

Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

16 December 2020

Operational benchmarking performance report of Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service 2019/20

Recommendation

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

1.0 Key Issues

- 1.1 This report summarises the performance of Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) against certain key incident categories in comparison to the other 44 English Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) and against a range of organisational factors where broad comparisons can be made. Incident and population data has been taken from the Fire Statistics Data Tables April 2019 to March 2020, published by the Home Office in August 2020; the number of dwellings information has been taken from CIPFA published statistics. Incident data is collated using the national Incident Recording System used within each FRS. It should be noted that FRS supplied data is no longer subject to a national audit process and therefore it cannot be guaranteed that information is consistently recorded or presented from Service to Service.

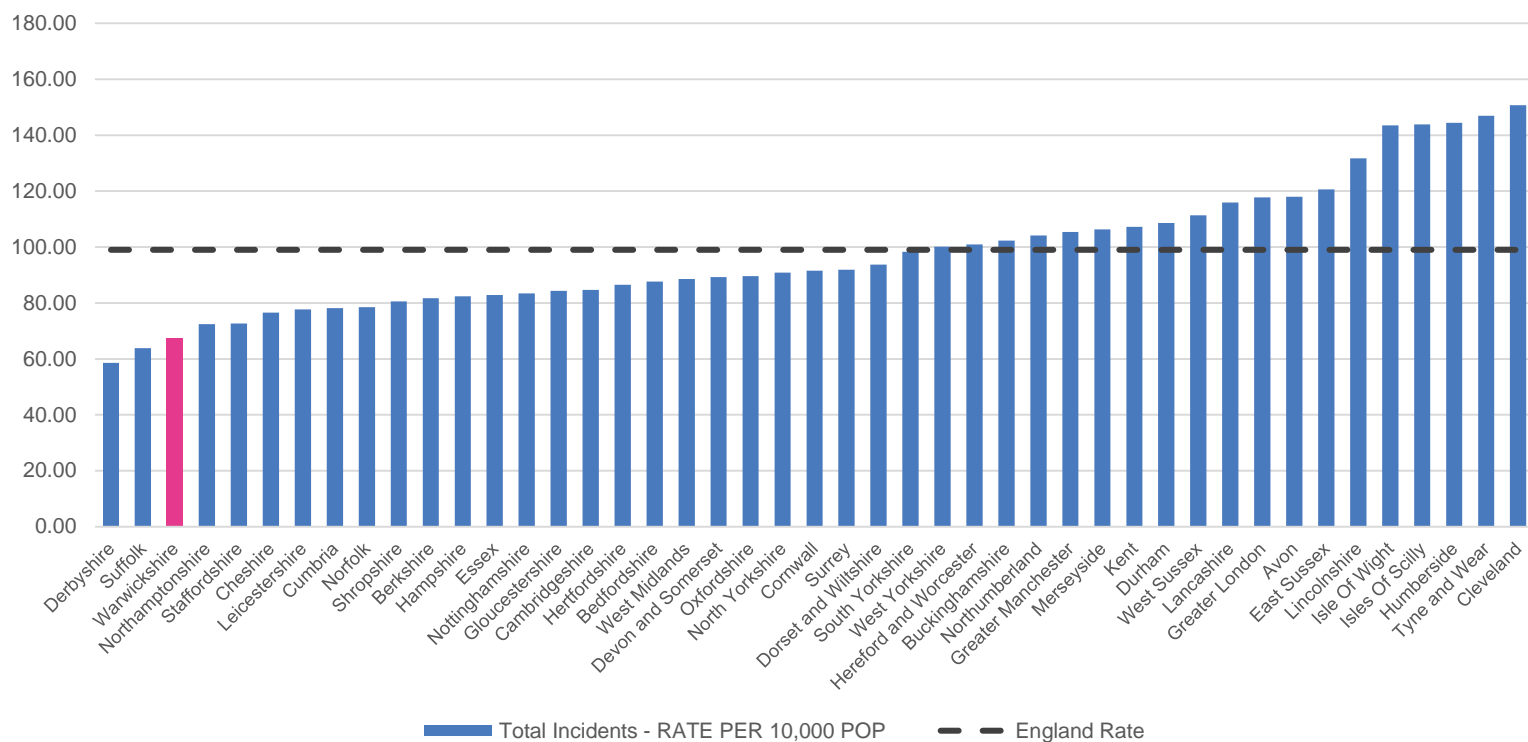
2.0 Incident Activity

- 2.1 Across England, the number of incidents attended by Fire and Rescue Services peaked in 2003/4 at over one million incidents. For around a decade there was a general decline in all categories and by 2015/16 there were around half a million incidents attended per year. These figures have been increasing since and the main reason for the increase is the attendance of non-fire related incidents and false alarms.

Nationally, in 2019/20, 557,299 incidents were attended by Fire and Rescue Services (FRS), which was a 3% reduction on the previous year. Locally in Warwickshire, following a slight increase last year, there has been a reduction of 1.8% in the number of attended incidents, a reduction from 3,915 in 2018/19 to 3,843 in 2019/20.

- 2.2 Total Incidents Attended – this category includes all incidents attended by FRSs including all fires, false alarms, special services and road traffic collisions (RTCs).

Total Incidents Attended - Rate per 10,000 Population



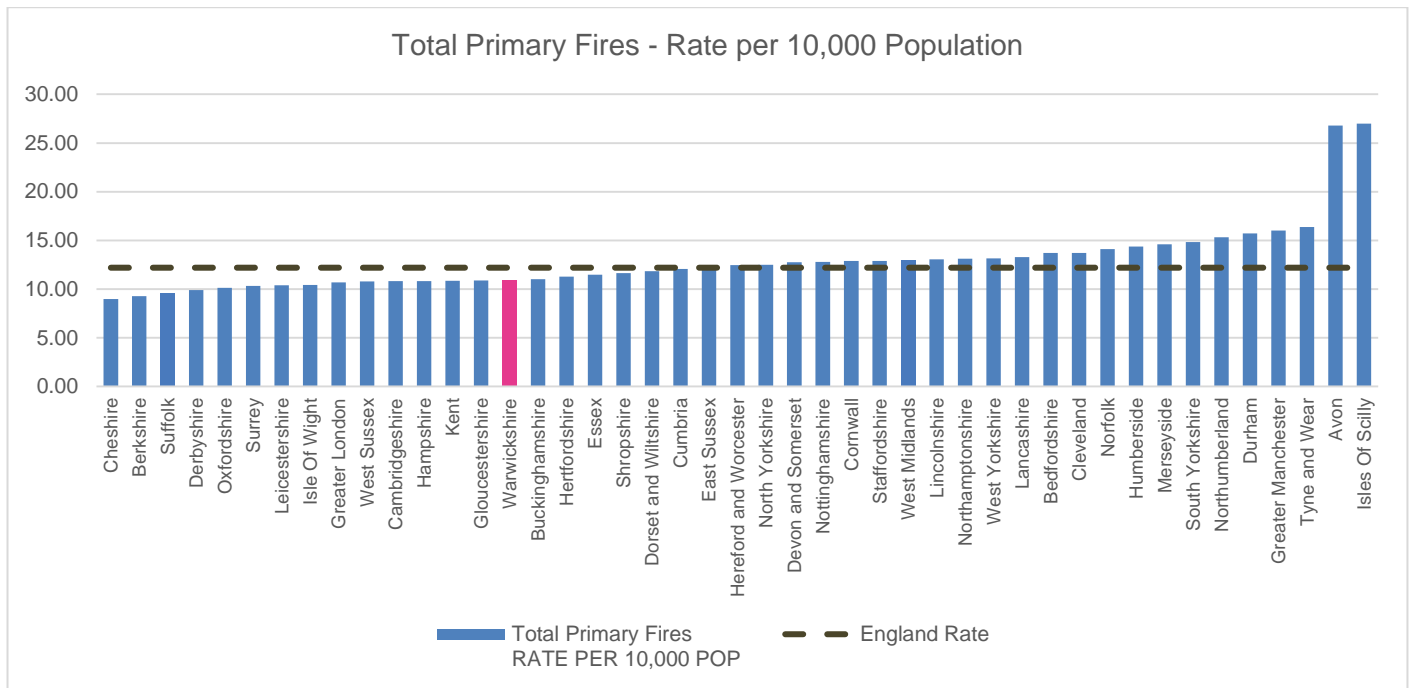
Warwickshire: 67.53
 Position: 3/45
 England: 99.01
 Average: 98.08
 Significantly Rural: 91.30

When compared with other FRS, Warwickshire attends the 3rd lowest level of incidents per 10,000 population. In part, the low level can be attributed to differences in local call challenge, mobilising and attendance policies between fire services.

The overall rate for total incidents in Warwickshire per 10,000 population has reduced from 69.37 in 2018/19 to 67.53 in 2019/20. Warwickshire has remained at 3rd position in the rankings. Warwickshire’s rate of incidents per 10,000 population remains significantly lower than the England rate of 99.01, the overall average rate of 98.08 and all other significantly rural English Services rate of 91.30.

In comparison, levels have also reduced at a national level, from 102.91 in 2018/19 to 99.01 in 2019/20.

2.3 Primary Fires - These are fires that involve property or vehicles or where casualties or rescues have occurred; they also include incidents where five or more fire engines are in attendance. This category of fires includes domestic and non-domestic fires, vehicle fires and other property fires.



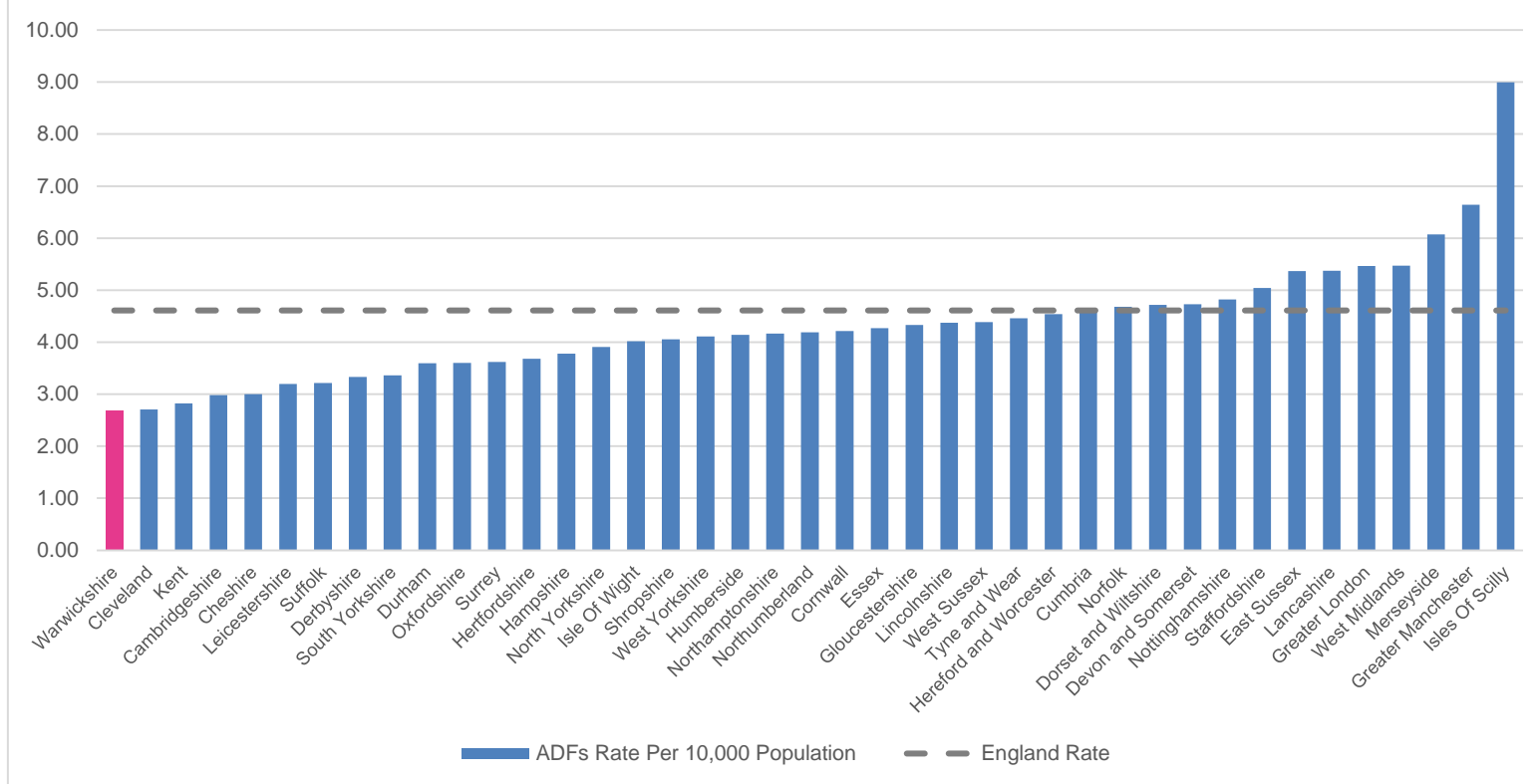
Warwickshire: 10.90
 Position: 15/45
 England: 12.20
 Average: 12.91
 Significantly Rural: 11.62

Nationally there has been a reduction in the number of primary fires per 10,000 population compared to the previous year, 13.08 in 2018/19 compared to 12.20 in 2019/20. Warwickshire has also seen a reduction, with a rate of 11.96 in 2018/19 compared to 10.90 in 2019/20 but has increased in its ranking to 15th.

Warwickshire’s rate of incidents per 10,000 population remains lower than the England rate of 12.20, the overall average rate of 12.91 and all other significantly rural English Services rate of 11.62.

2.4 Secondary Fires – These are fires that do not involve property, vehicles or life risk and are mostly outdoor fires, such as refuse and grassland fires. Derelict property and vehicles and fires confined to a chimney structure are also included in this incident type.

Total Accidental Dwelling Fires - Rate per 10,000 Population



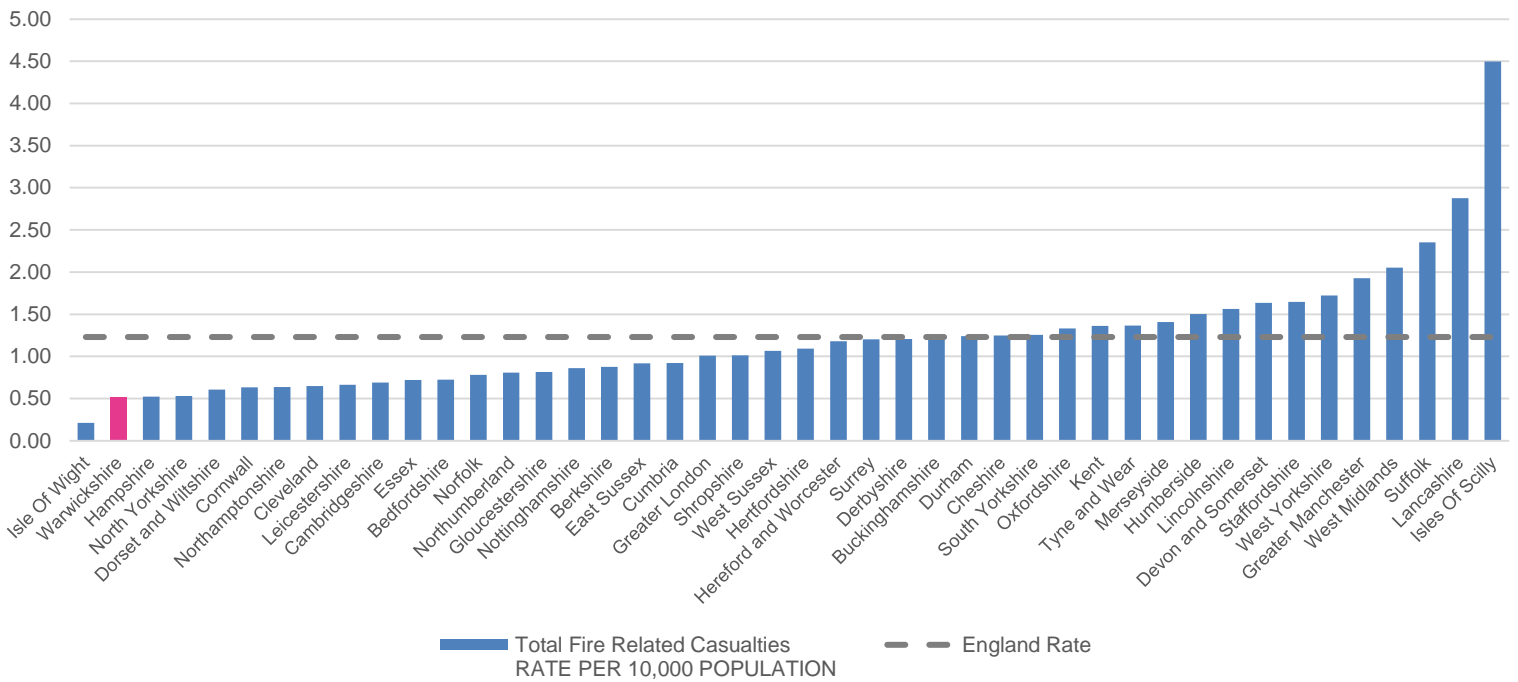
Warwickshire: 2.68
 Position: 1/41
 England: 4.61
 Average: 3.93
 Significantly Rural: 3.50

Nationally, the level of accidental dwelling fires has reduced by 4% in 2019/20 and this is a continuing trend since 2009/10. Warwickshire ranks first for all 41 Services that have provided their information, with a rate of 2.68 per 10,000 population. Warwickshire’s rate remains significantly lower than the England rate of 4.61, the overall average rate of 3.93 and all other significantly rural English Services rate of 3.50.

2.6 Fire Related Deaths and Injuries - Fire related deaths and injuries are primary incidents where either the cause of death has been recorded by the Coroner as fire related or where a sustained injury has been fire related such as smoke inhalation or burns and includes any precautionary checks. The measure includes both members of the community and WFRS personnel.

WFRS has historically experienced very low numbers in terms of fire related deaths. In 2019/20 there were 4 fire related deaths, which is a reduction from 6 reported in 2018/19. Full investigations are always undertaken to understand the circumstances behind these tragedies and identify any improvement activities for targeting of fire safety campaigns. Please note a chart has not been included for this measure as such low levels of fire related deaths occur nationally.

Total Fire Related Casualties - Rate per 10,000 Population



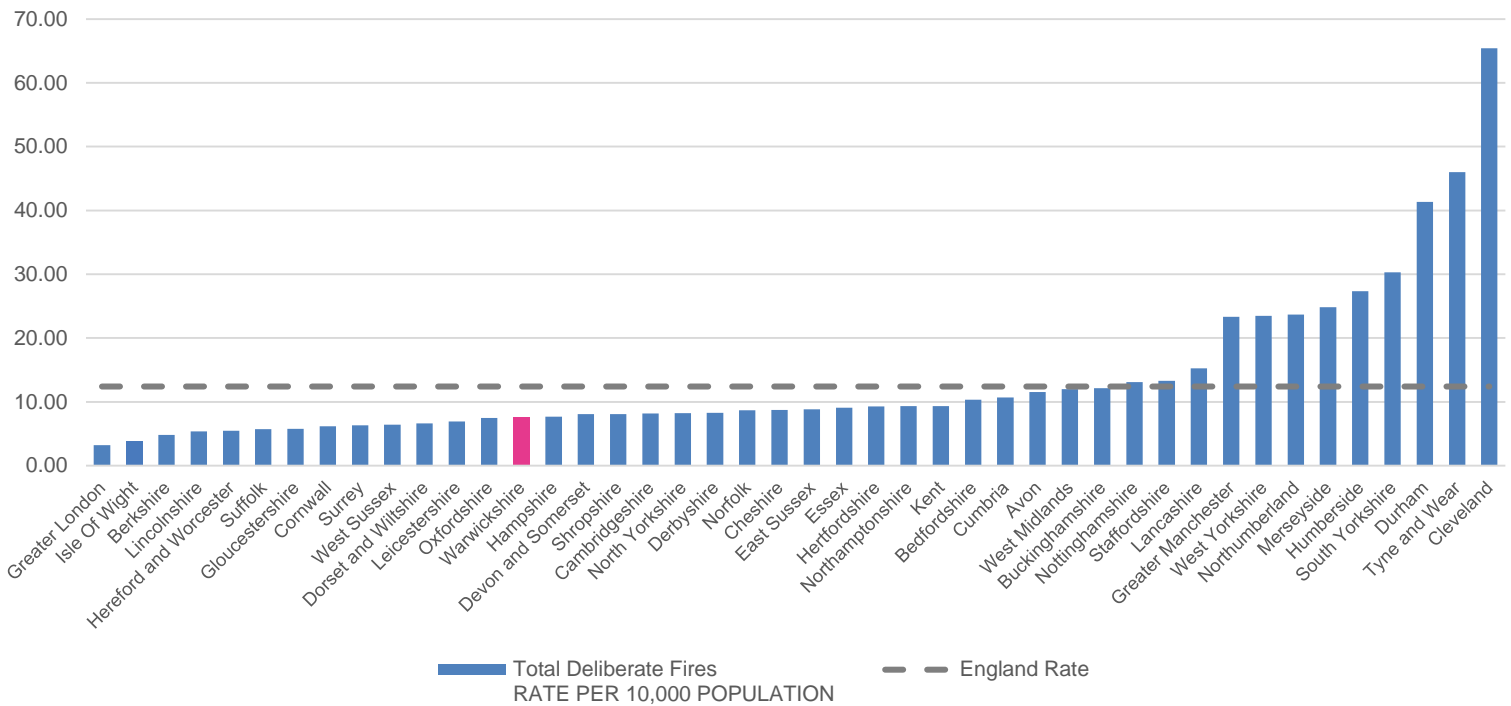
Warwickshire: 0.52
 Position: 2/44
 England: 1.23
 Average: 1.18
 Significantly Rural: 1.00

Warwickshire’s performance in terms of fire related casualties per 10,000 population has improved slightly, with a rate of 0.52 in 2019/20 compared to 0.54 in 2018/19. Similarly, at a national level the rate of fire related injuries per 10,000 population has reduced slightly from 1.28 in 2018/19 to 1.23 in 2019/20.

Warwickshire’s rate of fire related injuries per 10,000 population remains lower than the England rate of 1.23, the overall average rate of 1.18 and all other significantly rural English Services rate of 1.00.

2.7 Deliberate Fires - This category is related to incidents of deliberate fire setting, where the source of ignition is believed to be deliberate. It includes fires of a primary and secondary nature but is mostly comprised of secondary fires.

Total Deliberate Fires - Rate per 10,000 Population

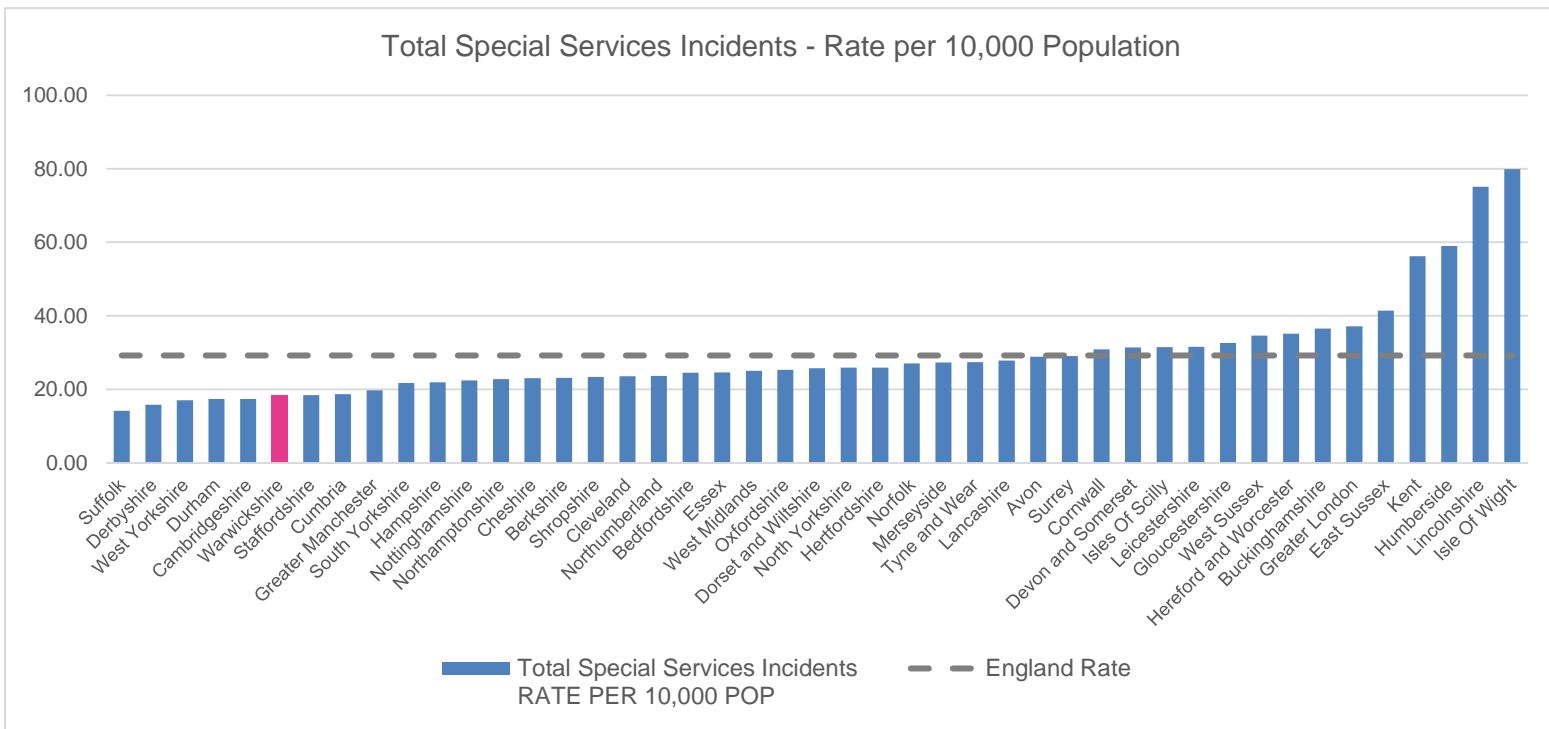


Warwickshire: 7.67
 Position: 14/44
 England: 12.40
 Average: 13.58
 Significantly Rural: 14.36

Nationally, the overall rate of deliberate fire setting has reduced from 14.87 in 2018/19 to 12.40 during 2019/20. The rate in Warwickshire reduced from 8.16 in 2018/19 to 7.67 in 2019/20 however, Warwickshire has maintained its ranking at 14th.

Warwickshire's rate of deliberate fire incidents per 10,000 population remains lower than the England rate of 12.40, the overall average rate of 13.62 and all other significantly rural English Services rate of 14.36.

2.8 Special Services - This incident category includes a diverse range of incident types including emergency medical response, flooding, hazardous material, rescue or release of people.



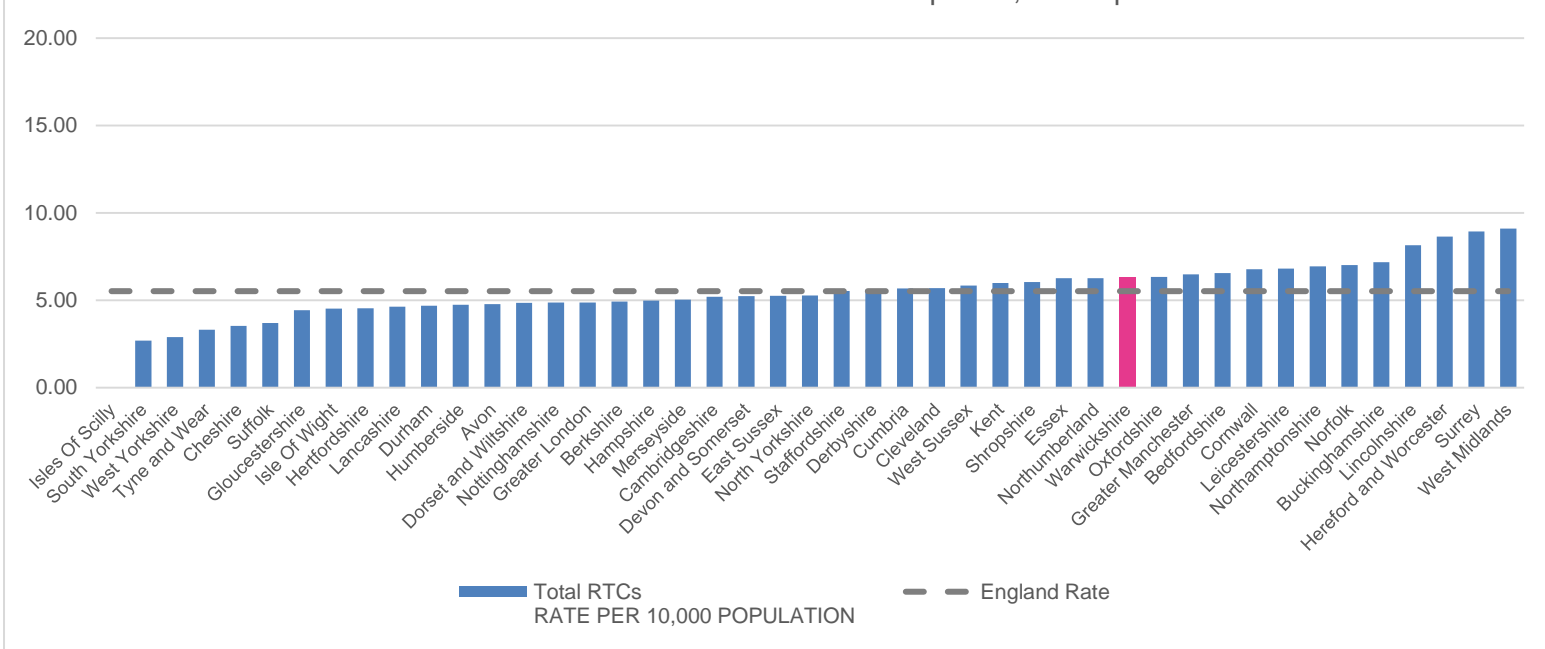
Warwickshire: 18.38
 Position: 6/45
 England: 29.22
 Average: 29.35
 Significantly Rural: 31.29

Warwickshire attends lower levels of special service incidents per 10,000 population compared to some other Services in part due to its challenge of 999 callers and its attendance policies. Because of some historical policy changes by WFRS and the revision of some previous non-attendance decisions there has been an increase in the number of incidents of this type attended. There has been an increase to 18.38 in 2019/20, from 16.51 in 2018/19, however Warwickshire’s rankings have improved from 7th to 6th. Nationally levels have also increased slightly, from 27.67 in 2018/19 to 29.22 in 2019/20.

Warwickshire’s rate of special services incidents per 10,000 population remains significantly lower than the England rate of 29.22, the overall average rate of 29.35 and all other significantly rural English Services rate of 31.29.

2.9 Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) - This incident category relates to incidents that WFRS attend where there has been a road traffic collision on Warwickshire roads. It is important to note that there will be other RTC’s in the county that WFRS will not have been called to. The operational activity at such incidents will depend on the nature of the incident but regularly includes extricating injured persons from the vehicle.

Total Road Traffic Collisions Attended - Rate per 10,000 Population



Warwickshire: 6.32
 Position: 33/45
 England: 5.52
 Average: 5.49
 Significantly Rural: 5.91

Nationally the rate of attended road traffic collision incidents reduced slightly from 5.68 in 2018/19 to 5.52 in 2019/20. Warwickshire has seen a similar reduction, from 6.39 in 2018/19 to 6.32 in 2019/20 and the ranking has remained static at 33rd place.

Warwickshire’s rate of attended road traffic collision incidents per 10,000 population remains higher than the England rate of 5.52, the overall average rate of 5.49 and all other significantly rural English Services rate of 5.91.

It is important to note here that the Warwickshire area has a large number of people travelling through it on the roads every day and is home to 92 miles of motorway. In the West Midlands region, Warwickshire has the largest amount of motorway network, the second highest local authority area is Staffordshire (64.5 miles of motorway) and Worcestershire (48.5 miles of motorway).

2.10 Conclusions on Incident Activity

Overall performance remains consistently good in key areas, both in terms of comparing WFRS against other Fire Services and also when comparing WFRS to other Fire Services that are classified as being ‘significantly rural’. These key areas of good performance include the overall levels of incidents, accidental dwelling fires and fire related deaths and casualties. Focus needs to remain on deliberate fire setting and road traffic collisions. Due to performance in these areas showing little improvement, prioritising activity to reduce the risk

and improve the safety of Warwickshire communities is recommended.

2.11 Community Fire Safety

The Fire Authority has a statutory duty to make provision for promoting fire safety in its area. This duty is delivered by the Community Fire Safety (CFS) team who deliver a range of initiatives, either by delivering services directly, or by providing the policy and support necessary to allow frontline fire station personnel deliver a number of activities to complement the overall aim of keeping the public safe. A summary of the main activities are as follows which, in total, typically see some 40,000 members of the public having a direct face to face contact with a member of WFRS each year:

Safe and Well Checks - These are visits into the homes of those people who may be at greater risk of having fires in the home to offer guidance and advice and in some cases, to fit smoke detectors. The visit now incorporates a wider range of risks in the home including from slips, trips and falls, smoking cessation, home security and winter warmth. The Community Fire Safety team have strengthened relations with Social Care colleagues to further develop the referral process to maximise information sharing between key agencies.

Schools Programme - Visits take place to children in Primary Schools in Years 1 and 5; our aim is to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of fire safety behaviour and to provide them with survival skills in the event of a fire. Secondary schools also have visits to reinforce the "FIRE!" scheme which is used by teachers in schools during Personal, Social and Health Education / Citizenship lessons; pupils will have worked through the scheme before they receive a visit by a Community Fire Safety Officer and so have some knowledge of fire safety and arson awareness.

Targeted Campaigns are delivered throughout the year - National campaigns such as smoke alarm 'test it Tuesdays', white goods safety 'register my appliance', health initiatives 'no smoking day' and water safety campaign 'drowning prevention' will be supported locally. In addition, there are local bespoke campaigns such as the Chimney Fire awareness which is based on our own historical information around when and where incidents occur.

Small Fires Unit (SFU) – This provides both firefighting capability at specific times and a joint and high visibility patrol with Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in deliberate small fire hotspots in Nuneaton and Bedworth. The SFU will challenge anti-social behaviour; provide fire safety education and messages to young people. They are directly based on intelligence from Arson Reduction and Police.

Anti-Social Behaviour Intervention Team (ASBIT) - Joint high visibility patrols with PCSOs to challenge anti-social behaviour and provide fire safety/ASB education. Schemes run at peak times (e.g. school holidays, exam results time and Halloween and the Bonfire Night period).

Bicycle Intervention, Knowledge and Education (B.I.K.E) - High visibility patrols of wooded areas and recreational grounds to engage and educate young people in Nuneaton and North Warwickshire areas. This scheme runs on a peak demand basis.

Hospital to Home (HTH) – This is a commissioned service providing a transportation and settling service for the over 65s. It was initially a 12 month pilot that started in August 2018,

due to its initial success, WFRS have now secured further funding to support the scheme. The service provides a home transport service from Warwick and George Eliot Hospitals between the hours of 10:00 - 00:00. On arrival at the service users home address the HTH team will also ensure basic welfare needs are met, undertake an initial hazard spotting exercise and fit smoke alarms if appropriate. If the customer consents to a full Safe & Well check the HTH team will forward a referral to the Prevention department. In the majority of cases this should be completed within five days.

Nursery boxes - Are an available resource for childminders and early years settings. They contain a selection of early years resources that fit in with the early year's educational framework. All children who access the boxes receive accident prevention and fire prevention information to take home. The Nursery Boxes are working in partnership with public health to help with the reduction of unintentional injuries to the under fives and reduce childhood obesity with healthy food packs.

Heart Shield - Is a collaboration between Warwickshire Public Health and WFRS. The initiative is delivered to secondary school pupils and covers skills such as, emergency life support, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and how to use a Public Access Defibrillator. The sessions also include information on key heart health messages to help reduce the risk of them having heart related issues associated to lifestyle in later life.

Rural Crime - Work with Rural Crime coordinators to visit rural victims of arson and to provide prevention advice to surrounding farms.

Road Safety Education - WFRS works in partnership with Warwickshire County Council (WCC) Road Safety Partnership to deliver the "Driving Ambitions" and "Fatal 4" education sessions within secondary schools and colleges across the county. The session aims to encourage safe driving habits with inexperienced drivers.

Biker Down - The Service works in collaboration with the 'Safer Roads Partnership' working with Warwickshire Police and West Midlands Ambulance Service to deliver safety awareness sessions to motorbikers of all ages. The sessions cover accident scene safety, basic first aid and the science of being seen.

2.12 Community Fire Protection

The WFRS Fire Protection team enforces fire safety standards of premises within the communities of Warwickshire by inspecting, monitoring and reviewing businesses under the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The team works hard to raise awareness to business owners and managers of the risk of fire in the workplace. The enforcement and advisory activities help those responsible to develop and implement appropriate fire safety processes which will ensure the safety of employees, premises and the continuity of businesses.

Fire Safety Audits - The audit is an examination of the business premises and relevant documents to ascertain how the premises are being managed regarding fire safety. Advice and information is offered during the visit as well as any improvement action that may be required. The Protection team targets higher risk premises for audit by employing a risk and

intelligence based principle which can be adapted to address both local and national trends. The management team will also apply professional judgement based upon local knowledge and national advice when tailoring the inspection programme.

Highrise Building Fire Safety - Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower the Fire Protection team have been working very closely with the local authority and private sector landlords to ensure that high rise buildings within Warwickshire are compliant with fire safety standards. This has been completed in conjunction with visits by operational fire crews to residents to offer and complete Safe and Well Checks further raising safety.

Business Fire Safety checks (BFSC) - A BFSC is an information gathering process relating to a premises fire protection requirements and potential non-compliance within the standards. This work is carried out by operational fire crews on behalf of the Fire Protection department during other routine visits to premises. This allows the Fire Protection department to check a greater proportion of business premises in the county, reduce burdens on business from multiple visits from the Fire Service whilst identifying and reducing risk to the community.

In addition to the full fire safety inspections the fire protection team undertakes a range of fire protection activities which includes, post fire audits, building regulation consultations; enforcement/ prohibition action; event safety and sports ground safety as well as inspecting under other legislation such as the Housing Act, Marriage Act and Licensing Act.

- 2.13 The Warwickshire Risk Profile analyses the risk across the County in greater detail and Local Risk Plans are developed and used by stations to address their local risk. There is a Management Information Dashboard that can be used to monitor incident activity at station level and by the Arson Reduction Manager. Senior managers at tactical and strategic level review and challenge performance at six weekly performance meetings.

3.0 Financial Implications

- 3.1 None.

4.0 Environmental Implications

- 4.1 None.

5.0 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 Not applicable.

Background Papers

None

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

None