

SE16. Performance Report, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services presenting the local performance of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services for the period 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020.

In terms of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 local senior officers were required to report on performance in regard to the Local Fire and Rescue Plan, and to report on the provision of local services.

The following performance information was appended to the report:-

Local Plan Performance 1 April to 30 September 2020. David Sharp gave a short summary of the key areas of performance over the period which had covered the lockdown period.

Following a question Mr Sharp agreed that a factor in the rise in accidental dwelling fires could be attributed to the larger than normal number of people who were at home during the period as a consequence of lockdown. Conversely, the year to date incidents was less than the same period in 2019/20.

The committee noted that the intended introduction of new legislation in regard to smoke alarms had been delayed by a year. Nonetheless it would require that all dwellings had interlinked smoke alarms and a CO gas detector as standard. The responsibility to meet the new standard would lie with the homeowner and would incur a cost to homeowners to meet the statutory duty. It would also impact on the Fire and Rescue Service and the committee asked if an update could be provided. Brian Robertson confirmed that this requirement had been delayed for a year. The Fire and Rescue Service had fitted smoke alarms for those who were deemed 'high risk' and this would continue. The delay was to allow the community time to understand the requirements and to make arrangements. The Scottish Government had allocated a limited amount of funding to the Fire and Rescue Service to purchase the devices. However the distribution criteria for these was strict and limited to the high risk groups. It will be the responsibility of owner/occupiers who are not high risk to purchase and fit the alarm systems. He added that for example house sale home reports would in future include whether there was compliance with the new regulations and failure to meet the standards could impact on the sale of a property.

The committee then turned to 'deliberate' fires and expressed concern at the number of incidents – 205 (compared to 215 in the previous comparison period). David Sharp replied that year on year the number was reducing but that the Service continued to work with partners to address problematic areas. Deliberate fires tended to be refuse and this year had seen an increase in wheelie bin fires of 66 for example. Brian Robertson advised that the Service had seen unusual behaviour during the period. As lockdown was eased and the weather was good there was a number of deliberate fires and although the Service continued to respond and to

educate there were odd behaviours which were attributed to the 'strange times'.

Following a question, Mr Robertson confirmed that the Service continued to work hard to recruit retained firefighters. It was increasingly difficult to attract volunteers and this was an issue that was being looked at nationally within the Service.

The committee then asked for an update on discussions at the national level in regard to expanding the role of firefighters to include the use of defibrillators and in giving CPR. Members noted that the matter had been 'on the table' for at least 3 years with no resolution. David Sharp confirmed that all firefighters were trained to give CPR and to use defibrillators. Successful pilots had been undertaken however the matter sat at a national level. The FBU had opposed the expansion previously – however the Chief Fire Officer was keen to reopen discussions. Brian Robertson gave more detail on the pilot which had focussed on road traffic collisions. There were numerous instances when as first responders firefighters could intervene in cardiac situations. Similarly they are able gain access to buildings more easily than other partners and all staff are trauma trained. He repeated that while crews can and sometimes do carry out these duties they were not formally part of their core duties and nationally the matter was still in discussion. The committee asked that it be kept advised of the discussions as part of the performance report.

Decision

The Committee

- (1) approved the report and acknowledged progress by the organisation in meeting its priorities;**
- (2) requested that the next report include an update on the position in regard to talks on broadening firefighters' role to include CPR/use of defibrillators.**