

**SAFER STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE**

Title	Report from the London Fire Brigade		
Key Decision			Item No. 5
Ward	All		
Contributors	Martin Corbett, Borough Commander of Lewisham, London Fire Brigade		
Class		Date: 22 May 2019	

**1. Purpose**

To provide the Committee with an update on 2018-19 performance of the London Fire Brigade within the Lewisham borough.

**2. Recommendations**

The Select Committee is requested to note the report. Any questions arising at this meeting will be sent by the Scrutiny Manager to the Borough Commander for response.

**3. End of the year performance.**

In summary, performance targets for primary fires, dwelling fires and care home fire were met, Community fire safety (CFS), Home fire safety visits (HFSV's) are being achieved as can be seen from the table below.

Automatic fire alarms (AFA's) and persons shut in lifts are on the increase in 2018-19 and our fire safety teams are working with responsible persons of the worst offending premises to look at ways to reduce these incidents.

Work has been done with Regulatory fire safety to reduce AFA's, the main offender is Lewisham Hospital where good progress is being made to make them aware of their responsibility to ensure they have an appropriate fire safety response to AFA's.

Lewisham Homes will now be charged for excessive non emergency lift releases from April 2019. There is also a local liaison with borough housing providers to raise awareness and joint working to identify hotspots, defective lifts or ineffective housing providers lift release contractors.

Arson incidents although below target is an area I would still like to concentrate on and work is being done with the MPS to target borough hotspots which coincide with anti-social behaviour.

Non domestic fires in Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) properties is on the increase. These are properties such as Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO), commercial properties or shops with dwellings above that have a shared escape route. Work is ongoing between our Fire Safety team and trading standards to identify rogue landlords or premises which do not have the required level of fire precautions. Fire crews are also being used to undertake on the spot visits, particularly in shops with

dwelling above to further identify premise contraventions. It is also planned that they are trained to undertake fire safety inspections of less complex RRO premises to reduce the load on our fire safety teams and increase the number of premises visited.

Indicator	12 month rolling actual	Target	Difference	12 month rolling trend
H2 - Dwelling Fires - All	211	256	-17.58 %	
CO1 - CFS by Station Based Staff %	11.6%	10.0%	+15.68 %	
CX3E - Fire Related Serious Injuries	29	35	-17.14 %	
IP3 - Outdoor Rubbish Fires - All	127	163	-22.09 %	
H4 - Fires in Care Homes & Sheltered Housing	8	21	-61.90 %	
H8 - HFSVs by LFB Staff	2,077	1,848	+12.39 %	
CX5 - P1 HFSVs - High Risk People/Places	1,716	1,478	+16.10 %	
CX5iii - HFSVs - Area Risk (Geographic Borough)	2,206	2,890	-23.67 %	
H3 - Non Domestic Primary Fires in RRO Properties	59	52	+13.46 %	
H11 - AFAs - non dwelling	759	438	+73.29 %	
IP8 - Shut in Lift Releases	205	134	+52.99 %	
IP2 - Arson Incidents - All Deliberate Fires	100	125	-20.00 %	
CX5ii - P1 HFSVs - High Risk People/Places %	92.9%	80.0%	+16.07 %	

Station staff in the borough achieved HFSV's well above our annual target which complemented the geographical target which fell short. It is also reassuring that 92% of these were for vulnerable people or in priority places (P1 postcodes). The reason for the two performance indicators (PI) is that station grounds do not reflect borough boundaries and other stations in other boroughs cover some areas of Lewisham. There is a need to measure the performance of stations, hence the PI for HFSV's carried out by station staff. There is continual liaison between stations and boroughs to ensure priority places in the borough covered by other stations are visited.

Some incidents of note:

Roma Court, 14th June, a year to the day from Grenfell. A very visual fire as it started on a roof terrace and was suppressed internally by sprinklers reducing fire damage.

Lovelinch Close, six pump fire 23rd July where three men were injured. A police investigation is ongoing.

Adolphus Street, the morning of 6th August, a fatal house fire at which Joel Urhie aged 7 tragically died. A Police Murder investigation is ongoing in response to this incident.

A 12 pump fire on the 28th March in a textile recycling centre on Cricket Lane which was on Forest Hill's ground but in Bromley Borough.

#### **4. Community fire safety (CFS)**

My main area of prevention is the identification of vulnerable people who are more likely to either die or be injured in a fire. The main initiative to reduce these are HFSV's. CFS initiatives continue with the Station Manager at Forest Hill working with the Safe and Independent Living (SAIL) project and Lewisham Homes to obtain referrals for vulnerable people, Crossfire, Deptford Reach for the homeless and CQC to get HFSV referrals from GP's.

Following a presentation to the Safer Adults Board, we are also working with the Positive Aging Council, presenting to their forums to highlight elderly people in the borough who we can target HFSV's.

In addition to this and to complement Lewisham Council's commitment both issues, as part of our borough training days all firefighters in the borough have received Dementia Friends and domestic violence awareness. This will help them identify cases at HFSV's, know how to deal with them at the time and enable them to refer if needed as an adult safeguarding referral.

One area of concern is the increase in the number of self neglect and hoarding. Approximately 60% of safeguarding referrals the LFB have made to Lewisham SCAIT are for hoarders. I am pleased that the self neglect and hoarding policy is soon to be published which details how partners should respond to these cases. An example of this being LFB are working with Lewisham Homes to identify hoarders, refer to each other so we can complete HFSV's and operational tactical plans, and they can take steps to reduce the level of clutter in those identified homes. If this approach proves successful we would like the council's support in doing the same with all other housing providers in Lewisham. We also need to look at other ways to deal with this issue in the long term, there has been some excellent work done by the Safer Adults Board in providing self neglect and hoarding masterclasses but this does not address the initial multi agency crisis response rather than the longer term solution. Once hoarders' homes are clearer they often start hoarding again as they don't have ongoing support.

#### **5. Local engagement**

Lewisham had a very successful open day on the 18th August and Forest Hill a car wash on the 2nd September and the plan is to continue these next year.

Work is continuing on New Cross fire station community facility. The Cadets and outreach started using the facilities in September and have settled in well. Budget has been approved to fund a complete refurbishment of the CFS venue to create a South East outreach hub, better facilities for the cadets and have a venue for LIFE if it is needed in the future. This work is due to start soon with the hope for it to be finished by the end of the year.

As the name suggests this is intended to be a community facility. It will have meeting and training rooms that other partners or community groups can use. For instance it was used as a venue to undertake flu vaccinations in December and will be again this year. Once the facility is up and running there will be a booking system for people to follow.

The Cadet team can only operate with funding from local partners. The Mayor of London has provided £1m to fund a central team which has the aim of establishing a Cadet group in every borough and is separate to funding to support local teams. We therefore still need local funding to continue the Cadets in Lewisham so if there is any funding streams or avenues to progress I would be very interested in discussing further.

Dates for your diaries:

- New Cross open day Saturday 29th June 2019
- Lewisham fire station open day Saturday 17th August 2019
- Forest Hill Car wash Saturday 31st August 2019
- Cadet pass out at New Cross fire station Tuesday 11th June 1800hrs

Anyone on the committee would be very welcome to attend any of these events. If you do please can you let me know so I can make the relevant arrangements.

## **6. People**

In regard to staffing there has been a movement of Station Manager's following the retirement of Barry Wakefield at Lewisham and Steve Young moving to Sidcup. Keith Sanders (New Cross and Deptford) being successful in the SM promotion and is responsible for liaison with the MPS and arson related issues. Two other recently promoted station managers have joined my team, Steve Vydelingham (Forest Hill) is responsible for community fire safety and Nathan Hobson (Lewisham) is responsible for training.

We have a new Deputy Assistant Commissioner in charge of the SE area. His name is Richard Welch and he has already expressed a wish to meet the Mayor to improve in the partnership work we are already undertaking.

## **7. Future developments**

### **7.1. HMICFRS inspection.**

HMICFRS inspectors will be visiting the Brigade during two weeks in May as part of their discovery phase and the fieldwork is scheduled for the last two weeks in July. They will be visiting all areas of the Brigade and will be carrying out focus groups and interviews with various staff groups. They have the authority to visit any station in the brigade so could do so in any in Lewisham, or follow officers around to any meetings within in LFB or with other partners.

It is envisaged that results of our inspection will be available towards the end of the year.

### **7.2. Role to Rank (R2R)**

The London Fire Brigade and the London Region Fire Brigades Union reached an agreement in September 2017 to change from a role based structure to a rank based structure. This is not a move back to what we used to have, but is move forward to a better structure which will ensure more officer availability, better stability of officers on watches and increased appliance availability at key times of each shift.

The main difference partners will see is in the names of operational roles:

- Crew managers will become leading firefighters
- Watch manager A will become a Sub Officer
- Watch manager B will become a Station Officer

Sub officers can be in charge of single appliance stations and station officers in charge of two appliance stations.

There is no change in the role of Station managers other than their name changes to become station commanders

R2R will be implemented on the 15<sup>th</sup> October.

### **7.3. Development and Maintenance of operational professionalism (DaMOP)**

This is a new competency based framework for all operational, specialist and control staff to ensure they are able to do their job safely, confidently and well. It will also provide the London Fire Commissioner and the Commissioner's Board an internal assurance process to demonstrate compliance with the new requirements.

The focus is on quality training that addresses the knowledge and skills requirements, rather than the current prescribed targeted hours (6 hours per tour) for staff to train on the current 4 core skill DaMOP areas.

The first implementation phase for this is for firefighters which will be in July 2019. The second phase will be for specialist teams and senior officers, in July 2020.

Martin Corbett

Borough Commander