

**S57. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – FALKIRK & WEST LOTHIAN
COMMAND PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services presenting the local performance report and supporting appendices by the local senior officer for the period 1 April to 30 September 2014.

Members asked if there had been an increase in electrical fires caused by overheating chargers for mobile devices when left switched on. Stuart Stevens stated that white and electronic goods were often the cause of domestic fires. These incidents were monitored nationally and where trends were found they were focussed on through media statements and guidance. Issues often arose where illegal chargers or those brought in from other countries which did not meet British or European safety standards were used. Stuart Stevens highlighted that even where appliances meet safety standards failures can still occur and cause fires.

The committee asked what the main reasons were that some areas had higher levels of false alarm calls than others. Stuart Stevens stated that human activity was the main influence on false alarms as well as inappropriate placement of detectors and faulty appliances.

Members asked if the decrease for priority two should have been more significant with the perceived decreased use of chip pans. Stuart Stevens stated that modern cooking appliances and methods had helped to reduce the number of incidents. However he highlighted that the use of chip pans was still widespread and that a main cause of accidental dwelling fires was cooking while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

The committee sought information on what multi-agency work the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service was involved with in regard to priority six, special service – casualties (fatal & non-fatal). Gary Laing advised that in the Falkirk area a weekly meeting was held involving community safety partners. At this meeting incident statistics were analysed and where trends were identified collective actions were taken forward to tackle the identified issues. Further, Gary Laing stated that ward plans had been created which had been submitted to the citizens panel for feedback, which would increase community ownership of community safety.

Members asked for further information about the reduction of accidental fires during the summer period. Stuart Stevens stated that a number of factors had contributed to the decrease including the resources put in to community safety, the creation of thematic action plans and effective school engagement.

The committee asked for further information about recent training exercises carried out at high rise flats. David Lockhart stated that there was a new standard operating procedure, brought in to ensure that all crews could perform effectively at multi-level dwellings. Further, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service ensured that all officers regularly maintained their training across all areas of risk.

Members asked questions about the review of special equipment and raised concerns about the impact on the Falkirk area.

Regarding the relocation of line rescue assets to stations outwith the Falkirk area, Gary Laing advised mobilisation and response times would improve. This was because these assets would be operated by wholtime firefighters and able to respond immediately to incidents whereas, when located in Falkirk they had been operated by retained duty firefighters.

The committee expressed concern at the relocation of environmental protection and mass decontamination assets outwith the Falkirk area. Gary Laing stated that environmental protection assets were available on all appliances. Further, he stated that the mass decontamination assets, which were removed from the Falkirk area, would not adversely affect the ability of firefighters to respond to incidents at Grangemouth petrochemical plant. Gary Laing stated that the most likely type of incident would involve fire or an explosion and that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service was prepared to respond to such incidents. Further, the service held frequent meetings with representatives from the petrochemical plant to discuss any planned and actual changes to production and would bring any changes to risk to the attention of the national group to ensure the response was correct. He highlighted the good level of on-site security. Gary Laing invited members of the committee to visit a local fire station to see what equipment was available to local teams.

The committee asked what was being considered in terms of service delivery for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service going forward. Gary Laing advised that consideration was being given to firefighters providing colleagues from the Scottish Ambulance Service with assistance in cardiac arrest treatment situations. He stated that research had found that 2,000 lives a year could be saved by having a third first responder on the scene of a cardiac arrest. Members highlighted that there remained difficult operational questions which would need to be answered before this service could be rolled out. Gary Laing stated that they were being looked at through a pilot scheme and that partners had been involved from an early stage.

Members asked for information on retained duty station provision. Gary Laing stated that a challenge for retained duty firefighters was for individuals to arrange getting release from their main employment for duty. There was a programme of recruit and retain work ongoing within the service. A full review of the system was to take place and retained duty staff would be involved and the service was looking to improve safety in remote areas.

The committee asked about the timing of the review. Gary Laing stated that current practice would be looked at in around a years time while the futures project would be a longer term 2 to 3 year project.

Members asked why the audits activity for Houses of Multiple Occupation achieved was at 23% of target. Stuart Stevens advised that this was because the license review was not yet due and that the figures would improve for the rest of the year.

Decision

The committee noted the performance report and supporting information.