

**Status of Report: Public**

**Meeting: Combined Fire Authority**

**Date: 27 September 2018**

**Subject: Operational Update**

**Report by: Rick Taylor (Chief Fire and Rescue Officer)**

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**For: Information**

## **1. Purpose**

This report updates the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) on key operational matters since the last CFA meeting held on 20 June 2018.

## **2. Recommendations**

It is recommended that the CFA notes the contents of this report.

## **3. Executive Summary**

The areas covered in this report include:

1. New Item: Impact of Close Proximity Crewing Judgement in South Yorkshire
2. New Item: Effective local use of Social Media
3. Update: Visit from Home Office re: Resilience for Strike Action
4. Update: Delivery of Corporate and Integrated Risk Management Plan Objectives
5. Update: Wholtime Firefighter Recruitment
6. Update: Firefighter Pay Negotiations 2017
7. Update: Operational Activity Levels
8. Update: Incidents of note since the last CFA meeting

## **4. Background**

### **4.1 Impact of Close Proximity Crewing Judgement in South Yorkshire**

Earlier this year the Fire Brigades Union in South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service launched a successful legal challenge (relating to the Working Time Regulations) to the Close Proximity Crewing system in operation there. Close Proximity Crewing is similar to our Day Crewing Plus duty system which operates at six of our stations. Day Crewing Plus firefighters work 24 hour shifts. 12 hours of these are on standby at their place of work during which they are available for immediate response but do not undertake other work.

The Head of Response has been asked to carry out an Impact and Options analysis and legal advice has been provided on the implications, which is currently being considered. CFA members will be kept updated as further information emerges.

#### 4.2 Effective Local use of Social Media

The crew at Oakham Fire Station took advantage of the 'Baby Shark' phenomenon on children's TV. Baby Shark is a song with simple actions that went viral online. Oakham firefighters performed the actions to the song on the shores of Rutland water as part of a water safety campaign. Since they launched it on social media it has been viewed 239,000 times, shared 4000 times and had 730 comments and questions. It also featured on BBC Breakfast. We hope that this social media following will then continue to receive our safety and other campaign information. Similarly, a video was taken at a fire of a 'Firenado', a rising column of flame sucked into a vortex. It has been viewed 730,000 times, shared 8000 times and had 1000 comments and questions. This video has led to a film crew interviewing our staff and it is hoped the video will be used in a future episode of the television programme 'extreme weather'. These are being used as examples to encourage staff to use newer forms of media to help them get their messages out.

#### 4.3 Visit from Home Office re: Resilience for Strike Action

In the Operational Update to the CFA at its meeting on 20 June 2018, members were given details of a Home Office request for information about our projected crewing levels in the event of strike action by firefighters. The report explained that Home Office representatives had visited the service to meet with the Chairman to gather further detail about our response preparations. In August, the Home Office sent a draft copy of their report for comment. An amended version of the report was returned, correcting errors and clarifying points of accuracy. The Home Office replied and explained that a final version of the document would be sent to us in due course. Once the final version has been received the report will be shared with the Combined Fire Authority.

#### 4.4 Update – Delivery of Corporate and Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Objectives

Further progress has been achieved in delivering the key corporate and IRMP service improvement objectives that have been agreed previously by the CFA. By way of a summary, set out below are the main aspects that have been, or are about to be, delivered/implemented:

- Building work has been completed at Wigston fire and rescue station to provide facilities for the day crewing duty system;
- Building work is progressing at Lutterworth fire and rescue station to extend the building. This will improve the facilities available for the new wholetime crew and provide some additional space to enable future collaboration with partners. Talks with the police about them sharing the building are at an advanced stage;

- Work is nearing completion at Southern fire and rescue station to provide a specialist training rig for the Technical Rescue crews;
- The Braunstone Blues multi-agency partnership will end its work on the 30 September 2018 following over three years of commitment. A final report will be produced and presented to the Strategic Partnership Board Executive in November. Learning from the partnership has been adopted in the approach to the 'People Zones' which are being established in Loughborough, Coalville and New Parks as agreed by the Strategic Partnership Board; and
- All other corporate and IRMP service improvement objectives are reported to the Corporate Governance Committee.

#### 4.5 Update – Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment

We are analysing our current establishment levels to determine how many new firefighters to recruit in 2019. The originally planned numbers will need to be adjusted upwards due to higher levels of leavers than anticipated. A number of "Have a Go" days have been held, targeted at Women, BAME and LGBT+ candidates. Further days are planned for October and a number of other positive action events have taken place.

The Learning and Development team is working with Service Delivery to design a trainee course that will best prepare new staff for their roles in a modern fire and rescue service.

#### 4.6 Update – Firefighter Pay Negotiations 2017

Pay negotiations remain ongoing and a settlement is not yet in place. A 2.0% pay rise was offered with effect from 1 July 2018, while negotiations continue to put in place a longer term deal. The Fire Brigades Union has noted that offer. Their Executive Council meets in September and will consider it further. At this time pay inflation is of concern to future budget planning.

#### 4.7 Update – Operational Activity Levels

At its meeting on 20 June 2018, the CFA was advised of a rise in the number of calls to 'other emergencies'. These include assisting other agencies. The number of responses to this incident type continue to grow, although there has been a reduction in the number of Emergency First Responder calls since the end of the trial.

Since June we have been particularly busy, largely as a result of the prolonged dry and warm summer combined with the school holidays. These incidents mainly involve the deliberate and accidental ignition of grass/vegetation and rubbish. The Districts worst affected are Charnwood, Western and Eastern where additional effort is being made to reduce these incidents.

Members should be aware that a number of serious fatal incidents have occurred. The number of fatalities was comparable during June and July with the same period in 2017. However, in August crews dealt with nine fatalities, including five in road traffic collisions and a drowning. At three additional incidents that we attended that involved fatalities, we were asked to provide

assistance only (this could include gaining entry, body recovery). Crews also supported other emergency services during an armed siege in Leicester where the occupant of a house barricaded themselves in with a family member and made threats to life.

Welfare support is offered to fire crews following traumatic incidents and we are in discussions with Leicestershire Police to enhance this service further. We are considering utilising the TRIM process which is used across Police forces for assisting staff to manage exposure to traumatic incidents.

#### 4.8 Incidents of note since the last CFA meeting

There have been no single incidents of particular note since the CFA meeting on 20 June 2018.

### 5. **Report Implications/Impact**

#### 5.1 Legal (including crime and disorder)

None identified.

#### 5.2 Financial (including value for money, benefits and efficiencies)

There are no direct financial implications from this report.

#### 5.3 Risk (including corporate and operational, health and safety and any impact on the continuity of service delivery)

None arising from this report.

#### 5.4 Staff, Service Users and Stakeholders (including the Equality Impact Assessment)

Response crews face traumatic incidents on a regular basis. Measures are in place to provide welfare support and work is underway to enhance it.

#### 5.5 Environmental

None identified.

#### 5.6 Impact upon Our Plan Objectives

The matters set out in this report inform the progress that has been achieved in delivering the key corporate and IRMP service improvement objectives that have been agreed previously by the CFA.

### 6. **Background Papers**

None.

**7. Appendices**

None.

**8. Officers to Contact**

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