

MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	AUTHORITY		
DATE:	17TH 10 OCTOBER 2019	REPORT NO:	CFO/055/19
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	AM GUY KEEN TEL: 4615	REPORT AUTHOR:	GM BEN RYDER, SM WOODWARD & MIKE BURATTI
OFFICERS CONSULTED:	SM LAUREN WOODWARD, COMMUNITY SAFETY COORDINATOR MIKE BURATTI, INCIDENT INVESTIGATION TEAM, ARSON TEAM, PROTECTION (FIREWORKS)		
TITLE OF REPORT:	BONFIRE STRATEGY 2019		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A: APPENDIX B:	INFOGRAPHICS – BONFIRE 2019 2018 STATISTICS
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Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the key elements within the 2019 Bonfire Strategy aimed to limit the number of deliberate fires and instances of anti-social behaviour across Merseyside.

Recommendation

That Members note the contents of the report for the Halloween and Bonfire Period 2019.

Introduction and Background

2. Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority has in previous years delivered a highly successful Bonfire Strategy to reduce the impact of the seasonal rise in incidents of fire and ASB related activities. The local planning has been devolved to each District Arson Officer. Central co-ordination of partners, resources and control is facilitated by the Community Safety Coordinator for the Arson Team and also the Community Safety Station Manager to ensure local plans contribute and compliment the pan- Merseyside multi agency approach.
3. It is recognised that current financial challenges will impact on some of the services our partners have contributed in the past and Officers will endeavour to ensure contingencies and alternative resources are put in place to address any areas of risk.

4. Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service recognise that a significant increase in calls for service is received over the Halloween and Bonfire period, particularly deliberate secondary fires and misuse of fireworks. This is directly linked to the increase in anti-social behaviour and the sale of fireworks over the period. In order to limit the demand, an extensive plan over the period has been formulated to reduce the calls for service, numbers of fires and instances of anti-social behaviour which adversely affect the Communities of Merseyside.
5. Bonfire 2019 has been divided into three phases,
 - a. Planning Phase
 - b. Implementation Phase
 - c. Post period data capture and debrief phase

Planning Phase

6. Planning has taken place with partner agencies since June 2019 at both Service level and District level. A de-brief was held post the 2018 bonfire period and feedback from that de-brief has been used to inform the 2019 strategy.
7. An internal Bonfire Briefing will take place for MFRA staff on Friday 4th October 2019.
8. Operation Banger - This is the Police led operation which co-ordinates Police activity over the Halloween and Bonfire period. This includes monthly Silver meetings with Merseyside Police at the Joint Control Centre, Bridle Road. These monthly meetings involve all Police Commanders responsible for implementation of Operation Banger and representatives from MFRA.
9. School Presentations – As part of a Service wide education delivery strategy to key Senior Schools and Junior Schools pan Merseyside, Bonfire DVD packages will be delivered by MFRA Arson Officers, Merseyside Police, embedded School Police Officers and Operational Crews. Each Fire Station will deliver 4 school presentations in schools in high demand wards identified by Arson Officers based on local knowledge and secondary fire data.
10. In order to ensure all relevant information is available to all staff, the Portal has been utilised as a central repository for all relevant information appertaining to the Bonfire Period.
11. Surplus 2018 Bonfire leaflets will be utilised and distributed across the Service area that promote safety advice and contact details for MFRA, Merseyside Police, Crimestoppers, PCC and Stop Hate UK.
12. Firework Retailer inspections will continue across Merseyside. With over 200 retailers applying for, or holding licences to store in order to sell fireworks, an ongoing inspection regime has been undertaken by Community Protection Team Inspectors. They will visit premises to ensure suitable and sufficient actions have

been undertaken by the retailers to comply with safe storage and guidance given on the selling of fireworks.

13. The Liverpool Street Intervention Team will be working every evening from Monday 21st October until Wednesday 6th November. The Sefton and Knowsley Street Intervention Teams will be working 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th November. The objective being to reduce Anti-Social Behaviour issues and promote key safety messages in the run up to Bonfire night.
14. It is proposed by Corporate Communications that the new MFRA Website will be live by mid-October in time for the bonfire period. The website will contain key safety messages in relation to the bonfires and fireworks.

Implementation Phase

15. Key Dates have been established in agreement with Merseyside Police so that Wednesday 30th October, Thursday 31st October and Tuesday 5th November will have increased resources available as part of Operation Banger to promote community engagement activities. This will be co-ordinated through a dedicated Tactical Coordination Group (TCG) based at JCC, Bridle Road.
16. Districts have been requested to produce their own plans for local prevention and response to the Bonfire Period. Each plan is tailored to local issues based on historical data of previous years and emerging issues. The dynamic plans will evolve based upon data received over the Bonfire period and captured in the Bonfire Briefings. Ownership of District plans falls with the Arson Officers supported by the Arson Management Team and IIT Station Managers.
17. During the permitted firework selling dates of 15th October and 10th November 2019, onsite inspections and risk assessments will be carried out at selected retailers who have applied for a storage licence to verify that the fireworks are being stored and sold correctly. Any illegal firework sales will be dealt with by the Community Protection Team and appropriate action taken. This will range from advice given, up to and including the seizure of articles. IIT will respond to all firework incidents involving damage to property or injuries to persons.
18. Monthly Arson Awareness Campaigns which started in 2017 and have proven to be extremely successful will continue over the bonfire period in each district.
19. All MFRA stations have explosive mitigation boxes which are available if the public hand in unwanted fireworks or marine flares into fire stations. Police Stations also have a number of mitigation stores for their own use. Locations of Police facilities are as follows: St. Anne's Street, Admiral Street, Birkenhead, Speke, Marsh Lane, Lower Lane, Southport, Kirkby, Walton Lane & St Helens. Any Fireworks deposited at Fire Stations will be collected by an IIT Officer and will then be brought to ultimate storage at MFRA Headquarters storage facility.
20. [Community Risk Management \(CRM\)](#) Routes will be circulated to Operational crews. These routes have been identified through collaborative work with Merseyside Police. They have identified areas of high Fire Service and Policing

demand through the Bonfire Periods from historical data. MFRA crews will focus on these areas for Community based work throughout the bonfire period. A campaign code of 517 has been set for all HFSC activity carried out within those areas. This will complement the Policing strategy, Micro-beats, for Operation Banger 2018. This will lead to an increased visible presence of both services in high demand areas to offer heightened community reassurance.

21. The [Potential Arson Threat Scheme \(PATS\)](#) will be used to deal with buildings that are identified as being at risk of arson. This scheme will identify and reduce the threat of potential arson through partnership working. MFRA will gather information from local authorities on planning application refusals, licence premises closures, licence revocations and rating reductions due to vacant premises. MFRA will send letters to those identified warning of the potential arson threat and outlining penalties for arson related crime. This will also allow firefighters to keep an eye on specific buildings within the area.
22. From Monday 21st October 2019 until Wednesday 6th November 2019, MFRA will have the use of 5 tipper trucks pan - Merseyside and will have designated crews made up of Home Safety Advocates and volunteers in order to remove build-up of bonfire material in order to prevent the material being used as fuel for a fire. A bid for funding has been submitted to Liverpool City Safe Board to support the tipper truck provision for Liverpool. Wirral, Sefton and Knowsley has successfully sourced tipper trucks free of charge.
23. Fire Service Direct will take receipt of reports of bonfire debris placed on the streets or storage of bonfire materials in void properties. This information will then be passed to the relevant District Arson Officers for action as per the District plan. Any caller who reports unlit debris to Fire Control will be asked to contact Fire Service Direct to report the issue. Members of the public will also be encouraged to report bonfire debris via our social media outlets.
24. A joint agency Tactical Co-Ordination Group (TCG) will be established on the Operation Banger key nights (30th, 31st Oct, and 5th Nov) at JCC. This will be active from 4pm until midnight. This will be staffed by an MFRA Group Manager.
25. An Operational Support Room (OSR) will be established within Fire Control on seven nights over the bonfire period staffed by the Arson Team Community Safety Coordinator and a Station Manager. These will be on the three Operation Banger Key Nights (30th, 31st Oct, and 5th Nov) with the addition of Friday 1st, Saturday 2nd, Sunday 3rd and Wednesday 6th November. The aim is to assist all staff that are not riding fire appliances who are deployed across Merseyside. This facility complements Fire Control operations, allowing staff to concentrate on the increase in emergency calls for service via the 999 system. This facility will include the monitoring of the Arson Officers, Home Safety Advocates, Street Intervention Teams and Youth Engagement Staff.
26. The Arson Team will be on duty 1700-2300 hours over seven evening across the bonfire period. On the three Operation Banger Key Nights (30th, 31st Oct, and 5th Nov) with the addition of Friday 1st, Saturday 2nd, Sunday 3rd and Wednesday 6th November. Arson Officers will be out in each district

accompanied by Home Safety Advocates and Youth Engagement staff and will attend any target hardening visits at the request of the Police, Fire Control, IIT or any other agency on the evening. The Arson Officers will also be sent to and will patrol high demand areas to engage with young people and members of the public in a bid to prevent incidents occurring and reassuring members of the public who may feel vulnerable at this time of year due to increased ASB activity. Arson Officers will be mobilised by and will report to the OSR.

27. Merseyside Police Officers will be issued with guidance cards with bonfire risk assessment information in and information relating to our tolerant approach to prevent large numbers of calls from Police Officers reporting bonfires.
28. Community Engagement diversionary activities are to be organised at a District level. This includes Local Authority firework displays, community event bonfires, climbing wall activities, community centre activities and numerous smaller public events.
29. Corporate Communications have been meeting with Police partners to ensure key messages are rolled out across the Service over the period and have produced a Bonfire Comms Strategy including a suite of infographics (contained in Appendix 1). A campaign of media press releases will promote the key messages at key times over the period. A suite of Infographics has also been created for use on social media. A bid for funding has been submitted to Liverpool City Safe Board to fund Facebook and Twitter advertising. This will enable the MFRA Corporate Communications Team to geographically target our key safety messages via social media to high demand areas and to social media users who do not currently follow MFRA social media outlets. Last year's social media campaign reached over 650,000 people on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Members of the public will also be encouraged to report bonfire debris via our social media outlets which will be monitored by the Corporate Communications Team and then referred onto the Arson Team.
30. The deployment of the Trojan fire appliance has been reviewed. This year, it has been decided that the Trojan fire appliance will proactively deploy on Friday 1st and Saturday 2nd November 2019. This decision has been fully supported by Merseyside Police who will provide Police Officers on the two evenings. Throughout the remainder of the bonfire period, the Trojan will be made available at SHQ if required to be deployed. Deployment will be facilitated in co-operation with Merseyside Police who will supply two Police Officers to ride the vehicle along with an MFRA OIC and driver. It will be deployed to known hotspot areas for a specific duration. The deployment of the Trojan Fire Appliance will be via the OSR. The Trojan Fire Appliance will be further supported by a Police carrier van and an unmarked Police vehicle. This would commence at the next predicted time of activity which historically is usually early evening. MFRA would consult with appropriate staff to verify for the need to apply for RIPA approval for the Trojan Appliance if it is to be targeting a designated area at a designated time frame. Approval through RIPA submission will be considered. The Arson Reduction Manager will be responsible for submission of the RIPA to the appropriate SPOC for approval and then authorised by a designated officer.

31. Due to the potential increase in demand for response by the Incident Investigation Team (IIT), a further officer will be available on the seven key dates from 16:00 to 00.00 who will be utilised for firework incidents or fire investigations.
32. An Internal Briefing for staff involved in this year's bonfire period will be held on Friday 4th October 1000-1100 in the Wirral Suite, SHQ.

Debrief Phase

33. A post Bonfire night sweep will take place on the morning of Wednesday 6th November 2019. This will involve fire crews patrolling their station areas in order to extinguish smouldering bonfires in known fire locations. Appliances will remain available for redeployment by Fire Control and will replenish water supplies prior to the supply falling below an unacceptable level for redirection. This will facilitate tipper trucks to remove bonfire remains before the youths return home from school.
34. The final figures for the bonfire recording period of 19th October to 7th November inclusive will be published with a week after the final recording date.
35. A full debrief document will be circulated to all partners after the bonfire period has finished.
36. An internal de-brief will take place on post bonfire night at SHQ.
37. All 2019 District Bonfire Plans, can be viewed via the following [link](#).

Equality and Diversity Implications

38. EIA completed and available on the E&D page of the portal

Staff Implications

39. Staff will be required to support Trojan if required. This will be an OIC and a driver.
40. Arson Officers will be working into the evening on the 7 key nights supported by Home Safety Advocates and Youth Engagement Staff. There will be 1 Arson Officer in each district per night plus 1 Advocate from Home Safety or Youth Engagement making up teams of 2.
41. The Liverpool, Knowsley and Sefton Street Intervention Teams will be working additional nights (as outlined above) and will require a minimum of 2 per team in order to deploy.
42. The OSR will be staffed from 4pm until midnight on the 7 key nights by the Arson Teams Community Safety Coordinator and a Station Manager.

43. Additional cover for the Incident Investigation Team has been agreed with the team members to ensure suitable cover is provided during the anticipated periods of peak activity. An additional IIT officer will be available at times of high demand on the key nights.

Legal Implications

44. School presentations have previously been viewed by the Legal team to verify that the content is acceptable. Recommendations to include a warning and to show content to responsible persons for youth groups prior to presenting to schools have been implemented within the package.
45. Regulatory Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) training has previously been given to key staff prior to the bonfire period.
46. All Arson Officers staff are trained in Safeguarding and reporting processes are established.
47. All staff during the tipper tucks have received a driver validation by the Driving School and all staff on the tipper trucks are manual handling trained.
48. Community Protection Officers will be available to visit retailers storing fireworks for sale to ensure compliance with legislation.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

49. All additional costs for delivering the bonfire plan will be met from existing budget and supported by external partners.
50. A bid for £3500 of funding has been submitted to Liverpool City Safe Board to fund Facebook and Twitter advertising, a tipper truck and some staff costs.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

51. In considering the risk management implications for staff operating within Merseyside during key nights, a decision was made to operate the Operational Support Room. This will allow for a robust monitoring and management of staff across Merseyside who are not riding fire appliances
52. In order to reduce risk of attacks to Firefighters and Fire Appliances a Trojan fire appliance will be ready from 15th October and can be dynamically deployed if required to hotspot areas of attacks against crews or appliances. This will be supported by Merseyside Police.

53. In order to reduce the impact of fly tipping, firecalls and smoke on the environment tipper trucks will be operating pre bonfire to remove hazardous waste or combustible materials.
54. A post bonfire sweep of smouldering bonfires will be undertaken on the morning of 6th November in order to extinguish fires and to prevent re-ignition. This will reduce firecalls, smoke and allow for quicker removal by cleansing teams.

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

55. The delivery of the Bonfire plan aims to limit and reduce the threat of the number of Anti-Social Behaviour incidents and deliberate fires across Merseyside.
56. It also promotes key safety messages to allow the public to have a safe Halloween and bonfire period free from harm and injury.
57. Its aim is to reduce the risk of attacks on firefighters through education and engagement.
58. The plan will prepare for the anticipated increase in calls for service by working with partners and key stakeholders; prevent crime and fires which will impact on MFRA response to incidents; protect the most vulnerable who may be victims of fire or firework incidents plus educating young persons; and pursue those who attack firefighters or staff of MFRA.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

DPM -	District Prevention Managers
FIRST -	Firework Incident Research & Safety Team
IIT -	Incident Investigation Team
JCC -	Joint Control Centre (Bridle Road)
MFRA -	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority
MFRA -	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
OIC -	Officer in Charge
OSR -	Operational Support Room
RIPA -	Regulatory Investigative Powers Act

S&P - Strategy and Performance

SHQ - Service Headquarters

SPOC - Single Point of Contact