



Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Community Safety Committee

FIRE PROTECTION PROJECT UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 30 June 2017

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on two of the current projects being managed by the Fire Protection Team:

- The use of operational crews to carry out hazard spotting activities in non-domestic premises, and;
- The use of a predictive incident risk scoring database to influence the service's risk based audit programme for non-domestic premises.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name : Wayne Bowcock
Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Tel : 0115 967 0880

Email : wayne.bowcock@notts-fire.gov.uk

**Media Enquiries
Contact :** Therese Easom
(0115) 967 0880 therese.easom@notts-fire.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Prevention is the key to reducing the tragedies and hardships caused by fire. Stopping fires from starting requires the business community and the fire service to work together to deliver safer non-domestic premises and communities and reduce the economic impact of fires in these types of premises.
- 1.2 The Protection Team currently undertakes approximately 600 audits per annum. The risk based audit programme follows Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) guidance and is currently based on the highest risk premises within Nottinghamshire. The programme's primary focus is currently aimed at properties which pose the greatest risk to individuals who are sleeping in unfamiliar surroundings.
- 1.3 In real terms this approach means that approximately 1% of the 51,000 non-domestic premises with Nottinghamshire are audited every year. The nature of the process that is used to develop the risk based audit programme, combined with the services capacity to undertake audits, means that certain types of premises are not audited unless the Protection Team are made aware, via a complaint or another agency's referral.
- 1.4 Typical premises types include food outlets, where it is known there is a high level of 'unknown sleeping above'. Licensed premises can also be problematic as audit activities invariably need to be carried out at peak times. The ability for the Protection Team to carry out audit activity on such premises can also be impacted by the existing employment contracts of Fire Protection Inspecting Officers.
- 1.5 The Fire and Rescue National Framework document 2012 requires a Fire Authority to set out its management strategy and risk based programme for enforcing the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO), in accordance with the principles of better regulation set out in the Statutory Code of Compliance for Regulators and the Enforcement Concordat.
- 1.6 The RRO makes "risk assessment" central to determining the necessary level of fire precautions in all non-domestic premises. The statutory responsibility for ensuring an adequate level of fire safety is the duty of the nominated "responsible person" for individual premises – usually the employer, or occupier (person in control of the premises) or the owner.
- 1.7 A Fire Authority has a statutory duty to enforce the compliance requirements of the RRO in most premises, although the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the Crown Premises Inspection Group of the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisers Unit and local authorities also have enforcement responsibilities in some specific types of premises.
- 1.8 The inspection programme is underpinned by a determination of the level of risk presented by a premise. The inspection of premises is categorised by

priority order, those presenting the highest risk to life, being of the utmost priority.

- 1.9 The current audit programme is developed using a robust, third-party validated risk assessment and resource deployment tool. This is exported to the Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS) database which then determines the frequency of premises inspections. CFRMIS stores the information and regular reports determine which premises are due for inspection from our known businesses stored within CFRMIS.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 Operational intelligence gathering (hazard spotting) utilises operational crews to highlight potential breaches of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (RRO) in support of the Fire Protection Business Plan 2017-2020.
- 2.2 The project aim is to increase operational crews awareness of fire safety when working in and around non-domestic premises. The use of operational crews for this role will go some way in ensuring non domestic premises are safe for those who work and use the premises and increase firefighter safety in the event of an incident at these premise types. The information gathered is shared with the Fire Protection team to determine an indicative level of compliance against the RRO. The use of operational crews will increase visibility and reassurance amongst the business community and provide a more efficient and effective use of resources.
- 2.3 Throughout the project planning phase, the team reviewed several models used by neighbouring fire and rescue services. The models were discounted as the hazard spotting procedure relied on fire fighters to gather hazard information, which, at this time NFRS fire fighters do not have the requisite skills and qualifications to carry out this level of audit activity under the RRO.
- 2.4 To address this, a procedure was developed which uses the powers under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 enabling fire fighters to gather hazard information on premises. The procedure requires fire fighters to gather basic information on four areas:
 - Fire detection and firefighting;
 - Emergency exits and escape routes;
 - Staff training and housekeeping;
 - Risk critical elements.
- 2.5 The collection method has been designed so that once it has been completed and submitted, the information can be used by the Protection Team to ascertain the level of follow up action that may be required. The purpose is to gather intelligence on the compliance level of non-domestic premises. It is not an expectation for fire fighters to provide advice or guidance to the Responsible Person (RP) as this may compromise any further action that the Protection Team may have to undertake.

- 2.6 The initial expectation of operational crews is the gathering of hazard information with regards to fire protection issues, as well as highlighting potential risk critical operational issues. Suggested opportunities for crews to gather the information include:
- Post incident; following the actuation of an automatic fire alarm, fire or special service call;
 - During other intelligence gathering activities ;
 - During pre-arranged familiarisation visits;
 - During prevention activities associated with non-domestic premises – i.e.: school visits.
- 2.7 Since November 2016 a pilot of the project has been running at Highfields fire station. During April 2017 the initiative was rolled out to include Mansfield, City (London Road), Retford (wholetime and retained) and Hucknall. To date, there have been limited responses from Highfields station and this is believed to be due to a lack of opportunities to contribute to the initiative. To address this and to support crews, several measures have been developed:
- Staff training;
 - Types and methods of information capture. Specific guidance will be given to crews relating to their level of authority and regarding the giving of advice and guidance to the RP;
 - Details relating to internal control procedures following non-compliance of the RP (prohibition and restriction procedures and the interaction with Officers, including the use of officers to carry out prohibition action).
- 2.8 A meeting was held in January 2017 between protection and response Officers to discuss the initiative and seek the support of Group Managers (GM's) in the roll out of the hazard spotting initiative and the use of operational personnel within their geographical areas. Initial approval was also given for a Service-wide roll out across all wholetime stations within the county.
- 2.9 This approach will provide the potential for a significant number of premises to be included as part of the Service's annual risk based audit programme.
- 2.10 Any hazard spotting activity which is carried out by crews will be undertaken using their powers under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. If all Watch Managers (WM's) were qualified to Level 3 Certificate in Fire Safety for Fire Safety Advisors, the Service would then have the option of carrying out the hazard spotting visits under the RRO. This would enable WMs to offer advice, and educate those responsible for fire safety in regulated premises in addition to the support of the Protection Team, where needed, for more complex issues.
- 2.11 The training would be delivered in-house and would satisfy the requirements of the CFOA Competency Framework. A full business case would be developed for approval by the Strategic Leadership Team to develop all WM's to achieve a Level 3 Certificate in Fire Safety.

- 2.12 The current method of developing the risk based audit programme for visits by Fire Protection Inspecting Officers is outdated. The toolkit was developed in 2004 and is now generally used by fire and rescue services in support of other forms of intelligence.
- 2.13 In April 2016 the Service viewed the 'Experian Incident Risk Score' toolkit. The incident risk score product produces a fire predictor model that uses a number of fields to build up an historic risk profile (5 years data) of all non-domestic premises within Nottinghamshire and predicts the probability (risk) of a premises having an incident of fire. Where the model was used to predict incidents of fire retrospectively there was an 80% success rate in identifying the premises that had suffered an incident of fire.
- 2.14 In December 2016 the Service contracted Experian to provide the incident risk score data for a 12-month period. The Service is currently looking to embed the data by overlaying this intelligence with the data that CFRMIS currently holds to help verify the current risk based audit programme, highlight new risk and help in identifying those premises that are highly compliant and therefore may not need to be visited on a regular basis.
- 2.15 Regular meetings between the Service, Experian and other fire and rescue services are taking place to evolve the product and ensure that it remains fit for purpose. This approach has already seen a number of improvements in the product by including a number of additional data fields:
- Local Authority Food Standards Agency ratings;
 - Sleeping risk flag;
 - Heritage Building flag;
 - Businesses that are part of a Primary Authority Scheme.
- 2.16 There are additional opportunities to use the data outside of the development of the risk based audit programme, these include:
- Improving fire fighter safety by sharing the data with the operational assurance team;
 - Supporting retained recruitment by using the data to identify businesses that operate within a retained stations turnout area;
 - Targeted engagement with those businesses most at risk by using other methods (email shots, newsletter etc.);
 - The development of risk mapping tools (used to influence the 2010 and 2015 Fire Cover Review);
 - In support of the Performance Management Framework project and the requirement for this to take an evidence led approach.
- 2.17 Both the hazard spotting initiative and the use of the Experian risk score data will improve the way in which the service addresses the risks that non-domestic premises pose. The increase in audit activity by using operational crews and the ability to target those premises most at risk within the county by

using an intelligence led audit programme, is intended to reduce instances of fires in non-domestic premises and improve firefighter safety.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are limited financial implications associated with the content of this report. For the roll out of the hazard spotting initiative the financial implications will be contained within existing budgets.
- 3.2 There would be financial implications if the recommendation to develop all WMs to achieve a Level 3 Certificate in Fire Safety was approved. This would be subject to a business case being approved by SLT and the required funding being included in the next budget presented to members for approval.
- 3.3 The Experian data costs were in the region of £7000 for the first year and the ongoing annual costs are likely to be approximately £5000. All costs are contained within existing budgets.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The learning and development implications during the pilot phase are limited to the upskilling of operational personnel to carry out the hazard spotting initiative at Mansfield, London Road, Retford, Hucknall and Highfields stations. There will be further implications if support is given to roll the initiative out to the whole of the Service, this will be limited to the upskilling of all whotetime personnel to carry out hazard spotting.
- 4.2 The recommendation to develop all WMs to achieve a Level 3 Certificate in Fire Safety will require development and delivery of a training package to all WMs. Gaining the qualification itself and the expectation for WMs to carry out inspections under the RRO is within the WM's role map

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because the report is not setting Service policy or procedures.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Under Section 6 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 a fire and rescue authority must make provision for the purpose of promoting fire safety in its area. Both the

hazard spotting initiative and the use of the Experian risk data contributes to our statutory functions under the Act.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The Fire Authority is the enforcing authority for the RRO and as such must enforce the provisions of the Order and any regulations made under it in relation to premises for which it is the enforcing authority.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Regulators' Code states that regulators should share information about compliance and risk. During NFRS's hazard spotting activities the Service will actively encourage opportunities to collect information once and to secure mechanisms to share information with other regulators about businesses and other bodies the Service regulate to help target resources and activities to minimise duplication.
- 9.2 Where appropriate and when opportunities arise, NFRS will carry out regulatory functions jointly with other regulators to decrease the burden on businesses and in support of those NFRS regulate to comply and grow.
- 9.3 The ongoing implementation and development of Experian risk score data presents an opportunity for the Service to work with regional fire and rescue services. Both Leicestershire and Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Services are likely to purchase the data from Experian which may lead to an opportunity to share costs on data purchase and product development.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members support the increased use of operational crews in the reduction of risk in non-domestic premises.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER