Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Wednesday 24 April 2024
Time: 2.00 pm
Venue: Committee Room 2, Shire Hall

Membership
Councillor Adrian Warwick (Chair)
Councillor Parminder Singh Birdi (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Sarah Boad
Councillor Sarah Feeney
Councillor Wallace Redford
Councillor Will Roberts
Councillor Tim Sinclair
Councillor Mejar Singh
Councillor Richard Spencer
Councillor Robert Tromans

Items on the agenda: -

1. General

(1) Apologies

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

(3) Chair's Announcements

(4) Minutes of Previous Meeting

2. Public Question Time
Up to 30 minutes of the meeting is available for members of the public to ask questions on any matters relevant to the business of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Questioners may ask two questions and can speak for up to three minutes each. To be sure of receiving an answer to an appropriate question, please contact Andy Carswell (Democratic Services) at least two working days prior to the meeting.

3. **Questions to Portfolio Holders relevant to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
Up to 30 minutes of the meeting is available for the Committee to put questions to the Leader and Portfolio Holders on any matters relevant to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4. **2022-23 Performance Report of Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service Activity**

5. **Approach to Artificial Intelligence**

6. **Work Programme**

7. **Any Urgent Matters**

Monica Fogarty
Chief Executive
Warwickshire County Council
Shire Hall, Warwick

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A member attending a meeting where a matter arises in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest must (unless they have a dispensation):

- Declare the interest if they have not already registered it
- Not participate in any discussion or vote
- Leave the meeting room until the matter has been dealt with
- Give written notice of any unregistered interest to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting

Non-pecuniary interests relevant to the agenda should be declared at the commencement of the meeting.

The public reports referred to are available on the Warwickshire Web
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Public Speaking
Any member of the public who is resident or working in Warwickshire, or who is in receipt of services from the Council, may speak at the meeting for up to three minutes on any matter within the remit of the Committee. This can be in the form of a statement or a question. If you wish to speak please notify Democratic Services in writing at least two working days before the meeting. You should give your name and address and the subject upon which you wish to speak. Full details of the public speaking scheme are set out in the Council's Standing Orders.

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Warwickshire
County Council

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Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 21 February 2024

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members
Councillor Adrian Warwick (Chair)
Councillor Parminder Singh Birdi (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Piers Daniell
Councillor Sarah Feeney
Councillor Wallace Redford
Councillor Will Roberts
Councillor Tim Sinclair
Councillor Richard Spencer
Councillor Robert Tromans

Officers
Rob Powell, Executive Director for Resources
Vanessa Belton, Business Intelligence Service Manager (Performance and Quality)
Ben Brook, Chief Fire Officer
Andy Carswell, Democratic Services Officer
Craig Cusack, Director of Enabling Services
Sarah Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning and Governance
Bal Jacob, Director of Workforce and Local Services
Virginia Rennie, Interim Director of Finance
Sue Robinson, Business Intelligence Service Manager
Louise Richardson, Lead Commissioner - Corporate Policy and Strategy
Kate Sullivan, Strategy and Commissioning Lead, Organisational Development
Max Taylor, Graduate Management Trainee

Others Present
Councillor Andy Crump (Portfolio Holder, Fire & Rescue and Community Safety)
Councillor Izzy Seccombe
Councillor Martin Watson (Portfolio Holder, Economy)
Penny Barry (Public)
Jill Machado (Public)

1. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Boad and Butlin.

(2) Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

(3) Chair's Announcements

There were none.

(4) Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2023 were approved as an accurate record, subject to an amendment to show that Councillor Watson was in attendance.

2. Public Question Time

Jill Machado addressed the Panel in relation to the ongoing resourcing to risk consultation by Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service. She said that under the proposals there would be an increase in response times in the Stratford area. She noted there had been a recent incident at the Royal Shakespeare Company Theatre which had been attended by nine appliances attended, and said that under the proposals there would be eight emergency appliances available overnight from 10pm to 8am. She also noted the proposals said the planned surge model would be needed four times in five years, but stated her belief this needed to be reviewed.

Penny Barry also addressed the Committee on the consultation. She stated her belief the proposal out for consultation would not work and a more thorough analysis should have been undertaken. She asked if the removal of on-call firefighters had been properly understood.

It was noted that Councillor Boad had also asked to address the Panel on the points raised by the public questions. She would get a response from the portfolio holder, as would the two members of the public.

Ben Brook (Chief Fire Officer) said WFRS appreciated the engagement made by the public to the consultation, and all feedback was being considered. He said there would be eight full-time teams available overnight, in addition to the eight surge teams. He said the four to five incidents in a five-year period that a surge team might be needed for would be major incidents requiring up to 20 appliances. Regarding the incident at the Royal Shakespeare Company, he said the eight crews included some specialist appliances.

Councillor Crump said a significant number of responses to the consultation had come from the south of the county, and he appreciated the strength of feeling on the proposals. He reminded members the consultation would close on 10 March, and the responses would be considered by Cabinet and Full Council before a decision was made. He said there had been meetings with the Fire and Rescue Services Association and Fire Brigades Union, and the proposals were also being

independently reviewed by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services.

3. Questions to Portfolio Holders relevant to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

There were none.

4. Warwickshire Futures - looking ahead to 2030/40

The item was introduced by Max Taylor (Graduate Management Trainee), who explained the report looked to address large-scale challenges, but also look at potential opportunities, that would affect the Council going forward to 2040. To do this, analysis of long-term trends and short-term issues had been undertaken, along with examples of good practice and research across other areas of local government. This would be continually monitored and updated as time progressed. It was hoped all of this information, when collated, would put the Council in the best position to respond to the challenges it would face in the coming years. Examples of topics that were considered to be shorter-term priorities included the Levelling Up agenda, the increased cost of living, resourcing of services, and potential changes caused by election results.

Members were told five key themes had been identified: societal change; community and health; jobs, economy and technology; environment, climate and infrastructure; and transport and travel. Further issues that could have a potentially strong impact across all areas of the Council had also been identified. These were shifts in demographics; global economic and political uncertainty; climate change; artificial intelligence; and inequalities. For example, people were living for longer but also more of those people would suffer with serious illnesses. There would also need to be changes to help meet the needs of a younger demographic in terms of inclusivity. In respect of climate change, emergency planning teams had been established that would tackle climate events such as flooding or prolonged heatwaves. The use of AI was seen as more of a positive opportunity, as there were potentially ways for customer-facing teams to exploit its use for the Council's benefit.

In addition to the Council-wide issues, workforce challenges, political engagement, and digitalisation had all been identified as specific issues of relevance to the Committee. Among the workforce challenges to be identified were pay levels for senior staff and succession planning. It had been noted two thirds of Council staff were aged between 40 and 64, and just five per cent of the total workforce was under the age of 25. Engagement with local elections had been identified as an issue, with turnout across England being around 32 per cent at last year's local election. Members were told that 6G data was in the process of being developed and it was anticipated it would begin to be rolled out by 2030.

Responding to a question raised by Councillor Feeney, Louise Richardson (Lead Commissioner – Corporate Policy and Strategy) said town centre regeneration and work with district and borough councils was being undertaken by the Place team. She said Councillor Feeney's comments would be fed back to the team. In response to another question from Councillor Feeney regarding workforce challenges, she said feedback would be reported back to members of the Strategy Network. Bal Jacob (Director of Workforce and Local Services) said a lot of work was already taking place in relation to strategic workforce planning. Pilot schemes regarding staff recruitment and retention were taking place within eight areas that had traditionally been difficult to recruit for,

and analytical work would then take place. There would be a focus on talent management and acquisition.

Councillor Roberts noted some of the links embedded in the report were either invalid or mixed-up. Max Taylor said this would be revised and updated.

Councillor Seccombe said it would be important to ensure the aging population would be able to access the information it needed and kept well informed. She said AI would prove to be helpful, but it was important for alternative ways of communication to be considered.

Councillor Tromans said the report considered the future of the Council, but also Warwickshire as a county. Although there would be some overlap between the two, it was important for there to be a separation as far as possible. Councillor Tromans said the Council had a good track record of ensuring good value for money and it was important for this to continue, and for risks to be mitigated against. Councillor Tromans said the five key themes were very strong, but stated his belief the five priority issues did not add much value to the overall strategy. He noted the contents of the risk register and said the skills gap, and attracting and retaining staff, would be an important issue to address. However the Council had a good record with its apprenticeship and 'grow your own' schemes, he said.

Responding to a question from Councillor Birdi, Sue Robinson (Business Intelligence Service Manager) said the most recent population statistics available were from 2018. Data from the 2021 census would not be available until 2025.

Rob Powell (Executive Director, Resources) said feedback from the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees would help inform the Council Delivery Plan, which would be considered at Cabinet in April.

Members thanked officers for the report, and the Chair commended Max Taylor's presentation to the Committee.

Members noted the contents of the report.

5. Estates Master Planning

The item was introduced by Craig Cusack (Director, Enabling Services). He said usage of Shire Hall had doubled, and this had been done within the existing budget. Ways of continuing to expand this were being looked at. Partnerships had been established with other organisations for them to use Council buildings. Each building or asset would be kept under review to ensure it had a defined use and benefit plan. This would also help the Council to meet its net zero target.

Regarding the Warwickshire Property Development Group, Craig Cusack said delivery of its objectives was slightly ahead of schedule. Progress on this was being reviewed by governance groups and the Member Oversight Group.

Responding to a question from Councillor Feeney, Craig Cusack said a full option appraisal, including any usage and planning restrictions, was undertaken for each property asset. All options would be considered before any recommendations were taken forward.

Councillor Feeney noted there had been delays to four business cases relating to WPDG developments. Craig Cusack said these delays were unlikely to have an adverse effect on the Council, and they were close to being resolved. They were also covered by the financial commercial risk reserve. Craig Cusack said there may be a benefit, in that by the time the buildings were ready then a greater return yield may be possible. Rob Powell added the delays were beyond the control of WPDG, and the main projects were on track to be met.

Members noted the contents of the report.

6. Our People Strategy Annual Review 2023/2024 and Plan for 2024/2025

The item was introduced by Kate Sullivan (Strategy and Commissioning Lead, Organisational Development). She said the report outlined the achievements made through the previous year's plan, and it detailed the strategy's priorities for the next five years. These broadly tied in with the key priority themes that had been highlighted earlier during the section on the Warwickshire Futures Strategy, and fitted with the key priority themes that had been identified by Corporate Board. Kate Sullivan said the results of the staff Your Say survey had become available after publication of the report. This showed an increase in agreement of the statements made in the survey, from 76 per cent to 79 per cent. The overall response rate had increased from 40 per cent to 56 per cent. However there had been a small reduction in the number of people who had responded positively to the statement they felt safe to be their authentic selves at work. There had been an increase in absences associated with stress and mental health, which reflected a national trend. Kate Sullivan said an action plan to proactively tackle this was being produced.

Responding to a question from Councillor Sinclair regarding increased headcount, Kate Sullivan said this was due to successful recruitment and there had been a consequential reduction in the number of staff vacancies.

Councillor Feeney noted there had been no reference to the Council working with trade unions as part of the network groups. Kate Sullivan said there were good relationships with the unions with regular meetings, but these were business as usual items so did not need to be highlighted in the report.

Responding to questions from Councillors Feeney and Sinclair about absences, Kate Sullivan said a deep dive analysis of stress and mental health was taking place. As well as increasing instances of absence, there was an increase in the severity of issues faced which required more complex levels of support. A detailed report on this analysis would go to the Staff and Pensions Committee. It was agreed this could be made available to members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Responding to a question from Councillor Feeney, Kate Sullivan said an agency contract was in the process of being agreed and signed. However it was acknowledged there was a desire to try and minimise the use of agency staff. Strategic workforce planning was looking to develop ways of dealing with this, such as looking at improving the grow our own scheme or the graduate scheme.

Members noted the contents of the report.

7. Council Plan 2022-2027 - Integrated Performance Report Quarter 3 2023/24

The item was introduced by Craig Cusack, who explained the Plan had been endorsed by Cabinet earlier in the month. Of the measures relevant to the Committee, 64 per cent were on track to be met. This represented an increase of 16 per cent since the previous quarter. Key themes to have been noted included increases in demand and costs, and the ability to access resources when they were needed more quickly than had been previously anticipated. Craig Cusack stated his belief that the term 'not on track' sometimes carried unnecessarily negative connotations, and sometimes could be accounted by time slippages rather than a decrease in performance levels.

Members were told there had been a £39,000 overspend, which technically represented a zero per cent variation. Craig Cusack said the capital programme was on track to be delivered, and any delays and the reasons demonstrating the understanding for them had been included in one of the report appendices. Attention was also drawn to the four main strategic risks that had been outlined in the report pack.

Responding to a question from Councillor Sinclair regarding fire service response times, Ben Brook said the long-standing target of responding to an incident that represented a risk to life or property within ten minutes 75 per cent of the time was unrealistic and had not been met at any point within the previous five years. The resourcing to risk proposals would instead generate a mean average response time across the county, rather than measuring it as a percentage. The fastest response times would be in places where resources were most likely to be needed. Ben Brook said the proposed arrangements would generate a 13.2 per cent increase in prevention and protection activity, which in the longer term would help save more lives. The proposals also sought to provide a greater level of transparency.

Responding to a question from Councillor Feeney, Ben Brook said a serious fire incident review took place following all incidents involving a fire-related death or serious injury. These would be done with partner agencies to see if more work could be done to prevent similar incidents; for example, working with agencies where there was a known hoarder, as this represented an increased fire risk. Councillor Crump gave an example of a light aircraft crash that had resulted in a fatality. Although the craft was returning to an airfield in a different county, where it was registered, because the accident had taken place in Warwickshire it counted towards the county's fatal incident statistics. Ben Brook added that although crews always sought to attend an incident as soon as possible, there was not necessarily a correlation between response time and death or serious injury resulting.

Councillor Sinclair noted the number of staff responding to say they agreed they were kept well informed of the work of the Council had fallen from 85 per cent to 79 per cent, and asked how this was being addressed. Kate Sullivan said since the report had been published, this figure had increased to 81 per cent, and any response of more than 75 per cent was a positive. More work was taking place to engage more with the community teams, who were less office-based. Feedback from managers of these teams suggested they were well informed of their own team's work, but not necessarily that of the Council as a whole and this was looking to be addressed. Rob Powell said scores for internal communications had increased significantly during the Covid pandemic, and the targets for further improvement that had been set subsequently may have been overly ambitious. However, he stated his belief internal communications was excellent and was evolving to meet the Council's changing needs.

Members noted the contents of the report.

8. Treasury and Investment Strategy

The item was introduced by Virginia Rennie (Interim Director of Finance). She said the key message was performance levels were good, and an additional three months' of forecast data showed the direction of travel would continue on a positive trajectory.

Virginia Rennie said treasury management was becoming increasingly regulated, following well-publicised financial difficulties affecting a number of local authorities. However, the details of those financial arrangements showed that authorities still retained a large amount of flexibility in their decision making. Good management and governance arrangements were therefore of great importance.

Members were told that at the end of Quarter 3, there was £336million in cash in the investment balance. Virginia Rennie said this had all been earmarked. Additionally, the average balance throughout Quarter 3 had been £392million, which Virginia Rennie said demonstrated the volatility of the market. There had been a significant withdrawal of cash in November following the pay award scheme and backdating of pay.

Regarding liquidity of assets, there had been no change to the credit worthiness of any of the assets the Council had invested. Members' attention was drawn to one bank that was mentioned in the report, but no money was currently invested in this. Virginia Rennie said there were no plans to change where money was invested as current return rates were good, and there was a guarantee of a return on investment. The Council would monitor which other local authorities were subject to Section 114 notices, and would not make any investments into them.

Regarding investment yield, Virginia Rennie said the expected earning of £3.5million had actually been £13.5million. This £10million windfall had been used to fund this year's overspends.

Members were told that £39million was invested in the asset net variation section. Virginia Rennie said these typically performed best when interest rates were low, and presently they were the worst performing of the Council's investments. A review was being undertaken to see if a change of strategy was required.

Borrowing currently stood at £273million, following an early repayment of £49million that had been made last year. The next repayment was scheduled for 2029. It was not anticipated the Council would need to borrow any more money this year or next.

Responding to a question from Councillor Sinclair, Virginia Rennie said the Council's policy was that cash balances should not go below £100million. The Treasury Management Strategy was designed to prevent this from happening, otherwise the Council may be forced into a position where it needed to borrow money temporarily and this was not something that was desirable. Officers wanted to be proactive in reporting on the levels in the cash balances.

Members said they were reassured by the contents of the report that the Council's treasury was being well managed. Members noted the contents of the report.

9. Work Programme

Members noted the contents of the work programme, and that an additional meeting had been scheduled that would just consider the Resourcing to Risk item.

10. Any Urgent Matters

There were no additional matters to discuss.

The meeting rose at 3.17pm

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Chair

Resources and Fire & Rescue
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

24th April 2024

2022-23 Performance Report of
Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service Activity

Recommendation

That the Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers and comments on the contents of this report.

1.0   Summary

1.1   This report provides information regarding the performance of Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) against the key business measures reported on at a corporate level. The figures aim to give a view of historical trends over the last five years, as well as a summary of the most recent performance for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

1.2   Several incident types usually attended by firefighters have seen significant increases as a result of severe weather experienced this financial year, which has impacted the figures for 2022/23. Of note, there have been increases in the number of accidental dwelling fires, small fires and attended road traffic collisions, with some categories seeing increases of over 75%.

1.3   Appliance availability remained high for wholetime appliances at 98.4%, with the on-call availability at key stations figure being much lower at 52.4%. On-call availability figures have been impacted by recruitment challenges and officers returning to primary employment following the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.4   The Fire Control Team handled life risk and property emergency calls within 90 seconds on 84.5% of occasions over the last twelve months, the percentage remaining high but just under the target of 85%.

1.5   The Hospital to Home scheme has been a success and continues to strengthen the WRFS brand within the community and to ensure the elderly and vulnerable are supported and safe. Levels increased significantly during the pandemic, but demand has continued to reduce slightly over the past 12 months.

1.6   The service continues to monitor and track its performance with acknowledgement of the changing risk profile. Key drivers for future change in the risk profile are the effects of

emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis and climate change.

1.7   New analytical reports are being developed regularly by the Business Intelligence team and are shared with Service personnel at all levels to assist with prevention work and targeting resources more effectively, most notably the CRMP risk analysis tool, which is helping the Service to target the highest risk areas in the county.

2.0   CRMP Risk Analysis

At the start of 2022/23, a composite risk analysis tool was developed that assigned a risk score to each LSOA in the county, which represented the community risk within that area based on 17 measures spanning across Prevention, Protection, Response and climate change.
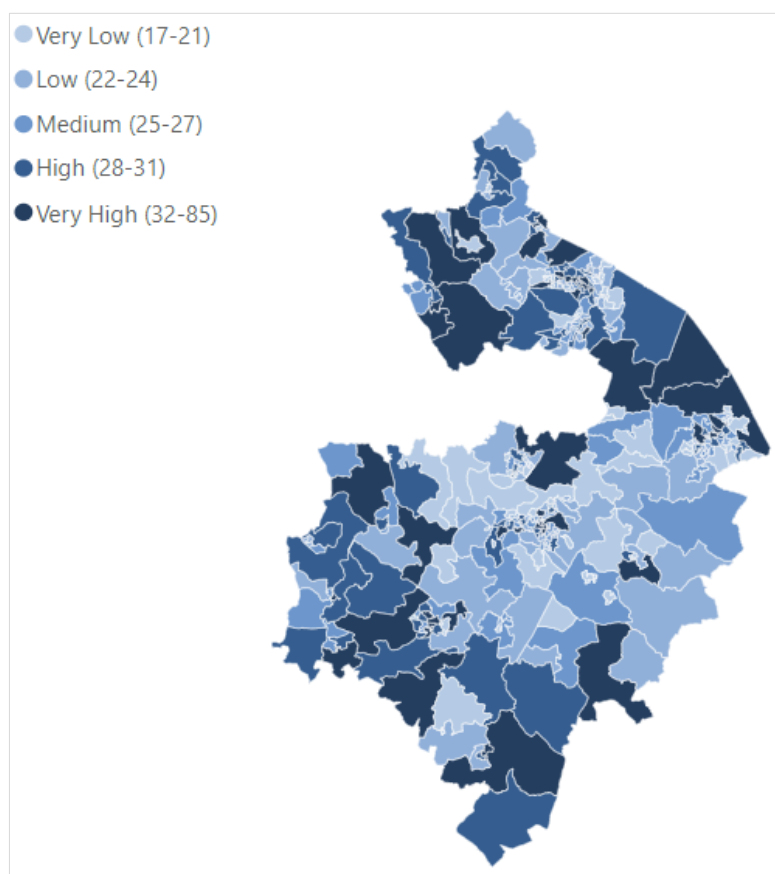
Source: CRMP Risk Analysis, Power BI

The methodology behind the risk analysis culminated in a total risk score for each LSOA, assigning each LSOA with a 'Very High', 'High', 'Medium', 'Low' or 'Very Low' classification.

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service have been using this information as a tool to help deliver a risk-based approach to its fire safety activities that have been conducted in the local Warwickshire community.

The risk analysis tool will be refreshed in Summer 2023, where the data underpinning the model will be updated to include the most recent data, thus providing an up-to-date picture of risk in the county.

3.0 Key Business Performance Measures and Indicators

3.1 Key Business Measures: Fire-Related Deaths and Injuries
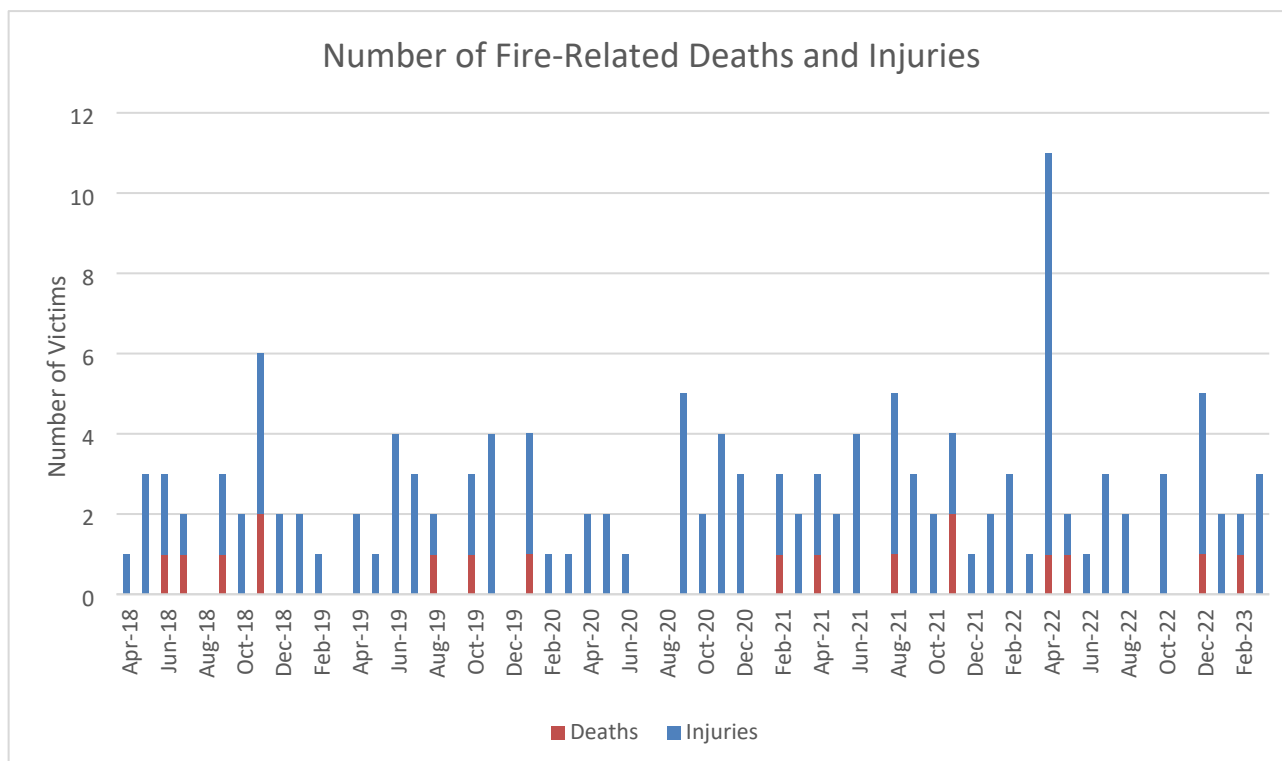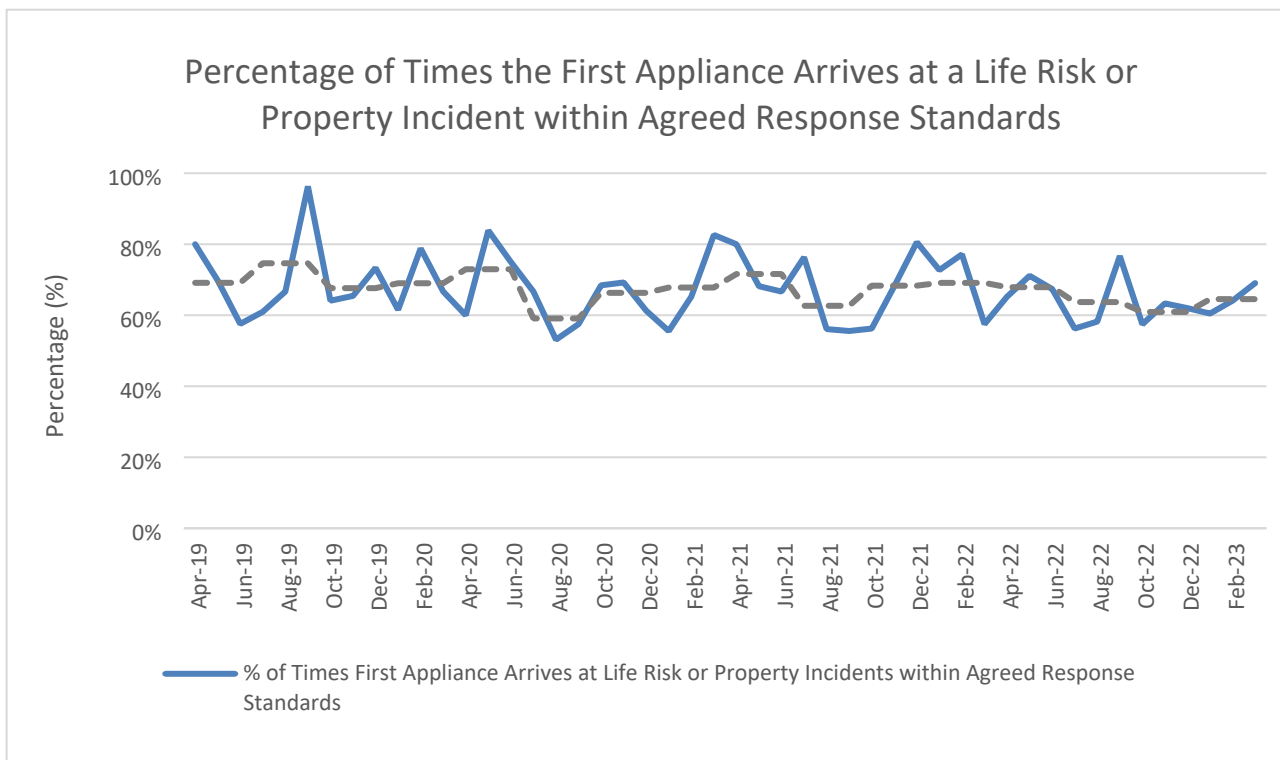

Source: Firecrest

In 2022/23 there were four fire-related deaths recorded, which is the same as the number recorded in the same period of 2021/22. All four deaths have been confirmed as fire-related by the Coroner and one of the deaths was a fire-related suicide. In the event of a fire-related death, the Service investigates to understand causes and identify any appropriate improvement activity.

In 2022/23 there were 30 fire-related injuries recorded, which is an increase of three incidents compared to the 27 fire-related injuries recorded in the same period of 2021/22. For the 30 victims, 16 victims were taken to hospital and 14 were given first aid at the scene. Three incidents saw victims with serious injuries. There was a spike in April of 10 fire-related injuries. This represents the highest number of fire-related injuries that have been seen in a single month, although monthly figures returned to normal levels after this.

The Service closely monitors levels and types of incidents involving fire-related injuries to address any emerging issues and to inform community prevention activity. Following any incident that results in a fatality or life changing injury, the Service conducts a Significant Fire Incident Review (SFIR) with appropriate partners. The purpose of these reviews is to assess current partnership working and embed any lessons learnt in order to reduce the chance of similar incidents happening again.

3.2 Key Business Measure: Response Times

Percentage of Times the First Appliance Arrives at a Life Risk or Property Incident within Agreed Response Standards

Source: Firecrest, Vision

The Service's agreed response standard is 10 minutes from the time of assignment for 75% of incidents. Between April 2022 and March 2023, an appliance arrived at life risk or property incidents within agreed response standards 64.3% of the time, which is a decrease from the 2021/22 figure of 67.9% and still below the target. The average time to respond to a life risk incident for the attending appliance was:

- 8 minutes 54 seconds for Fire incidents
- 10 minutes 46 seconds for Road Traffic Collision incidents
- 7 minutes 25 seconds for Special Services incidents

For initial appliances that missed the 10-minute target, the average time for response was:

- 14 minutes 0 seconds for Fire incidents
- 13 minutes 58 seconds for Road Traffic Collision incidents
- 14 minutes 13 seconds for Special Services incidents

The Service focuses its attention and short-term remedial measures on incidents where the modelled 10-minute response time was missed, as opposed to the incidents where it was not. Response times are being reviewed based upon the new risk analysis report. Ongoing lower availability for rural on-call stations combined with the usual wide geographical spread of incidents has resulted in significant variations from month to month.

### 3.3 Key Business Indicator: Accidental Dwelling Fires
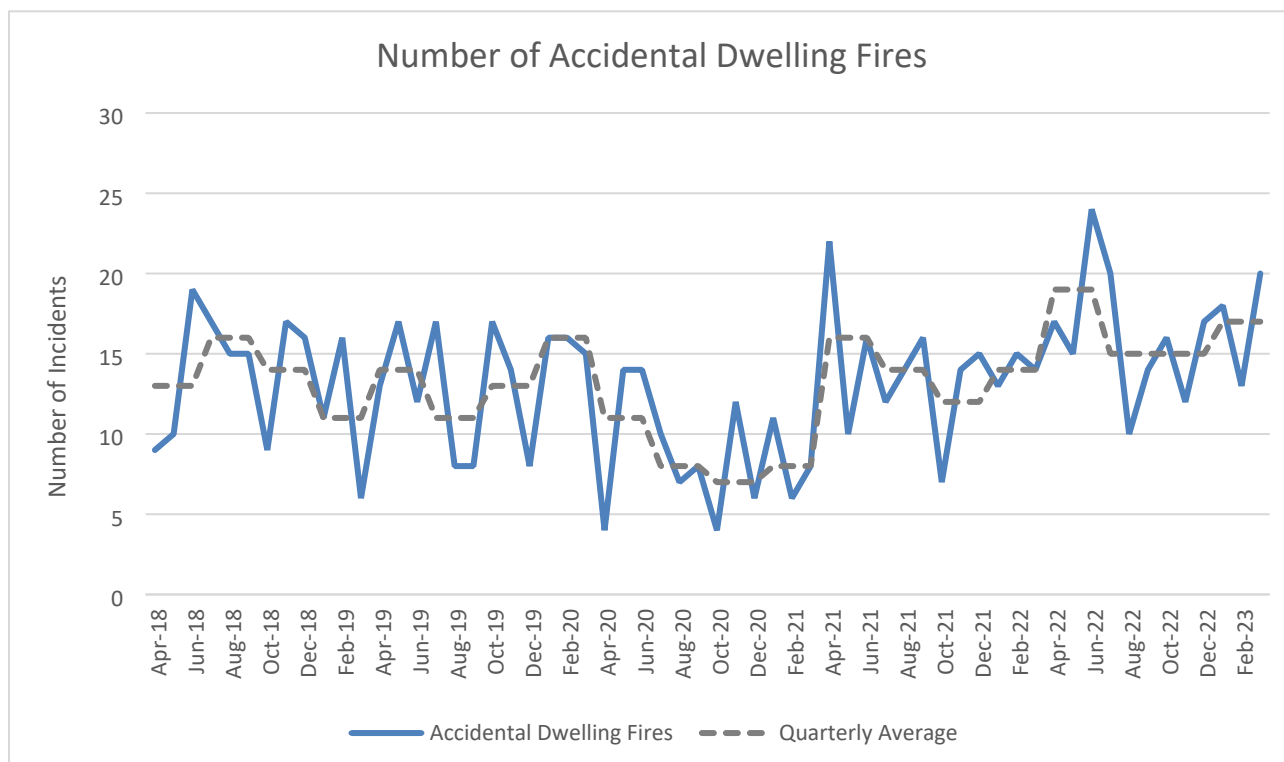
Source: Firecrest

From April 2022 to March 2023, WFRS attended 196 accidental dwelling fires, which is a 16.7% (28 incidents) increase when comparing to the same period of 2021/22. Incident levels and the severity of incidents are monitored closely to identify and react to any emerging trends. The full suite of prevention activities has now restarted post-pandemic and the targeting of these measures is being further enhanced using Power BI risk mapping, which is being rolled out across fire stations countywide. National benchmarking for 2021/22 indicated that Warwickshire remains a top performer when compared nationally for this measure.

The rise in accidental dwelling fires appears to be a national trend. The numbers also need to be viewed in line with an increasing population in Warwickshire, with a large increase in housing developments built locally over the last few years, and some still being built (particularly in Warwick District). There is also a link between fires occurring, deprivation and the cost-of-living crisis that could continue going forward. All serious fires are reviewed through a Significant Fire Incident Review (SFIR), which drives prevention activity.

The proportion of fires confined to the room of origin has remained high for the period of April 2022 to March 2023, with 90.5% of accidental fires being confined to the room of origin, compared with 90.8% reported between April 2021 and March 2022.

3.4 **Key Business Indicator: Road Traffic Collisions Attended and Road Traffic Collisions involving 1 or More Extrication**
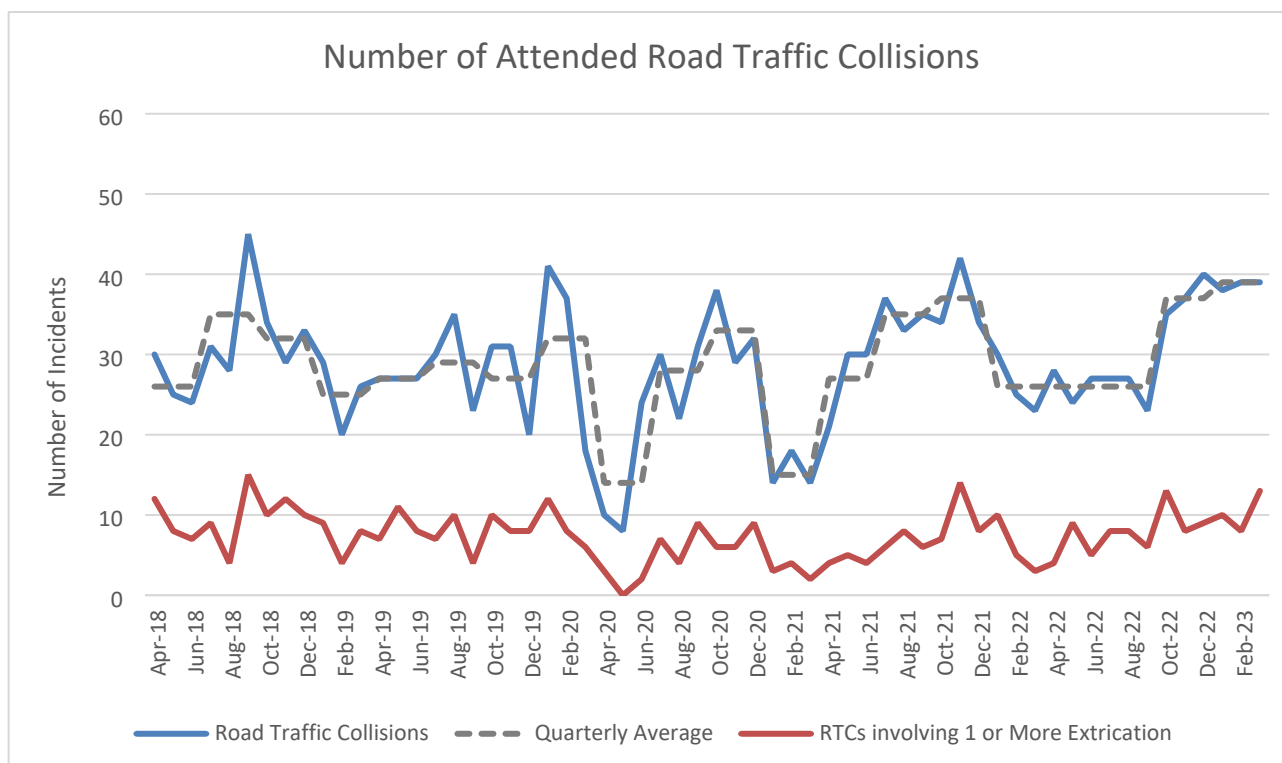

Source: Firecrest

From April 2022 to March 2023, WFRS attended 384 road traffic collisions, which is a 2.7% (10 incidents) increase when comparing to the same period of 2021/22.

Of the 384 road traffic collisions attended, there were 101 incidents requiring extrications, which is 26.3% (21 incidents) more than the 80 incidents attended last year. In addition, the percentage of road traffic collisions that required an extrication increased from 21.4% in 2021/22 to 26.3% in 2022/23. The greatest increase in road traffic collisions was seen during the winter months, where more severe cold weather was experienced than the year prior.

The frequency, types and locations of road traffic collisions are monitored closely to identify any emerging trends and subsequent prevention activity. Business Intelligence are carrying out further analysis of WFRS data and WCC Road Safety team data to provide hotspot areas and a casualty profile to enable better targeting of prevention activity.

The Services continue to work in partnership to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on Warwickshire roads, also working with surrounding Fire Services.

3.5   Key Business Indicator: Wholetime Appliance Availability
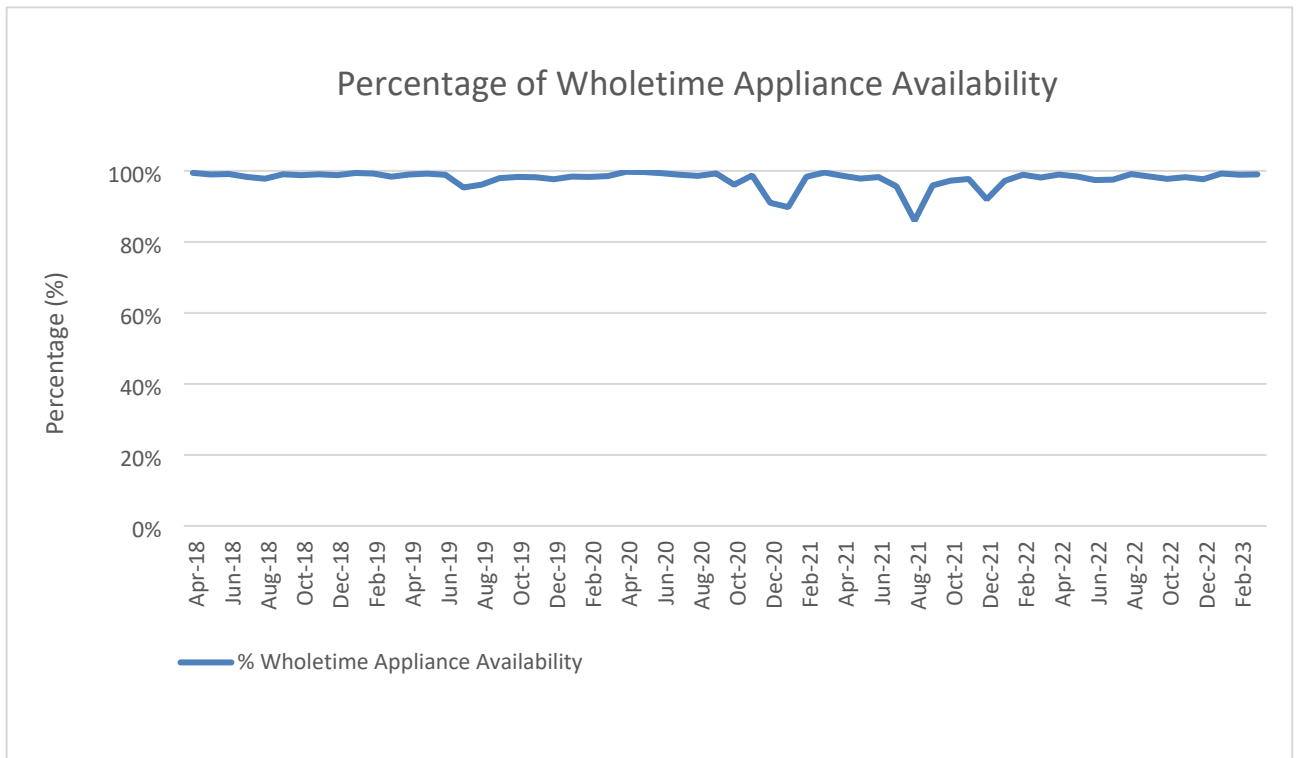

Source: Wholetime Availability Performance Monitoring, 2019/20, 2020/21,2021/22, 2022/23

The average wholetime appliance availability for 2022/23 was 98.4%, which is an increase on the 2021/22 figure of 96.1%.

These figures reflect an improved picture with regards to competency levels following COVID-19 working guidelines. Also, Six new Volvo appliances have been brought into the Service, which has also contributed to a significant improvement in overall appliance availability, with a further three due later in 2023.

3.6   Key Business Indicator: 24hr On-Call Appliance Availability at Key Stations
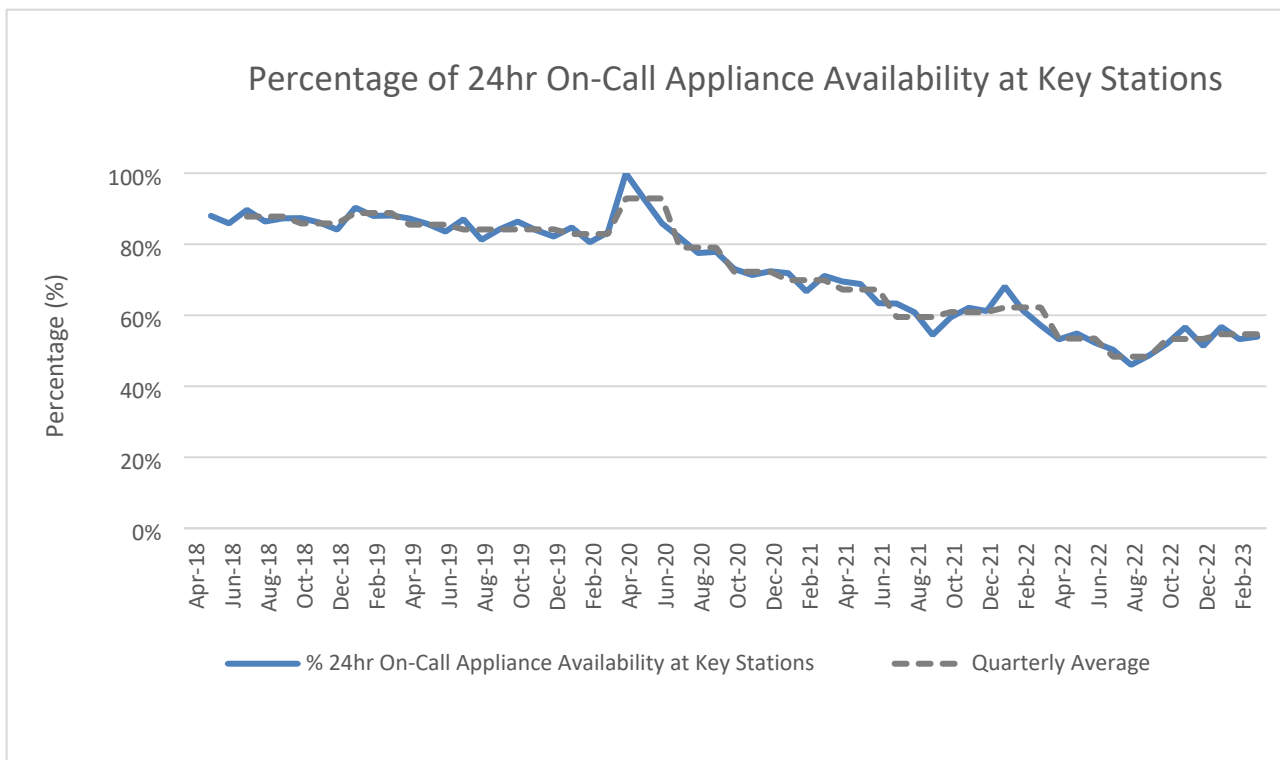

Source: Fire Service Rota

From 1st November 2020, it was agreed that the key availability measure should focus on on-call crews that are available as a full crew to respond to Priority 1 incidents. For the period April 2022 to March 2023, the average on-call availability at key stations figure was 52.4%, a decrease from 62.5% for the year before.

A dedicated Station Manager is focusing on exploring new approaches to improve On-Call availability and a 22-point improvement plan is being implemented. There is also a recent trend of wholetime on-call staff resigning their on-call role. This trend is being explored alongside measures and policies that aim to counteract this movement.

The role of Community Engagement Officer has been made permanent, after being a temporary role for the last 12 months. The postholder will work to atract on-call recruits and their work has already increased the number of people interested in the role.

We have recently commissioned a third party, ORH, to review our resources. This review is likely to influence the approach that we take with the on-call system, whilst factoring in the challenges that we have with on-call recruitment and retention.

**3.7   Key Business Indicator: Hospital to Home Collections**
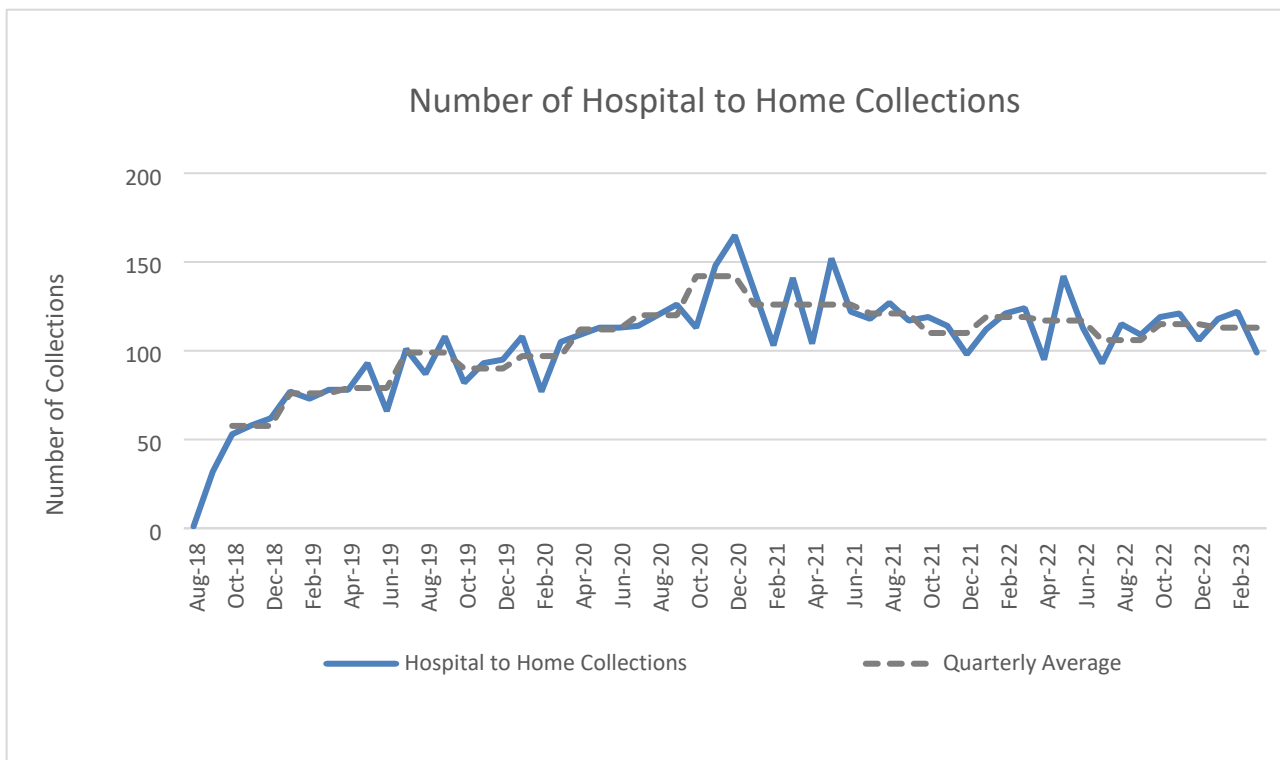
Source: Firecrest

There has been a significant increase in Hospital to Home activity since the start of the pandemic, although the number of collections decreased by 9.6% (76 collections) this year from 1,428 in 2021/22 to 1,352 in 2022/23.

The initiative continues to receive extremely positive feedback for service users and NHS Trusts report a positive impact on balancing hospital capacity and reducing waiting times for ambulances to transfer patients into hospital care.

Departmental supervisory capacity is being reviewed to provide improved coordination, the ability to evaluate the initiative and any opportunities for expansion. Vehicle design is also being reviewed to explore the potential of expanding the service offer to people with disabilities and Commissioners are promoting increased use of the service at George Eliot Hospital.

3.8   Key Business Indicator: Safe and Well Checks
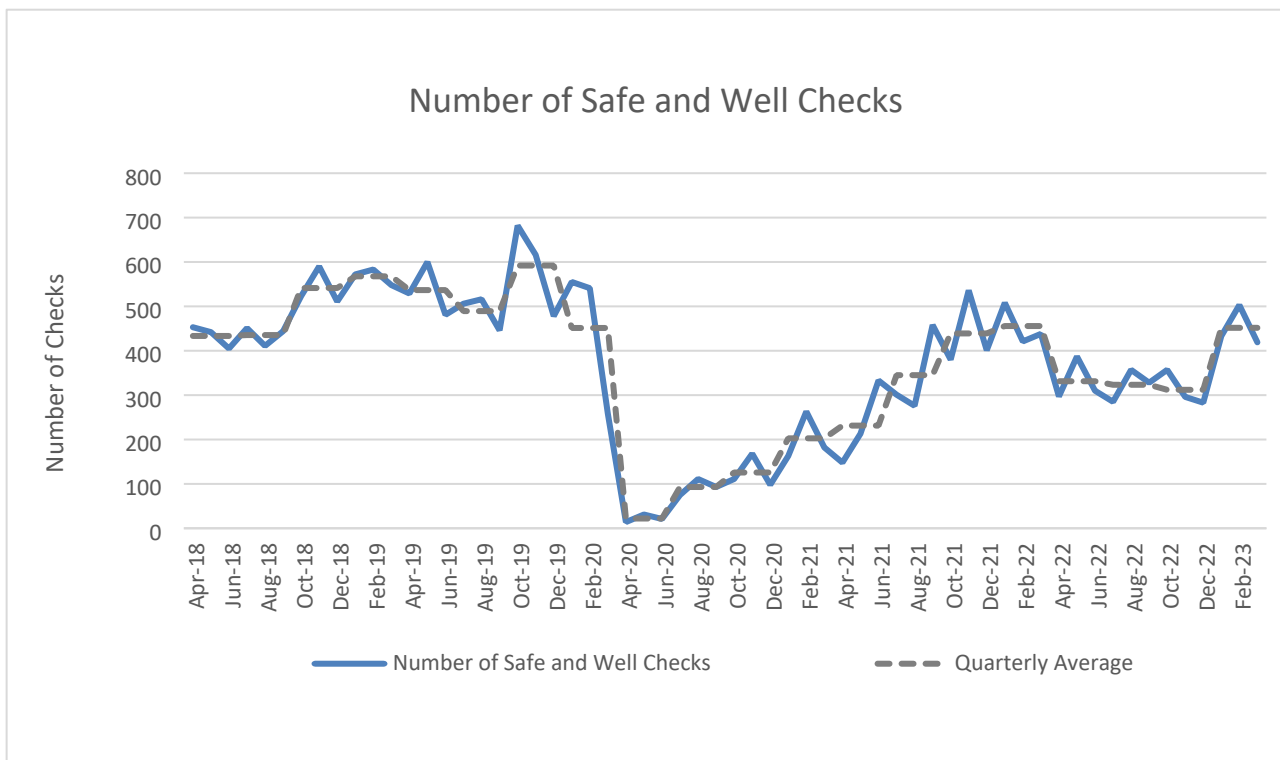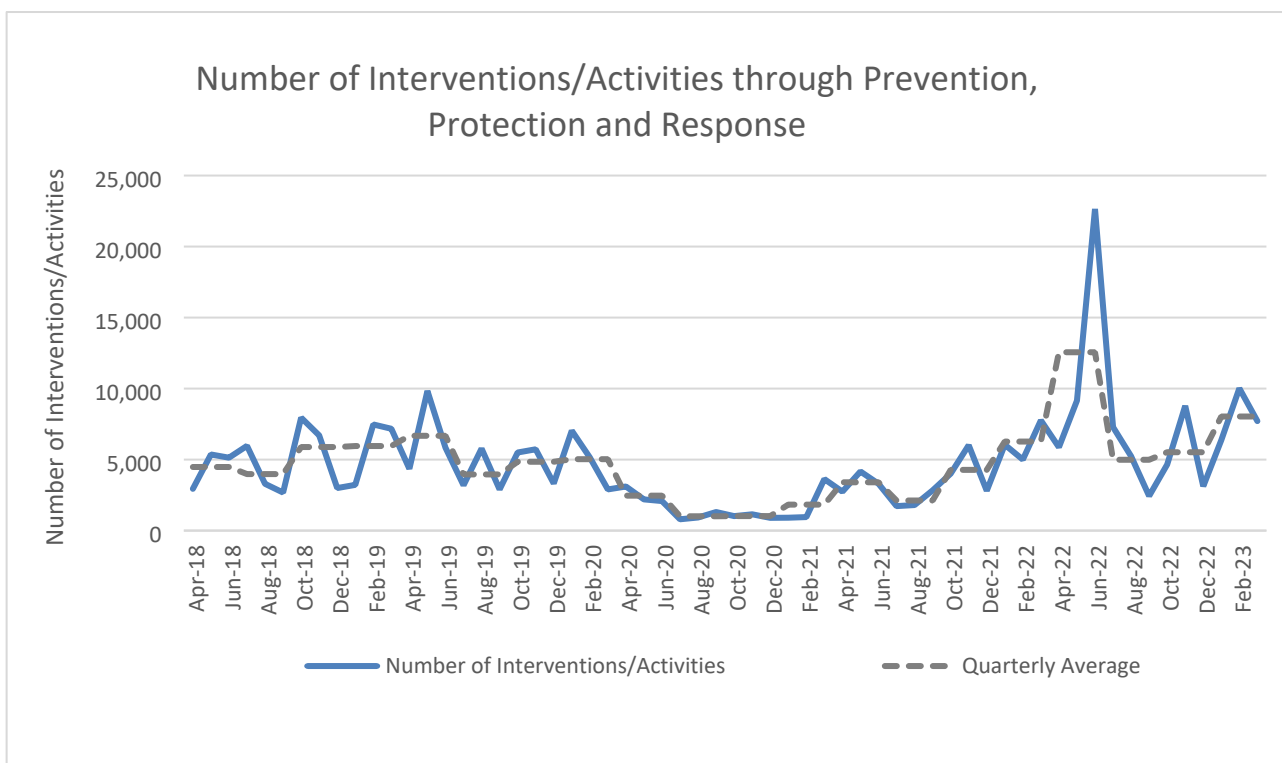

Source: Firecrest

From 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023, there were 4,255 Safe and Well Checks completed, which is a 3.6% reduction (158 cases) on the same period in 2021/22 of 4,413.

The number of Safe and Well Checks conducted has increased significantly since the end of COVID-19 working guidelines, although there was a short-term reduction during the summer of 2022 due to the increase in operational activity caused by the extreme heat events.

A new Response Power BI report has been created that is accessible to and used by all crews to enable them to monitor and target Safe and Well Checks effectively. Work is being carried out to ensure that the performance figures that are collated on the Firmstep system are accurate due to inconsistencies having been identified that have affected reporting figures.

3.9   Key Business Indicator: Interventions/Activities through Prevention, Protection and Response
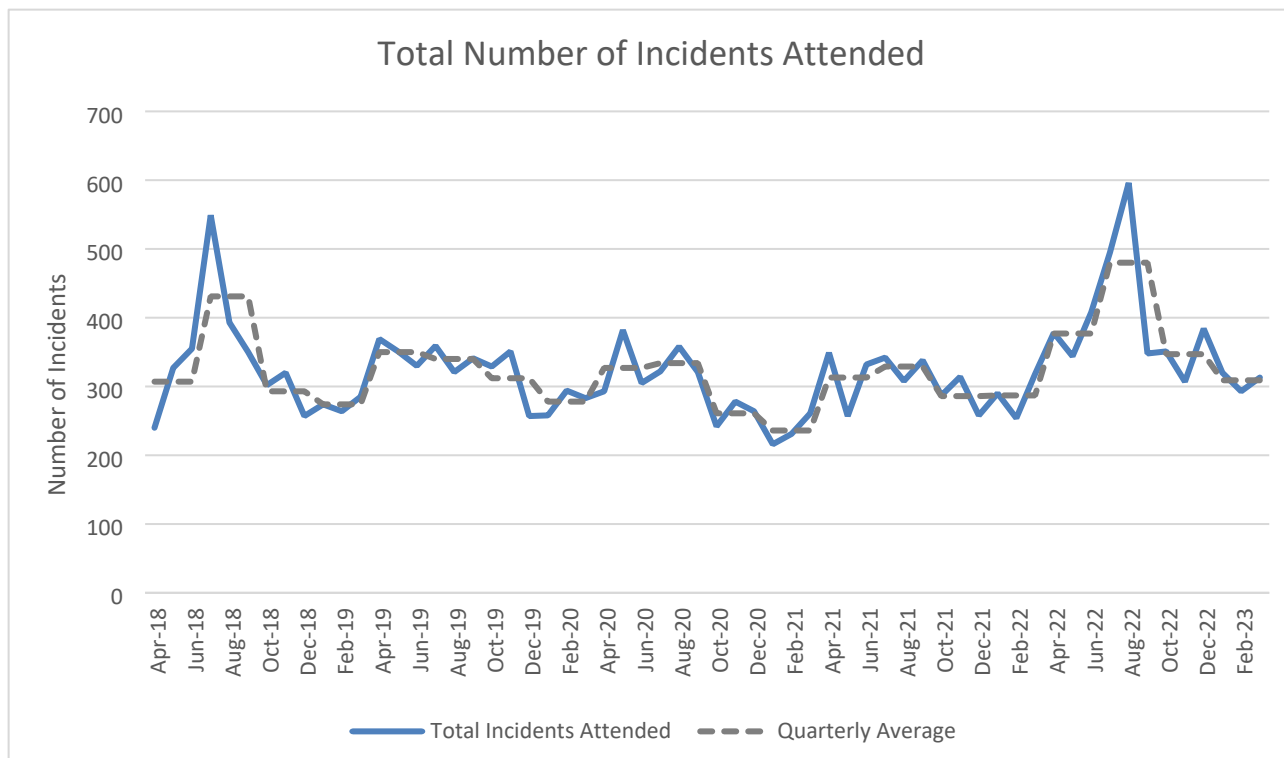

Source: Firecrest

For the period of 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023, there were 93,295 interventions/activities delivered, which is a 93.5% (45,091 interventions/activities) increase on the same period in 2021/22 where 48,204 interventions/activities were delivered.

The number of interventions/actions delivered by Prevention, Protection and Response teams has increased significantly post-pandemic following the lifting of restrictions. Over the last 12 months there has been an increase in community engagement, with the number of road safety education sessions and school programmes increasing in volume.

4.0   Other Performance Measures and Indicators

4.1   Attended Incidents

Source: Firecrest

From April 2022 to March 2023, WFRS attended 4,541 incidents, which is a 24.5% (894 incidents) increase on the same period of 2021/22. The total number of fires attended increased by 50.4% (520 incidents), including a 75.7% increase (374 incidents) in small fires and a 62.6% increase (57 incidents) in other primary fires. Road traffic collisions saw an increase of 2.7% (10 incidents), special services attendances increased by 26.2% (168 incidents) and false alarms experienced an increase of 12.5% (199 incidents).

The large increase in attended incidents for 2022/23 can be attributed to the extreme weather events experienced, predominantly in the summer. Record temperatures in the summer resulted in a significant increase in the number of fires. Additionally, cold snaps during the winter period saw a significant increase in flooding incidents due to frozen pipes bursting or leaking.

The Service monitors levels and types of incidents to address any emerging issues and to inform community prevention activities.

**4.2 Life Risk and Property Emergency Calls Handled within 90 Seconds**
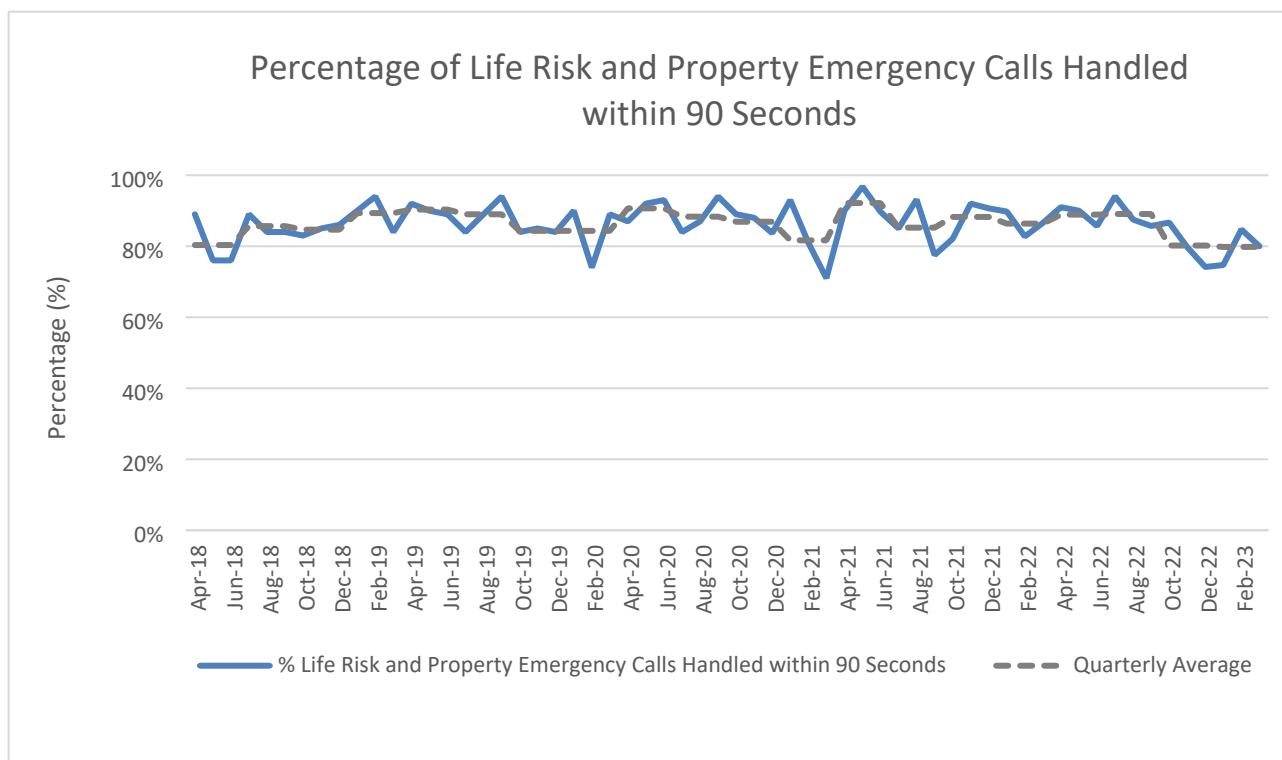
Source: Fire Control - Vision

The Fire Control Team achieved an average call handling time of 90 seconds or less of 84.5% over the last 12 months, which is just under the target of 85%.

Exposure to the live mobilising environment to support development of three new Trainee FF Controls may have impacted the average call handling for emergency incident types. With the development of these team members, the expectation would be that the average call handling time will reduce over time. A review of the call challenge function embedded in the Command-and-Control system is imminent with the replacement of mobilising systems, which will assist in streamlining the process further by introducing an Integrated Communication Control System (ICCS) that will pre-populate the call handling form with address and contact details when an emergency call is received.

4.3   Community Safety Contacts

### Number of Community Safety Contacts
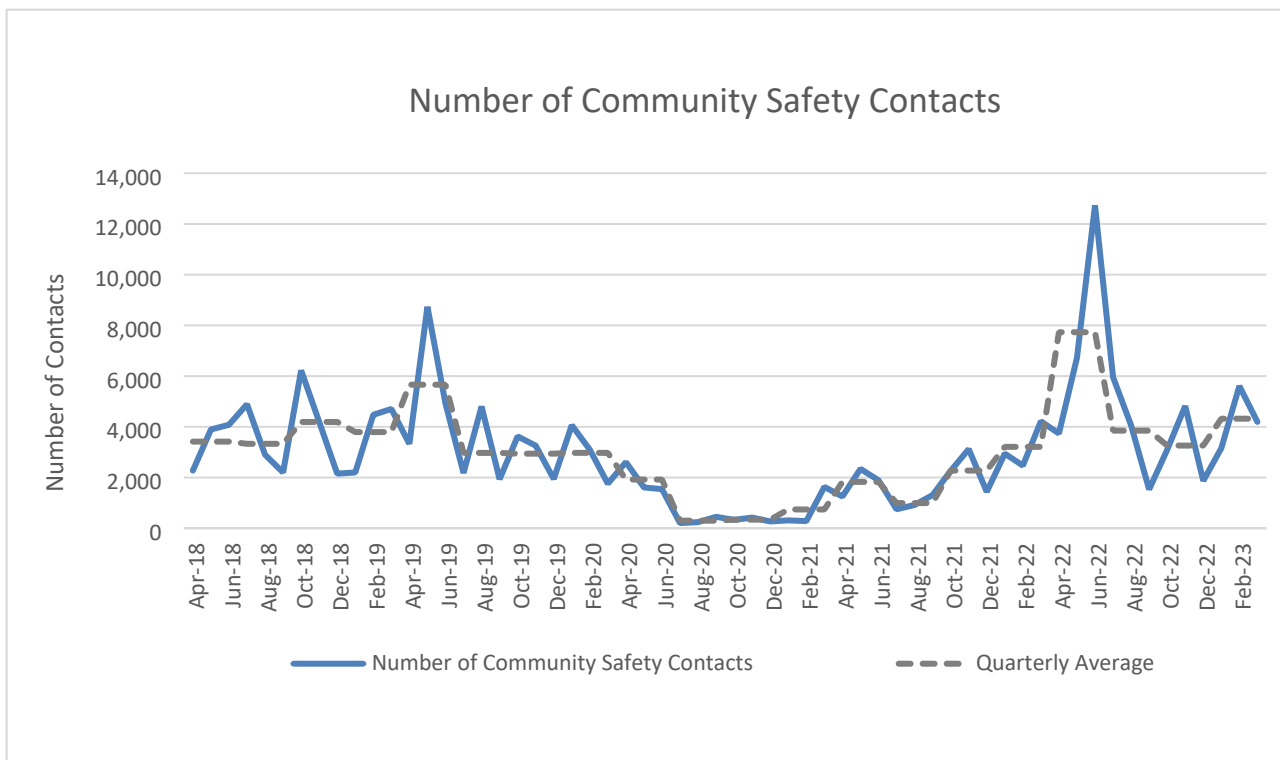
Source: Fire Prevention Team

The target number of contacts has always been exceeded through an extensive range of targeted safety initiatives and engagements that the Service would normally deliver on. In 2022/23, 57,489 contacts were made, an increase of 130.6% on the 2021/22 figure of 24,929 following the removal of all COVID-19 working guidelines.

The removal of COVID-19 restrictions and increasing community confidence has enabled the Service to steadily return to business as usual in the context of reducing community risk. As a result, face-to-face engagements such as community events, Safe and Well Checks, the schools' education program, Heart-Shield and road safety initiatives have all resumed. The increased number of community contacts correlates with this increase in activity.

4.4   Premises Influenced by Fire Protection Work

Number of Premises Influenced by Fire Protection Work
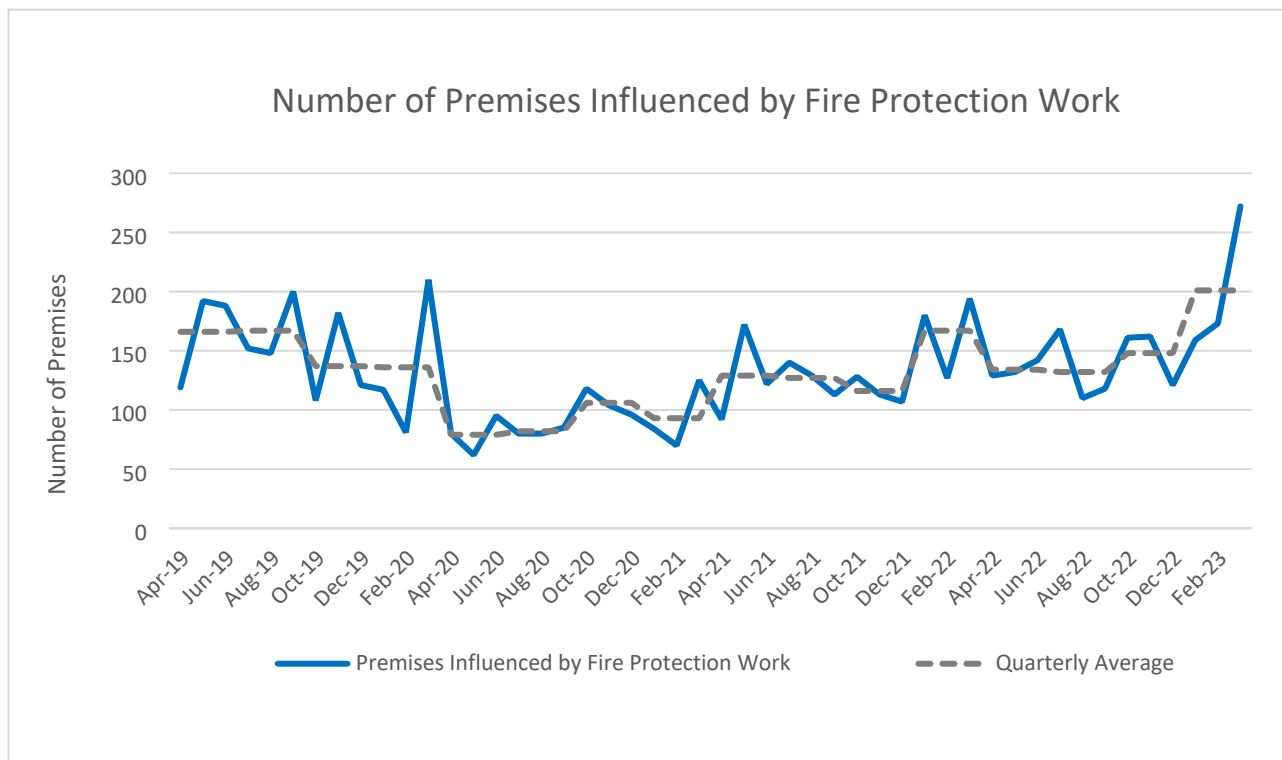
Source: Fire Protection Team

The number of premises influenced (this could be in person, via phone/email or consultation with the responsible persons) by fire protection officers for 2022/23 was 1,847, exceeding the target of 1,700. This was a new measure that was introduced three years ago to reflect the positive contribution fire protection activity has within the communities of Warwickshire.

Much of the work that derives this performance figure is driven by audits of premises/structures falling under RRFSO 2005 and consultations driven by legislation relating to the hospitality sector, wedding venues, planning and building regulations and sports grounds, as well as wider business premises concerns. The Service has been able to build on the levels of activity in the previous year due to having greater capacity; several new Officers have been developed and equipped to deliver a wide variety of Fire Protection work.

4.5   RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Reporting)

In 2022/23 there were four RIDDOR incidents reported, where the target is zero. This is one fewer than the number recorded in 2021/22. Of the four incidents, one 'over 7 day' injury and three 'no dangerous occurrence' injuries were reported. Positively, no 'major' injuries were reported.

4.6   Firefighter Injuries
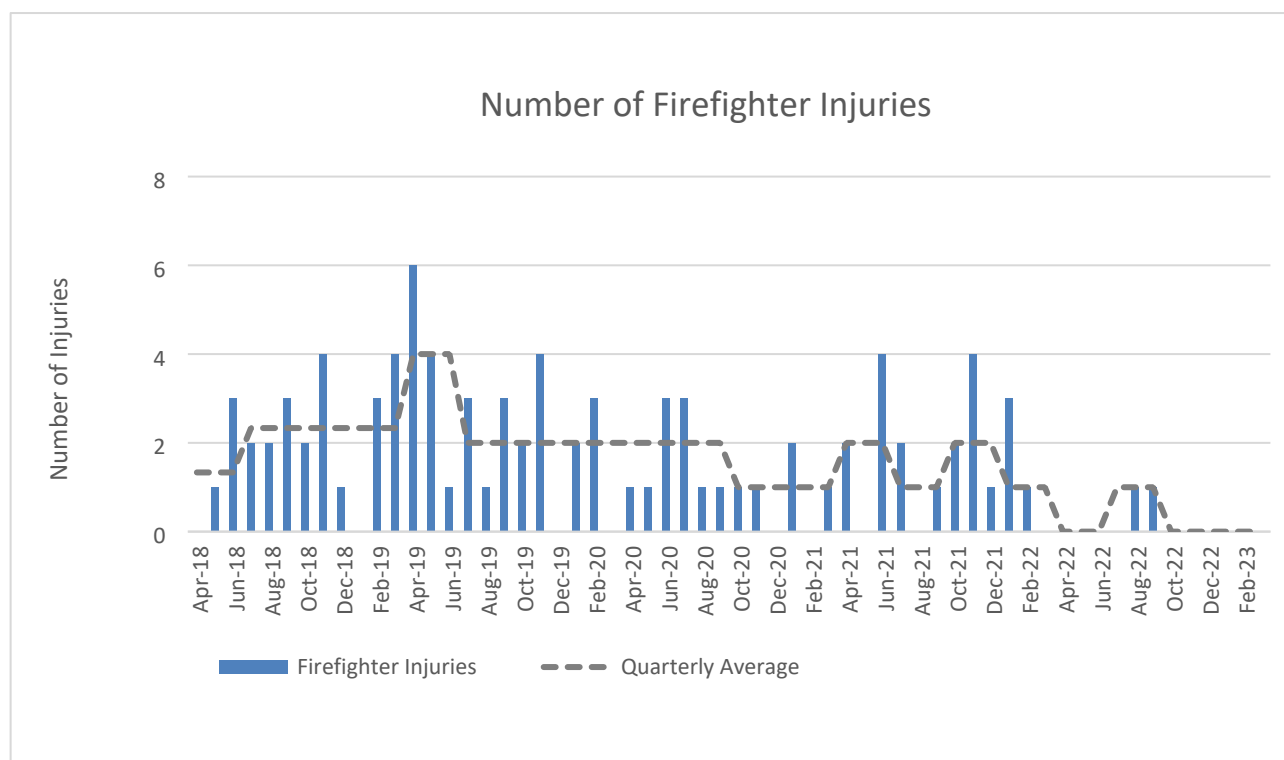
Source: WFRS Health & Safety Team

Whilst the target for 2022/23 is zero injuries, it is accepted that minor injuries will occur during operational and training activities. There were a total of two injuries reported for the 2022/23 period, which is a significant reduction on the 20 injuries in 2021/22.

All reported injuries are investigated, and remedial measures are put in place where possible and appropriate.

5.0   Financial Implications

5.1   None.

6.0   Environmental Implications

6.1   None.

7.0   Timescales Associated with the Decision and Next Steps

7.1   Not applicable.

Background Papers

None

	Name	Contact Information
Report Author	Joshua Cavie Business Intelligence Analyst	joshuacavie@warwickshire.gov.uk
Chief Fire Officer	Ben Brook	benbrook@warwickshire.gov.uk
Executive Director	Mark Ryder	markryder@warwickshire.gov.uk
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Andy Crump	andycrump@wawickshire.gov.uk

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Members: None as county wide report

Other members:

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Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme 2023/2024 – April 2024

Item / Lead Officer	Report detail	Date of next report
Public Question Time/Questions to the Portfolio Holders / Work Programme	Standing items for every meeting.	* Standing item
Council Plan 2020 – 2027 Performance Report	Council Plan 2020 – 2027 Performance Report	* Standing item
Resourcing to Risk	To consider the results of the Resourcing to Risk consultation and make comments prior to consideration by Cabinet and Full Council	6 June 2024
Year End Integrated Performance Report	A report considering the Integrated Performance for 2023/24	26 June 2024
Social Impact Fund Outcomes Update	A report on the outcomes of the Social Impact Fund at the conclusion of its two year term	25 September 2024
Data Roadmap Update	A report updating on progress against the Council's Data Roadmap, one of the delivery plans associated with the Digital & Data Strategy	25 September 2024
Warwickshire Property and Development Group Performance Update	To review the performance of the Warwickshire Property and Development Group	TBC

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