£21.47	£42,708	£22.14
34	£42,403	£21.98	£43,693	£22.65
35	£43,421	£22.51	£44,711	£23.17
36	£44,428	£23.03	£45,718	£23.70
37	£45,441	£23.55	£46,731	£24.22
38	£46,464	£24.08	£47,754	£24.75
39	£47,420	£24.58	£48,710	£25.25
40	£48,474	£25.13	£49,764	£25.79
41	£49,498	£25.66	£50,788	£26.32
42	£50,512	£26.18	£51,802	£26.85
43	£51,515	£26.70	£52,805	£27.37

NB: hourly rate calculated by dividing annual salary by 52.143 weeks (which is 365 days divided by 7) and then divided by 37 hours (the standard working week)

Part 3 Paragraph 2.6(e) Sleeping-in Duty Payment:

**1 April 2024**  
£41.78

**RATES OF PROTECTED ALLOWANCES AT 1 APRIL 2024  
(FORMER APT&C AGREEMENT (PURPLE BOOK))**

**Paragraph 28(3) Nursery Staffs in Educational Establishments - Special Educational Needs Allowance**

**1 April 2024**  
£1,491

**Paragraph 28(14) Laboratory / Workshop Technicians**

City and Guilds Science Laboratory Technician's Certificate Allowance:

**1 April 2024**  
£243

City and Guilds Laboratory Technician's Advanced Certificate Allowance:

**1 April 2024**  
£175

**Paragraph 32 London Weighting and Fringe Area Allowances £ Per Annum**

Inner Fringe Area:

**1 April 2024**  
£1,013

Outer Fringe Area:

**1 April 2024**  
£706

**Paragraph 36 Standby Duty Allowance - Social Workers (1)(a)(i) Allowance - Per Session**

**1 April 2024**  
£33.63



**FORMER MANUAL WORKER AGREEMENT (WHITE BOOK)**

**Section 1 Paragraph 3 London and Fringe Area Allowances £ Per Annum**

Inner Fringe Area:

**1 April 2024**  
£1,013

Outer Fringe Area:

**1 April 2024**  
£706

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County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Authority



**Safest People, Safest Places**

**Combined Fire Authority**

**20 January 2025**

**Notes of the Human Resources Committee held on 26 November 2024**

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**Report of the Chair of the Human Resources Committee**

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**Members Present:** Cllr S Zair in the Chair

Cllrs C Marshall, G Lee, C Martin A Batey

**Purpose of the report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Human Resources Committee held on 26 November 2024.

**Sickness Absence Performance Report Quarter Two 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024**

2. K Metcalfe introduced the report which provided an update on sickness absence performance for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2024.

Members discussed sickness by section, Benenden referrals and fire service data comparison report.

The committee **noted** the report.

**Health and Safety Report Quarter Two 1 April 2024 to 31 September 2024**

3. Members received a summary of the Service's health and safety performance for the second quarter of the 2024/25 reporting period.

Members discussed accidents to personnel, vehicle accidents and health and safety investigations.

Members **noted** the report.

### **Standards of Behaviour: The Handling of Misconduct in the Fire and Rescue Service**

4. K Metcalfe presented Members with the outcomes of the internal review of County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Services practices against the recommendations made in HMICFRS Standards of Behaviour: The Handling of Misconduct in Fire and Rescue Services report and the action plan.

Members **noted** the report.

### **Options for addressing HMICFRS Recommendations relating to the provision of a professional standards function**

5. K Metcalfe introduced the report which highlighted a range of options which would address the recommendation relating to the provision of a Professional Standards Function highlighted in the recent inspection report.

Members discussed the options in turn.

The Committee **agreed** to the proposed progression of option 2 collaboration with the police.

## **PART B**

### **Employee Relations Update**

6. Members were provided with details of informal and formal complaints received by the Service from its workforce as well as the instigation of any disciplinary action for the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024.

Members commented on the information.

The Committee **noted** the report.

### **Recommendation**

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

County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Authority



**Safest People, Safest Places**

**Combined Fire Authority**

**20 January 2025**

**Notes of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 27 November 2024**

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**Report of the Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee**

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**Members Present:** Cllr R Bell in the Chair  
Cllrs B Kellett, A Batey, J Cairns, A Anderson

**Purpose of the report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 27 November 2024.

**Internal Audit Progress Report**

2. Members were updated on the work carried out by Internal Audit and providing assurance on the effectiveness of the Combined Fire Authority's control environment, risk management and corporate governance arrangement in place.

Members considered and noted the Quarter 2 internal audit position.

**Corporate Governance Action Plan Update**

3. KLazzari presented the Corporate Governance Action Plan, which is reviewed quarterly by the Senior Leadership Team. All actions were currently on-going, areas highlighted:

Action 2 – regarding pay awards - The MTFP is based upon increases in pay awards of 3% in 2024/25 and 2025/26 and 2% thereafter. The MTFP deficit position could change dramatically if pay awards are agreed above this level.

Action 4 – The Service has recently entered into a collaboration with 3 other FRSs for a shared Emergency Mobilisation and Control system which has enabled the system supplier to deliver efficiencies in the solution and increased resilience for all 4 services.

Members were asked to note the update.

### Corporate Risk Register

4. KLazzari presented details of the Corporate Risk Register, currently 6 risks have been identified.

FIN152 – reduced risk - as MTFP currently showing as balanced in 2024/25 and 2025/26.

FIN153 – reduced risk – MTFP assumptions are being monitored and pay awards for 2024/25 can be managed within the budget.

AAnderson asked what the impact of a 1% pay increase on MTFP currently would cost, THope informed the committee it would be a £297k increase.

Members were requested to **note** the report.

### Forecast of Outturn 2024/25 Quarter 2

5. THope presented the report which provides an indication of the Service's revenue and capital financial outturn position based upon expenditure and income to the 30 September 2024.

Based upon expenditure and income to 30 September 2024, the forecast revenue outturn position to the 31 March 2025 is an underspend of £0.268M (0.76%).

At this stage no further borrowing is anticipated during 2024/25.

No areas of concern were raised.

Members were asked to **note** the report.

## Short-term Investments and Long-Term Borrowing Quarter 2

6. THope presented the short-term investments and Long-Term Borrowing for Quarter 2 report. He highlighted the following:
  - Interest of £276,402.40 has been earned up to the 30 September 2024 which is above the budgeted amount of £75,000.00 for the year to date.
  - Short-term investment balance of £15,818,000 as at 30 September 2024.
  - Long-term borrowing – outstanding principal balance of £4,859,134.69.

Members **noted** content of the report.

## 2025/26 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan

7. Members received an update on the financial pressures facing the Authority which include the impact of unfunded pay awards, rising energy and utility costs and a lack of funding for capital investment. Although the Authority's financial position has improved following the identification of savings through budget challenge, increased interest receipts and the implementation of riding with four, there are risks in our current MTFP assumptions particularly around pay. The Committee were reminded of the uncertainty surrounding future funding and the reliance on council tax receipts which now account for over 60% of the Authority's funding.

The settlement will be announced 19 December 2024 and this will be 1 year funding settlement then going forward it would be multi-year funding.

Members **noted** the content of the report.

## County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority Audit Progress Report November 2024

8. Audit work is ongoing with 3 key risk areas, which would apply to any service not just Fire.
  - Management override of controls
  - Net defined benefit liability valuation
  - Valuation of property, plant and equipment.

There are currently no matters which need bringing to the attention of the Committee, planned timescales are within the audit report which they intend to deliver ahead of the February 2025 backstop deadline.

Discussion took place around the February 2025 deadline.

The committee are very mindful of the possibility of not being able to meet the February 2025 deadline. However, they remain concerned about the impact of delays in the completion of the audit and urged Mazars to do everything possible to meet the deadline. The Committee understand the position Mazars are in with regard to queries they are submitting to staff and the time involved in processing these. THope assured the Committee that audit queries will be dealt with as a priority.

The audit update was **noted** by the members.

## **PART B**

### **Outstanding Audit Recommendations Quarter ended 30 September 2024**

9. NCooke updated the committee that there were 5 recommendations that were overdue and had revised target dates now.

The report was **noted** by the members.

### **Recommendation**

10. Members are requested to note the report.



County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Authority



**Safest People, Safest Places**

**Combined Fire Authority**

**20 January 2025**

**Notes of the Performance Committee held on 10 December 2024**

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## **Report of the Chair of Performance Committee**

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**Members Present:** Cllr J Quinn in the Chair  
Cllr K Rooney, Cllr S Quinn, Cllr R Manchester,  
Cllr A Andrews

**Apologies received:** Cllr S Zair

### **Purpose of the report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Performance Committee held on Monday 3 December 2024.

### **Performance Report Quarter 1 2024/25**

2. The committee was updated on the operational and corporate indicators for quarter two of 2024/25 which shows 62% of the strategic PIs met or exceeded their target level, while 57% of the strategic PIs either maintained or improved when compared to performance last year.

A copy of the report is attached at appendix A.  
The committee **noted** and **commented** on the report.

### **Letters of Appreciation**

3. The committee considered letters of appreciation that had been submitted to the service. In total 8 letters had been received for the quarter two period.

The committee **noted** the report.

## **National Performance Presentation**

4. The committee received a benchmarking presentation on the National incident types for the year ending June 2024. FRSs attended 594,384 incidents in the 12 month period which is a 4.5% decrease from the previous year. Of these incidents 129,541 were fires which is a 26% decrease compared with the previous year.

The committee **noted** the report.

## **PART B**

### **Formal Complaints**

5. A total of 6 formal complaints had been received by the service in the Q2 2024/25 reporting period. None of these complaints had been upheld and no complaints had been forwarded to the Local Government Ombudsman.

The committee **noted** the report.

### **Recommendation**

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



## **Safest People, Safest Places**

## **Performance Committee**

**10 December 2024**

## **Performance Report – Quarter Two 2024/25**

### **Report of Deputy Chief Fire Officer**

#### **Purpose of report**

1. This report presents a summary of organisational performance at the end of the second quarter of the 2024/25 financial year.

#### **Background**

2. Both operational and corporate performance is monitored and managed internally via the monthly Performance Board and Service Leadership Team (SLT) forums. Members of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) consider performance on a quarterly basis at meetings of the Performance Committee and the full CFA.
3. A comprehensive suite of performance indicators (PIs) is employed to measure both operational and corporate performance. Targets are set on an annual basis against SMART criteria and take account of longer-term trends and the potential for spikes in performance.
4. This robust approach to performance management enables action to be taken at an early stage if performance is not meeting expectations and provides assurance that resources are being directed towards the areas of greatest risk.
5. In addition to setting a target level for relevant PIs, the Service also employs a system of tolerance limit triggers that allow under or over performance to be highlighted to the Performance Board when the PI goes beyond set tolerances, which vary depending on the indicator. Each PI has a total of four tolerance limit triggers, two each for both under and over performance.
6. Performance is presented from two perspectives, by comparison against the annual target levels, and by comparison with performance at the same point last year.

## Overview of performance across all indicator categories

7. An overview across both operational and corporate key PIs at the end of quarter two for 2024/25 shows 62% of the strategic PIs met or exceeded their target level, while 57% of the strategic PIs either maintained or improved when compared to performance last year.
8. The following sections of the report present details of specific operational and corporate indicators. An explanatory narrative is provided for each PI group along with information about how performance compares to the annual target and the previous year.

## Prevention

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q2 2024/25 Actual	Q2 Target	Actual vs Target	Q2 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 01 – Deaths Arising from Accidental Fires in Dwellings	Down	2	0	n/a	2	0%
PI 03 – Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires	Down	88	108	18.5%	103	14.6%
PI 04 – Injuries Arising from Accidental Dwelling Fires	Down	10	7	-42.9%	6	-66.7%
PI 05 – Total Secondary Fires	Down	1,308	1,708	23.4%	1,415	7.6%
PI 07 – Number of Home Fire Safety Visits	Up	9,039	9,000	0.4%	9,375	-3.6%
PI 42 – Proportion of Home Fire Safety Visits to High-Risk People/Properties	Up	98.6%	80%	23.3%	99%	-0.4%

**PI01** – There have been no deaths arising from accidental fires in quarter two. Meaning current performance remains at two for the year to date.

**PI03** – There has been 88 accidental dwelling fires (ADFs) which is 20 under the target of 108. Kitchen fires continue to be an area of focus for our targeted Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSVs) with 51% of all incidents recorded as starting in this room. Lone occupiers and lone parent account for 45% of all incidents.

The service continues to engage with partners delivering ‘Eyes Wide Open’ training to their staff. Engagement has been very positive with the Hospital Discharge Teams with the expectation of referrals of vulnerable residents as they are returned to their homes following a stay in hospital.

See Appendix A, chart 1 for number of ADFs by room of origin and chart 2 for number of ADFs by occupier type.

**PI04** – The service responded to four significant accidental dwelling fires that resulted in injuries, requiring hospitalisation, one in July, followed by one in August and two in September.

July saw a fire in Darlington involving a 46-year-old male who sustained smoke inhalation injuries. The fire started on a mattress, suspected to have been ignited by smoking materials. The casualty,

who had recently been released from prison, was transported to the hospital for treatment. Evidence of drug use was discovered at the scene.

In August, a fire in Bishop Auckland resulted in serious injuries to an adult male. The fire began in the kitchen when a chip pan ignited. The casualty attempted to extinguish the fire by placing the pan under running water, causing a deflagration. The flat was heavily smoke-logged, and the casualty, who was under the influence of alcohol, suffered severe smoke inhalation and burns. He was rescued by fire crews and provided oxygen before being hospitalised.

September was marked by two incidents. On the 8th, a fire in Murton led to serious injuries for a 74-year-old female. A fully developed fire in the front sitting room, trapped the occupant, who was rescued near the entrance by fire crews. She suffered from smoke inhalation and foot injuries sustained while attempting to escape and was transported to the hospital. Safeguarding referrals were made, and a follow-up visit was arranged.

The second incident in September occurred on the 30th, in Chilton, where a 70-year-old female experienced breathing difficulties, after a fire in an external out-house spread to her kitchen and adjoining rooms. Fire crews rescued ten cats and sadly found one dog deceased. The property sustained significant fire and water damage, and safeguarding referrals were made for the residents.

**PI05** – The positive performance for this indicator has continued into quarter two with performance at 1,308 incidents which is 23.4% better than the target of 1,415 and improved performance by 7.6% compared to the previous year. This is the lowest number of secondary fires since 2016/17.

Rubbish/ refuse is still the top fuel source with 56% of all secondary fires, with 33% being vegetation related. 93% of all secondary fires were deliberately set. Emergency Response crews and the Community Safety and Arson Reduction Team continue to work with partners to reduce these incidents. During the quarter, Emergency Response crews have delivered 4,297 deliberate fire reduction activities.

Durham and Darlington are part of the Government Anti-Social Behaviour Trailblazer and funding has been received to increase high visibility patrols in hotspot areas. The Service is using this funding for the Targeted Response Vehicle (TRV) to patrol hotspot areas for deliberate secondary fires.

See Appendix A, chart 3 for secondary fires by motive and chart 4 for secondary fires by property type.

**PI07** – At the end of quarter two, 9,039 HFSVs have been delivered which is above the target, although slightly lower than the previous year's performance. This high number of visits is above the fire sector average and should continue to make the residents of County Durham and Darlington safer from fire.

As highlighted in the quarter one report, over 2,000 properties were added to the HFSV targeting list, due to the residents having similar vulnerability factors as recent fire deaths. 1,200 of these properties have been visited with the expectation to complete the list in quarter three.

The service is currently working with Durham County Council to enhance the targeting methodology with additional data sets.

**PI42** – This indicator is currently performing at 98.6% which is well above the Community Risk Management Plan target of 80%. The ‘Eyes Wide Open’ programme and national risk methodology will support us to continue targeting the most vulnerable in our communities.

## Protection

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q2 2024/25 Actual	Q2 Target	Actual vs Target	Q2 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 10a – Primary Fires in Non-Domestic Premises	Down	63	55	-14.5%	59	-6.8%
PI 14 – False Alarms Caused by Automatic Fire Detection Equipment	Down	335	381	12.1%	417	19.7%
PI 17 – Number of Fire Safety Audits	Up	934	1,014	-7.9%	854	9.4%

**PI10a** – At the end of quarter two there has been 63 incidents, which is eight over the target of 55 and 4 more compared to the performance in the previous year. This performance has been influenced by 14 fires in prisons, 11 of which were in quarter one. The Service do not have legislative responsibility for fire safety in prisons although we continue to work with these establishments with the aim to reduce fires in these premises. Positively only three prison fires in quarter two compares positively with the nine prison fire in quarter two in the previous year.

The other incidents were in a variety of premises types including nine incidents in retail premises and eight in permanent agriculture premises. The Business Fire Safety Team conduct post fire reviews of incidents in premises enforced under the Fire Safety Order by the Service and combined with our high levels of fire safety audits aims to improve the performance of this indicator.

**PI14** – The positive direction of travel has continued for this indicator, with 335 incidents which is 12.1% under the target of 381. This is also 19.7% improved performance compared to the same period in the previous year. 65.3% of all incidents are in four premises types, namely education (25.2%), residential homes (17.2%), retail (11.6%) and industrial manufacturing (11.3%). 53.4% of all incidents were linked to system faults and 25.2% were caused by human intervention.

The new approach to mobilisations from automatic fire alarms is having a positive effect on mobilisations with 569 calls to Fire Control for automatic fire alarms not attended by the Service.

**PI17** – Performance of this indicator is slightly under target with 934 completed audits against a target of 1014, although performance is 9.4% better than the same period in the previous year. There has been continued high performance by the Emergency Response crews, although as the central team have been slightly under their full establishment during the year, there is slight under performance against target. Recruitment and short-term secondments are planned during quarter three which should see the indicator back on track.

Positively 44.7% of audits have been unsatisfactory showing that the updated Risk Based Inspection Programme is targeting the correct premises and making a real difference to improving fire safety across County Durham and the Borough of Darlington.

## Response

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q2 2024/25 Actual	Q2 Target	Actual vs Target	Q2 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
Total Emergency Calls Received	N/A	7,939	N/A	N/A	8,890	10.7%
Total Incidents	N/A	3,678	N/A	N/A	3,987	7.8%
Total Road Traffic Collisions	N/A	162	N/A	N/A	171	5.3%
PI 02 – Total Primary Fires	Down	556	523	-6.3%	531	-4.7%
PI 06a – Dwelling Fires Attended within 8 Minutes	Up	61.3%	70%	-14.6%	65.31%	-8.5%
PI 06b – Non-Domestic Fires Attended within 9 Minutes	Up	62.2%	70%	7.1%	72.41%	-8.5%
PI 06c – Road Traffic Collisions Attended within 10 Minutes	Up	74.7%	70%	6%	72.89%	1.8%
PI 16a Availability of on call appliances - 1st pump	Up	71.3%	75%	-4.9%	66.7%	6.9%

See Appendix A, chart 5 for total incidents.

**PI02** – There have been 556 primary fires which is 6.3% over the target of 523, and 4.7% more incidents compared to the previous year's performance.

57% of all primary fires are set deliberately and the Service continue to work with Firestoppers to raise awareness and try and gather intelligence on the perpetrators. As many of these incidents are linked to crime, work continues through the multi-agency Arson Suppression Group to identify ways to reduce deliberate fire incidents. There are currently two live Police Operations linked to OCGs (Organised Crime Groups) who use fire as a weapon to target others. The Service is linked and actively working with police to mitigate the risks and reduce the associated incidents.

50% (278) of primary fires are vehicle fires with the majority (69.3%) of these vehicle fires being set deliberately. Peterlee station area continues to be the highest across the Service area for vehicle fires. This type of incident is difficult to prevent, though the Community Safety and Arson Reduction Team continue to work with Police colleagues to target offenders. A new Arson Reduction and Safety Campaigns Manager, and Young Person Education Coordinator started in quarter two and will be able to provide more focus on deliberate primary fires.

See Appendix A, chart 6 for primary fires by motive and chart 7 for primary fires by type.

## **PI06a, PI06b and PI06c**

At the end of quarter two, only one out of the three response standards have achieved their 70% performance target.

PI06a – Response time performance when attending ADF's within 8 minutes on 70% of occasions is 61.3%. This has reduced from 70% at the end of quarter one.

PI06b – Response time performance when attending non-domestic fires within 9 minutes on 70% of occasions is 62.2%. This has increased from 55.6% at the end of quarter one.

PI06c – Response time performance when attending road traffic collisions within 10 minutes on 70% of occasions is 74.7. This has reduced slightly from 76% at the end of quarter one.

Each failure for any response standard is individually reviewed and analysis shows that extended travel distances are the main reasons for failing response times. Divisional Managers continue to work with Watch Managers through the monthly performance reporting process to scrutinise and improve performance.

**PI16a** – Performance at the end of quarter two was 71.3% against its target of 75%. This has deliberately been set as a challenging target by the service, with 75% not being achieved for over four years, with the aim to motivate staff and the RDS Liaison roles to increase performance. This performance is 6.9% improved compared to the same period last year, when availability was only 66.7%.

At the end of quarter two, RDS 'true availability' (RDS staff only) was 68.3%. The proactive utilisation of day duty, FDOs and surplus operational personnel including the use of the TRV and SRU has increased availability by an additional 3%, to its 71.3% performance. Notable availability of RDS staff only is 97.3% at Middleton in Teesdale, 89.1% at Stanhope, 78.7% at Crook and 78.5% at Wheatley Hill.



## Health and Safety

Performance Indicator	Objective	Q2 2024/25 Actual	Q2 Target	Actual vs Target	Q2 2023/24 Actual	Actual vs Previous Year
PI 69 – Number of Accidents to Personnel	Down	7	4	-75%	2	-250%
PI 72 – Number of Vehicle Accidents classified as CDDFRS Driver's fault	Down	5	10	50%	12	58.3%

**PI69** – At the end of quarter two, there were seven accidents which is three over the target of four and five more than the same period in the previous year.

There were three minor accidents in August with two occurring on station and one at an incident. During September a laceration occurred to a hand whilst conducting a hydrant inspection with the lack of PPE being the main factor. This incident was reportable under RIDDOR due to an over 7-day absence. All accidents have been investigated to identify any learning points.

**PI72** – Following no at fault vehicle accidents in quarter one, there were five in quarter two. Performance of the indicator remains strong, 50% under the target and 58.3% better than the same period in the previous year.

In July there were three accidents during slow speed manoeuvres that resulted in minor damage to appliances – one at an incident and the other two during routine duties. In August a TRV was reversed into a station canopy whilst being repositioned resulting in minor damage to the rear light cluster. In September minor damage was caused to an appliance during a slow speed manoeuvre whilst being repositioned at an incident. All accidents have been investigated with the key learning being the improved use of banks persons.

## Recommendations

9. Members are requested to:
  - a. **Note** the content of the report;
  - b. **Comment** on the reported performance.

Keith Carruthers, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Ext. 5564

## Appendix A

Chart 1 - Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires by Room of Origin

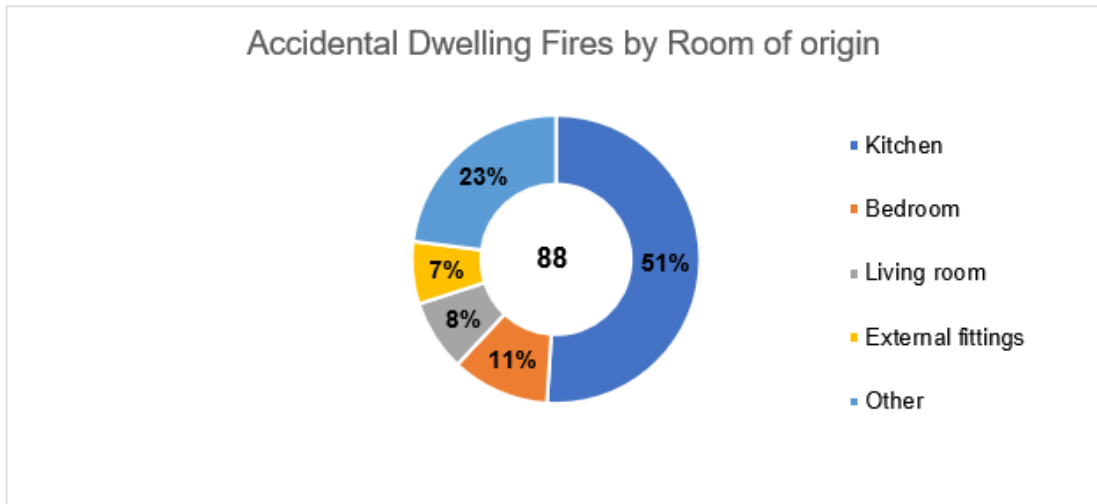


Chart 2 - Number of Accidental Dwelling Fires by Occupier Type

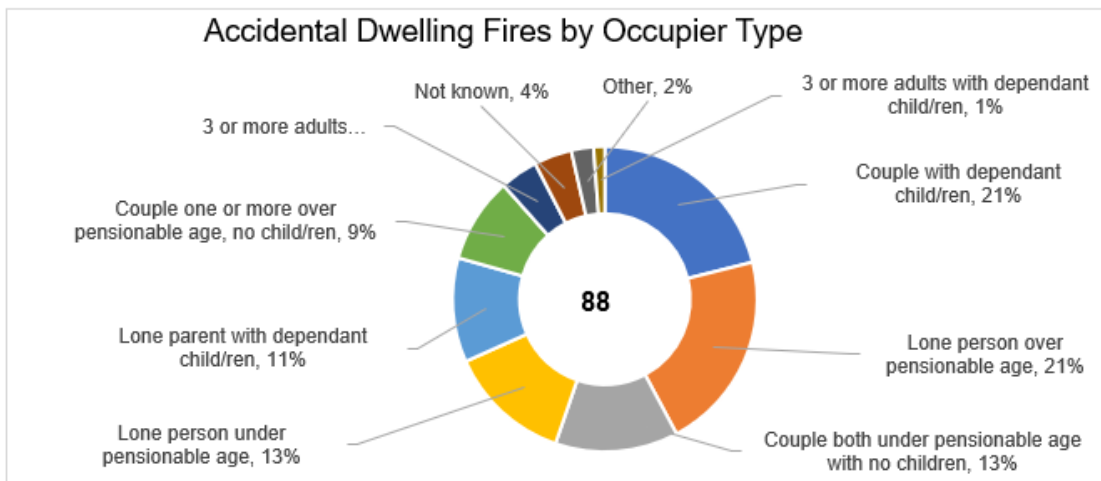


Chart 3 – Secondary Fires by Motive

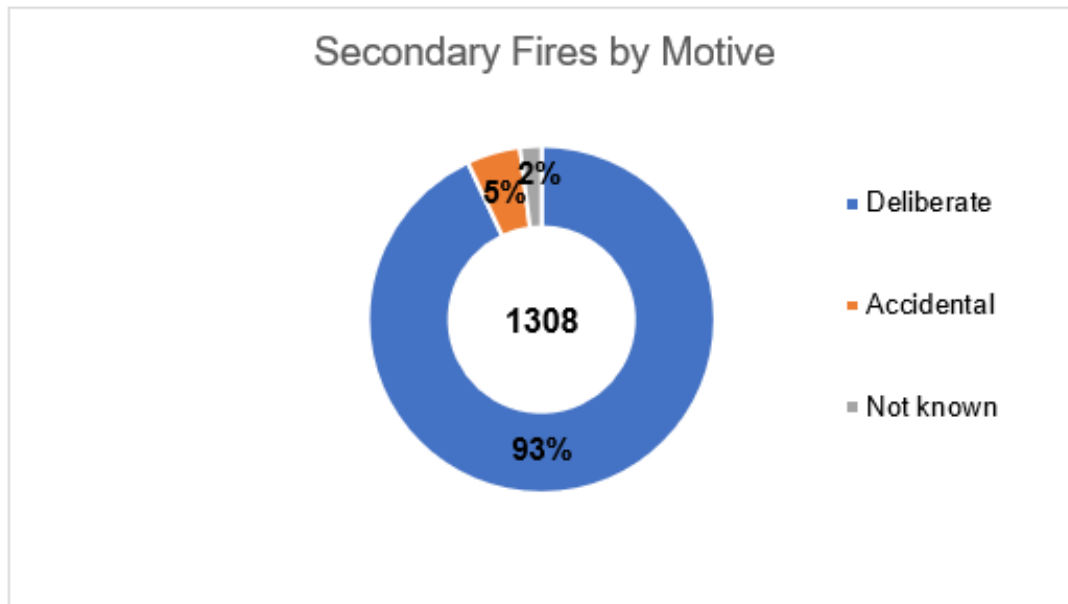


Chart 4 – Secondary Fires by Property Type

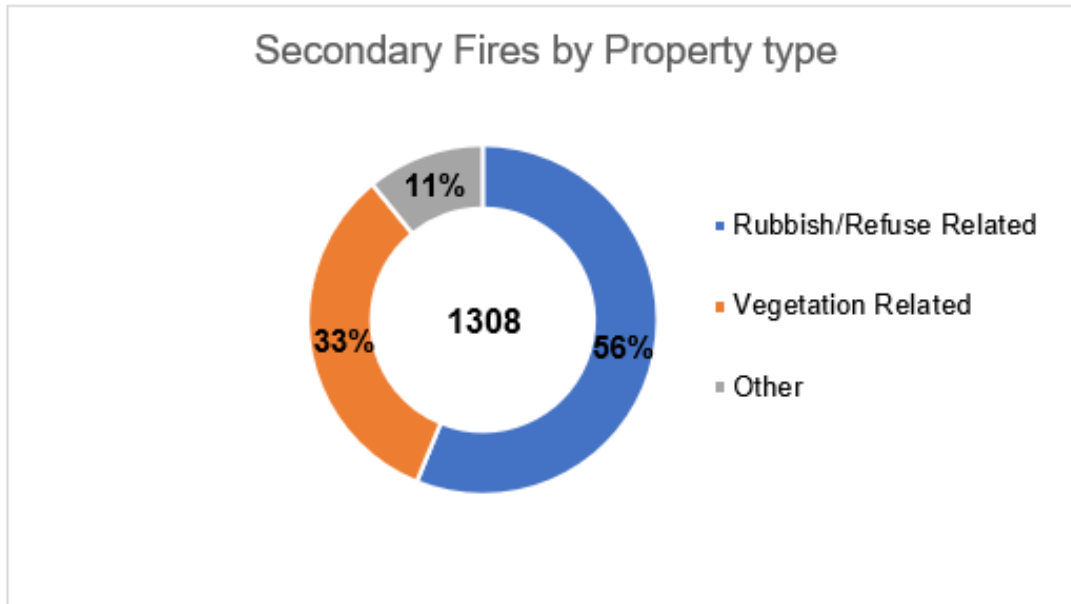


Chart 5 - Total Incidents

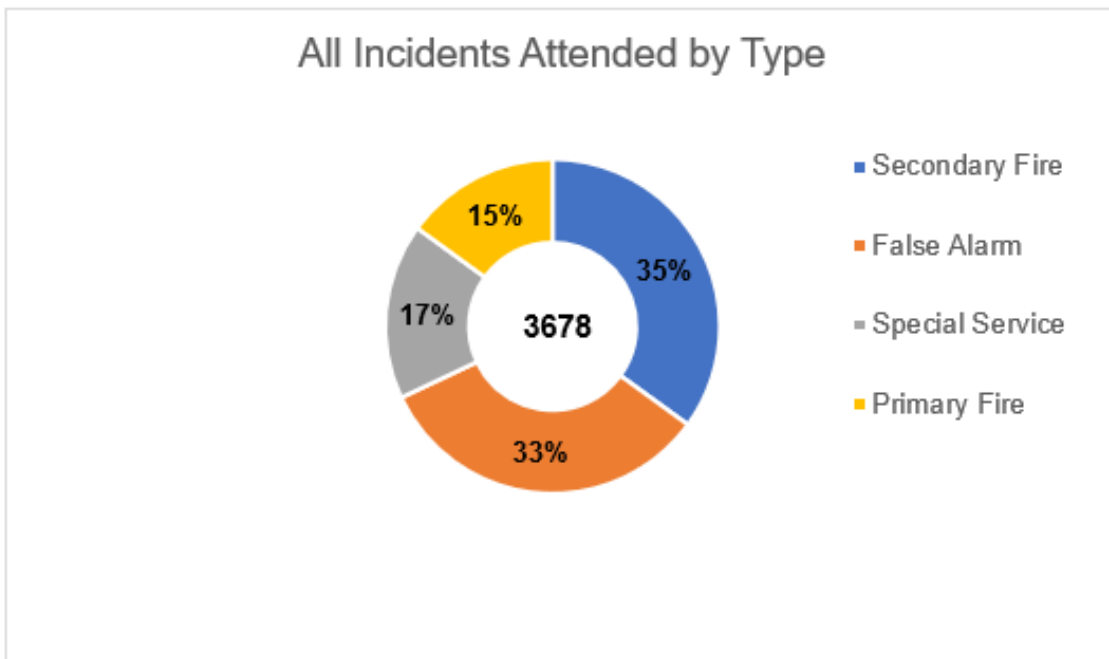


Chart 6 - Primary Fires by Motive

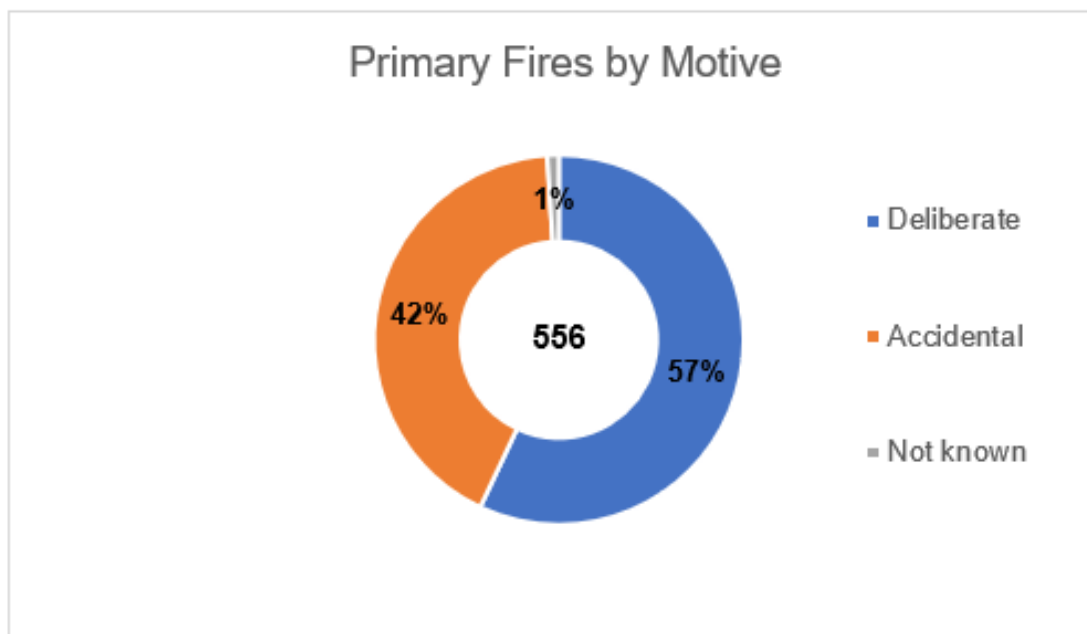
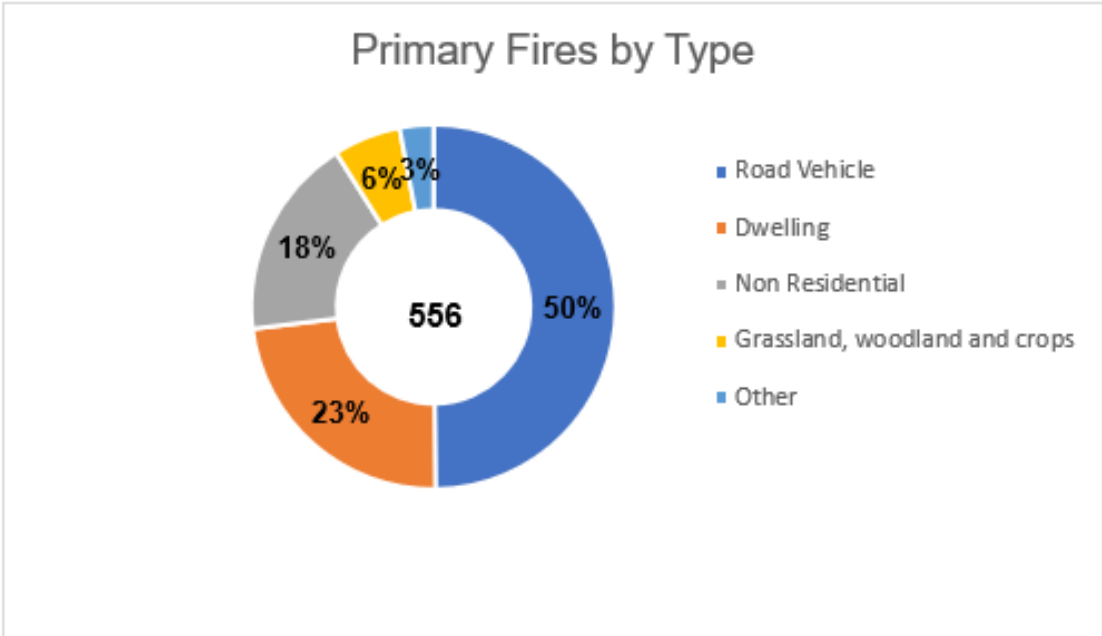


Chart 7 – Primary Fires by Type



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County Durham and Darlington  
**Fire and Rescue Authority**



## **Safest People, Safest Places**

### **Combined Fire Authority**

**20 January 2025**

### **Bonfire Campaign Evaluation 2024**

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## **Report of the Director of Community Risk Management**

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to evaluate the 2024 Bonfire Campaign and provide an overview of the activities conducted by the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS).

### **Background**

2. The original version of the Joint Bonfire Delivery Plan was developed in 2021 to establish a formal process for the Emergency Response, Community Safety and Arson Reduction Team, Communications Team, and key partners. The plan outlines specific activities, designated outcomes, and target dates for task completion and data returns.
3. It is reviewed annually and circulated both internally and externally for consultation. Feedback is sought from end users based on their experiences with the previous year's plan, enabling continuous improvement through lessons learned.
4. Much of the original plan remains valid and effective, with minor adjustments made to enhance interoperability among diverse partners. These partners include Housing Associations, Schools, Trading Standards, Environmental Service teams from Durham County Council (DCC) and Darlington Borough Council (DBC), as well as Durham University.
5. A key benefit of collaboration is the ability to amplify bonfire safety messages within the wider community, including targeted groups such as young people and families. This collaboration emphasises the advantages of attending

organised displays and raises awareness about the potential dangers of bonfires.

## **Scope**

6. This evaluation report will only cover activities conducted as a result of the Joint Bonfire Strategy 2024 which is live from the 24<sup>th</sup> of October until the 7<sup>th</sup> November.

## **Bonfire Strategy Actions Delivered**

7. As part of the preparations for the bonfire period, police 999 operators were based in the CDDFRS Control Room to enhance coordination between Durham Constabulary and CDDFRS during the bonfire period.
8. The Emergency Response crews conducted:
  - 151 Environmental Visual Audits (EVA). EVAs are targeted patrols in 'high likelihood' areas, where there is fuel in this area which could be used to build an illegal bonfire, it is reported to the local authority and it is removed that day.
  - 215 Blue Route Patrols (BRP). BRPs are high visibility patrols in areas where we have experienced nuisance fires in the past, these patrols are undertaken on the days and times where we have experienced the previous fires and the presence of the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) vehicles is intended to be a visual deterrent to prospective fire setters.
  - 24 school educational sessions aimed at educating young people on the dangers of fireworks and deliberate fires.
9. Our social media campaign is divided between the formal media provision by the Communications Team and Emergency Response crews who disseminate social media content on platforms such as TikTok.
10. On Instagram, the Fireworks Safety Video received 51 likes and 1,101 views, with a total watch time of 1 hour, 41 minutes, and 45 seconds. The Sparkler Safety Video performed slightly better in views, accumulating 2,106 views and 49 likes, with a significantly higher total watch time of 4 hours, 24 minutes, and 31 seconds.
11. On Facebook, the Fireworks Safety Video achieved 71 likes, three comments, and eight shares, with 6,123 total views and approximately 8 hours of watch time. The Sparkler Safety Video outperformed it with 154 likes, 12 comments, and 24 shares, 10,902 views and around 25 hours of watch time. Additionally, the Firefighter Attacks Warning Release post, accompanied by a photo, reached 4,806 people, generating 58 likes and 11 shares. The Bonfire Night Attacks Post-Event Release, featuring an image of a damaged fire engine, was



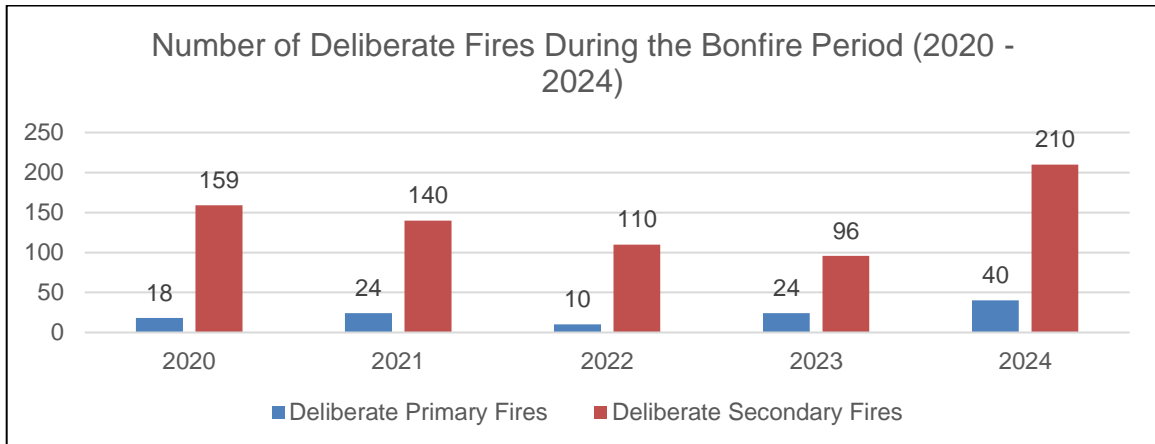
the most impactful post, reaching 46,126 people and generating 1,238 likes, 339 comments, and 208 shares.

12. On TikTok, the Fireworks Safety Video accumulated 2,895 views, 156 likes, six shares, and 12 saves, with a total play time of 5 hours and 52 minutes, while bringing in four new followers. The Sparkler Safety Video was a standout success, amassing 194,000 views, 8,640 likes, 230 comments, 493 shares, and 572 saves, with an impressive total play time of 904 hours and 12 minutes, leading to 378 new followers. Lastly, the Firefighters Attacked Post-Event Message achieved 13,000 views, 339 likes, 27 comments, 20 shares, and 34 saves, with a total play time of 27 hours and 58 minutes, resulting in six new followers.

### **The Bonfire Period 2024**

13. In the run-up to and during the Bonfire Period in 2024, weather conditions were predominantly dry, contributing to an increased fire risk. October experienced only 7 days of significant rainfall, delivering an average of 1.8cm of rain across County Durham and the Borough of Darlington.
14. In contrast, the same period in 2023 saw 21 days of significant rainfall during October, with an average of 6cm of rain. This wetter weather in 2023 ensured that much of the accessible flammable material was damp, reducing the potential for fires.
15. As November 2024 began, temperatures remained mild, ranging from 14°C to 11°C, accompanied by minimal rainfall. The first week of November saw just 0.6cm of rain on average, leaving flammable materials dry and more readily available for ignition. By comparison, the first week of November in 2023 experienced 5.5cm of rainfall, alongside high winds and lower temperatures, which further reduced fire risks.
16. This year we recorded:
  - 40 deliberate primary fires which is an increase from the previous year and the highest number in the last 5 years (Table. 1).
  - 210 deliberate secondary fires which is an increase from the previous year and the highest number in the last 5 years (Table. 1).
  - 9 violence at work incidents against operational crews whilst responding to incidents which is an increase from the previous year and the highest number in the last 5 years (Table. 2).

Table. 1 – Number of primary fires and secondary fires during the bonfire period (24<sup>th</sup> October – 7<sup>th</sup> November) for the previous 5 years.

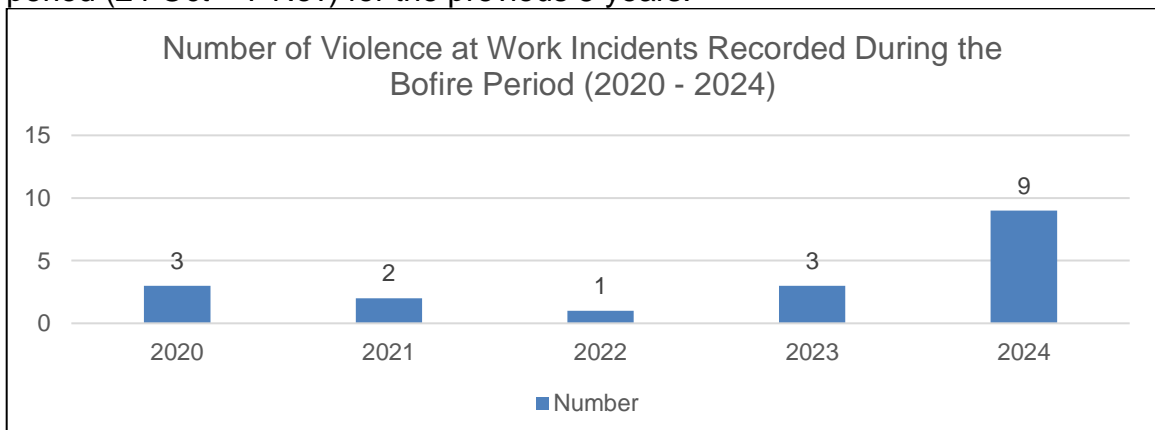


17. Whilst the increase in fire incidents over the bonfire period and on bonfire night, the environmental conditions mentioned earlier would have invariably played a significant role in this. Also, whilst there were several organised bonfire displays in 2024 which proceeded without issues, feedback indicated a lack of formally organised events in the East area of County Durham.

18. Unfortunately, there were 9 instances of violence against CDDFRS staff during the bonfire period in 2024, this is a significant increase from previous years (Table. 2). In all cases, projectiles (primarily fireworks) were thrown at operational crews. Although no injuries to staff were reported, fire service vehicles sustained significant damage, including a smashed windscreen and a smashed side window rendering them temporarily out of service.

19. All incidents were reported to the police for action. Where available body worn camera and CCTV footage was utilised and passed to the Police to assist with investigations. This highlights the reasoning for the services approach to increasing body worn camera usage for staff safety and to assist with potential prosecutions where attacks on emergency workers occur.

Table. 2 – Amount of violence at work in incidents reported during the Bonfire period (24 Oct – 7 Nov) for the previous 5 years.



## **Bonfire Strategy 2024 evaluation and learning**

20. Evaluation is a fundamental component of any learning organisation, as it allows for reflection, assessment, and growth. By regularly analysing outcomes, processes, and feedback, CDDFRS can identify areas for improvement and implement changes to drive effectiveness.
21. To promote continuous improvement, a meeting was held with partners to discuss enhancements for the 2025 strategy. It was agreed that the Bonfire Strategy will be shared with partners at the earliest opportunity, ideally at the beginning of September 2025, to ensure sufficient preparation time.
22. To further support improvement, evaluation forms were completed by crews, and individual watch visits were conducted. These evaluations revealed that school presentations require refinement to better engage audiences and address technical challenges. IT issues, such as difficulties in sharing large PowerPoint presentations and playing videos, were barriers to effective delivery.
23. Feedback from schools, however, was overwhelmingly positive, with school teachers noting that the content was both age-appropriate and engaging. While schools found the material suitable, CDDFRS crews expressed the need to tailor presentations more specifically to different audiences and improve technical reliability to ensure seamless delivery. Addressing these issues will further enhance the educational impact and strengthen partnerships moving forward.
24. Having police 999 operators based in the CDDFRS Control Room to enhance coordination between Durham Constabulary and CDDFRS was described as highly effective and received very positive feedback from all involved.
25. By embracing evaluation and actively addressing this feedback for the Bonfire Strategy 2024, CDDFRS continues to demonstrate its commitment to learning, adapting, and improving for the benefit of its teams, partners, and communities.

## **Summary**

26. This report summarises the 2024 Bonfire Strategy, which aims to prepare for and reduce the number and impact of illegal bonfires, injuries, and fire-related incidents during the bonfire period.
27. To manage the anticipated increased demand, TRV were strategically deployed to tackle secondary fires, ensuring frontline fire appliances remained available for life-risk incidents.
28. Emergency Response crews carried out 151 EVAs to remove flammable materials, 215 Blue Route Patrols to deter nuisance fires, and 24 school sessions to educate young people on firework safety.

29. A proactive social media campaign reinforced safety messaging, with TikTok proving most effective. The Sparkler Safety Video reached 194,000 views and 572 saves, while Facebook and Instagram content also generated significant engagement, raising awareness around fire safety and firefighter protection.
30. Dry weather conditions contributed to an increase in deliberate secondary fires and deliberate primary fires when compared to previous years. While organised events proceeded without issue, feedback highlighted a lack of formal displays in East County Durham.
31. Additionally, 9 incidents of violence were reported against crews, primarily involving fireworks thrown at staff, causing significant vehicle damage but no injuries.
32. Evaluation is a key part of CDDFRS's commitment to continuous improvement. It has been identified that there is a need to share the 2025 Bonfire Strategy earlier, refine school presentations, resolve IT challenges and tailor presentations further.
33. By addressing these areas, CDDFRS aims to enhance educational impact, strengthen partnerships, and demonstrate its dedication to learning and improvement.

## **Recommendations**

Members are requested to:

- **Note** the contents of the report.

**Ben Cairns, Director of Community Risk Management**

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



## **Safest People, Safest Places**

### **Combined Fire Authority**

**20 January 2025**

### **Integrated Fire Control Collaboration (IFCC) Update Report**

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#### **Report of Director Emergency Response**

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#### **Purpose of this Report**

1. To provide members with an update on progress with the implementation of the new hosted control room system which is being procured jointly between County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS), Hereford and Worcester FRS (HWFRS), Shropshire FRS (SFRS) and Cleveland Fire Brigade (CFB).

#### **Background**

2. In anticipation of the contractual agreement for the previous control system expiring on 31 December 2023, the Service engaged an independent consultancy to undertake market appraisal of Emergency Mobilising Control System (EMCS) system suppliers and to prepare theoretical costings to demonstrate potential savings that could be achieved through working in collaboration. This work was engaged in collaboration with Cleveland Fire Brigade.
3. The market appraisal indicated that future costing models for the supply and maintenance of similar systems had significantly increased since the current system was procured in 2013, potentially making it prohibitively expensive for individual services to procure.
4. Throughout 2022, the Service engaged with various other FRSs from across the sector who were preparing to procure a new control room solution.
5. During this process, similar requirements were identified in collaboration with Cleveland Fire Brigade, Hereford and Worcester, and Shropshire FRSs. These mutual requirements were subsequently put out for competitive tender on 19 January 2023.
6. Two tenders were submitted and evaluated by a panel comprising representatives from each service involved in the process. The most economically advantageous

tender was submitted by Motorola Solutions Inc, costing the consortium £7.559M over three years, which equated to approximately £5M less than the nearest competitor over the same period of time.

7. The contract was subsequently extended to seven years during contract negotiations leading to expected savings to the Authority of circa £1.9m.

### **Progress to date**

8. A seven year collaboration agreement between the four FRSs making up the consortium was signed on 13 December 2023 followed by the initial IFCC contract for the new solution being signed on the 14 December 2023.
9. A Strategic Command and Control Project Board consisting of a strategic lead from each Service within the consortium was established to ensure full oversight of the project plan is maintained and a technically focused project team created to oversee the day to day running of the project itself.
10. A series of workshops and administrator training sessions have been conducted to determine common configuration of the system for all users within the consortium, this is key to the success of the collaboration.
11. A decision has also been reached on the sharing of Airwave Dispatch Communication Server (DCS) ports between the four FRSs with the consortium now in the process of completing the necessary Change Control Note (CCN) documents with Airwave.
12. Work has been undertaken on the harmonisation of a range of datasets including Station identifiers, Appliance Callsigns and Status Messages so that each FRS's resources and messages can be clearly identified in a shared system.

### **Key Points to Note**

13. To ensure the supplier delivery is consistent and to a high level, all milestone payments are withheld until such time that the agreed work has been completed and the Strategic Command and Control Project Board agree to the payment being made.
14. The first payment, due on Contract signature, was made with two further project implementation payments due on completion of delivery of the Staging Platform estimated to be 17 June 2025 and on the estimated go live date circa 4 March 2026.

### **Additional Benefits**

15. There are several additional benefits of the collaborative approach and the use of advanced communication and mobilising systems including an increase in operational resilience by enabling control rooms to handle each other's calls during spate conditions or business interruptions.

16. The use of cloud-based technology will also free up real estate as well as providing improved cyber security whilst reducing carbon footprint at the same time.

**Recommendations**

17. Members are requested to:

**Note** the content of the report.

**Rob Cherrie, Director Emergency Response**

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County Durham and Darlington  
Fire and Rescue Service



**Safest People, Safest Places**

**Combined Fire Authority**

**20 January 2025**

**Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Update Report**

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**Report of the Director of Emergency Response**

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### **Purpose of this Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an overview of the purpose of Local Resilience Forums (LRF), and in particular the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum (CDDLRF), which is hosted by the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS).
2. The report also outlines the structure and roles within CDDLRF, including key personnel, responsibilities and meetings that take place as well as highlighting CDDFRS relationship with CDDLRF and their involvement in training, exercises, and community resilience efforts.

### **Background**

3. Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA), local responders have a legal responsibility to cooperate with one another. Whilst the LRF is not a statutory body, within the CCA, (Contingency Planning) Regulations 2005 and accompanying statutory guidance entitled "Preparing for Emergencies", it is seen as the principal mechanism for facilitating multi-agency cooperation, especially between Category 1 and Category 2 Responders.
4. Cabinet Office guidance stipulates that all Category 1 responders must attend meetings of the LRF Strategic Board and Category 2 responders have a right to invite and to attend.

### **Purpose of the LRF**

5. The purpose of all LRFs is to ensure effective delivery of those duties under within the CCA that need to be developed in a multi-agency environment and individually as a Category 1 or Category 2 responder.

6. The LRF's purpose is to plan for and respond to incidents requiring a multi-agency response, ensuring preparedness and effective emergency response for the communities the particular LRF is responsible for.
7. In particular the national LRF process should deliver:
  - a compilation of agreed risk profiles for their area, through a Community Risk Register (CRR)
  - a systematic, planned and coordinated approach to encourage Category 1 responders, according to their functions, to address all aspects of policy in relation to:
    - risk
    - planning for emergencies
    - planning for business continuity management
    - publishing information about risk assessments and plans
    - arrangements to warn and inform the public
    - other aspects of civil protection duty, including the promotion of business continuity management by local authorities
  - support for the preparation by all or some of its members of multi-agency plans and other documents, including protocols and agreements
  - coordination of multi-agency exercises and other training events

## **CDDLRF**

8. CDDLRF was formed in 2004 and is part of a wider UK network supporting resilience activities. The secretariat team operating from CDDFRS HQ consists of five members of staff.
9. CDDLRF supports the local communities of County Durham and Darlington to plan for and respond to any incidents that would require a multi-agency (two or more responder agencies e.g. fire, police, and local authority) response. This includes training and exercising for the agencies within the forum.
10. The overall purpose is to ensure that there is an appropriate level of preparedness, within available resources, to enable an effective multi-agency response to emergencies which may have a significant impact on the communities of County Durham and Darlington.
11. Funding of CDDLRF is made up of core Central Government funding and contributions from six Category 1 responders as set out in the table below:

Organisation	Total contribution per annum
Durham Constabulary	£6,812
CDD FRS	£6,812
NEAS	£3,906
Integrated Care Board	£3,746
Durham County Council	£7,812
Darlington Borough Council	£6,812
<b>Total</b>	<b>£35,900</b>

12. On 21 December 2021, the LRF Chairs received verbal confirmation that the Secretary of State had agreed to provide funding for three years (from April 2022 - 2025) set at £186,851 per annum on a pilot basis.
13. Given this funding is to support LRFs to transition into a state capable of dealing with greater roles and responsibilities over the next few years the funding is now known as 'core funding'.
14. LRFs were expressly informed that this core funding should not replace or displace contributions from LRF partners, but rather it is in addition to the contributions already made.
15. The CDDLRF team work to an annual work programme overseen by the Tactical Business Group (TBG) including areas such as horizon scanning, strategic risk analysis, financial planning, coordinating and evaluating training and exercises.
16. Since 2019 the work undertaken by CDDLRF has been unprecedented in terms of responding to national events, pandemics and emergencies such as Brexit and Covid-19 with the multi-agency response for both based at CDDFRS Headquarters (HQ) for the duration. More recently Storm Arwen and Storm Babet both saw an influx in the number of community groups requesting assistance in the preparation of community emergency plans (CEPs).
17. CDDLRF, Community Resilience and Risk Officer based at CDDFRS HQ works closely with the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) to assist community groups across County Durham & Darlington in preparing for such emergencies and boosting community resilience.
18. CDDLRF are also responsible for producing the Community Risk Register (CRR) which is a multi-agency publication highlighting risks across County Durham and Darlington that have the highest likelihood and potential to have significant impact, causing disruption to the communities. The CRR is derived from both the National Risk Register (NRR) and the National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA) although with the cognisance that not all national risks are relevant to our locality.

19. CDDLRF utilise CDDFRS staff in the documents development and overarching communications plans that aim to draw together the CRR, the work of the Community Resilience and Warning and Informing Groups. This joint working ensures that information regarding emergency preparedness is targeted towards key audiences, is relevant and consistent and that all partners are working collaboratively and effectively. As a result of this work CEPs are now available to operational fire crews.
20. The CEPs are stored on the secure government platform, Resilience Direct (RD) and are uploaded onto Mobile Data Terminals (MDT's) on all front line fire appliances. This ensures that when crews are responding to community emergencies, such as severe weather incidents they are aware of key community venues, community emergency coordinators and have access to valuable local intelligence that can assist with their emergency response, an recent example of which was severe flooding in the Lanchester area of Durham.
21. During the Flooding in Lanchester on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the Service responded to a challenging situation involving stranded, vulnerable residents as well as a number of businesses whose premises were affected by the floodwater. The crews and officers on scene worked in collaboration with the Lanchester Community Resilience Group who had activated the Lanchester CEP to identify the most vulnerable residents, source locations for them to relocate to and receive the care and support they needed.
22. Thanks to this well-organised community initiative, residents were able to find safety and comfort during a challenging situation, highlighting the importance of preparedness and collaboration in times of crisis.

### **CDDFRS relationship with the LRF**

23. CDDFRS are the custodians of the general LRF fund and senior officers chair both the strategic and tactical boards within CDDLRF.
24. The Strategic Board which is a multi-agency group responsible for setting the strategic direction for CDDLRF is chaired by CDDFRS, Chief Fire Officer (CFO) and the Tactical Business Group (TBG) which has responsibility for implementing the strategic direction set by the Strategic Board and is made up of wider stakeholders from across Category 1 and 2 responders is chaired by CDDFRS Director of Emergency Response (DER), *see appendix A*.
25. The CDDLRF secretariat team operating from CDDFRS HQ consists of five members of staff. Roles within the team include the LRF Manager who is directly line managed by CDDFRS DER and oversees officers responsible for Risk, Training and Exercise, Community Resilience and Business Support.
26. CDDFRS directly employ the LRF secretariat team and therefore provide support in such areas as Human Resources (HR), occupational health, payroll and location of work. The fact that the team are located at HQ also means that they work to CDDFRS policy and procedures including the Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) Core Code of Ethics.

27. CDDFRS work really closely with all partners that make up the LRF, but none more so than with the CCU which forms part of Durham County Council (DCC) on both preventative and reactive response for major and multi-agency incidents and exercising. This close relationship ensures that as a Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) we maintain good arrangements to respond to incidents with partners from across the LRF whilst also being able to effectively anticipate and consider any reasonably foreseeable risks and threats we face.
28. The LRF secretariat coordinate the production of multi-agency incident plans including the Multi-agency Major Incident Plan (MAIP) on behalf of CDDLRP partners before being signed off by the TBG and approved by the LRF Board, both of which are chaired by strategic officers in CDDFRS.
29. As part of its incident planning and mitigation process, CDDFRS regularly takes part in multi-agency training events including internal and external debriefs with a view to continually developing its plans for responding to major and multi-agency incidents.
30. In the previous 12 months alone the Service have been involved in a number of strategic level exercises through the LRF. The most recent examples include Exercise Hydrant, which was a multi-agency, large scale major incident, led by CDDFRS, DER in their role as chair of the TBG and Exercise Nutwell with the focus being predominantly on Death Management.
31. Looking forward into 2025, CDDFRS will be heavily involved in Exercise Pegasus, a national Tier 1 Pandemic Preparedness Exercise, organised by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and coordinated through CDDLRP.

## **Meeting Structures**

32. CDDLRPs annual business cycle is based upon three LRF Strategic Board meetings and four TBG meetings held at CDDFRS HQ per year. The aim is that the two main groups precede one another to ensure that a two-way flow of information takes place, with recommendations from the TBG being fed into the Strategic Board.
33. There are also a total of six sub groups of which CDDFRS are involved with that report directly into the TBG which are chaired by tactical leads from several different agencies that make up the CDDLRP:
  - Warning and Informing Group
  - Tactical Exercise Group
  - Risk Assessment
  - Community Resilience
  - Voluntary Emergency Liaison
  - Death Management Group
34. There is also a requirement for various members of CDDLRP to attend the following regional meetings:

- Northeast (NE) LRF Chairs & TBG Chairs
- NE LRF Secretariats
- NE LRF Risk Group Chairs
- NE LRF TEG Chairs
- NE Business Continuity
- NE Death Management Group
- NE Cyber Group

*See appendix A/B for all meeting structures and attendees.*

## **Summary**

35. CDDLRF is funded through contributions from various Category 1 responders including CDDFRS as well as Central Government. The LRF is designed to facilitate multi-agency cooperation in emergency planning and response, as mandated by the CCA 2004.
36. CDDFRS hosts the CDDLRF and plays a significant role in its day to day operations. Senior officers from CDDFRS chair both the strategic and tactical boards within CDDLRF, setting the strategic direction and implementing it through the TBG.
37. CDDLRF secretariat team who are responsible for various functions, including risk management, training, exercises, and community resilience operate from CDDFRS HQ and consists of five members of staff, including roles such as the LRF Manager, who is directly line managed by the DER.
38. CDDFRS collaborates closely with all partners that form the LRF, particularly with the CCU, to ensure effective response to major and multi-agency incidents. This collaboration includes the production of multi-agency incident plans, participation in multi-agency training events, and involvement in strategic level exercises.

## **Recommendations**

39. Members are requested to:

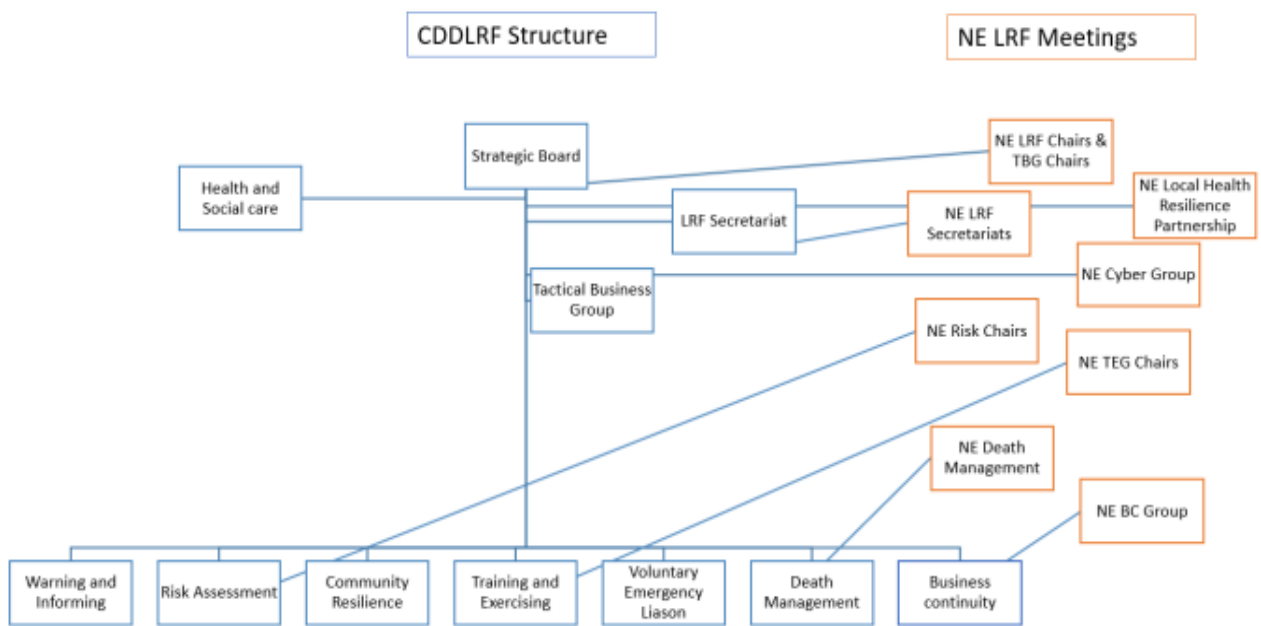
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**Rob Cherrie, Director of Emergency Response**

### CDDLRF Structure – June 2024



### CDDLRF plus Regional Structure – June 2024



**Breakdown of attendees of all CDDLRF Groups**

	Strategic Board	Tactical Business Group	Business Continuity Group	Community Resilience Group	Risk Assessment Working Group	Training and Exercising Group	Warning and Informing Group	Voluntary Emergency Liaison Group	Death Management Group
British Transport Police		X			X				
CDD NHS Foundation Trust		X	X		X	X			X
CDDFRS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Counter Terrorism Police					X				
Darlington Borough Council	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Durham Constabulary	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Durham County Council	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Environment Agency	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
HM Coastguard	X	X	X		X	X			
NEAS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
NHS ICB	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
UKHSA	X	X	X		X	X	X		





County Durham and Darlington  
**Fire and Rescue Authority**

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## **Combined Fire Authority**

**20 January 2025**

### **Police and Crime Commissioner's Request to Join the Combined Fire Authority**

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#### **Report of the Clerk**

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#### **Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) request to join the Combined Fire Authority (the Authority) as a member and to request that members make a decision as to whether the PCC may join the Authority.

#### **Background**

2. Cllr John Shuttleworth, Chair of the Authority, received a letter dated 20 November 2024 from the Durham PCC Joy Allen. The PCC has made a request to join the Authority as a voting member. In addition, a request was made for the Deputy PCC, Graham Hall, to deputise as a non-voting member in the PCC's absence. The PCC's letter is set out at Appendix A.
3. The Authority's governance structure is set out within The Durham Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1996 (the 'Scheme'). This Scheme has been varied recently by Schedule 7 of The Combined Fire and Rescue Authorities (Membership and Allowances) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. These Regulations created a process within the Scheme for PCCs to be appointed to the Authority as members.
4. Only a relevant PCC may be appointed as a member. This is defined in Paragraph 2 of the Scheme as a PCC:
  - a. whose area is the same as or contains all of the Authority's combined area, or
  - b. all or part of whose area falls within the Authority's combined area.

5. Paragraph 12A (1) of the varied Scheme states that a relevant PCC may be appointed as a member of the Authority, Paragraph 12A (2) specifies that the Authority may only make this appointment in response to a request from the PCC.
6. Upon receiving a request from a relevant PCC, the Authority must take three actions as per Paragraph 12A (3) of the Scheme. The Authority must:
  - consider the request,
  - give reasons for its decision to approve or refuse the request, and
  - publish those reasons in such a manner as it feels appropriate.
7. If the PCC's request is approved, the PCC will immediately become a member of the Authority with the ability to attend, speak at, and vote at meetings of the Authority. Paragraph 13A of the Scheme states that the PCC ceases to be a member of the Authority at the end of their term of office or when there is a vacancy in their office. Once a new PCC is elected or re-elected, it would be at their discretion to request to join the Authority as a voting member.
8. Paragraph 12B of the Scheme allows a PCC who is appointed as a member to arrange for a Deputy PCC to attend and speak at a meeting of the Authority on the PCC's behalf. However, this deputy may not vote and may not be treated as a member of the Authority for any purpose. No permission needs to be granted by the Authority to the PCC in relation to this power.
9. Per the operation of Para 11 of the Order, an appointed PCC is in addition to the standard membership and does not count against the maximum number of members which the CFA may have.

## **Recommendations**

10. Members are recommended to:
  - a. Note the request of the PCC to join the Combined Fire Authority,
  - b. Make a determination as to the PCC's request and give reasons for their decision,
  - c. Authorise the publication of those reasons and specify how these reasons should be published.



20<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Dear Cllr Shuttleworth

You will be aware through your discussion with my Deputy that I am keen to further develop the relationship between elected officials and officers of police and fire governance bodies for the benefit of our residents across County Durham and Darlington.

I would like to register my interest in joining the Fire & Rescue Authority as a voting member and for my Deputy PCC- Graham Hall- to deputise in my absence as a non-voting member. I understand that this is permitted in legislation and I am aware of other Police and Crime Commissioners around the country having a 'seat at the table' on the Fire Authority. I am sure you will agree that we hold a unique position in scrutinising/holding to account our respective emergency services to ensure our residents receive the best possible service.

I believe my participation on the Fire & Rescue Authority as Police and Crime Commissioner for County Durham and Darlington will not only add value to closer partnership working between the Fire Service and Durham Constabulary, but will bring additional benefits in areas such as:

- Response to serious and organised crime within the Force area for issues such as arson
- Road casualties and collisions
- Diversity across the emergency services workforce across Durham and Darlington
- Anti-social behaviour

I would appreciate the Fire Authority's consideration of my request and look forward to hearing back from you.

Yours sincerely

Joy Allen  
Police and Crime Commissioner for Durham

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County Durham and Darlington  
**Fire and Rescue Authority**



**Safest People, Safest Places**

**Combined Fire Authority**

**20 January 2025**

**English Devolution White Paper**

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**Report of the Chief Fire Officer**

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### **Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an overview of the elements of the English Devolution White Paper relevant to Fire and Rescue Authorities.

### **Background**

2. On 16 December 2024, the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution Jim McMahon set out details of the government's plan for devolution in a Written Ministerial Statement. Alongside the Statement, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published its Devolution White Paper.
3. In his Statement, the Minister states that "at its core, the White Paper sets out how the government will strengthen and widen the mayoral model of devolution across England.
4. The Government's number one mission stated in the paper "is to relight the fire of our economy and ignite growth in every region."

### **Potential Implications for Fire and Rescue Authorities**

5. The White Paper outlines several key intentions related to fire and rescue authorities in section 3.9 on Public Safety. A summary of these are set out below.

6. Where geographies align with Police and Crime Commissioner and Fire and Rescue Authorities, Mayors will, by default, be responsible for those services.
7. The government state they are committed to increasing the number of Mayors who take on Police and Crime Commissioner and Fire and Rescue Authority responsibilities. Alignment with police and fire services boundaries will therefore be a key consideration in the negotiation of new Strategic Authorities.
8. The possibility of a single Mayor taking on Police and Crime Commissioner and Fire and Rescue Authority responsibilities across two or more Police Force and Fire and Rescue Authorities, where boundaries align, will be explored in time through the English Devolution Bill.
9. The paper highlights that the government will enable police and fire boundaries to be altered incidentally upon the transfer of Police and Crime Commissioner and Fire and Rescue Authority functions to Strategic Authority Mayors, to ensure the continued efficiency and effectiveness of policing and fire functions.
10. The government aims to align public service boundaries over the long term, including job centres, police, probation, fire, health services, Strategic Authorities and Local Authorities.
11. Any changes to public service boundaries will be made in consultation with stakeholders and considering the impact on service delivery. In the meantime, the government will look for practical solutions to allow Mayors to deliver where service boundaries are non-coterminous, considering the benefits on a case-by-case basis.

### **Recommendation**

12. Members are recommended to:
  - a. **Note** the contents of this report.

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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