

SE18. Performance Report – Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services presenting a local performance report of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, for the period 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017.

The committee asked if, following an increase in deliberate fire setting incidents at Polmont Prison, any intervention work had been carried out. MR stated that such interventions had been carried out with a specific individual.

Members sought further information on the auditing of licensed premises, expressing concern that fire exits were often blocked. MR advised that audit work was undertaken on a targeted basis determined by level of risk. Therefore places where people undertook overnight stays like care homes and hospitals were prioritised. Other types of premises were inspected thematically. In the Falkirk area there were 1.5 auditing officers so there was a need to prioritise their work to the areas of highest risk. However, the Service worked closely with colleagues in the Council's licensing section and would respond to any concerns raised, as they would respond to specific concerns raised by elected members. Members commented that when the Licensing Board undertook site visits to licensed premises it would be useful to have the auditing officers present.

The committee asked why there was an increase in deliberate fire setting during periods of good weather. MR stated that there is an increase in deliberate fire setting every year around April, which tied in with the school holidays. Hot weather could make the land tinder dry. Cycle patrols had been undertaken with Police Scotland. There had also been school visits in a targeted approach to try and prevent this spike in deliberate fire setting. The school based Police Officers identified at risk groups of young people.

Following a question on home safety visits, MR stated that the elderly were at higher risk and were therefore targeted. During visits people were asked questions to determine their risk level and an appropriate response was then put in place. There had been a specific initiative at sheltered housing premises to decrease the risk of accidental fires. Specsavers had worked in partnership to help promote the home safety programme to over 65s. Further, there was strong partnership with Housing and flats were regularly checked for clear means of escape and corridors were kept clutter free.

The committee asked about the increased number of false alarms and if this was due to automated systems. MR stated that as more alarm systems came online there were more calls. There was a proposal to look at staff alarms in large public buildings. This would involve caretakers involving the cause of an alarm prior to an appliance being dispatched. However, building evacuation would still take place.

Decision

The committee approved the report and acknowledged progress by the organisation in meeting their priorities.