

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF : **PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW**
DATE : **7th April 2010**
REPORT OF : **DCO M CASHIN**
AUTHOR : **AM M Abram**

SUBJECT : **2009 BONFIRE REPORT**

Summary

1. This paper updates Members on the effectiveness of the Service's 2009 Bonfire Initiatives.

Recommended: That

[1] The report be noted.

Background

2. The report contains an analysis of the number of bonfire incidents attended by the Service in 2009, for the period 15th October to 6th November, compared to those attended over the previous two years. It also gives an overview of local initiatives in certain areas in addition to the removal of bonfire materials and bonfires from targeted sites.
3. The bonfire season of 2009 has seen a dramatic decrease in the number of bonfire incidents attended by the Service. The figures fell by nearly 24%, from 186 in 2008 to 143 incidents in 2009.
4. Community Fire Protection will ensure that the recommendations in the report are disseminated to Unitary Performance Managers for consideration within the 2010 bonfire initiatives. This will enable management of the recommendations and ensure they are implemented where necessary.

Current Position

5. The Service, in partnership with Unitary Authorities, is committed to reducing the number of bonfires we attend each year. These bonfires can present a risk to local residents by threatening nearby property and their existence can attract incidences of anti-social behaviour in the immediate area. In previous years the problem has been most prevalent in Ellesmere Port, Runcorn, Warrington, Widnes and Winsford and has included a number of attacks on FireFighters.

Equality and Diversity

6. There are no equality and diversity implications with the work undertaken in reducing the incidences of bonfires.

Financial

7. The total cost of the bonfire removal initiatives undertaken in the four Unitary Authority areas was £40,100. Of which the total contribution made by the Fire Authority was £1200 whilst the contributions made by our partners totalled £38,900. A table detailing this expenditure is located on page 5 of the Report.

Health & Safety Implications

8. Removing bonfire material can cause problems locally, particularly with bonfire owners. Successful planning and partnership working ensured that over one hundred bonfires were removed without incident. However, there were five attacks on fire-fighters during the bonfire period whilst they were performing their duties. This represents a reduction of 28% when compared to last year's total of seven instances. In 2007 there were eight instances.
9. In addition crews have had training and advice on dealing with confrontation as well as assessing the need to extinguish a fire that is not classed as dangerous if confrontation could be an issue.

Legal Implications

10. The bonfire initiatives are seen as a core function of the Service and there are no legal implications in carrying out this work. It is important to note that we acknowledge the balance between protecting communities from the effects of bonfires and our aim to continue to provide a first class service, whilst supporting our local communities to celebrate a national festival.

Environmental Issues

11. The decrease in the number of nuisance related incidents will have benefitted all and have had a positive effect on the quality of life and well-being of all within the Service area and the local environment. The reduction in instances of fire will have a number of environmental benefits, including; less carbon being released into the atmosphere as well as less fuel being used by Service vehicles.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: None