



Safest People, Safest Places

## **COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY**

**14 JUNE 2019**

### **FIRE CADETS**

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#### **REPORT OF THE MEMBER CHAMPION FOR FIRE CADETS**

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##### **Purpose of the report**

1. To provide Members with an update on progress of the Service's Fire Cadet schemes.

##### **Background**

2. The Authority 'champions' various areas of service delivery through the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) Member Champion roles. These roles provide the opportunity for Members and officers to work closely together to help develop the services provided by better engagement with local communities, staff and other stakeholders. Councillor Linda Marshall was appointed to the role of Fire Cadets Member Champion in 2017.
3. The Service has retained a cohort of young people under the Young Firefighter Association (YFA) for many years at stations across the Service. The aim of these schemes was to develop young people within the local area by enhancing their citizenship skills and improving their employability, with the intention of potentially recruiting the Young Firefighters into the Service in the future.
4. In 2015/16, the Service consulted under its Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) for 2016/17, whether it should invest in extending the YFA schemes. The return on this consultation was 81% in favour that the Service should continue this investment and grow the schemes.
5. On the 1 December 2018, the Service's YFA schemes were rebranded to Fire Cadets, which aligned the schemes to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) workstream under Children and Young People for Fire Cadets.
6. Currently the Service has 133 Fire Cadets in schemes which are hosted at nine fire stations across the Service and 7 junior Fire Cadets under the age of 13 hosted at Wolsingham School.

##### **Centralised governance of Fire Cadets**

7. Previously, each cadets scheme was established and ran with local control by the District Management Team. In September 2018, central governance was established by Community Risk Management for recruitment and retention, safeguarding, data protection, expenditure, purchase of equipment and maintenance of assets held by the Fire Cadet schemes. This allowed for a greater degree of central control and assurance across all cadet schemes, while still allowing flexibility for schemes to be managed and run locally by the station.

8. Adult volunteers who supervise the cadets sign a volunteer's agreement and undergo induction training sessions which includes awareness of Service policies and procedures, data protection and Level 1 Safeguarding training.
9. The parents of all Fire Cadets have completed an emergency contact details form which is held by Control, this allows parents to be contacted immediately should there be an emergency with a cadet.

## **Equipment and Assets**

10. A central store for uniform is now located at Spennymoor Station. Initial issue of uniform and fire kit per fire cadet currently costs £315. This is now managed centrally to allow it to be reused when a cadet grows out of the uniform and enable the central stock of uniform to be reduced.
11. The uniform and fire kit currently issued is being reviewed, for example, the Service is looking to have fire kit leggings reinforced on the hem and knees to extend the operational life of these garments. Also, new gloves are to be sourced that afford a greater degree of grip and protection from water and friction.

## **Learning and development of Fire Cadets**

12. The Service's aim for the cadets is to develop and educate our cohort of young people to be the best they can be and attain their personal goals in preparation for life within the community and the workplace. To that end, the training and development that the cadets are receiving is diverse and challenging to develop their natural resilience and problem-solving skills.
13. Thirty cadets from across the schemes are enrolled in the Duke of Edinburgh Award and are actively working towards their bronze awards. The outdoor expedition is scheduled for September 2019.
14. All cadets have undertaken their Duke of Cornwall Community Safety Award working alongside the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) and the Environment Agency (EA). The cadets participated in an 'Incident Response Day' at the Service Training Centre in partnership with the EA and CCU.
15. The NFCC National Fire Cadet Award Level 1 qualification will be delivered to all cadets from September 2019, this qualification develops core firefighter vocational skills and fire safety skills such as delivering Safe and Wellbeing Visits and Business Fire Safety audits.
16. A formal educational syllabus for our cadets is being developed to include Dementia Friends training, employability skills, first aid, food hygiene and sign language. The Junior Fire Cadets at Wolsingham School have a different school-based syllabus to work towards over 2019/20 which is tailored to their needs and equipment levels.
17. Peterlee Fire Cadets are working in collaboration with Durham Agency Against Crime Police Cadets in a joint arson reduction/ASB project with the aim to produce arson reduction strategies designed by young people, which are aimed at young people.
18. Darlington Fire Cadets are attending the 'Festival of Ingenuity' in Darlington Town Centre to highlight the benefits of becoming a Fire Cadet and the various opportunities and activities that Fire Cadets participate in.

19. The Human-Kind Charity have delivered educational programmes around challenging youth racism to all our cadet schemes to support the Service policy and positive outlook on diversity and the effects of racist behaviours.

## **Conclusion**

20. Following the positive response during the IRMP consultation in 2015/16, the Fire Cadets have grown in numbers and some of our cadets have since become retained duty system (RDS) firefighters and apprentice firefighters, which is testament to the training and development that the coordinators, volunteers and the Arson Reduction and Young People Team have committed to the Fire Cadet schemes.

21. These outcomes are aimed at reducing arson and secondary fire setting within County Durham and the Borough of Darlington, but also to support young people to become the best they can be, ready for the workplace as resilient, motivated and community-focussed individuals.

22. Cllr Marshall would like to encourage Members to engage and support their local cadet schemes and to raise awareness of the excellent work the Service is delivering in developing our young people.

## **Recommendation**

23. Members are requested to:

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

Cllr Linda Marshall, Member Champion for Fire Cadets.