

MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROTECTION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	19 DECEMBER 2013	REPORT NO:	CFO/142/13
PRESENTING OFFICER	DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER PHIL GARRIGAN		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	MYLES PLATT	REPORT AUTHOR:	MYLES PLATT
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TITLE OF REPORT:	BONFIRE PERIOD 2013		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX A: DISTRICT PERFORMANCE COMPARISON TABLES.
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Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Authority of the activity and outcomes relating to the Bonfire period 2013.

Recommendation

2. That the Authority note the contents of this report relating to the Bonfire period 2013.

Introduction and Background

3. The recording period for the Bonfire period is defined as 19th October to 07th November inclusive.
4. Traditionally the bonfire period has always been a busy period for the Fire and Rescue Service typified by a seasonal rise in anti-social behaviour related incidents. Through work undertaken by the Prevention and Protection teams in each District of Merseyside, together with partners, co-ordinated by the Prevention team at SHQ.
5. As a result of this work Merseyside has seen a further reduction in incidents during this period when compared to the same period last year.
6. Across Merseyside there has been an overall reduction of 214 deliberate secondary fires when compared to 2012. A total 213 incidents were attended this year which makes the 2013 period the quietest Bonfire period on record with a 50% drop from 2012.
7. Liverpool had the highest number of incidents with 113, followed by Wirral 33, Sefton 24, Knowsley 24 and St Helens 19.

8. All five districts saw significant reductions when compared to 2012 (Liverpool Districts split North and South figures can be seen in Appendix 1)

District	Total Secondary Fires Attended	Percentage Reduction compared to 2011
Knowsley	24	-43%
Liverpool	113	-47%
Sefton	24	-59%
St Helens	19	-60%
Wirral	33	-49%
Overall	213	-50%

9. A multi-agency debrief was held on 15th November 2013 at SHQ and was well attended. Many areas of good practice were noted and several recommendations were identified in order to improve on next year's plan. These will be considered following further meetings with individual departments in January 2014, they include development of environmental considerations, review of standards of Personal Protection Equipment in accordance with activity, more robust engagement with skip companies.
10. Each District was responsible for producing a local Bonfire Plan that complemented the Service Wide Plan which was shared with members prior to the period beginning. Local planning and service delivery specific to each District co-ordinated and supported from the centre has had a positive effect on reducing the number of incidents.
11. District Advocates and District Prevention Managers were given the responsibility over the period to make resources available outside of core hours to maximise availability at peak time of demand.
12. Numerous community engagement activities took place across Merseyside which included 'Horror events' on key stations/locations, Cage Soccer, climbing wall, community bonfires, local firework displays, community football events and a Liverpool based 'adopt a street' scheme. 'Adopt a street' involves an individual, either member of the public or MFRS staff member, taking ownership of a street to manage risk and assist their neighbours prevent incidents. For example returning wheelie bins to a safe position following collection for residents who are less able.
13. Waste reclamation and the removal of combustible materials took place in each District, including tipper truck patrols staffed by MFRS, Police Cadets, Local Authorities, Fire Support Network and the Probation Services Community Payback Scheme. Residential Social Landlords arranged and publicised local skip days, waste stations and community clearance schemes. Private waste management firms were also involved in removing bonfire debris.
14. There has been a reduction in wheelie bin fires of 39% when compared with 2012, showing a drop from 116 to 71 incidents. This has been particularly pleasing in light of the change in waste collections in each Local Authority.

15. Operational crews increased their involvement over the period patrolling station areas and carrying out environmental impact assessments. This allowed for fly-tipped debris to be reported centrally with the details passed to the relevant Authorities to initiate removal. Crews also had a visible presence at key community events and community engagement activities.
16. Vehicle fires decreased after a rise was noted the previous year. This was down to 42 vehicle fires when compared to 60 in 2012.
17. Building on the success of last year, a full service wide 'Bonfire Sweep' was operated on 6th November whereby operational appliances were mobilised within their respective station areas to extinguish smouldering fires in known troublesome areas. This resulted in 108 smouldering remains being doused which prevented them being rekindled that evening. This assisted in a drop from 104 fire calls attended on 6th November 2011, to 24 this year and a reduction of 17% when compared to 2012.
18. The Service attended 16 fireworks related incidents over the period which resulted in damage to property. All incidents involved fireworks which can be purchased by adults from retail premises. No incidents involved category 4 professional fireworks (display fireworks not intended for public use). The Incident Investigation Team attended 55 incidents over the period with the peak demand on Bonfire night. This was comparable to the 57 incidents attended in 2012.
19. In 2013 there were 5 enforcements pending prosecutions due to break of firework legislation compared to 10 in 2012. The number of fireworks seized totalled half a tonne, similar to 2012.
20. The Firework Incident Research Safety Team (FIRST) continued to drive down misuse and inappropriate sales from over 350 separate premises authorised to retail fireworks. In addition the unregistered premises were also targeted with domestic premises, petrol stations and business premises visited over the period.
21. Fire Service Direct (FSD) handled 84 referrals for either bonfire materials removal or target hardening requests. The majority of calls (61) were on 5th November when requests for bonfire removal were at their maximum. This represented a 34% drop in referrals when compared to 2012. Extended operating hours allowed the public to report non-emergency incidents such as bonfire debris. FSD have continued to handle non-emergency calls after the Bonfire period allowing MACC to deal with real emergencies.
22. The Trojan Fire Appliance was made available but not deployed over the Bonfire period. This was due to no violence at work incidents being reported against fire crews. Three VAW incidents did occur, two of which were against FSN staff operating cage soccer and one was towards prevention staff carrying out their duties. Again this was a significant reduction in the number of VAW incidents when compared to last year.

23. All ASB related small fires were dealt with by operational crews on fire appliances. An assessment was made prior to the Bonfire period and analysis of historical data showed no additional resources were needed. This is a significant change from previous years when multiple small fires units were deployed over the bonfire period.
24. An Operational Support Room was established at MACC to provide enhanced control and monitoring of prevention activities over the key nights of 30th, 31st Oct, 2nd and 5th Nov 2013. The provision complimented MACC staffing and allowed for a safe and effective supervision of staff operating in key locations across Merseyside.
25. MACC logged 2670 emergency calls over the bonfire period. This was a significant reduction in calls for service from 2012 when 3262 incident logs were created representing an 18% drop.
26. Merseyside Police continued to provide high levels of contact and involvement throughout the Bonfire Period. Commencing with the planning meetings in June 2012 to allow for suitable arrangements to be made to the Bonfire Plan and Operation Banger. Improved lines of communication between Merseyside Police and MFRA staff has contributed to more coherent and co-ordinated approach to incidents over the Bonfire period. It is anticipated that this will be further enhanced next year through the provision of the Joint Control Centre.
27. Police Silver Control was in operation on the key nights with a MFRA Station Manager located in the Police control room to act as liaison between the Police and the Operational Support Room at MACC. This proved extremely useful in the transfer of intelligence between both parties and was found to allow a fast response process to be initiated.

Equality and Diversity Implications

28. An Equality Impact Assessment was completed during the planning phase for the Bonfire period 2013. Report CFO/120/13 Bonfire Period Campaign 2013
29. Targeted interventions aimed at reassuring vulnerable members of the community were carried out across each District.

Staff Implications

30. The multi-agency debrief carried out on 15th November 2013 identified the positive contribution made by the flexible use of Community Fire Prevention staff over the period as detailed in the recently negotiated flexible working contracts signed by all prevention staff. This ensured that teams were out on the front line at key times of the day and night when the risk was at its greatest.

Legal Implications

31. All enforcement actions carried out as a result of the Bonfire period 2013 are considered by the Authorities legal team and will be included in a year-end report detailing all enforcements and prosecutions during 2013.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

32. All activity associated with the Bonfire Period 2013 were financed from existing budgets.
33. For indicative purposes this report demonstrates that the reduction of 214 secondary fires over the target period delivers a non-cashable saving to the community of £446,823.44. This is based on an estimate that each secondary fire attended having an average cost value of £2,087.96 as detailed in *Department of Communities and Local Government:- Cost of Fire Q2 2013 Estimate*.
34. Again, vehicles fires saw a reduction of 18 fires and at an average cost of £4,939.04 per vehicle represents a saving of £88,902.72 using the same data source.
35. The combined indicative savings to the community over the bonfire period totalling £535,726.

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

36. An updated risk assessment relating to bonfire removal was published prior to the period commencing.
37. Training courses were run by the Driving School at the Training and Development Academy for Prevention staff to be familiarised with issues concerning the operation and use of tipper trucks.
38. Input from the Environmental Officer in the bonfire planning phase will be included for 2014 to ensure full consideration is given to the environmental benefits and factors including recycling waste.

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

39. It can be seen from the reduction in mobilisations to incidents that the effect of the Bonfire plan has played a significant role in making the Communities of Merseyside Safer and Stronger. The reduction in journeys to and attendances at fires has assisted in reducing risk to staff.
40. Through extensive Partnership working with RSLs, Community Groups, Local Councillors, Private Commerce, Other Emergency Services, Skip Companies, Probation Service and other local groups has resulted in less Anti-Social Behaviour fires and other incidents over the period making the Communities of Merseyside safer.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
DMT	District Management Team
KIM	Knowledge and Information Management
FIRST	Firework Incident Research & Safety Team
FHQ	Force Headquarters (Merseyside Police)
IIT	Incident Investigation Team
MACC	Mobilising and Communications Centre
MFRS	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
OSR	Operational Support Room
RSL	Residential Social Landlord
SFU	Small Fires Unit
SHQ	Service Headquarters (MFRS)
MFRA	Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority