

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27 FEBRUARY 2019

1. Call Challenge

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

THAT the committee notes the West Midlands Fire Service (the Service) approach to call challenge.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is submitted following a request at the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 14 November 2018 for additional information regarding the approach that the Service employs to call challenging.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Emergency Call Management (ECM)

The Emergency Call Management (ECM) protocol of the Service offers a generic system for the successful management of emergency calls based on the principle that an emergency call can be dealt with within three distinct stages:

- **Stage One:** Primary questions, which aid the mobilising decision
- **Stage two:** Assessment questions that help build a picture of the incident, aid mobilising decisions, and assist the safety of responders and the caller
- **Stage Three:** Pre-arrival advice designed to assist the safety of the caller and the public at the scene

3.2. The overall aim of using the above stages is to ensure that the response is appropriate to the types of risk and calls attended, reduce the risk to responders and improve public safety. This is achieved by the provision of timely, accurate and relevant information, which will better equip the Service to:

- Resource appropriately against the identified risk (dynamic mobilising)
- Reduce risk to the first emergency service crews by the provision of information of
- the threat, pre-planning and briefing
- Reduce risk to the public and the environment by the provision of appropriate and
- accurate information, of the potential effects of any occurrence and how to
- Implement the necessary control measures to aid public safety.
- At each stage of the ECM process Fire Control will have to consider if resources should be: sent, adjusted, returned/redirected or sent to a Rendezvous Point (RVP).

3.3 **Dynamic Mobilisation (DM)**

Dynamic Mobilising (DM) involves using resources flexibly and efficiently in the approach to ECM. This will result in a proportionate and appropriate initial response. Therefore, allowing Fire Control to alter or amend initial response decisions 'to achieve the best match between incident needs and resources available at the earliest opportunity, to ensure those in need receive a safe and appropriate service.'

Dynamic mobilisation may be influenced by:

- Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI)
- Repeat calls
- Information received on the initial call, local knowledge on specific sites, equipment and appliance availability of proposed resources
- Additional information received from reliable sources in attendance
- Additional intelligence from imagery
- High level of incidents in progress

- Previous incidents to a location
- Other considerations - weather, time of day, travel distances
- This is not an exhaustive list.

3.4 **Call Challenging**

Fire Control will call challenge all types of incidents in line with the ECM and Dynamic Mobilising policies. In addition to this, they will challenge calls to premises that have automatic fire alarms fitted when the call is received either from an Alarm Receiving Centre or where the call is made by someone at the premises.

Fire Control determine the level of call challenge needed dependent upon the type of premises. Premises are grouped into three different categories:

- Life Risk
- Hospitals
- Non-Life Risk/Commercial

3.5 **Life Risk**

Fire Control will not challenge a life risk premise, however the question 'do you know what has caused the alarm to actuate?' will be asked. The nearest appliance will be mobilised. In addition, a Business Support Vehicle (BSV) will attend within 20 minutes unless it is a domestic dwelling.

Examples of life risk premises are:

- Sheltered Accommodation/OAP/Care Homes
- Special Needs School
- Boarding School
- Domestic Dwelling
- Children's Home

3.6 **Hospitals**

Fire Control will not challenge hospitals, however, it is not classed as life risk because of the number of staff and management that are on site at any point. For hospitals a Business Support Vehicle is mobilised within 20 minutes on

its own. If the Business Support Vehicle is not available or outside 20 minutes, then the most appropriate resource within 20 minutes is mobilised.

3.7 **Non-Life Risk/Commercial**

Fire Control will always call challenge a call to a non-life risk/commercial premises 24/7 unless there are special instructions relating to a particular premise that indicates otherwise.

Examples of non-life risk premises are:

- Shopping Centres/Retail Units/Shops
- Commercial Premises/Offices
- Pubs & Places of entertainment
- Medical Centres/Doctors Surgeries/Clinics
- Magistrates Courts/Police Stations
- Schools/Nurseries

Alarm activations at any of the above premises will only receive an attendance if they fall into the following criteria

- Life Risk Premises/Hospitals
- Call received from a lone worker
- Two detector head activations (double knock)
- Break Glass operation (not malicious)

- 3.8 If the Service is not attending as they do not fall into the above criteria, Fire Control will advise that the fire service will not attend unless they receive a further call to advise of signs of smoke or fire, in which case the correct level of response is mobilised based on the information received, for example, signs of fire would initiate a two appliance attendance.

4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

This report does not raise issues which should be drawn to

the attention of the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

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

Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 14 November 2018.

The contact name for this report is ACFO Gary Taylor, telephone number 0121 380 6006.

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CHIEF FIRE OFFICER