

Report of the Assistant Director: Prevention

Attendance Performance Measure – proposed changes following public consultation

Purpose of report

1. To present a revised proposal for the new Attendance Performance Measure, which has been considered by the Policy and Resources Committee, for consideration and approval.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that a new Attendance Performance Measure be introduced with effect from 1st April 2023 as follows:

- i) Attendance times for a broad range of emergency incidents will be measured across three time zones (10, 15 and 20 minutes from the fire station).;***
- ii) For attendance times that take longer than expected, the reasons why will be analysed and areas for improvement will be identified as appropriate, and quarterly performance for each area will be published on the internet; and***
- iii) Attendance times will be measured from the time the fire station is alerted by Fire Control to the time the fire engine arrives at the incident scene.***

Introduction and Background

2. The Community Risk Management Plan 2021-2025 (the CRMP) highlighted a need to review the Service's Attendance Standard as it was considered to be no longer a meaningful measure of performance. In the public consultation for the CRMP in 2020, the respondents generally agreed with the proposal for a new way of recording attendance aligned to Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service methodology. The CRMP also then proposed that further public consultation be carried out to gain views on proposed changes, when the new way of measuring attendance was determined.
3. At your meeting on 15 February 2022, the Fire Authority gave approval to commence public consultation on agreed proposed changes, which would be incorporated into a new Attendance Performance Measure to replace the current Attendance Standard.

4. Independent consultants, Opinion Research Services (ORS) conducted the consultation over the summer of 2022 and their '[Final report of Findings](#)' was submitted in October 2022.
5. At their meeting on 15 November 2022, Policy and Resources Committee considered the '[Final report of Findings](#)' including a short presentation from ORS, and having reviewed the findings are recommending the Authority to approve and adopt the proposed changes to the Attendance Performance Measure.
6. It should be stressed that the proposed new Measure is an *internal* measure of performance only. The public will still see the same emergency response as at present, with a response to all incidents as quickly and safely as possible with the closest available and most appropriate resources. However, the new Measure will provide the public with increased transparency and information about how quickly they are likely to get a fire engine, and to a much wider range of emergencies.

The current Attendance Standard

7. The Attendance Standard was introduced in 2009 to assess performance in regard to how quickly fire engines attend incidents. The Standard originally intended to measure the performance of the first and second fire engines when attending fires in buildings and at road traffic collisions, but only attendance by the first fire engine at fires in building within 10 minutes on 75% of occasions has been consistently reported.
8. The attendance time was calculated from the time the emergency call was received by Fire Control to the time the fire engine arrived at the incident scene. The calculation was expressed as follows:
 - 'call handling time' + 'crew turnout time' + 'travel time'.
9. Over the years, the Attendance Standard has become less meaningful for a number of reasons, including:
 - the Service attend a much broader range of emergency incidents than fires in buildings (which represent just 7% of all incidents attended),
 - the blanket targets do not take account of where our fire stations are or how they are crewed,
 - the Standard hasn't kept pace with the changes to road networks and increasing levels of traffic congestion, and does not take into account weather conditions or time of day/night,
 - the overwhelmingly main reason for fire engines not meeting the 10 minute (75%) standard relates to travel distance to the incident, which in two geographically large counties is worthy of note.
10. To address this, the 2021-2025 CRMP included the following commitment:

A new standard based on our Alliance work with Shropshire FRS will be consulted upon and, if appropriate, introduced during the term of the CRMP. This will be complemented by a travel-time analysis of all incidents that do not align with expected travel times, in order to identify any areas for improvement.

Public Consultation on a new Attendance Performance Measure

11. Proposed changes to replace the Attendance Standard with a new Attendance Performance Measure were set out in a consultation document that formed the basis of a public consultation exercise carried out over the summer of 2022.
12. The new Attendance Performance Measure aims to give communities a clearer and more realistic picture of the response times they can expect for a wider range of incidents in relation to where they live. Three main changes were proposed:

a. Remove call handling time from the calculation

Attendance times will be measured from the time the fire station is alerted by Fire Control to the time the fire engine arrives at the incident scene. This follows, and aligns the Service with, the current national guidance on attendance times. Call handling time will still be reviewed, measured and reported separately.

b. Measure performance across three time zones (10, 15 and 20 minutes from the fire station) rather than having a blanket 10 minute target as at present.

In those areas that lie outside the 20 minute zone, additional prevention work and community safety activity have already been prioritised.

c. Measure performance across a broader range of emergency incidents rather than just fires in buildings.

This would include those incidents that have a potential to cause harm to life, property or the environment (such as fires, road traffic collisions and flooding incidents), as determined by the Service.

13. In June 2022, Opinion Research Services (ORS) were appointed to conduct an independent public consultation exercise. The consultation ran from 8 July 2022 to 16 September 2022. The consultation consisted of the consultation document, an online questionnaire and two public focus groups. Notice of the consultation was sent to all Fire Authority members and it was widely publicised through the Service website, social media and the internal Bulletin,

through press releases and it was communicated through all local authority services, including parish councils, local organisations and other stakeholders.

14. Having considered a report on the outcomes of the consultation process Policy & Resources Committee, whilst disappointed at the relatively low response rate, unanimously recommended that the Authority adopt a revised performance measure as proposed.

The new Attendance Performance Measure

15. **The aim is to measure attendance at those incidents that have a potential to cause harm to life, property or the environment.** If the new Measure is approved, a full list of proposed incidents will be developed and will be measured from the proposed launch of the new Attendance Performance Measure in April 2023. In practical terms, this will correspond closely with the 'Emergency Response' graded response category set out in the Service's 'Emergency Driving Graded Response Service Policy/Instruction (SPI), and highlights where a blue light response is necessary based upon the risk and information received.
16. Taking all this into account, the new Attendance Performance Measure is proposed as follows:

Attendance times for a broad range of emergency incidents will be measured across three time zones (10, 15 and 20 minutes from the fire station).

For attendance times that take longer than expected, the reasons why will be analysed and areas for improvement will be identified as appropriate, and quarterly performance for each area will be published on the internet.

Attendance times will be measured from the time the fire station is alerted by Fire Control to the time the fire engine arrives at the incident scene.
17. Quarterly performance reporting will provide an analysis of attendance times across the three time zones, including those that fall outside expected times. This will be complemented by further scrutiny at a local level to understand what might be slowing our response and to examine how it might be improved.

Conclusion/Summary

18. The CRMP 2021-2025 proposed a review of the Service's Attendance Standard, which is considered no longer meaningful and is overly restrictive in what it measures. Following review, officers published a consultation document setting out proposed changes to form the basis of a new Attendance Performance Measure. Public consultation on the proposed changes found a good level of support and the new Attendance Performance

Measure set out above is proposed for Fire Authority consideration and is recommended for approval.

19. On approval, it is proposed that the new Attendance Performance Measure will be implemented from 1 April 2023. Performance against the new Measure will be reported as part of the quarterly performance reviews submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	None.
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	A review of the Attendance Performance Measure was proposed in the Community Risk Management Plan 2021-2025. This also links closely to the Core Strategies, and in particular delivery of the Response Strategy.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	N/A
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Public consultation on proposed changes to the Attendance Performance Measure has been undertaken.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	An EIA was completed for the CRMP 2021-2025.
Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)	Not required – no personal data is identified

Supporting Information

None