

Report title: Fire and Rescue Plan Performance Measures – Quarter 2 2022/23	
Report to: Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel	
Report author: The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority	
Date: 21 March 2023	For: Noting and comment
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County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's progress in delivering the priorities set out in the Fire and Rescue Plan 2020 – 2024 during Quarter 2 of 2022/23.

2. Recommendations

That members of the Panel note and comment / seek clarity as appropriate on the content of the report and attached appendix.

3. Context / Summary

To put into context the circumstances in which these levels of performance were achieved:

- Quarter 2 was dominated by the heatwave of July and August 2022. July saw the greatest number of recorded incidents since the start of 2016, with August showing the second highest. The total number of incidents was 49% greater than during the same period the previous year, 45% above the previous quarter and 27% above the five-year average for the period.
- This is also reflected in a greatly elevated total number of fires, which was 152% higher than during the same period the previous year, 98% above the previous quarter and 47% above the five-year average for the period. The largest increase was seen in deliberate fires, the volume of which was 106% higher than the same period the previous year, 56% above the previous quarter and 20% above the five-year average for this period.
- There was also an increase in the provision of Special Services compared to the previous quarter and the five-year average for the period, with the largest increases linked to flooding (37 incidents in Quarter 2 compared with six incidents Quarter 1) and rescue / extraction from water (nine incidents in

Quarter 2 compared with two incidents in Quarter 1). Safer Essex has since convened a themed meeting of community safety partners on water safety and is now coordinating multi-agency work around this in preparation for another long, hot summer expected next year.

- The total number of false alarms was 23% greater than the same period the previous year, 37% above the previous quarter and 20% above the five-year average for this period.
- The volume of calls adversely affected average call handling and turnout times, but performance against both these metrics recovered to its previous position during Quarter 3.

During Quarter 2, highlights with regard to performance included:

- Despite the Prevention Team going into business continuity in September due to loss of staff, the number of Home Fire Safety Visits completed increased by 51% compared with the previous quarter and 38% compared with the same quarter the previous year. This included a significant increase in the number completed by operational crews.
- The service continues to see small but steady increases in the percentage of its workforce that has declared themselves to have a disability, to be from an ethnic minority background, and / or to identify as LGBTQ.

In terms of areas for continued focus:

- Core station coverage fell from 97% to 95% against a target of 98%. Global availability also dipped slightly, from 74% to 73% against a target of 80%. Linked to this, the average attendance time to potentially life-threatening incidents increased to 11 minutes 37 seconds against a target of 10 minutes. However, this improved to 10 minutes 22 seconds during Quarter 3, which is marginally better than performance during Quarter 1 (10 minutes 24 seconds). The proportion of total incidents that was responded to within 15 minutes also fell during Quarter 2, from 84% to 77% against a target of 90%. This likewise recovered to 83% in Quarter 3.

Whilst the increase in response times was undoubtedly exacerbated by the heatwave, this remains an area of concern. A dedicated performance dashboard has now been created and made available to Area and Group Managers which is updated three times a day, providing real time information on incidents and response rates to help inform the service's deployment of resources. A detailed piece of work has also been commissioned to understand the link (if any) between station coverage and response times. If such a link is statistically established, the service's approach to core stations will be re-evaluated in light of the analysis.

- The number of audits completed under the Risk Based Inspection Programme of high and very high-risk premises (461) was higher than the previous quarter (421) but still significantly off target.

- Sickness rates improved slightly, from 6.4% to 6.0%, however turnover was slightly higher than the previous quarter, the same period the previous year, and the five-year average for this period.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1 – ECFRS Quarterly Performance Report – Quarter 2 2022/23