

Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee

Title	Fire service update		
Key Decision	No	Item No.	4
	All		
Contributors	Martin Corbett – Borough Commander Lewisham Fire Service Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney, Head of Public Protection and Safety		
Class	Part 1	Date: September 18	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The paper outlines the current areas of focus for the fire service in Lewisham.
- 1.2 The information contained in this report is open to the public.

2. Recommendation

Members are asked to note the contents of the report and receive further updates as appropriate.

3 Overview

- 3.1 2017/18 has been challenging year.
The incident at Grenfell being the focus of most people's attention and locally a lot of work was done liaising with all partners to identify ACM clad buildings which present a risk. Pan London there remains about 100 buildings with ACM cladding. Three were identified in Lewisham, two in Hatfield Close and another, Garrard House. All of which are managed by Lewisham Homes who have done some very proactive work to address the fire safety issues and significantly reduce the risk associated with these buildings (removal of the cladding and replacement of fire doors etc.
- 3.2 The borough is performing well in regard to fire related performance. The total number of fires in 2017-18 is down from the previous year. This is reflected in reduction dwelling fires, outdoor rubbish fires and fires in care homes. Arson related incidents however remain at the same level as 2016-17 and is something that needs to be addressed by working with our MPS colleagues to identify joint anti-social behaviour hotspots that may contribute to this.

Automatic fire alarms and persons shut in lifts are on the increase in 2017-18 and our fire safety teams are working with responsible persons of the worst offending premises to look at ways to reduce these incidents (for instance changing the location or type of smoke detectors, having a two stage response etc.)

Quarter 1 (April-June) of this year continues this trend however the weather is playing a part with a pan London increase in grass fires and fires on balconies.

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 so I can't provide full details.
- Adolphus Street, the morning of 6th August, a fatal house fire at which Joel Urhie aged 7 tragically died A Police Murder investigation is on going in response to this incident.

Fire crews continue to carry out home fire risk assessments – completing over 2000 in the borough last year. They are also undertaking Dementia friends training and domestic violence awareness.

Cadets scheme continues to be a huge success. A pass out for the last academic year was held on the 6th June. A new facility for them is being prepared at the oldest operational fire station in Europe – New Cross and will be open from September. This will include an outreach hub and community safety facility.

There has been some great youth engagement, school teams continue to work in local schools

4. Current concerns and risks

- Safeguarding adults and children
 - Identification of vulnerable persons at risk
 - Increased cases of hoarding/self neglect
- Rogue landlords – commercial buildings and residential properties being converted to HMO's without appropriate fire safety measures. I believe Lewisham council are looking at a licencing scheme for landlords which will help to address this.
- Recent dry weather –high number of grass fires and fires on balconies. Campaign to ban BBQ's in open spaces, inappropriate disposal of cigarettes and awareness of fire risk posed by using balconies and storage space.
- Total Recalls “making white goods safer” campaign aims to make it easier for people to protect themselves from faulty electrical appliances that cause fires (see more information below)
- Automatic fire alarms and persons shut in lifts (as above)

5. Lessons learnt from Grenfell

- Review Breathing apparatus equipment
- Review of aerial fleet to introduce higher reach appliances
- High rise pre-determined attendance increased
- Tactical plans for high rise buildings reviewed and amended
- Assessment of risk posed by ACM cladded high rise buildings - risk assessments reviewed
- Highlighting of buildings that do not confirm to building regulations
- Full-scale review of Approved Document B (part of the building regulations guidance in England covering fire safety matters within and around buildings) following recommendations made by Dame Judith Hackitt (see more information below)
- Welfare of all firefighters who attended and now are providing evidence to the Public Enquiry.

Note that The Public Enquiry into the Grenfell fire will raise some lessons but until it is concluded it is inappropriate to comment on what they are or will be.

6. Organisational changes of note

LFB Governance arrangements following the abolishment of The LFEPA has now confirmed the statutory body of the London Fire Commissioner, Dany Cotton.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 places an obligation upon Local Authorities to have a committee which scrutinises crime and disorder within its area.

7.2 Within the context of the powers of this committee, the section provides that it should have the power to “ (a) review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities for example, police and other relevant partner agencies of their crime and disorder functions; (b) to make reports or recommendations to the local authority with respect to the discharge of those functions.”

Further, where this committee makes a report or recommendations it shall provide a copy— (a) to each of the responsible authorities, and (b) to each of the persons with whom, and bodies with which, the responsible authorities have a duty to co-operate under section 5(2) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (“the co-operating persons and bodies”).

7.3 The Local Government Act 1999 places a duty on the local authorities to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised having regard to the combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

7.4 These statutory duties amongst others are relevant to the production of the council's Safer Lewisham Strategy.

8. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report for the Council.

9. Environmental Implications

Specific environmental implications of crime and disorder are reviewed annually through the strategic assessment process and appropriate action taken as required.

10. Equalities Implications

Equalities implications are considered throughout the delivery of this change.

11. Crime and Disorder Implications

11.1 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1988, as amended places a duty upon Local Authorities to consider crime and disorder implications and in particular, “to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area.” This statutory obligation is the same for the Authorities “responsible partners” too. The level of

crime and its impact is influenced by the decisions and activities taken through the day-to-day functions of local bodies and organisations.

- 11.2 Responsible authorities are required to provide a range of services in their community from policing, fire protection, planning, consumer and environmental protection, transport and highways. They each have a key statutory role in providing these services and, in carrying out their core activities, can significantly contribute to reducing crime and improving the quality of life in their area.

For further information on this report please contact Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney, Head of Public Protection and Safety, Directorate for community services on 0208 314 9569.