

7. Chief Fire Officer's Service Report

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Authority of recent key developments and activities together with performance information for the period 1 October 2011 to 31 December 2011.

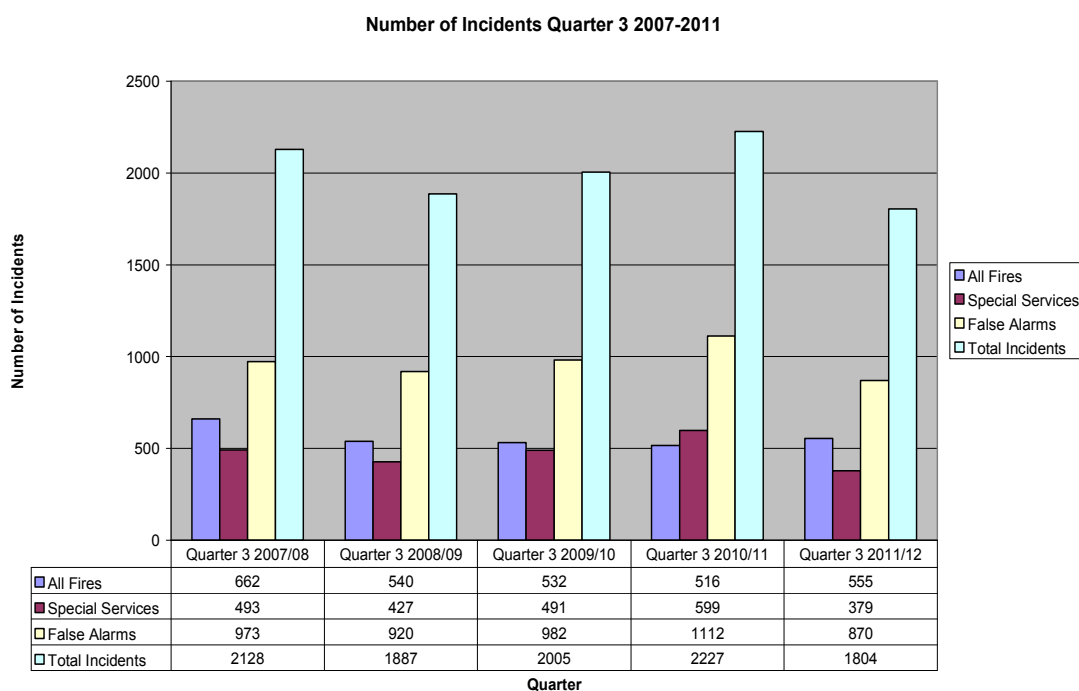
Recommendation

The Chief Fire Officer recommends that the report be noted.

Performance

Operational Activity

2. Figure 1 below demonstrates overall operational activity during Quarter 3 2011-2012 compared with the third quarter in the previous 4 years:



(Figure 1 – Comparative number of incidents Q3 2007/08-2011/12)

3. Total incident numbers for Quarter 3 2011-2012 show a decrease on the same quarter last year, though this was partially due to the increased activity in Quarter 3 2010-11 due to the extreme weather conditions experienced in December 2010. A total of 1804 incidents were attended in Quarter 3 2011-2012 compared with 2227 incidents in Quarter 3 2010-2011, (-19.0%). Although there was an increase in the total number of fires attended when compared with the same quarter last year, the number of special service incidents attended and the number of false alarms attended have both decreased compared with the same quarter last year. This has led to the lowest Quarter 3 total number of incidents attended in the last five years.

Total Number of Fires Attended

	Quarter 3 2010-11	Quarter 3 2011-12	Percentage change
Primary Fires	277	277	0.0%
Secondary Fires	135	213	+57.8%
Chimney Fires	104	65	-37.5%
Total Fires	516	555	+7.6%

(Table 1 – Total Fires Q3 10-11 and Q3 11-12)

- The total number of fires has increased from 516 in Quarter 3 2010-2011 to 555 in Quarter 3 2011-2012, (+7.6%). Table 1 above demonstrates that the increase in total fires is mainly due to a 57.8% increase in secondary fires in Quarter 3 2011-2012 compared with Quarter 3 2010-2011, which has outweighed a significant decrease in the number of chimney fires attended when compared with the same quarter last year.

Secondary Fires

- The table below illustrates that there have been increases in the number of secondary fires in both October and December when compared with the same quarter last year. The summer increase in secondary fires has lasted longer into October than in the previous year and the number of secondary fires attended in October represents the highest monthly October figure in the last eight years.

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Quarterly Total
Secondary Fires Q3 10-11	52	56	27	135
Secondary Fires Q3 11-12	126	49	38	213
Percentage Change	+142.3%	-12.5%	+40.7%	+57.8%

(Table 2 – Secondary Fires per month Q2 10-11 and Q2 11-12)

- The majority of secondary fires in October were located in tree scrub, loose refuse and domestic gardens which together accounted for 73 out of 126 secondary fires in that month. Accidental secondary fires were responsible for over half of all secondary fires in October (51.6%) compared with the other two months of the Quarter where the majority of secondary fires were caused deliberately.
- Other than the increase in tree scrub, loose refuse and domestic garden fires there are no other discernable trends as to the increase in secondary fires. The milder late summer/early autumn weather conditions may have exacerbated the increase.

Special Service Incidents

8. The number of Special Service incidents has decreased in Quarter 3 2011-12 compared with the same quarter last year with 379 incidents attended in Quarter 3 2011-2012 compared with 599 in Quarter 3 2010-2011, (-36.7%). The largest change is in the number of flooding incidents which has reduced significantly when compared with the same quarter last year in which there were a large number of burst pipes over the Christmas 2010 period caused by the prolonged frozen conditions experienced at that time:

	Quarter 3 2010-11	Quarter 3 2011-12	Percentage change
RTC Incidents	178	179	0.6%
Flooding	178	14	-92.1%
Other Special Services	243	186	-23.5%
All Special Services	599	379	-36.7%

(Table 3 – Special Services Q3 10-11 and Q3 11-12)

False Alarm Incidents

9. The number of false alarm incidents has decreased in Quarter 3 2011-2012 with 870 incidents attended in Quarter 3 2010-2011 compared with 1112 in Quarter 3 2010-2011 (-21.8%):

	Quarter 3 2010-11	Quarter 3 2011-12	Percentage change
Malicious False Alarms	13	15	15.4%
False Alarm Good Intent	222	175	-21.2%
Automatic False Alarms	877	680	-22.5%
Total False Alarms	1112	870	-21.8%

(Table 4 – False Alarms Q3 10-11 and Q3 11-12)

10. During the Quarter 3 period the Service attended a total of 424 automatic false alarms at non-domestic premises compared with 520 in the same quarter last year. This represents an 18.5% reduction. The number of attendances at automatic fire alarms within domestic properties has also decreased significantly from 357 in the same quarter last year to 256 attendances in Quarter 3. This represents a 28.3% reduction. The Service did see a slight rise in the attendance at Malicious False Alarms which, although minimal, is being monitored.

Health and Safety

Incidents and Injuries

	Oct	Nov	Dec	This Quarter Total	Previous Quarter Total
Serious Incidents ¹	5	0	5	10	11
Near Hit/Cause for Concern ²	3	0	7	10	16
Potential Exposure ³	11	13	5	29	10
Specialist Investigations ⁴	3	1	1	5	3

Analysis

11. Of the total 83 reported Health and Safety related incidents this quarter, only 10 had the potential to be or were, 'serious incidents'.
12. The serious, or potentially serious, incidents this quarter comprised of the following:
 - A potential hazard encountered when crew were responding to an incident and encountered a lorry travelling towards them on their side of the road.
 - A wheel becoming detached from one an off-road vehicle during training;
 - Lack of pressure to the hose when undertaking fire fighting during training;
 - Bruised ribs following a slip, trip or fall in Breathing Apparatus chamber during Breathing Apparatus training;
 - Blistering and reddening of the arms during fire behaviour Breathing Apparatus training;
 - Firefighter splashed in face by battery acid/water whilst attending a Road Traffic Collision involving two cars;
 - Malfunction of Breathing Apparatus set whilst undertaking Breathing Apparatus training at the Fire Service College;
 - Potential Hazard identified whereby the snap gate karabiner could fail;
 - Potential Hazard identified whereby exposed bolt heads on a ladder gantry, on a fire appliance, were wearing through the ladder housing; and
 - A towable trailer wheel centre badly cracked.
13. The Specialist Investigations that were mobilised this quarter comprised of the following:

¹ Incidents either actually resulting in, or having the potential to result in a fatality, serious personal injury or significant loss or damage.

² Incidents that almost resulted in an injury or conditions identified that have the potential to cause injury, loss or a near hit but have not done so up to the time of reporting – e.g. items falling but not injuring anyone.

³ Incidents where persons were potentially exposed to hazardous substances (usually during operational duties) – e.g. exposure to river water during swift water rescue training, exposure to asbestos during fire fighting. Water rescue training increases during this quarter and therefore so do potential exposures. This method of recording is to be reviewed.

⁴ Of incidents either actually resulting in, or having the potential to result in, serious injuries or losses.

- A wheel becoming detached from an off-road vehicle during training – Debrief held and other similar vehicles were checked, subsequent recommendations made to Fleet;
- Bruised ribs following a slip, trip or fall in Breathing Apparatus chamber during Breathing Apparatus training – Debrief held;
- Blistering and reddening of the arms during fire behaviour training – Debrief held and recommendations made to be taken to the Health and Safety Working Group;
- Malfunction of Breathing Apparatus set whilst undertaking training at the Fire Service College; and
- Minor collision between one of our Community Safety vehicles and a police car.

14. This quarter, 13 of the 29 incidents of potential exposure occurred during operational training. In addition, there were 4 reported incidents of verbal abuse to crews.

Fleet Incidents

Station	Total	Response Driving
21 Worcester	4	3
22 Stourport-on-Severn	1	1
24 Kidderminster	1	0
25 Bromsgrove	1	1
27 Redditch	1	0
28 Evesham	1	0
46 Hereford	2	1

Station	Total	Response Driving
51 Kingsland	1	1
53 Tenbury	2	0
Headquarters	1	0
North District	1	0
Ops Logistics	1	0
Total	17	7

Training Completed 2011-12

- 36 personnel were trained in undertaking risk assessment – this now completes the requirement for one qualified person per watch/department;
- 30 personnel were trained in managing hazardous substances – this now completes the requirement for one qualified person per watch/department;
- 9 Fleet Technicians were trained in using/managing abrasive wheels;
- 9 Fleet Technicians were trained in noise and vibration management;
- All Fire Control staff were trained in managing Display Screen Equipment (DSE);
- 26 departmental and station staff were trained in managing Display Screen Equipment;
- 30 staff were trained in conflict resolution;
- 15 managers received NEBOSH Health and Safety training – this is a core skill for this management level. Approximately 90% now possess this qualification; and
- 30 watch and crew commanders have received IOSH Managing Safely – this is a core skill for this management level. Approximately 60% now possess this qualification.

Significant Completed Activities

- The “Manager’s Health and Safety Handbook” has now been shared with the region, who intend to use it as a model for their own versions;
- A regional review of the GAP analysis conducted by all fire services within the region against the HSE’s consolidated report following its inspections of 8 fire services, to draw out key themes from which to develop leading indicators, has begun;
- Reviews of 15 Service policies has been completed;
- Two new policies have been written relating to asbestos management and pressure systems and gas containers;
- Delivery of 3 support sessions to Fleet and toolbox talks now developed for Fleet and other technicians;
- Nearly all premises action plans have now been written;
- Development of bespoke premises workplace inspection forms; and
- Completion of a GAP analysis against the Marlie Farm Investigation findings.

Items of Interest

Close Down of West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services Regional Control Centre Limited

15. At the Meeting of the Board of Directors on 13 January 2012, the Board resolved:
1. Unanimously to return any surplus funding from the DCLG grant for the Regional Fire Control Project (currently at approximately £152,360) to the DCLG minus all costs and disbursements which have been, or will be, incurred by and of behalf of the Company up to dissolution;
 2. That one (1) has been dealt with, unanimously to voluntarily dissolve the Company;
 3. To delegate power to the Company’s legal advisor and Chairman of the Board to complete all the necessary procedural steps to dissolve the Company, including completing the necessary forms for Companies House;
 4. That urgent decisions are delegated to the Chairman, reporting back to the Board as appropriate; and
 5. That a further Board meeting, if required, be convened at an appropriate date.

Presentations at Worcestershire County Council and Herefordshire Council

16. The CFO was recently requested by both the Authority Chairman and Vice-Chairman to make presentations to Members of each Constituent Authority with regards to activities and developments in the Service. Members also received an overview of the budget position for the Service as known at the time. Both sessions were well attended, with Members engaged in asking questions about the work that we do. The feedback from both Herefordshire and Worcestershire Members was very positive and events such as these provide a good opportunity to promote the work of the Service amongst our community leaders throughout the two counties.

Celebration of Success

17. The Service hosted its annual Celebration of Success event on 20 January 2012 at Worcester Guildhall. This was held to recognise the achievements of operational and support staff who have passed various qualifications. It was also an opportunity to thank the staff for the hard work they put in to completing these.
18. The awards were presented by CFO Mark Yates and the Chairman of the Authority, Cllr Derek Prodger MBE.
19. There were 52 awards presented in total and these included awards for recipients who had completed their Trainee Firefighter Programme, their Development Programme, A1 Assessors Awards, Level 7 Diplomas, Edexcel Professional Certificates, NVQ awards and Masters Degrees.
20. Congratulations were given to all the recipients including those that could not attend.
21. The event proved to be a great success and the 100 guests who attended to see their friends and families be presented with their certificates enjoyed the evening.

Special Awards Event

22. At an informal event held in Service HQ on 31 January 2012 attended by the Chairman of the FRA, the Chief Fire Officer awarded three Commendations and four Letters of Appreciation to the staff involved in the successful resuscitation of a member of HQ staff following his collapse in September 2011. The member of staff has now made a full recovery and has returned to work. This event illustrated the benefits of the Service having automatic defibrillators and trauma training for a variety of members of staff.

Contact Officer

Mark Yates, Chief Fire Officer
0845 1224454
Email: myates@hwfire.org.uk