

Report to	<b>Executive Panel</b>	
Date	<b>20 March 2023</b>	
Lead Officer	<b>Stewart Forshaw, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, (Corporate Policy and Planning)</b>	
Subject	<b>Performance Monitoring: April – December 2022</b>	

### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 To provide information about incident activity during the first nine months of the 2022/23 financial year; performance in relation to the Authority's improvement and well-being objectives; and other notable incident activity.

### **Executive Summary**

- 2 During the first nine months of 2022/23, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) attended 4,656 emergency incidents. This is an increase of 16.7% compared with the same period in 2021/22 (3,991).
- 3 There has been a 37.1% increase in attendances at non-fire emergencies (960) which are classified as Special Service Incidents (SSIs). This follows a change in policy during the previous reporting year around attendance at SSIs, to provide more assistance to the public and partner agencies whilst at the same time increasing the visibility of the Service in the community.
- 4 It is pleasing to report that the number of accidental fires in the home (ADF's) have continued to reduce with 258 incidents attended by fire crews during the past nine months, compared to 314 during the same period of 2021/22. It is also pleasing to report that no fire deaths have occurred during the past nine months, and there has also been a reduction of the number of serious injuries at ADF's, from 4 to 2, compared to the same period of 2021/22. Conscious that this could change, the Service continues to deliver fire prevention interventions and initiatives to support fire safety in the homes and communities of North Wales.
- 5 Wildfires continue to be an area of focus for the Service, which can be a result of extreme weather events linked to climate change and is an area of growth in the UK in comparison to the reduction of house fires during the past decade. Wildfires can be particularly challenging incidents for the Service to deal with because of their erratic nature, potential size, scale and intensity, and because of the rural and rural-urban interface environments in which they tend to occur.

- 6 As defined by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) a wildfire is a grassland, woodland or crop fire that:
- involves a geographical area of at least one hectare (10,000 square metres or 100m x 100m);
  - has a sustained flame length of more than 1.5 metres;
  - requires a committed resource of at least four fire and rescue appliances/resources;
  - requires resources to be committed for at least 6 hours; and
  - presents a serious threat to life, environment, property and infrastructure.
- 7 During the first nine months of this financial year there were 55 wildfires in North Wales (an increase of 1 from Q2 2022/23), which were attended by a combined total of 359 vehicles for over 1,108 hours.
- 8 The changes of our attendance at incidents at HMP Berwyn implemented during the pandemic, and the fire safety advice delivered during this period, has resulted in a reduction of fires attended at the prison from 22 to 13 compared with the same period in 2021/22.
- 9 Fire crews' availability performance in accordance with the 20 stations availability target continues to be on an upward trend, with 15.6% increase to 260 days (94.5%) compared with 225 days (81.8%) during the first nine months of the year.

### **Recommendation**

- 10 That Members note the content of the performance monitoring report.

### **Information**

- 11 **All Incidents**  
The upward trend in the number of incidents attended has continued, with 16.7% more incidents attended in the first nine months of 2022/23 (4,656) than in the same period in 2021/22 (3,991). Although there have been increased attendances across all categories, the main contributor was a 37.1% increase in SSIs.
- 12 **Fires**  
Fires attended during the reporting period increased 16.4% to 1,632 compared with 1,402 in the same period of 2021/22.

- 13 **Grassland, Woodland and Crop Fires**  
Grassland, Woodland and Crop fires increased 69.5% (256 to 434). Secondary Accidental Grassland, Woodland and Crop fires increased to 285 from 162, with 'Heathland or Moorland' fires being the main contributor to the increase (40 to 101). Increases were also recorded in 'Grassland, Pasture, Grazing etc.' (50 to 90); 'Tree Scrub - includes single trees not in garden' (15 to 28) and 'Hedge' (14 to 27).
- 14 Secondary Deliberate Grassland, woodland and crop fires increased 47.1% (87 to 128) with the main contributors to this increase being 'Grassland, Pasture, Grazing etc.' (34 to 59); 'Tree Scrub - includes single trees not in garden' (12 to 21) and 'Hedge' (5 to 10).
- 15 **Wildfires**  
There were 55 wildfires which were attended by 359 vehicles for over 1,108 hours during the reporting period.
- 16 **Primary Fires**  
Primary fires decreased slightly (3.8%) compared with the same quarters of 2021/22 (680 to 654), and were 3.8% below the three-year average of 680. Accidental primary fires decreased 4.8% from 567 to 540 with the main contributor to the decrease being a reduction in 'Dwelling' fires (314 to 258). Despite the decrease in primary fires, 'Car' and 'Grassland, Woodland and Crop' fires however increased from 58 to 77 and 5 to 18 respectively.
- 17 **Secondary Fires**  
Secondary fires increased 40.3% from 647 to 908, primarily due to a 44.7% increase in Accidental Secondary fires (405 to 586) with the main contributors to the increase being 'Grassland, woodland and crop' (162 to 285) and 'Other outdoors (including land)' (117 to 179). Deliberate Secondary fires increased 33.1% (242 to 322), wherein 'Grassland, woodland and crops' and 'Other outdoors (including land)' increased 47.1% (87 to 128) and 36.6% (93 to 127) respectively.
- 18 **Chimney Fires**  
Chimney fires, which have been on a downward trend since 2019/20 (93), decreased further compared with the same period in 2021/22 (75 to 70).
- 19 **Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs)**  
The Service attended 17.8% fewer ADFs - 258 compared with 314 during the same period of 2021/22. ADF's in 'House of Single Occupancy' and 'Bungalow of Single Occupancy' decreased from 179 to 152 and from 51 to 31 respectively, with the largest reductions in fire cause being 'Cooking – Other Cooking' (68 to 60), 'Combustible Articles too Close to Heat Source (or fire)' (67 to 50), and 'Cooking – Chip Pan/Deep Pan Fryer' (25 to 7). An increase was however recorded in 'Overheating, Unknown Cause' (10 to 16).

20 **Fatalities/Casualties in ADFs**

There were no fatalities in ADFs compared with 3 during the same period in 2021/22. There was also a reduction in casualties from 96 to 61, with 2 people sustaining serious injuries and 22 sustaining slight injuries.

21 **Smoke Detectors – ADF's**

Smoke/heat detectors were present at the majority of accidental fires in dwellings in 2022/23 (87.6%). ADF's where a smoke/heat detector was fitted, operated and raised the alarm, reduced from 155 to 129 compared with the same period in the previous financial year.

22 ADF's where a smoke detector was fitted but did not raise the alarm decreased from 56 to 31, with the most likely reason for non-operation being the detector correctly installed on an escape route (hall, landing) and not in a room most likely to be the origin of a fire (kitchen, living room).

23 ADF's where no detector was fitted decreased from 40 to 32, and where a detector was fitted and did not operate, incidents increased slightly to 66 from 63.

24 **Deliberate Primary Fires in Non-Residential Buildings**

Deliberate primary fires in non-residential buildings declined from 45 to 37, with 13 occurring at HMP Berwyn.

25 **False Alarms**

The upward trend in False Alarms continued with the Service attending 2,064 false alarms - 175 (9.3%) more than in the same period of 2021/22 (1,197), and 256 (14.2%) more than the three-year average of 1,808. Those originating from AFA systems increased 13.0% (138) from 1,059 to 1,197 and represented 58.0% of false alarm attendances.

26 **Non-Residential Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA)**

Non-Residential AFAs increased 39.4%, from 142 to 198 mainly due to increases in 'Hospitals and Medical Care' (92 to 142) and 'Education' (26 to 32). The main causes of activation in Non-Residential AFAs were 'Faulty' (63 to 79); 'Accidentally/ carelessly set off' (19 to 31); 'Other' (6 to 15); 'Chemicals/aerosols' (9 to 15) and 'Steam' (6 to 12).

- 27 **Other-Residential AFAs**  
There was a 9.6% increase in 'Other-Residential' AFAs from 83 to 91, with 'Nurses'/Doctors' Accommodation' and 'Hotel/motel' increasing from 8 to 23 and 11 to 18 respectively. However, 'Student Hall of Residence' and 'Residential Home' decreased from 27 to 12 and 22 to 10 respectively. Although the main causes of activation in 'Other-Residential' was 'Cooking/burnt toast', with a slight increase from 24 to 25, 'Dust' and 'Smoking' increased from 6 to 9 and from 1 to 6 respectively. There was however a decrease in 'Fault' from 30 to 20.
- 28 **Dwelling AFAs**  
AFAs in Dwellings showed a continued upward trend, increasing 8.9% from 833 to 907, with 'House – Single Occupancy' being the lead contributor to the increase, rising from 214 to 269, followed by 'Bungalow – single occupancy' increasing from 235 to 263 and 'Converted Flat/Maisonette – multiple occupancy' increasing from 17 to 33. Decreases were recorded in 'Purpose Built Flat/Maisonette – multiple occupancy' from 290 to 275 and 'Self-contained Sheltered Housing' from 68 to 60.
- 29 Of the 907 Dwelling AFAs, 'Cooking/Burnt Toast' was the main cause of activation, increasing from 433 to 454. Slight increases were also recorded in 'Fault' (198 to 210); 'Other' (43 to 53); 'Accidentally/ Carelessly Set Off' (40 to 49); 'Steam (19 to 26) and 'Water intrusion' (2 to 10). There was however, a decrease in 'Smoking' from 26 to 17.
- 30 **Good Intent False Alarms**  
Good intent false alarms increased 3.6% from 800 to 829, with increased attendances at 'Dwelling' from 306 to 311, where the fire cause of 'Other Cooking' increased from 43 to 61.
- 31 'Other Outdoors (including land)' false alarms made with good intent decreased from 221 to 186 on the back of a decrease in 'Controlled Burning' from 195 to 170.
- 32 'Non-Residential' false alarms made with good intent increased from 56 to 68 on the back of an increase in 'Other' from 19 to 24, and 'Overheating Appliance' from 0 to 9, although 'Fumes/heat Haze' decreased from 10 to 3.
- 33 Good intent false alarms in 'Grassland, Woodland and Crops' increased from 81 to 92, with 'Controlled Burning' being the main contributor to the increase (55 to 72), however, 'Reported Incident/Location not found' decreased from 21 to 9.
- 34 **Malicious False Alarms**  
There was a slight increase in Malicious False Alarms (30 to 38), with the main contributor to the increase being 'Dwelling' (11 to 29), where 'Activation of Fire Call Point/Alarm' increased from 8 to 23. 'Non-Residential' malicious false alarms decreased from 11 to 1.

35 **Special Service Incidents**

There was a 37.1% increase in SSIs (700 to 960) which can be attributed to the change in policy aimed at increasing the presence of the fire service in the community when needed.

36 'Other than RTC' increased 43.7% (545 to 783). The largest increase was in 'Assist Other Agencies' increasing 82.2% from 152 to 277, wherein increases were recorded in 'Missing from Home' (2 to 28); 'Gaining Entry' (77 to 170); 'Effecting Entry or Exit' (65 to 77); 'Lift Release' (54 to 67); 'Other Rescue/Release of Persons' (43 to 80); Separating People from Objects (53 to 64), 'Animal Assistance Incidents' (from 0 to 36) and 'No Action (not false alarm)' (39 to 67). There were however decreases in 'Flooding' and 'Make Safe (not RTC)' from 50 to 46 and 41 to 16 respectively.

37 **Road Traffic Collisions (RTC) Incidents**

The Service attended 14.2% more RTCs (177), where 54 (30.5%) involved the extrication or release of persons. Where the Service was called upon to make a vehicle or scene safe, attendance increased 54.2% (76 to 96). Although the Service attended more RTCs, the percentage of RTCs which involved the release or extrication of persons (30.5%) was lower than: 1) the same period of 2020/21 (32.9%); 2) 2018/19 (40.5%); and 3) the three-year average of 35.2%.

38 **Safe and Well Checks (SAWCs)**

The Service completed 13,487 SAWCs of which 4,682 (34.7%) were High Priority SAWCs with 2,633 (56.2%) of the High Priority SAWCs being referrals from a partner agency.

39 **Station Performance**

Planned 20 station availability was achieved on 260 days (94.5%) out of 275 days, compared with 225 (81.8%) in the same period of the last financial year. However, this is still lower than the 273 days (99.3%) achieved in the same period of 2018/19.

## IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	Helps the Authority to monitor its performance against the improvement and well-being objectives in the Corporate Plan 2021-24.
Budget	Helps to highlight any potential impacts on budget due to unanticipated incident activity.
Legal	Assists the Authority with ensuring that there are sufficient resources to meet demand.
Staffing	No implication identified.
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	No implication identified.
Risks	Not satisfying legal requirements to report on and monitor performance that may impact on the ability to ensure that there are sufficient resources to meet demand.