

24 June 2019



**Arson and deliberate secondary fires in
East Durham**

**Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and
Partnerships**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide Members with supporting information in advance of a presentation to Members on progress of partnership activity to addressing an increase in arson and deliberate secondary fires in East Durham.

Executive summary

- 2 The presentation attached in appendix 2 will aim to provide Members with an overview of partnership work and progress of implementation of recommendations following scrutiny activity to tackling arson and deliberate secondary fires in East Durham.

Recommendation(s)

- 3 Members are asked to note information within this report and presentation and comment accordingly.

Background

- 4 In June 2017, Members of the Council's Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to hold a focussed session on arson and deliberate secondary fires within its work programme.
- 5 A working group session has held in October 2017 with members of the Committee and elected members from areas with higher rates of arson within the east Durham area. The aim of the session was to gather evidence from police, fire and council representatives to gain an understanding of this issue, its impact on communities and police, fire and council services, the response by partner agencies and identify any areas for further development.

- 6 The Committee is the council's designated crime and disorder committee and therefore has the power to review and scrutinise decisions made and other actions taken in connection with the discharge by responsible bodies of their crime and disorder functions i.e. the organisations represented on the Safe Durham Partnership. Within this context, following the meeting in October, a response from Cllr Boyes was sent to the Chair of the Safe Durham Partnership Board and the Cabinet Portfolio lead for Adult and Health Services.
- 7 The Committee's response was presented to the Safe Durham Partnership Board in January 2018 and whilst acknowledging positive partnership work included the following areas for further consideration:
 - i Safe Durham Partnership to monitor performance relating to 'Deliberate Primary Fires and deliberate secondary fires
 - ii Include Countywide arson and deliberate fires within the performance reports presented to the committee on a quarterly basis.
 - iii Ensure a focus is placed on education with young people to highlight the dangers of fire including promotion of the Young Fire Fighters' Association at Peterlee Fire Station
 - iv Consider restorative approaches for low level offending alongside enforcement and prosecution for more serious offending
 - v Promote the Crimestoppers number and proactive public engagement to provide for community confidence and reassurance
 - vi Ensure that the focus of the review of the Time Limited Plan is to achieve a sustainable approach
 - vii Local Members to be consulted on the development of a Fire Reduction Plan to capture the needs of the community
- 8 A partnership response to the above recommendations was presented to the Committee by Phil Innis, District Manager, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service in July 2018. The presentation informed members of a reduction in recorded incidents since October 2017 and proactive work that included positive approaches to engage with young people, undertake campaign activity, a proposed community initiative at Peterlee Fire Station and launch of a trial of the 'firestoppers' phone number.
- 9 In addition, Members were advised of a local fire reduction plan and development of memorandum of understanding between partners to remove end of life cars, flytipping and boarding up empty properties. Following consideration of the presentation, a response containing comments from the Committee's meeting was sent to the Chair of the Safe Durham Partnership and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Adult and Health Services with a request for a progress update on activity to be presented to the Committee.
- 10 Phil Innis, Station Manager, County Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue Service will be in attendance at the Committee's meeting to provide a presentation to Members on partnership activity in relation to the above areas to reduce arson and deliberate fires within the east Durham area.

Main Implications

Crime and Disorder

- 11 Information with this report aims to contribute to objectives within the existing Council Plan and Safe Durham Partnership plan to reducing crime and disorder.

Conclusion

- 12 The attached presentation provides an update and opportunity for the Committee to monitor progress and provide comment of partnership activity to tackling arson and deliberate secondary fires in East Durham.

Background Papers

- None

Other useful documents

- Arson and deliberate secondary fires in East Durham, Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, July 2018

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None.

Finance

None.

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

Information with this report aims to contribute to objectives within the existing Council Plan and Safe Durham Partnership plan to reducing crime and disorder.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.