

## Agenda Item no. 7

**TO:** Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority

**FROM:** Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) - Rick Hylton

**PRESENTING OFFICER(S):** Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) - Rick Hylton

Telephone 01480 444500

[rick.hylton@cambsfire.gov.uk](mailto:rick.hylton@cambsfire.gov.uk)

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### RESOURCING FOR SPATE CONDITIONS

#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise on the Service's response to the spate conditions in the summer of 2018 and the associated impact on resourcing and financing.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Fire Authority is asked to note the contents of this report.

#### 3. Risk Assessment

- 3.1 **Political** – effective operational response is predicated on weight and speed of response. Resourcing for all foreseeable risks is a requirement of the Fire Authority, failure to do so may result in the Authority being unable to meet public expectations.
- 3.2 **Legal** – the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services (England) sets an expectation that fire services will have plans in place to respond to all foreseeable risks within their area. Furthermore, responding to fires is a statutory duty placed on fire and rescue services within the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.
- 3.3 **Financial** – periods of high demand in terms of call rates and protracted incidents increases financial pressure on the Authority and may result in the need for the Authority to supplement agreed budgets via the use of reserves.

#### 4. Background

- 4.1 This year, the UK experienced one of the hottest summers on record. As has been the case in the past, prolonged periods of extreme weather can place an extremely high level of demand on our operational resources; when this occurs we term it 'spate conditions'. Between 17 June and 17 July 2018 Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) responded to 851 incidents,

resulting in over 1500 mobilisations. Around 40% of these calls were to fires in the open affecting mainly farmland and woodland areas.

- 4.2 These types of fires, due to their tendency to spread quickly and over a large area, require a large number of resources to be mobilised. As an illustration, in the same period, the Service mobilised four plus fire engines to 41 incidents; a significant increase to normal levels of demand. In addition the tactics for extinguishing these types of fires are physically demanding on fire crews meaning that crews need to be rotated frequently.
- 4.3 In addition to responding to a large incident, the hot spell increased demand on the Service. It was not unusual during the month of July to have nine separate incidents ongoing at any one time.
- 4.4 CFRS proactively manages appliance availability. Modelling of risk and response times has demonstrated that the optimum number of appliances is 14 during the daytime. These appliances, when in key locations within the county, enable the Service to make the most effective response to incidents.
- 4.5 This model enables the Service to deal with day to day demand and enables sufficient resources to deal with foreseeable risk. In the event of spate conditions however there is a risk that the number of appliances may not be sufficient to deal with the number of calls being received within the normal performance measures.

## **5. Managing Spate Conditions**

- 5.1 Upon the onset of spate conditions the Service sets up the Major Incident Command Area (MICA) within Headquarters. The primary objective of this function is to work with Fire Control and Command to increase the number of available resources. This may be fire appliances or Officers.
- 5.2 CFRS operates a recall to duty policy. Activation of this enables the Service to increase the number of available Officers. These Officers are required to act as Incident Commanders at larger incidents together with undertaking coordination roles within MICA.
- 5.3 Fire appliance availability is increased by contacting On-Call staff who are booked off duty and requesting their return and by taking staff at stations that may be unavailable due to crewing shortages and moving them to another station to make up a crew. This system, whilst resource intensive in terms of making the arrangements, is well tested and delivers on average an additional three to six fire appliances.
- 5.4 Table 1 below provides Members with an illustrative view of our resourcing needs over part of the spate period. Column 1 shows the date of the spate period, column 2 highlights the number of resources available to the Service as per our planning assumptions set out in paragraph 4.4 above and column 3 provides an indication of the number of appliances that were required to deal with that spate period. The final column displays the number of appliances the

Service delivered as a result of the actions of our 'spate conditions' procedure.

Table1. Spate Condition Resourcing Requirements 19 July to 7 August 2018

<b>Date</b>	<b>Number of appliances contracted to be available</b>	<b>Number required to meet demand</b>	<b>Total Number of appliances delivered as a result of Spate Protocol</b>
19.07.2018	16	12	19
21.07.2018	15	10	18
26.07.2018	17	24	24
04.08.2018	13	10	17
06.08.2018	16	18	19
07.08.2018	15	20	21

- 5.5 Members will note from Table 1, the spite conditions over the summer period did on occasions place pressure on our resources however it should also be noted that due to the arrangements the Service has in place for managing such occurrences, it was able to match resourcing to demand. Any changes in the future to this resourcing will therefore impact on the Service's ability to meet such a demand going forward. It should further be noted that this was possible due to the flexibility and willingness of our staff to support the Service and the communities they serve. Chief Officers have publicly thanked the hard work and commitment of our staff during this period.
- 5.6 The financial cost of the spite period is difficult to fully quantify at this time. Additional cost will have been incurred from additional appliance movements and from wholtime staff overtime. The easiest quantifiable cost is from On-Call wages as a result of both attendance at incidents and providing resilience arrangements. This has cost the Service circa £70,000.

## **6. Learning and Future Improvements**

- 6.1 Spate conditions are becoming more and more common. As a result of our desire to continually improve the service we provide, we identify learning and areas of improvement after each activation.
- 6.2 As a result, the following areas will be taken forward as part of the Service planning process, with a view to making the management of spite conditions more effective;
- review of the location, resourcing and technology available to MICA,
  - implementation of a trial 'phased response ' model for On-Call staff,
  - consideration given to the most effective way to manage relief crews,
  - alignment of roles and responsibilities of MICA and Combined Control,
  - agreed protocol for the management of spite conditions with Suffolk FRS.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Source Documents	Location	Contact Officer
Incident data June to August 2018  CFRS On-Call availability July to August 2018	Business, Intelligence and Performance. Hinchingsbrooke Cottage Brampton Road Huntingdon	ACFO Rick Hylton <a href="mailto:rick.hylton@cambsfire.gov.uk">rick.hylton@cambsfire.gov.uk</a> 01480 444500