

## **SE20. Performance Report: Scottish Fire and Rescue Service**

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which presented the local performance report of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

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 2020 to 30 September 2021. David Sharp gave a short summary of the key areas of performance over the period which had covered the lockdown period.

SFRS Community Safety Advocates/Community Firefighters and Operational Firefighters delivered an educational programme within schools to address any developing trends and members asked how schools were chosen to participate. The Local Senior Officer for Falkirk and West Lothian explained that if particular areas had spikes in criminal behaviour, the SFRS targeted this area in partnership with schools. The Station Commander also explained that schools which were cause of concern were targeted - this was unveiled through intelligence-led data provided through their partnerships such as Police Scotland. She stated that wider educational facilities were available to all schools which had been relied upon throughout Covid-19 restrictions. 1-2-1 programmes were offered to those who presented as High Risk which was maintained throughout the pandemic.

The committee referred to the requirement for homes to have interlinked Smoke and Heat alarms from February 2022 and that the Scottish Government had provided the SFRS access to a limited number of detectors to enable support for the most vulnerable in communities. Mr Sharp explained that work to identify those who were vulnerable had begun and was ongoing – the SFRS's Home Fire Safety Visits as well as referrals were in place to identify.

Members noted that the Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest pilot was paused, they asked for an update on this. The Local Senior Officer for Falkirk and West Lothian referred to an offer by the Chief Fire Officer in late 2020 to the Fire Brigade Union, which covered Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest but was later rejected. He assured that the SFRS continued to assist partner agencies where and when needed, although did not hold the capacity to do this work independently.

The committee sought for assurance that the SFRS received support from Police Scotland in tackling Deliberate Fires to which Mr Sharp clarified that the SFRS worked closely with Police Scotland – this was done through regular updates and partner referrals. Police Scotland utilised the information provided to identify offenders and the schools they attended with the purpose to improve SFRS's education programme

Following a question on actions that could have minimised the issue of wheelie bin fires, the Local Senior Officer for Falkirk and West Lothian explained that when carrying out Home Fire Safety Visits and other community work, reminders were given to the public to place their bins for collection a short-time period before collection and return them to their house shortly after. He explained it was the materials within the bins that were set alight therefore it not being necessary to change the material in which the bin was made from. Mr Sharp recognised the increase of deliberate fires following the easing of lockdown restriction which was anticipated to be an act of frustration from youths.

In terms of vehicle fires, members sought clarity on how many were deliberate to which Mr Sharp clarified for the period 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2021, there were none and explained that the majority of deliberates attended were involving woodlands, grasslands, forests, crops and sheds.

Members referred to historic media concerns regarding the attacks that Fire Fighters endure when carrying out their jobs and asked if this was still prevalent. The Local Senior Officer for Falkirk and West Lothian explained that in the Bonfire period during 2020 and 2021 there had been a reduction – he suggested that this was due to the educational work with Police Scotland in informing school children the helpful role of Fire Fighters. He confirmed there were 0 physical attacks and 1 case of verbal abuse on Bonfire Night 2021.

The committee then referred back to the legislative change in February 2022 with the implementation of interlinked Smoke and Heat alarms and asked how those who were not being assisted through the Scottish Government funding delegated to the SFRS would be regulated. Mr Sharp explained that the onus would be on the occupier/owner of the property to conform to legislation. He stated that by not conforming with new legislation, house insurance would become invalid if an incident occurred and the house does not meet regulation standards. The SFRS would continue to carry out Home Fire Safety Visits and risk assessments – they were implementing Single Point Fire Alarms at the time as a stop gap until February 2022 for those who did not have working alarms.

Members noted local cases where Gas Alarms were identified in areas which did not have gas and the Local Senior Office explained smoke alarms should have been fitted within hallways and living rooms whereas heat alarms in kitchens. Furthermore, Carbon Monoxide detectors had to be fitted for any Carbon fuelled devices – the use of Gas Alarms was not limited to gas, but could facilitate heating boilers and coal fires.

## **Decision**

**The Committee considered the performance of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and approved the report and acknowledge progress by the organisation in meeting its priorities.**