WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4TH DECEMBER 2023

1. **FIRE CONTROL PERFORMANCE REPORT – Q2 2023/24**

   Report of the Chief Fire Officer

   RECOMMENDED

1.1 THAT the operational performance of Fire Control for Q2 be noted.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

   This report is submitted to provide the committee with an update of the operational performance of Fire Control. The report covers a 3-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 19,921 emergency calls between 1 July 2023 and 30 September 2023 across both brigade areas.

   This is a 29% decrease in the number of calls received from the same quarter in 22/23. This is because of a reduction in severe weather-related incidents than the period than the previous year when extreme heat conditions were experienced.

   The number of calls received for Q2 23/24 was split 15,049 calls for the West Midlands (75.5%), 4,304 calls for Staffordshire (21.6%) and 568 calls from outside of service areas (2.8%). This ratio continues to be consistent with the previous reporting periods.

Of the 15,049 emergency calls received for WMFS across the reporting period; Fire Control mobilised to 7,668 (50.9%) of incidents.

Of the 4,304 emergency calls received for Staffordshire FRS across the reporting period, Fire Control mobilised to 2,195 (50.9%) of incidents.

The exact proportion of incidents mobilised to for both Staffordshire and West Midlands demonstrates that Fire Control are applying procedures consistently for call challenge of automatic fire alarms and special service calls across both services.
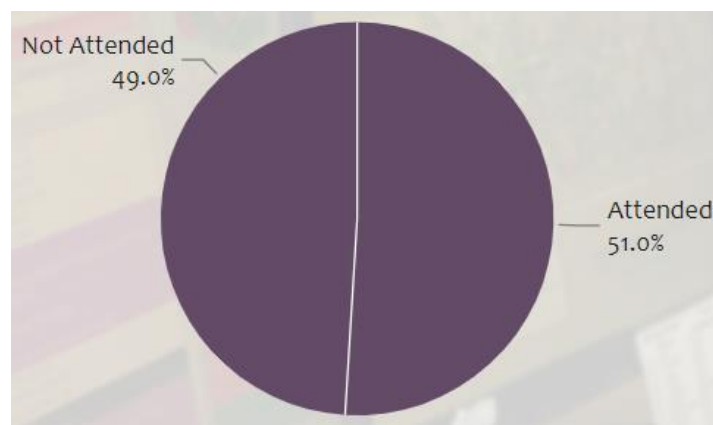
3.2 Call Handling

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.

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 92 seconds, this is a 3 second reduction on the previous quarter.

Positively, we continue to see a quarter on quarter reduction of call handling times.

Quarter 4 22/23	101 seconds
Quarter 1 23/24	95 seconds
Quarter 2 23/24	92 seconds

This is due to the introduction of a new call salutation and method of address gathering and searching.

3.3 Emergency Call Ring Time

Emergency call ring time demonstrates the reactiveness and responsiveness of Fire Control when answering emergency calls.

Q2 has seen the average call ring time increase from 8.87 seconds in Q1 to 11.32, which is a 22% increase. The number of connections made remains relative with an average of 4,504 in Q1 and 4,413 in Q2.

The increase in call ring time, directly correlates with the reduction of shifts that were at optimum staffing levels throughout Q2.

3.4 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

Fire Control dynamically amended the initial level of response 660 times throughout the quarter (6.7% of all incidents mobilized to), increasing the attendance 377 times and reducing the attendance 283 times. The dynamic mobilising decisions are supporting the most efficient use of resources across Staffordshire and West Midlands brigade areas.

On the occasions Fire Control reduced the attendance, three of the incidents resulted in a subsequent make up (1.3%). Recognising that additional resources may be required for additional equipment or due to incident escalation between the point of mobilising to in attendance, the target has been set at 2% of all reduced attendances.

The three incidents include two where specific equipment was required and one where an assistance message was received 35 minutes after crews arrived at the incident. This demonstrates that the decisions to reduce the attendance by Fire Control initially were the correct ones.

CASE STUDY

3.5 **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.

999eye 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.

In Q2 23/24 Fire Control used 999eye 4,705 times, this was for 23.6% of all calls received (including repeat calls). This is slightly down from 5,350 in Q1 which is due to a combination of fewer calls this quarter, and some variance on the incident types within those calls.

CASE STUDY

3.6 **Automated Fire Alarm Calls (WMFS only)**

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 4,660 AFA calls were received for the reporting period. This equates to 31% of all emergency calls received for the quarter for WMFS.

Whilst Fire Control call challenged and did not respond to 61.1% of these calls, there is still an ongoing impact on time spent managing these types of call. Approximately 155 hours in the quarter was spent handling these types of calls based on an average of 2 minutes per call.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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