WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24 APRIL 2023

1. **FIRE CONTROL PERFORMANCE REPORT – Q4 2022/23**

   Report of the Chief Fire Officer

   RECOMMENDED

1.1 THAT the operational performance of Fire Control for Q4 be noted.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

2.1 This report is submitted to provide the committee with an update of the operational performance of Fire Control. The report covers a three-month period.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 **Emergency Calls Received and Call Handling**

   Fire Control receives the emergency calls and effectively manages the resources for both Staffordshire and West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services.

   Staffordshire and West Midlands Fire Control received 16,085 emergency calls between 1 January 2023 and 31 March 2023 across both brigade areas.

   This was split 12,071 calls for the West Midlands (75%), 3,546 calls for Staffordshire (22%) and 468 calls from outside of service areas (3%).

   The table below show the breakdown of calls received for West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) and Staffordshire FRS across a three-year period.
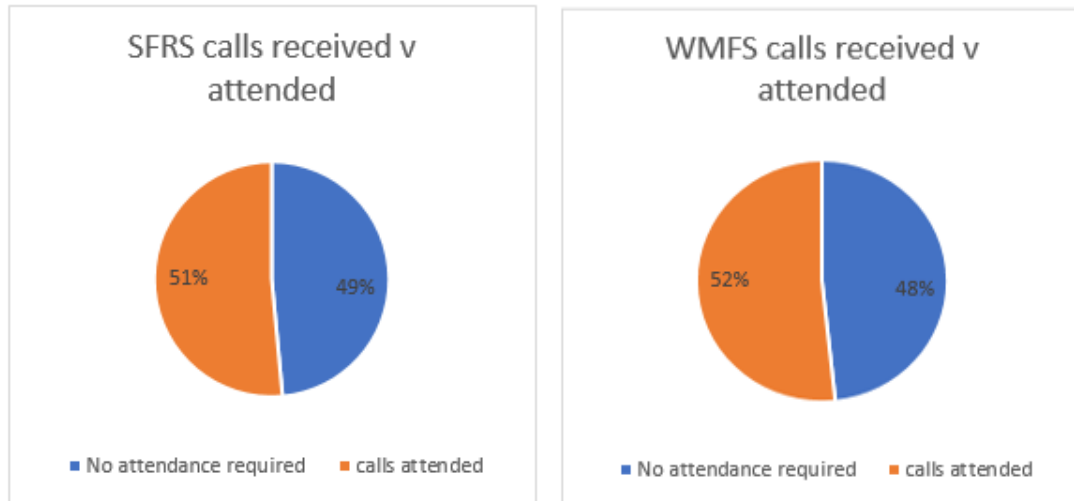
	WMFS			SFRS		
Period	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Q1 Apr-Jun	12,514	13,005	14,273	5,569	7,123	5,431
Q2 Jul-Sep	13,168	12,871	19,688	5,330	7,149	6,610
Q3 Oct – Dec	9,996	11,613	13,096	4,478	6,231	4,178
Q4 Jan-Mar	9,349	11,467	12,071	4,593	6,126	3,546

Of the 12,071 emergency calls received for WMFS across the reporting period; Fire Control mobilised to 6,241 (52%) incidents.

Of the 3,543 emergency calls received for Staffordshire FRS across the reporting period, Fire Control mobilised to 1,825 (51%) incidents.

This mobilisation to calls received ratio is because of several factors including –

- call challenging automated fire alarms (AFAs)

- call challenging special service calls which were deemed non-emergency

- repeat 999 calls

- use of 999eye footage and imagery

SFRS calls received v attended — 51% No attendance required, 49% calls attended

WMFS calls received v attended — 52% No attendance required, 48% calls attended

3.2 Call Handling

A key performance indicator for Fire Control is the length of time from answering a 999 call to mobilising appliances to category 1 (life and property) incidents. For these critical incident types, we aim to mobilise in under 80 seconds.

The data below shows the median average call handling times for life and property incident across Q4 with incident types broken down for both Staffordshire and West Midlands:

Brigade (excl OB)	SFRS		WMFS		Total	
Incident Type	Call Handling	Count	Call Handling	Count	Call Handling	Count
FIRE	104	134	101	349	101	483
FIRE PR	83	7	118	25	117	32
HOUSE FIRE	77	79	69	256	70	335
HOUSE FIRE PR	77	13	82	35	80	48
RTC	138	103	111	428	114	531
RTC PR	113	72	101	209	102	281

Fire Control's continued focus on mobilising with the required urgency is a key factor in survivability and limiting damage to property. The median call handling for the reporting period was 103 seconds, which is a 2 second increase on Q3.

Ref. AU/SC/2023/April/10404235

The increase in call handling time across the last three reporting periods is due to several factors, including the number of new entrants joining the fire control team, the introduction of Vision 4, our new command and control system, and enhanced questioning to support proportionate and appropriate mobilising of resources.

Following a request from the Q3 22/23 Scrutiny meeting, a request was made to other Fire Control Managers to gather information on their call handling times so we can compare and evaluate whether increase in call times were being experienced across the country. The following information was shared.

Metropolitan Fire Control 1 – Did not share call handling data/performance indicators, however confirmed they had seen a significant increase in their call handling times following go live of their C&C system (VISION 4).

Shared Fire Control 1 – 90 second call handling target being met 80% - 90% of the time.

Shared Fire Control 2 – Do not measure call handling times therefore this data was not available.

General Fire Control 1 – Performance target is an average of 90 seconds, current performance is 105 seconds. Increase is linked to new starters and additional call handling questions required to gather information to enable appropriate risk assessment to take place.

General Fire Control 2 – Do not measure call handling times.

Shire Fire Control 1 – 60 second call handling time to be met 96% of the time for all call types. Only being met 25% of the time.

Five other Control Rooms had a 90 second target of 75%, 85%, 90% and 95%.

There were three other Control Rooms who had a 120 second target for 80%, 98% and 98% of all calls respectively.

The wide range of performance indicators across Fire Control rooms make it difficult to draw any comparisons, however at a recent national Control Room Managers

meeting almost all attendees anecdotally stated they had seen an increase in call handling times.

This was attributed to a high turnover of staff and loss of experienced call handlers and additional call handling requirements being introduced through National Operational Guidance and taken from National Operational Learning.

A review of the current performance measures of Fire Control is being considered. This will focus on the quality, success and impact of the decisions that are being made as a result of longer call handling times and how this has an overall impact on appliance availability, speed and weight of attack and environmental implications due to less appliance movements.

3.3 **Dynamic Mobilising**

Dynamic mobilising involves using resources flexibly and efficiently in our approach to emergency call management and mobilising, resulting in a proportionate and appropriate initial incident response. The approach enables Fire Control to reduce and increase an incident response to achieve the best match for the incident needs, which includes selecting the most appropriate number and type of resource.

Fire Control continue to utilise several tools to support decision making including –

- Dynamic emergency call handling

- Information gathered at the time of call

- Location of the incident, both geographically and demographically

- Repeat calls

- Footage and images from 999eye

- Number and type of incidents in progress

- Weather

- Time of day

The charts below show the dynamic mobilising data captured for the reporting period.

Fire Control dynamically amended the initial level of response 600 times throughout the quarter, increasing the attendance 324 times and reducing the attendance 276 times.

These totals are either an increased or decreased attendance from the standard pre-determined levels of response.

On the occasions Fire Control reduce the attendance, this results in an increased number of appliances being available for category 1 incidents and to support prevention and protection activities, thereby increasing the effectiveness of our resources.

On the occasions Fire Control increased the attendance, this supported the speed and weight of attack allowing for safe systems of work to be implemented leading to effective and efficient resolution of incidents.

WMFS dynamic mobilising

306   212

92%

LOR   DM Increased   DM Reduced

SFRS dynamic mobilising
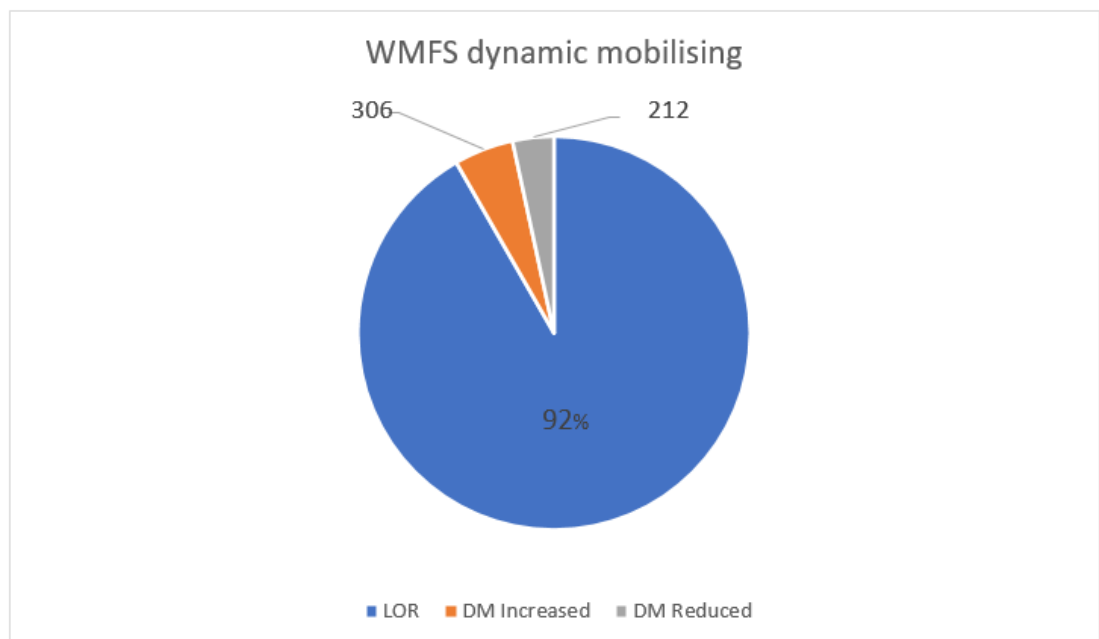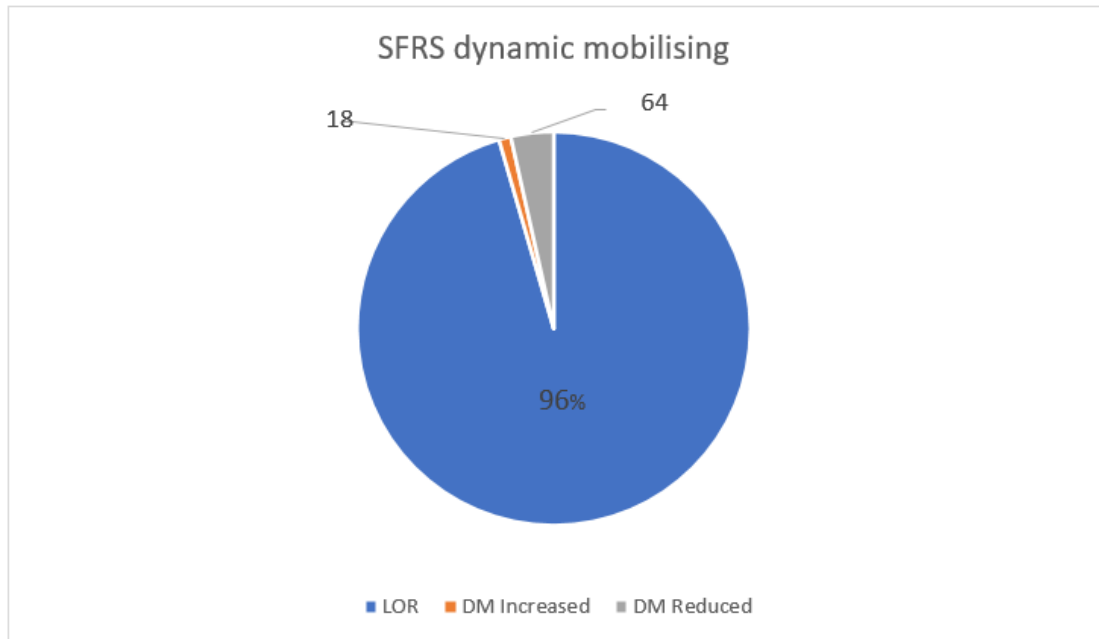
3.4   999Eye

Intelligence led mobilisation and resource management enables Fire Control to send the most appropriate number and type of resource based on the level of risk, this directly contributes to the achievement of our risk-based attendance standards.

The 999eye system is enhancing the quality of intelligence and information that is received within Fire Control, thereby enabling Fire Control personnel to make more informed dynamic mobilisations using this technology; further supporting our key aim of sending the right level of resource to the right incident type.
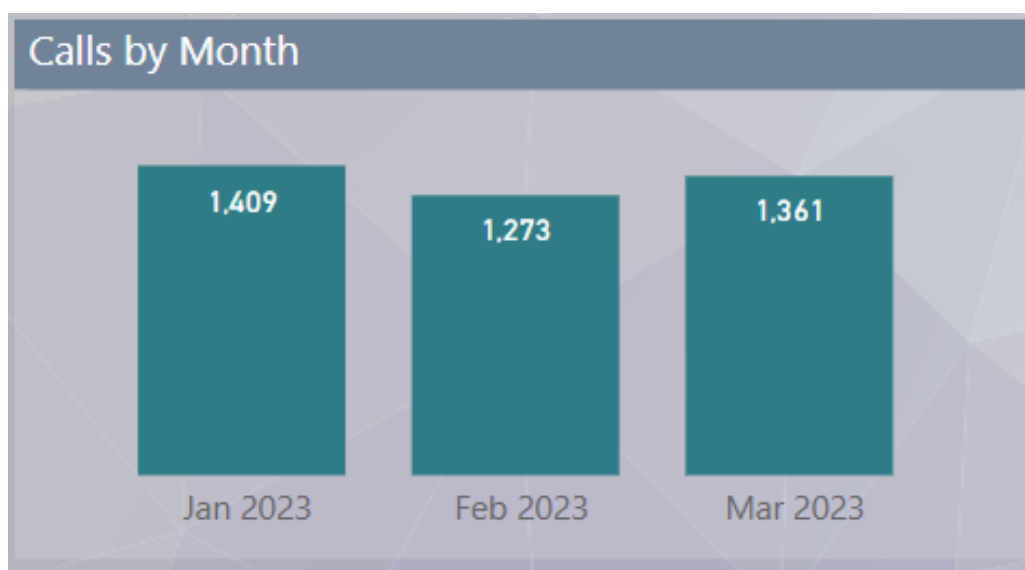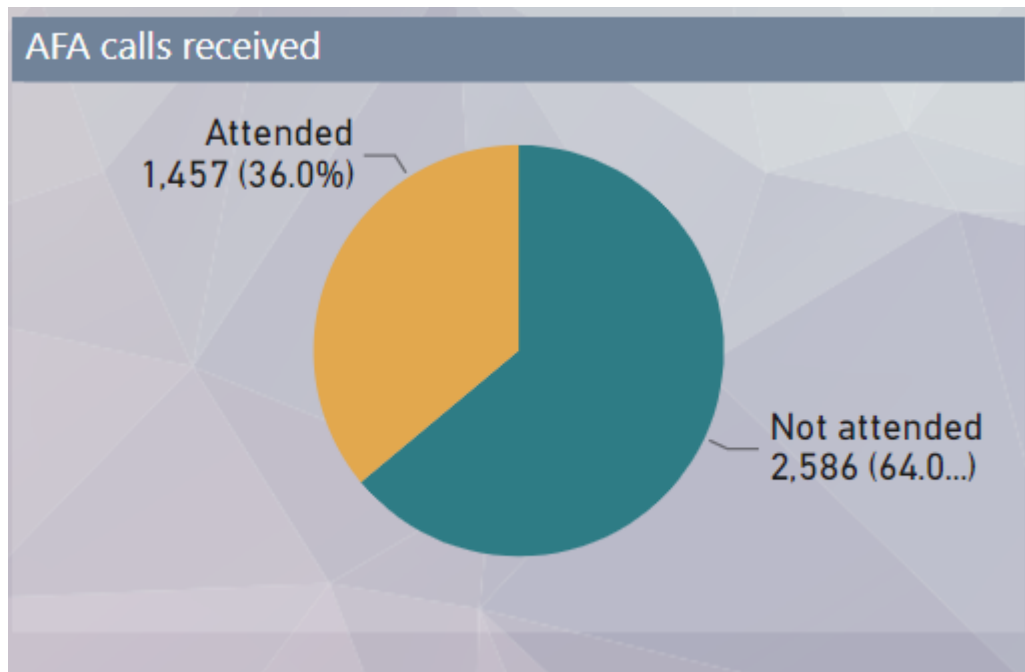
The table below shows the recorded use of 999eye across the reporting periods.

	Q4 21/22	Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23
WMFS	1848	2104	2995	1518	2819
SFRS	549	549	695	436	605
Total	2397	2653	3690	1954	3424

3.5 **Automated Fire Alarm Calls**

Fire Control continue to be an integral function supporting the introduction of CRMP projects by ensuring a proportional level of response to incidents, including those involving Automated Fire Alarms.

A total of 4,043 calls were received relating to Automated Fire Alarms. Of those calls 1,457 were attended (36%) and 2,586 required no attendance (64%).

AFA calls received

Attended
1,457 (36.0%)

Not attended
2,586 (64.0...)

Calls by Month

Jan 2023	Feb 2023	Mar 2023
1,409	1,273	1,361

Ref. AU/SC/2023/April/10404235

4. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1　In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1　There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1　There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1　There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

The contact name for this report is Alex Shapland Strategic Enabler

Wayne Brown
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Ref.　AU/SC/2023/April/10404235