

LEICESTERSHIRE SAFER COMMUNITIES' STRATEGY BOARD

15th DECEMBER 2023

LSCSB UPDATE: LEICESTERSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Background

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview to the Board on the work that is currently being undertaken by Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) in relation to Community Safety.
2. LFRS has a dedicated Community Safety department within the organisation. The department focuses on two main areas of Protection (buildings) and Prevention (people).
3. The Protection element allows for community and business engagement. This is a statutory duty of fire and rescue services and LFRS is the local enforcement agency of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. This applies to commercial premises and buildings where members of the public may gather. It does not apply to single private domestic dwellings.
4. The Prevention element engages with a wide community audience across Leicester Leicestershire and Rutland and uses a blended approach of dedicated Community Educators and operational firefighters. This includes entering people's homes and providing them with specific advice or equipment relative to their needs; generally referred to as a Home Safety Check (HSC).

Notable developments and challenges:

Past Year

5. One of our priorities is to improve home fire safety and reduce accidental fires. Since April 2023 LFRS have completed over 9000 (67%) Home Safety Checks (HSC) against an annual target of 13,200 (67%). These HSC are conducted following an assessment of a person's risk or a referral from a partner agency, e.g., a key health partner provides around 600 referrals per quarter.
6. The 2021 census data shows a 9.5 per cent increase to the county's population over the last 10 years. This confirms we are one of the fastest growing areas in the country in terms of population. The demand to provide Fire Safety advice in the home continues to grow.
7. LFRS continue to train partners to conduct HSC on our behalf providing knowledge and resources on additional services and referral pathways for further support from LFRS.
8. 486 Road Traffic Collisions (RTC) were attended by LFRS between April and October 2023. This is an increase of 99 on our 3-year average year-to-date figure of 387. Unfortunately, these RTC resulted in 13 fatalities and 261 injured persons. This has a

wider impact across the county and requires collaboration to try and reduce these figures.

9. An example of where collaboration work is making a difference is the Biker Down course. Biker Down is a free 3-hour course for bikers or pillion passengers. It educates them on scene safety, emergency first aid and how to avoid collisions and improve their visibility on the roads.
10. A recent attendee to a Biker Down course remembered the lifesaving training she had received when a motorcyclist had a medical event and CPR was given until emergency services arrived. Saving this person's life led to Highways Agency and Bike Safe working with LFRS to produce a national [#DoltForDave](#) campaign to promote attending safety courses like Biker Down.
11. As well as prevention activities we work with Responsible Persons in protecting the built environment. LFRS conduct Fire Safety Inspections (Audits) and completed 750 audits (April – October). 87 of these have required action plans or enforcement notices which means continued engagement until safety concerns are remedied.
12. Where there is an immediate risk to life LFRS Fire Protection Inspection Officers will prohibit the use or area of use of a premises which can lead to a need to find emergency accommodation. It is crucial that when this occurs, and where necessary, effective communication and cooperation is provided across partners e.g., local authority etc. This will reduce the impact to our communities when their safety may already be compromised. There were 29 prohibition notices served between April and October.

Key issues for partnership working or affecting partners

13. The prohibition of a premises by the local enforcement agency (LFRS) can have significant impacts not only to communities but local authority and other partners. Nationally the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has worked with partners to publish a Major Decants Protocol (September 2023) for buildings more than 5 storeys (other conditions apply).
14. The Major Decants Protocol triggered by the Fire and Rescue Service has the potential to impact multiple households or individuals. The protocol needs weaving into emergency planning aspects with partners during 2024 due to different responsibilities on different agencies.
15. Locally, nationally, and indeed internationally the increase in the use of Personal Light Electric Vehicle (PLEV) e.g., electric scooters etc. is seeing a significant increase in serious fires in and around people's homes.
16. PLEV are seen as environmentally friendly, economical, and convenient. A fire safety concern arises when the PLEV is in the home and charging. Often, they are charged in convenient common areas (hallways, landings, corridors, shared spaces) and non-Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) chargers or batteries are cheaply available and used.
17. Should a fault occur whilst charging and storage is in communal areas then a quickly developing fire can trap individuals in the home leading to increased likelihood of fatalities. LFRS would like to increase partners awareness of these issues. LFRS

encourages partners to influence the storage of PLEV in their estate and during engagement with communities and provide advice or action where required.

18. Other Lithium-ion powered devices pose similar fire risks including vapes and there is growing support for legislation and improved standards. LFRS are supportive of partners being proactive in managing this hazard now, before any potential changes in legislation may appear.
19. Road Traffic Collisions (RTC) are a key issue and LFRS want to work with partners to undertake initiatives to reduce road traffic collisions across the county. LFRS will actively engage with for example the Road Safety Partnership to support reducing harm from RTC.
20. After a prolonged period of reducing figures for 'false fire alarm incidents' a sharp upturn has been noted. A 13% increase to 2007 against the 3-year average of 1763 is an emerging issue. Premises which have multiple such incidents per year include hospitals, residential care, Houses In Multiple Occupation, and flats. Partners may be able to assist in ensuring local management is effective and issues are resolved quickly.
21. Whilst attending incidents which are false fire alarms there is a potential impact on operational availability for emergency calls elsewhere. LFRS are conducting some focussed work in this area and support from partners would be beneficial in ensuring our communities can be protected for emergency incidents as necessary.

Issues in local areas

22. The Road Safety partnership data provides a good insight into where the Road Traffic Collision incidents occur and provide a breakdown of data which will aid targeted initiatives. From a common data set we can target areas more effectively and coordinate activity to increase effectiveness.

Recommendations for the Board

23. It is recommended that the board:
 - (a) Notes the content of the report;
 - (b) Consider how the themes impact their areas of activity and where closer partnership working opportunities can be explored.

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