

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**14 FEBRUARY 2022**

1. **FIRE CONTROL PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER 3 AND 4 2019/20, AND QUARTERS 1 TO 4 2020/21**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDED

1.1 THAT the Committee note the Fire Control performance update for the following two periods:

- 01/10/19 to 31/03/20 (quarters 3 and 4, 2019/20)
- 01/04/20 to 31/03/21 (quarters 1 to 4, 2020/21)

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 an 18-month period to bring the reporting schedule up to date following the reconvening of the Committee in November 2021. Performance information covering 2021/22 will be submitted to the Committee at its meeting on 23 May 2022.

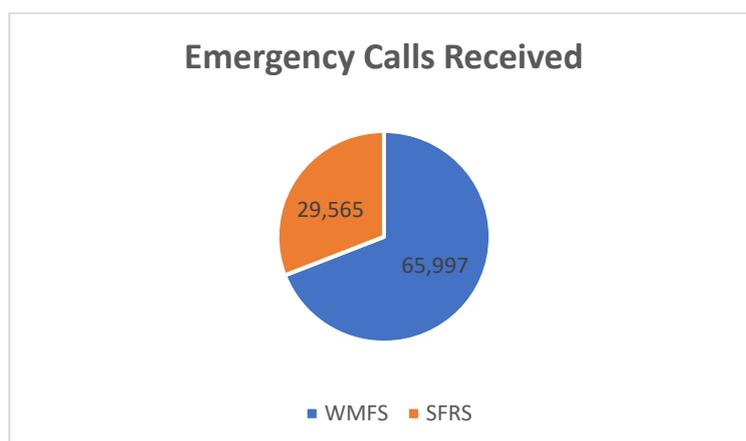
3. **BACKGROUND**

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 95,562 emergency calls between 1 October 2019 and 31 March 2021 across both brigade areas.

This was split 65,997 calls for the West Midlands (69%) and 29,565 calls for Staffordshire (31%).



The table below shows the breakdown of calls received for West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) and Staffordshire FRS across a 3-year period and shows a continued reduction in calls received across the same reporting periods.

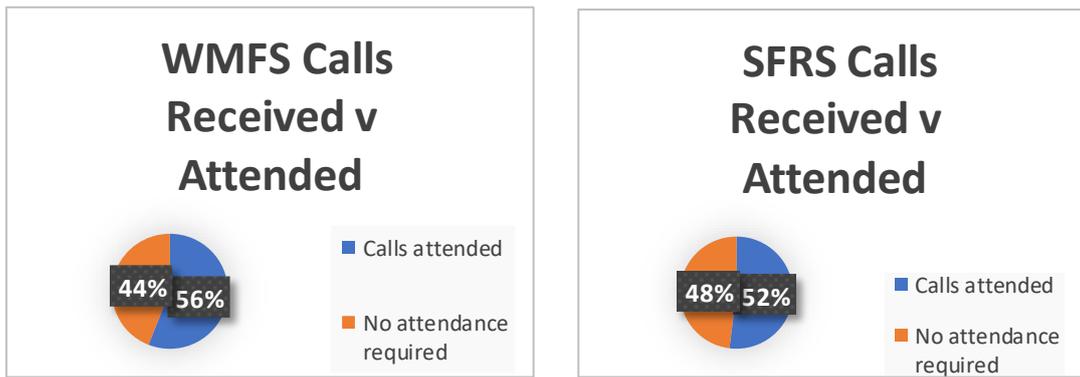
Period	WMFS			Staffordshire FRS		
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Q1 Apr - Jun	14,204	13,135	12,514	6,444	5,437	5,569
Q2 Jul – Sept	18,869	13,353	13,168	9,482	5,288	5,330
Q3 Oct – Dec	10,968	10,588	9,996	4,939	4,749	4,578
Q4 Jan - Mar	10,796	10,382	9,349	4,467	4,746	4,593

Of the 65,997 emergency calls received for WMFS across the reporting period; Fire Control mobilised to 37,189 (56%) incidents.

Of the 29,565 emergency calls received for Staffordshire FRS across the reporting period, Fire Control mobilised to 15,454 (52%) 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



### 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 types broken down for both Staffordshire and West Midlands:

Q1 – Q4 2020/21

brigade	SFRS		WMFS		Total	
	Call Handling	Count	Call Handling	Count	Call Handling	Count
FIRE	80	452	79	1470	79	1922
FIRE PR	92	26	75	72	80	98
HOUSE FIRE	62	315	58	1077	59	1392
HOUSE FIRE PR	64	48	63	148	63	196
RTC PR	90	230	69	603	74	833

Q3 – Q4 2019/20

brigade	SFRS		WMFS		Total	
	Call Handling	Count	Call Handling	Count	Call Handling	Count
FIRE	80	246	77	763	77	1009
FIRE PR	76	14	68	35	70	49
HOUSE FIRE	62	153	55	524	56	677
HOUSE FIRE PR	63	22	61	77	61	99
RTC PR	90	157	73	445	76	602

For the above reporting periods captured in the table, Fire Control have maintained an average mobilisation time below 80 seconds. Fire Control's continued focus on mobilising with the required urgency is a key factor in survivability and limiting damage to property.

### 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 following charts show dynamic mobilising data captured for two periods, 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 for both organisations.

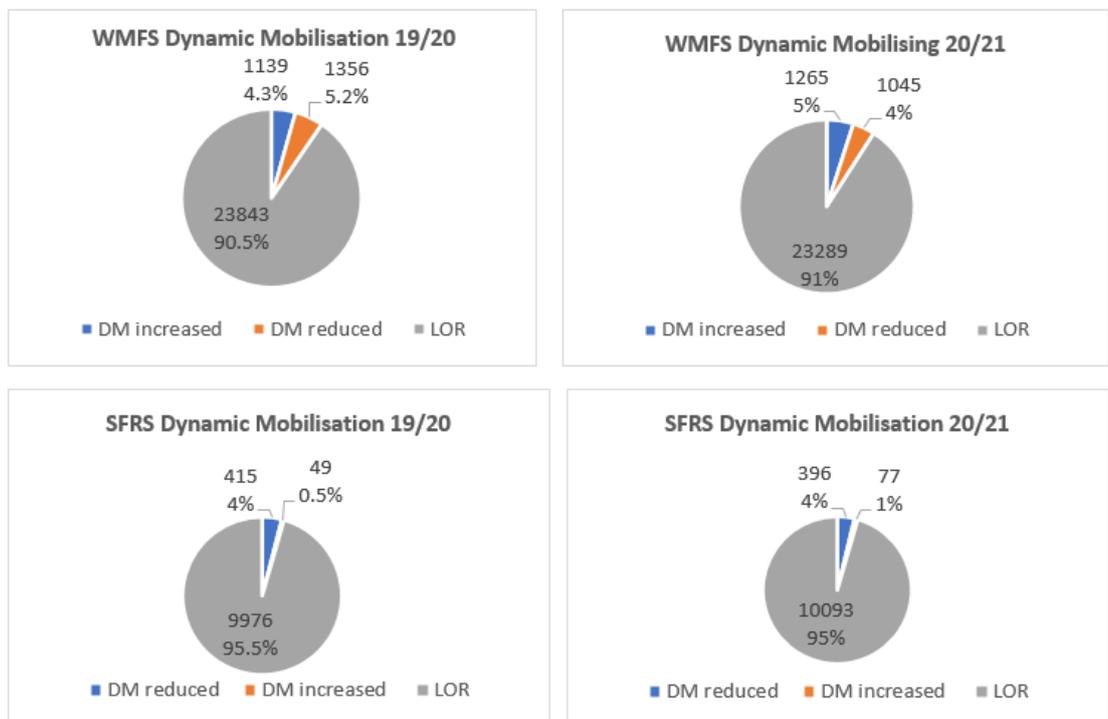
Fire Control dynamically amended the initial level of response 2,495 times throughout 2019/20 and 2310 times in 2020/21 for incidents in West Midlands area.

They dynamically amended the initial level of response 464 times throughout 2019/20 and 473 times in 2020/21 for incidents in Staffordshire area.

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.

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.



### 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.

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 through the use of 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.

The data indicates that in Q1 and Q2 there were a higher number of 999eye proposals and successful images being received. In Q3 and Q4 there is a drop in proposals, which is linked to a reduction in the number of emergency calls received into Fire Control.

	Q3 – Q4 19/20	Q1 20/21	Q2 20/21	Q3 20/21	Q4 20/21
<b>WMFS</b>	1825	2891	3160	1478	1716
<b>SFRS</b>	459	820	837	419	569
<b>Totals</b>	2,284	3,711	3,997	1,897	2,285

### 3.5 **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

To realise the full effectiveness of the staffing model within Fire Control the staff number needs to be maintained with 13 members of staff per watch, 52 in total, which excludes the Fire Control support team and Management team.

In Q3 of 2019/20 we saw the staff numbers in Fire Control drop below 52 to 44, rising to 54 in Q4 following successful recruitment, selection and training.

Fire Control staff numbers remained above 50 personnel across Q1 to Q4 2020/21.

Fire Control recruited and selected Firefighters (Control) to join two training courses during the reporting period. To enable Fire Control to maintain social distancing due to the Covid pandemic, the number of individuals on each course was reduced from 8 to 4 per course.

A total of 215 applications were received with 28 individuals invited to a selection day for shortlisting. Out of these, 8 individuals were successful with the top 4 invited joining course 1 and the next 4 joining a second course.

Of the 215 applicants 42% were male and 13% BAME.

From the 28 applicants who progressed through to the assessment day, 20 were female (71%) and 8 were male (29%) with 5 of the 28 indicating that they were BAME (18%).

Of the successful 8 applicants, 1 was male and 1 was BAME.

### 3.6 **VISION 4 COMMAND AND CONTROL SYSTEM**

During this reporting period this was the report for progress against the upgrade of the mobilizing system, Vision 4.

The Vision Command and Control (C&C) system is used for integrated call, incident and resource management across WMFS and SFRS. During this reporting period work was ongoing with our Command and Control supplier – Capita, to upgrade the current Vision 3 (in use since 2008) system to Vision 4.

To achieve Go Live we were testing individually the remaining 3 key component parts -

1. Change to use the Corporate Gazetteer on Vision 4 – good progress made
2. Improved access of the data coming from Vision 4 activity into back-office systems for required reporting requirements
3. Comms/message network infrastructure in both brigades
4. Vision 4 Command & Control System – complete
5. Improved Mapping - this product will also be used to update MDT mapping layers - complete

There had been some progress on the above whilst resources focused on the impact of Covid-19 on Business Continuity arrangements and work carried out to support the change to the Corporate Gazetteer.

This element, containing some 4 location million records, along with the associated risk information, was extensive to accurately map across, however, remained a priority for all key stakeholders.

### 3.7 **EMERGENCY SERVICES MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME**

Despite Covid-19, work continued whenever possible, at all levels, across all workstreams and their associated planning requirements, to enable optimum transition from Airwave onto the broadband based Emergency Services Network (ESN) - nationally, regionally, locally and across Fire, Police and Ambulance (3ES), in England, Scotland and Wales, as previously reported.

The programme held a board meeting with Motorola and took the decision to move to an alternative approach which will deliver an enhanced package of capability in the next ESN release. This means this will be a product that is closer to what is needed for mass transition (ESN Version 1.0), and thus reduces the delivery risk by simplifying the number of upgrades required and could accelerate the journey to ESN Version 1.0. This product will be known as ESN Beta and will be released in early 2022.

#### **Full Business Case**

During the reporting period this remained in progress due to changes detailed above.

#### **Funding**

Local Resource funding (LTR) for 21/22 - it is expected that, as we will remain in the prepare phase at this time, this will be the same as 20/21.

Airwave Grant 21/22 – the Section 31 Grant should continue however we have not yet received this confirmation formally.

#### **Identifying Minimum Levels of ESN Capability for Transition**

This work is continuing nationally and the 3 Emergency Services are focusing on the anticipated key decision points to be made throughout the ESN journey to mass transition, detailing -

- 'Musts' - absolute red line for the phase to progress.
- 'Shoulds' - the Programme should make every endeavour to deliver

## **Coverage Assurance**

Good progress being made with the amount of local road coverage data available via the national portal\* from the 'fit and forget' automotive devices allocated and fitted into vehicles within this region.

The Fire and Rescue Services in this region were also part of the coverage assurance pilots and work is now escalating across the region to build upon this and focus on Fire and Rescue Service critical operations locations (COL) including Fire Service premises and high-risk incident locations.

This workstream is being proactively supported through a collaborative approach across the 3 Emergency Services and the national portal view for project managers, etc. includes data collected from all sources.

### 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**

The course of action recommended in 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**

Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference

Fire Control Performance Report Q1 & Q2 2019/20

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Ref. AU/SC/2022/Feb/10102221