

<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>			
<b>MEETING OF THE:</b>	<b>COMMUNITY SAFETY &amp; PROTECTION</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>31 JANUARY 2023</b>	<b>REPORT NO:</b>	<b>CFO/57/22</b>
<b>PRESENTING OFFICER</b>	<b>CHIEF FIRE OFFICER PHIL GARRIGAN</b>		
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	<b>AM MARK THOMAS</b>	<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>GM FRANNY HILL</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	<b>ACFO DAVE MOTTRAM - SUZANNE HAZZA- COMMUNITY SAFETY COORDINATOR JOHN FIELDING – BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE MANAGER JOE CUNLIFFE – STATION MANAGER PROTECTION OFFICERS</b>		
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>BONFIRE REPORT 2022</b>		

<b>APPENDICES:</b>	<b>Appendix 1</b>	<b>Bonfire Fire Report 202</b>
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### **Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Members of the outcomes of Bonfire period 2022.

### **Recommendation**

2. It is recommended that Members:
  - (a)note the content of the report and the impact that Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service (MFRS) have had over the bonfire period and;
  - (b) note that this year’s plan delivered through our staff and partners has been the most successful to date.

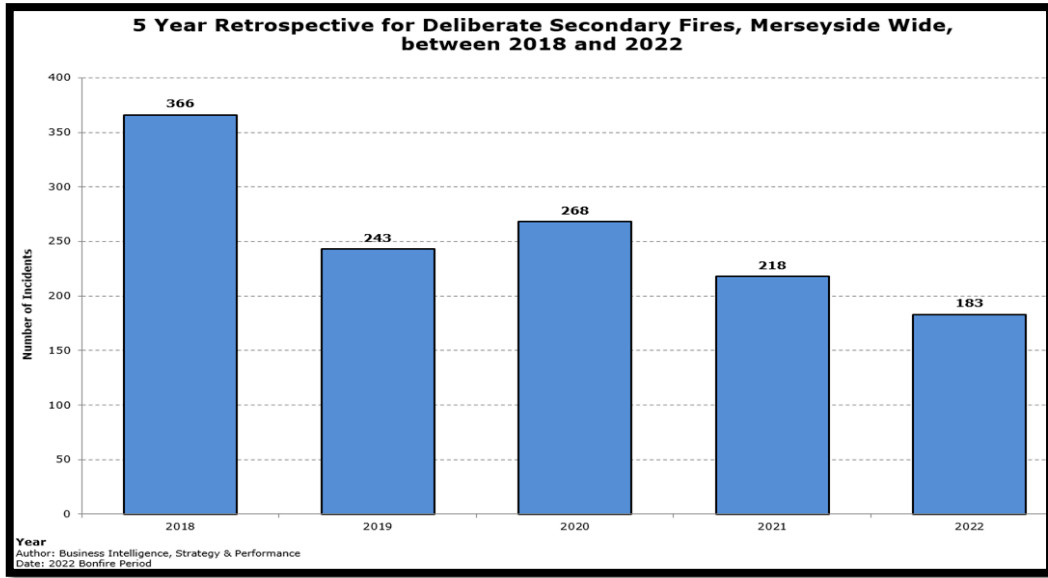
### **Introduction and Background**

3. Historically, MFRS receives increased numbers of calls over the Halloween and bonfire period. To limit those increased demands, our annual Bonfire Plan was implemented to help mitigate the number of 999 calls and the overall number of Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) fires MFRS attend.
4. Prevention Directorate planning for Bonfire 2022 commenced in June. Merseyside Police led Operation Banger, the multi-agency operation which coordinates Police, Fire and Local Authority activity over the Halloween and Bonfire period. This included monthly Silver meetings chaired by Merseyside Police at the JCC. These meetings involved all district based Police Commanders responsible for the implementation of Operation Banger (operation Good Guy St Helens) and representatives from MFRS and other agencies.

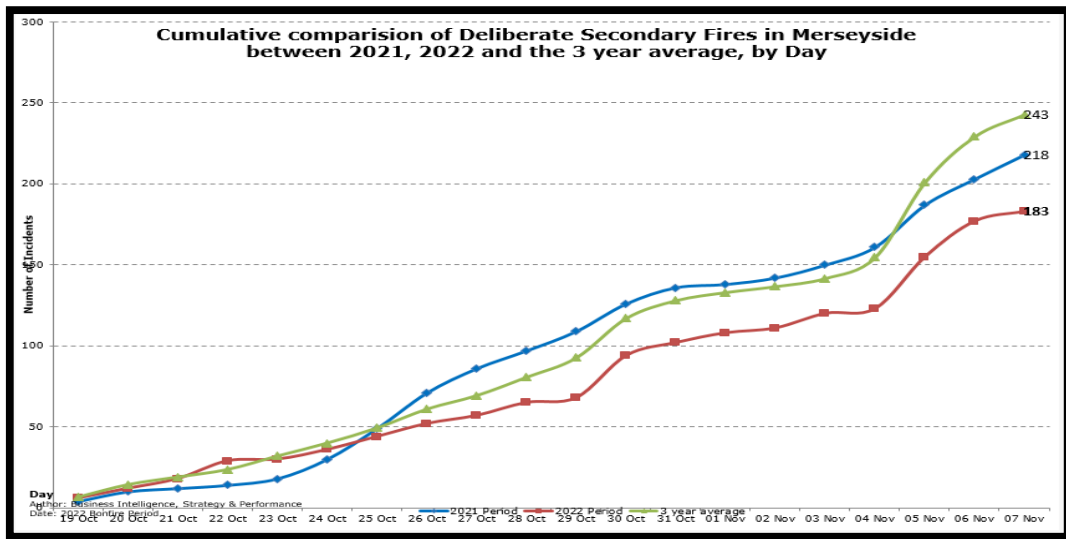
5. A range of diversionary activities were organised across Merseyside. Funding for these events was met by a range of partners, including Local Authorities, Merseyside Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner.
6. The covid19 pandemic has still had a significant impact on organised firework displays with several larger events not taking place. These events would normally attract a combined attendance of more than 120,000 people diverting people away from taking part in anti-social behaviour.
7. This year, St Helens Council was the only council to hold an organised firework event, held at St Helens Rugby stadium. The event was attended by over 5000 people.
8. MFRS Corporate Communications Team produced a bespoke Bonfire Communications Strategy which included:
  - A series of infographics carrying unique messages on social media.
  - Bonfire Leaflets- distributed by MFRS staff and partner agencies.
  - Video animations in relation to the dangers of arson and the impact of ASB in local communities
9. The communications strategy further included press releases promoting relevant messages at key times during the reporting period. MFRS received funding from City Safe which paid for a social media campaign enabling Corporate Communications to target important safety messages via social media. Members of the public were encouraged to report bonfire material via our social media outlets and website which was monitored by Corporate Communications.
10. From Monday 24<sup>th</sup> October until Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2022, MFRS had the use of 6 tipper trucks across Merseyside to support safer communities through management and removal of bonfire material. The Prevention team, assisted by volunteers from across the service including apprentices, operational firefighters and a number of green book staff, removed over 53 tonnes of material.
11. MFRS adopted a creative approach during this year's Bonfire period and ensured high visibility throughout the recording period. Tactics utilised included:
  - Locating the Arson Team to Old Swan fire station as part of a wider departmental improvement
  - Potential Arson Threats (PATs)/Fly tipping referrals
  - Community risk management routes
  - Tipper trucks in each district
12. PATs/Fly tipping reports - The purpose of a PAT is to highlight buildings that are potential arson targets, and to minimise risk to Firefighters. Crews familiarise themselves with each potential arson target so that they know the possible risks they could face if a fire breaks out at that location. When a vulnerable, empty

property is identified, a PAT referral is completed for action by the Arson Team and partners.

13. MFRS worked in partnership with local authorities and hired 6 tipper trucks to remove waste and fly tipping from each district. Fly tipping reports assisted with identifying waste materials across the region.
14. Community Risk Management routes - MFRS identified ASB spots across Merseyside utilising current data to target ASB high spots linked to high numbers of secondary fires. Community Risk Management routes were allocated on this basis to fire stations with routes to be completed in fire engines.
15. MFRA is the Licensing Authority for the storage of explosives in Merseyside. Joint visits with Merseyside Police and trading standards were carried out to prevent the selling of illegal fireworks and to ensure safe storage of fireworks is in place.
16. This year MFRA issued 39 new licences from retailers to store and sell fireworks, there are currently 179 premises licensed to sell fireworks. Officers inspected premises to ensure suitable and sufficient action had been actioned by the retailers to comply with safe storage and guidance given on the selling of fireworks. A further inspection and compliance programme was undertaken by Protection Officers and Trading Standards officers
17. MFRA staff and partners, visited schools to deliver key messages highlighting the impact of arson and ASB in local communities. MFRS and Police Community Support Officers visited 50 schools and delivered our message to approximately 4000 children and young people.
18. 120 PATS forms were completed. 189 fly tipping referrals were submitted, resulting in over 53 tonnes of rubbish and fly tipping being removed from the streets which otherwise may have been used to fuel deliberately set fires. MFRS fire appliances completed 325 Community Risk Management routes providing high visibility reassurance to local communities.
19. On the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> November, MFRS adopt a more tolerant approach to bonfires. Bonfires were risk assessed and allowed to continue to burn if the bonfire did not pose a risk to people or property, and that the bonfire was organised safely.
20. The table below indicates that during the 2022 bonfire period the number of deliberate secondary fire incidents attended by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service was 183.



21. The table below shows a cumulative analysis of deliberate secondary fire incidents through the 2022 period, contrasting it with 2021, and the 3-year average.



22. MFRS attended 22 incidents involving the misuse of Fireworks, these incidents were direct attacks including those put through letterboxes, windows or open doors. Combined with a lack of organised displays, this will have impacted on the increase in incidents. The table below capture 2022 figures:

District	2021	2022	Difference	% Difference
Knowsley	1	2	1	100.0%
Liverpool	9	10	1	11.1%
<i>Liverpool North</i>	6	8	2	33.3%
<i>Liverpool South</i>	3	2	-1	-33.3%
Sefton	1	3	2	200.0%
St Helens	2	1	-1	-50.0%
Wirral	3	6	3	100.0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>37.5%</b>

23. Overall, there has been a reduction in the number of secondary fires during the reporting period between 19<sup>th</sup> October and 7<sup>th</sup> November. With the exception of Sefton which had an unusually low number of secondary fires in the bonfire period of 2021, all areas saw a reduction of secondary fires when compared to 2021. Despite the increase in secondary fires in Sefton, the number of secondary fires there during the 2022 period is comparable to similar districts in Merseyside such as St Helens and Wirral and is below the number of secondary fires in the same period in 2020, which was 32.

District	2021	2022	Difference	% Difference
Knowsley	23	17	-6	-26.1%
Liverpool	115	92	-23	-20.0%
<i>Liverpool North</i>	71	48	-23	-32.4%
<i>Liverpool South</i>	44	44	0	0.0%
Sefton	11	23	12	109.1%
St Helens	33	20	-13	-39.4%
Wirral	36	31	-5	-13.9%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-16.1%</b>

## Equality and Diversity Implications

24. The aim of the Bonfire Plan is to reduce the number of deliberate secondary fires attended across Merseyside particularly prevalent in the our most deprived communities.
25. As in previous years, MFRS worked effectively with partners such as Merseyside Police, the 5 Local Authorities across Merseyside and Housing Associations resulting in a 16% reduction in the secondary fires attended when compared to 2021. 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.
26. MFRS maintained its attendance standard to life risk incidents throughout the bonfire period.

27. The Service adopted a dual approach towards social media, utilising an organic and 'paid for' campaign. During the Bonfire period, it is estimated the service had a reach of 460,791 on Facebook, 414,746 on Twitter and 5,274 on Instagram. Our videos were viewed 37,899 times. It must also be noted that our Corporate Communications Team worked with Police and Local Authority Communications Teams.

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### **Staff Implications**

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28. An aim of the operation is to reduce the risk of attacks on firefighters through education and engagement. There were 5 reports of attacks on firefighters, and none were reported after the 30<sup>th</sup> October. This represents a reduction of 3 attacks when compared to the same period in 2021. Of the 5 attacks in 2022, 4 of the incidents involved missiles being thrown at either fire appliances or cars (2 incidents involved eggs, 1 a firework and 1 involved a small stone). The other incident involved a youth hitting a fire appliance with a cricket bat. The bonfire plan also promoted key safety messages to allow the public to have a safe Halloween and bonfire period free from harm and injury. MFRS have not been made aware of any injuries to the public that could be directly attributed to the bonfire period.

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### **Legal Implications**

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29. To satisfy the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, 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.
30. Under the Explosives Regulations 2014 and the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Protection Officers visited retailers storing fireworks for sale to ensure compliance with legislation.

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### **Financial Implications & Value for Money**

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31. All directorates and departments contributed significantly during the bonfire period. This provided the Prevention Directorate with the ability to deliver a high performance with thanks to:
- Home Safety – provided additional staff
  - Youth Engagement – Providing staff assisting with tippers
  - Protection – Fireworks Legislation, compliance and enforcement
  - Corporate Comms – Comms and Media Strategy
  - Op. Response – HFSC Campaigns, CRM routes, fly tipping reports
  - An additional IIT Officer was available at all times of high demand on key nights
  - Fire Control additional staffing operators were utilised due to high demand over key nights

32. The Liverpool, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral Street Intervention Teams worked throughout the reporting period in high demand areas to engage with young people and local communities about the associated dangers of the period
33. The Operational Support Room was utilised to support co-ordination of prevention staff completing high visible presence and Street Intervention Teams

### **Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications**

34. In considering the risk management implications for staff operating within Merseyside during key nights, a decision was made to utilise the Operational Support Room
35. To reduce the impact and noticeable increase of fly tipping, tipper trucks operated pre bonfire to remove hazardous waste or combustible materials to minimise the impact on the environment and the safety of MFRS staff
36. A post Bonfire night sweep took place on 6<sup>th</sup> November. This involved fire crews patrolling their station areas to extinguish smouldering bonfires in known fire locations. Appliances remained available for redirection by Fire Control
37. The Bonfire plan identified 4 key nights where demands on MFRS were anticipated to increase, these were 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> October and the 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> November.

**Contribution to Our Vision: *To be the best Fire & Rescue Service in the UK.***

**Our Purpose: *Here to serve, Here to protect, Here to keep you safe.***

38. Overall, there has been a reduction in the number of secondary fires during the reporting period between 19<sup>th</sup> October and 7<sup>th</sup> November. As a result the impact on our communities has been reduced significantly – particularly those most at risk.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**CFO/111/11** If this report follows on from another, list the previous report(s)

### **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

<b>IIT</b>	Incident Investigation Team.
<b>JCC</b>	Joint Control Centre
<b>MFRA</b>	Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority
<b>MFRS</b>	Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service
<b>OIC</b>	Officer in Charge
<b>OSR</b>	Operational Support Room
<b>SHQ</b>	Service Headquarters
<b>ASB</b>	Anti Social Behaviour
<b>PAT</b>	Potential Arson Target

