

Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

14th December 2022

Operational Benchmarking Performance Report of Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service 2021/22

Recommendation

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

1.0 Overview and Key Messages

- 1.1 This report summarises the performance of Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) against certain key incident categories in comparison to the other 43 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 2021 to March 2022, published by the Home Office in August 2022. 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.
- 1.2 Positively, Warwickshire has improved its ranking for 3 of the 8 key incident categories in comparison to the other 43 English Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs). It has remained best performing FRS for the rate per 10,000 population for accidental dwelling fires (ADFs) in 2021/22 and is now the best performing FRS for total incidents attended per 10,000 population, too. In addition, it is the second-best performing FRS for the rate per 10,000 population for Special Services incidents. It is worth mentioning that that the COVID-19 pandemic has directly influenced these figures, or the human behaviour that results in them. Nationally there was a fall in incident types during the first year of the pandemic, which was slightly counter-intuitive as, whilst it was expected that road traffic collisions would decrease, it was thought that lockdown might bring more accidental dwelling fires. Numbers of all incident types have now risen back to pre-pandemic levels and increased past them; suggesting that prevention activity, which was to a great extent paused during COVID-19, has a very limited currency and needs to be repeated frequently to remain effective.

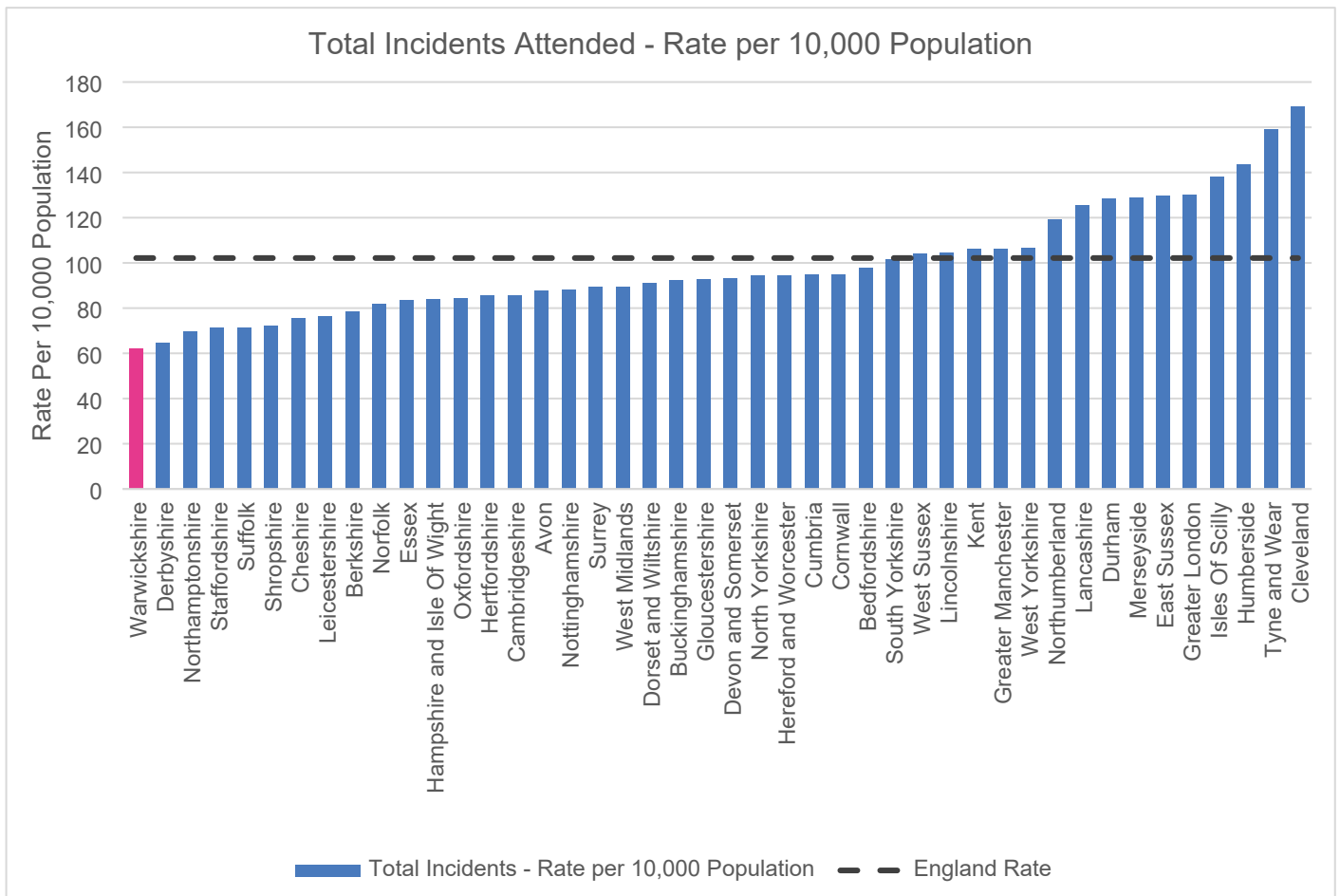
2.0 Incident Activity

2.1 Across England, the number of incidents attended by FRSs 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.

2.2 Nationally, in 2021/22, 577,053 incidents were attended by FRSs, which was an 11.3% increase on the previous year. Locally in Warwickshire, following a slight increase last year, there has been an increase of 5.5% in the number of attended incidents - from 3,517 in 2020/21 to 3,711 in 2021/22.

Total Incidents Attended

2.3 This category includes all incidents attended by FRSs, including all fires, false alarms, Special Services incidents and road traffic collisions (RTCs).



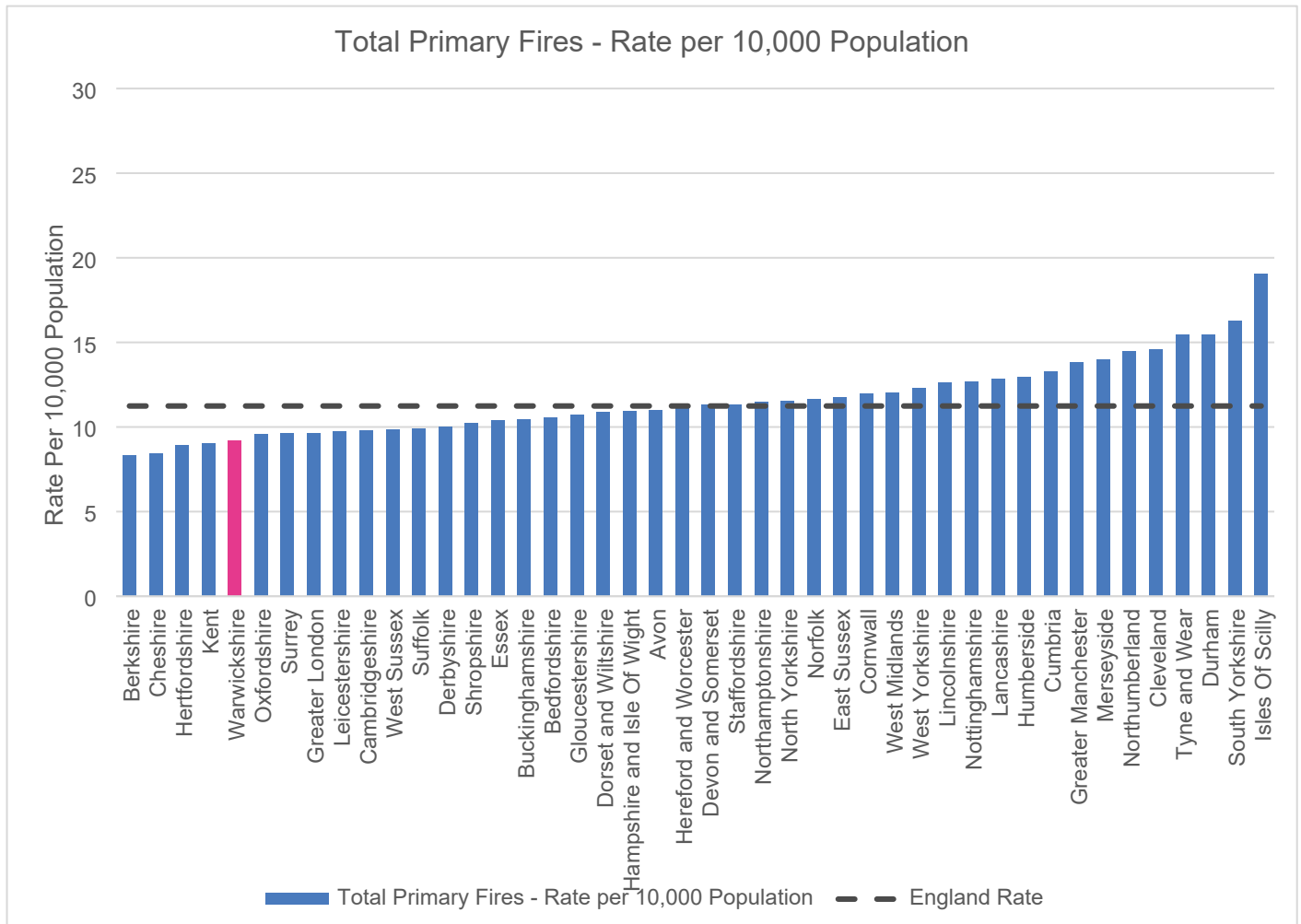
(Source: IRS, Home Office, 2022)

Warwickshire:	62.18
Position:	1/44
England:	102.15
Average:	98.77
Significantly Rural:	90.48

- 2.4 When compared with other FRSs, Warwickshire attends the 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 FRSs.
- 2.5 The overall rate for total incidents in Warwickshire per 10,000 population has increased from 60.24 in 2020/21 to 62.18 in 2021/22. Warwickshire has managed to improve its position from 2nd to 1st in the rankings. Warwickshire's rate of incidents per 10,000 population remains significantly lower than the England rate of 102.15, the overall average rate of 98.77, and all other significantly rural English Services report a rate of 90.48.
- 2.6 In comparison, levels have also increased at a national level, from 91.65 in 2020/21 to 102.15 in 2021/22.

Primary Fires

- 2.7 In comparison, levels have also increased at a national level, from 91.65 in 2020/21 to 102.15 in 2021/22.
- 2.8 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.



(Source: IRS, Home Office, 2022)

Warwickshire:	9.22
Position:	5/44
England:	11.24
Average:	11.61
Significantly Rural:	10.52

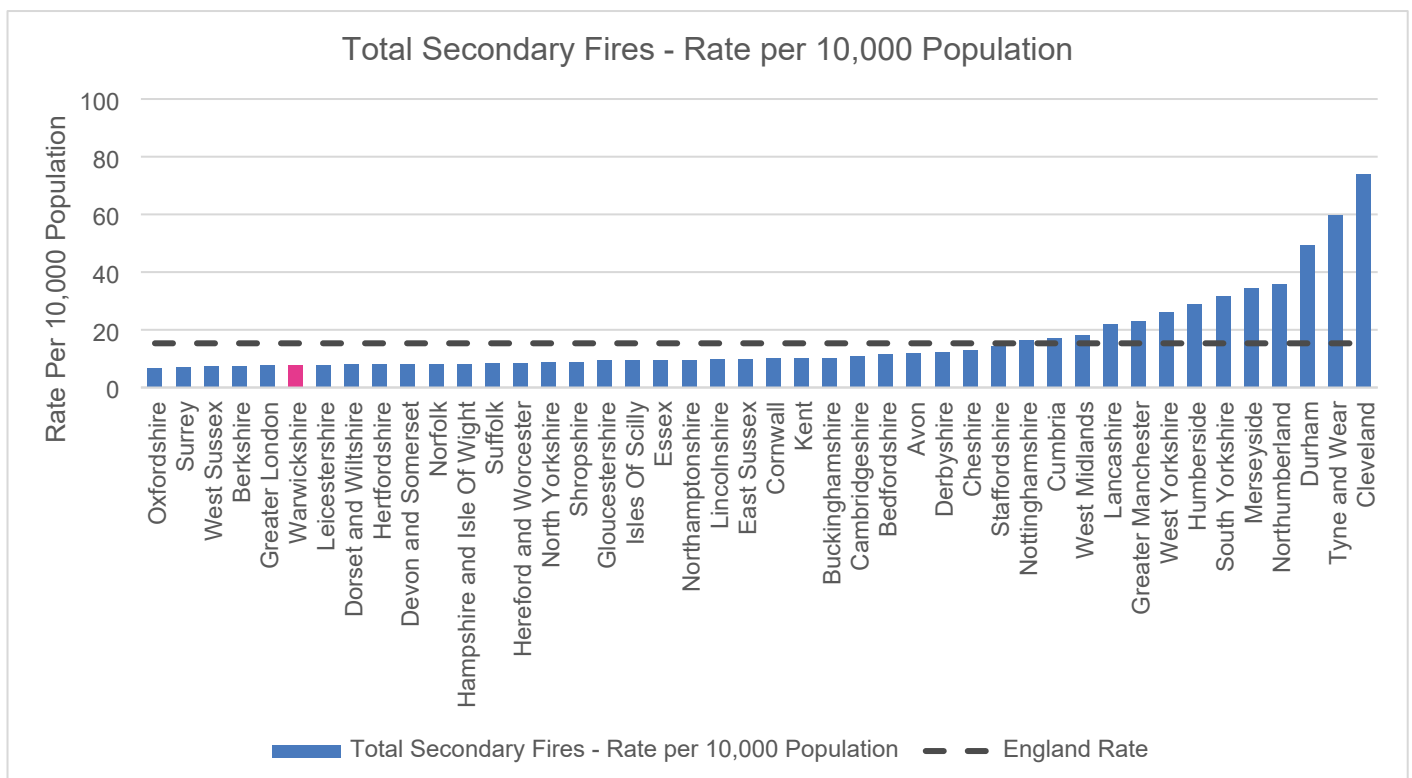
- 2.9 Nationally there has been an increase in the number of primary fires per 10,000 population compared to the previous year, with a rate of 11.24 in 2021/22 compared to 10.95 in 2020/21. Warwickshire has also seen an increase, with a rate of 9.22 in 2021/22 compared

to 8.32 in 2020/21, with its ranking lowering from 2nd to 5th.

2.10 Warwickshire’s rate of incidents per 10,000 population remains lower than the England rate of 11.24, the overall average rate of 11.61, and all other significantly rural English Services rate of 10.52.

Secondary Fires

2.11 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 vehicle fires and fires confined to a chimney structure are also included in this incident type.



(Source: IRS, Home Office, 2022)

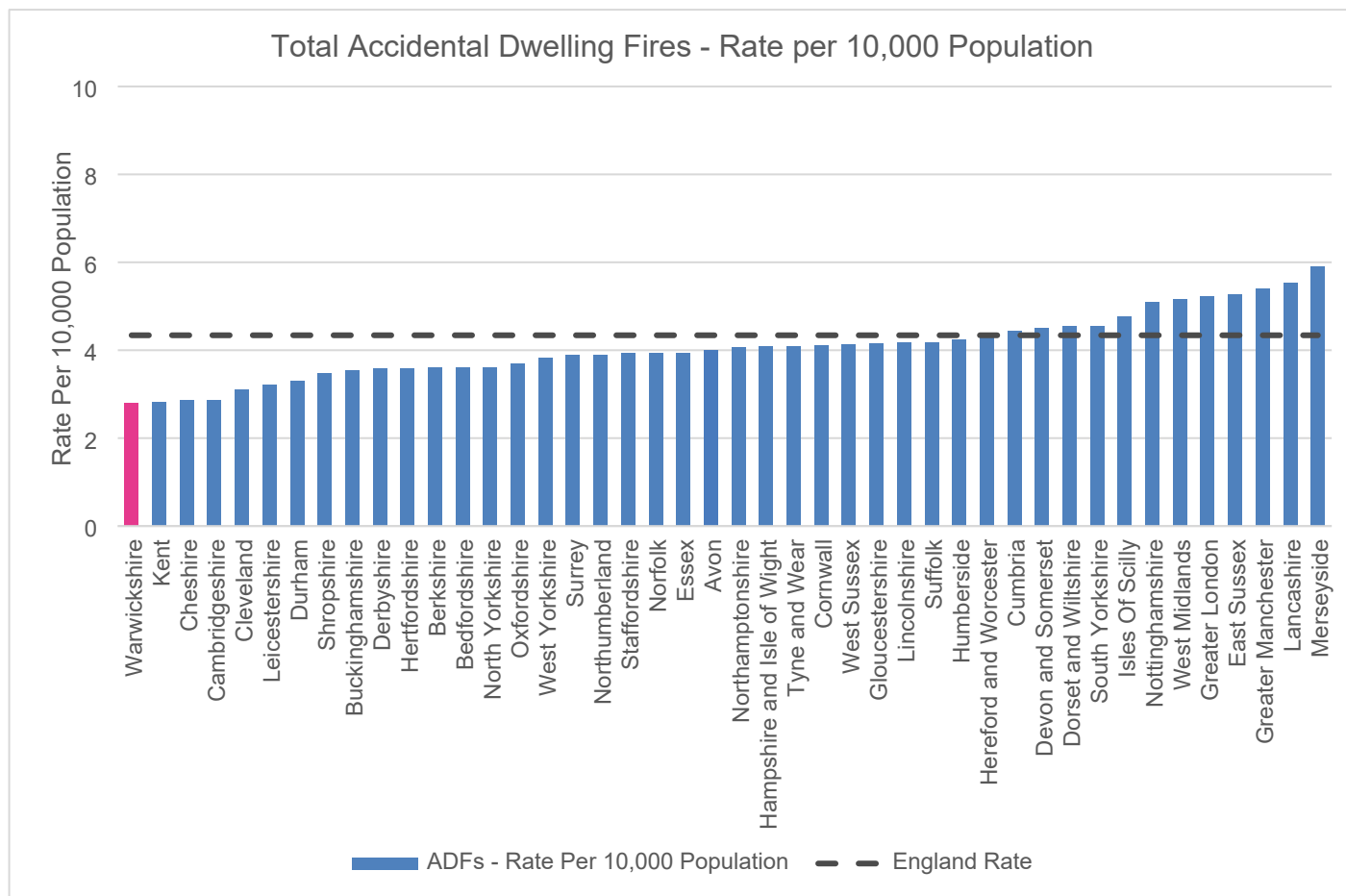
Warwickshire:	7.79
Position:	6/44
England:	15.32
Average:	16.54
Significantly Rural:	10.99

2.12 The level of secondary fires in England increased from 15.22 in 2020/21 to 15.32 in 2021/22. However, in Warwickshire, levels reduced from a rate of 9.25 in 2020/21 to 7.79 in 2021/22. Warwickshire has managed to improve its position in the rankings from 8th to 6th.

2.13 Warwickshire’s rate of secondary fires per 10,000 population remains significantly lower than the England rate of 15.32, the overall average rate of 16.54, and all other significantly rural English Services rate of 10.99.

Accidental Dwelling Fires

2.14 This category covers various types of domestic residences such as houses, flats, bungalows and care homes, as well as caravans and houseboats used as permanent dwellings, and where the cause of the fire has been accidental or not known. These types of fire are a subcategory of primary fires.



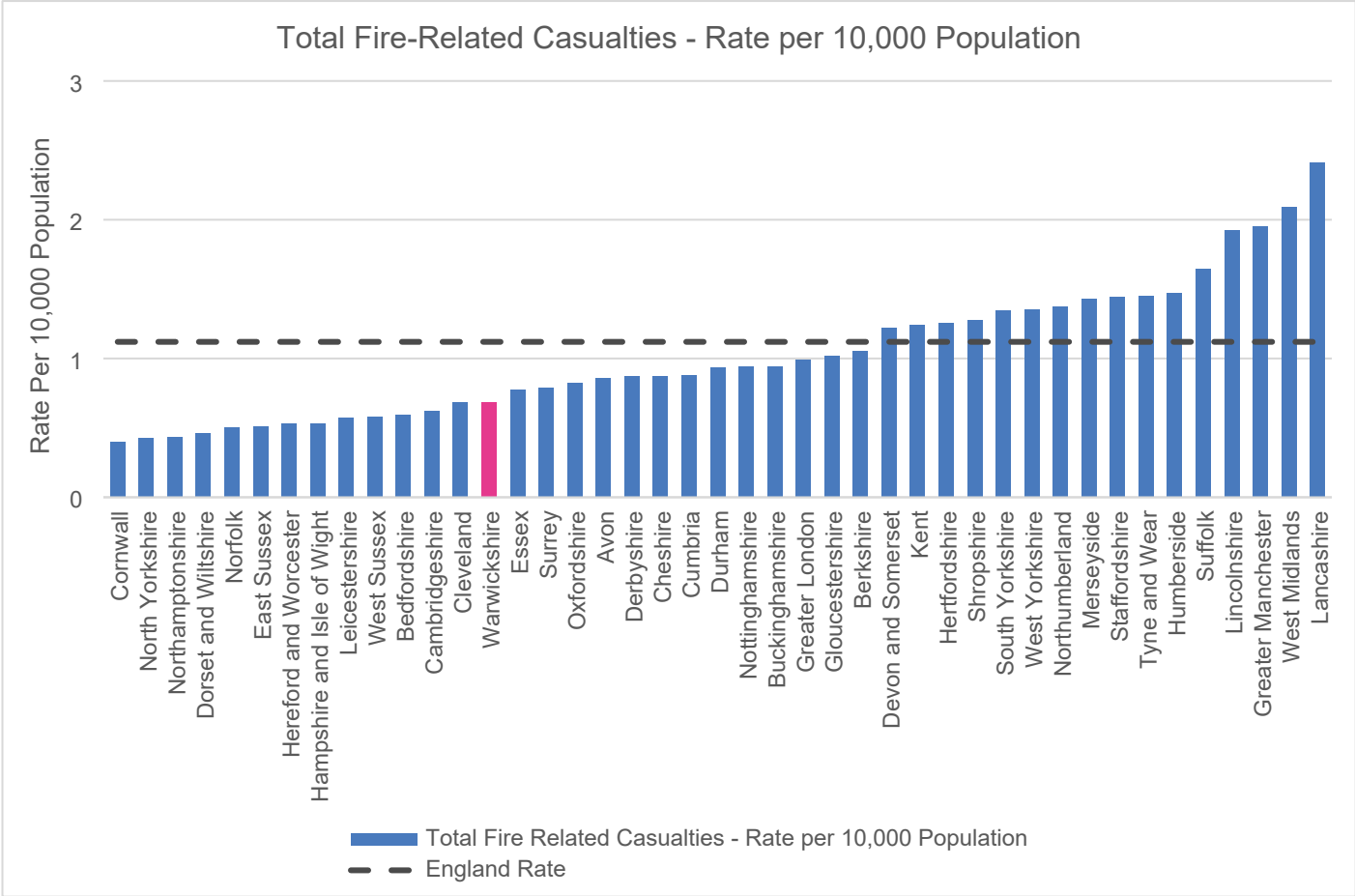
(Source: IRS, Home Office, 2022)

Warwickshire:	2.80
Position:	1/44
England:	4.34
Average:	4.07
Significantly Rural:	3.83

2.15 Nationally, the level of accidental dwelling fires has increased by 0.9% in 2021/22 compared to 2020/21, a slight change of direction from the continuing trend of decline since 2009/10. Warwickshire ranks 1st for all 44 Services, with a rate of 2.80 per 10,000 population. Warwickshire's rate remains significantly lower than the England rate of 4.34, the overall average rate of 4.07, and all other significantly rural English Services rate of 3.83. Performance in 2022/23 is expected to be affected by recent weather-related spikes in incidents, particularly for small fires and accidental dwelling fires.

Fire-Related Deaths and Injuries

- 2.16 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.
- 2.17 WFRS has historically experienced very low numbers in terms of fire-related deaths. In 2021/22 there were 4 fire-related deaths, following 1 reported in 2020/21. 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.



(Source: IRS, Home Office, 2022)

Warwickshire:	0.69
Position:	14/44
England:	1.12
Average:	1.03
Significantly Rural:	0.80

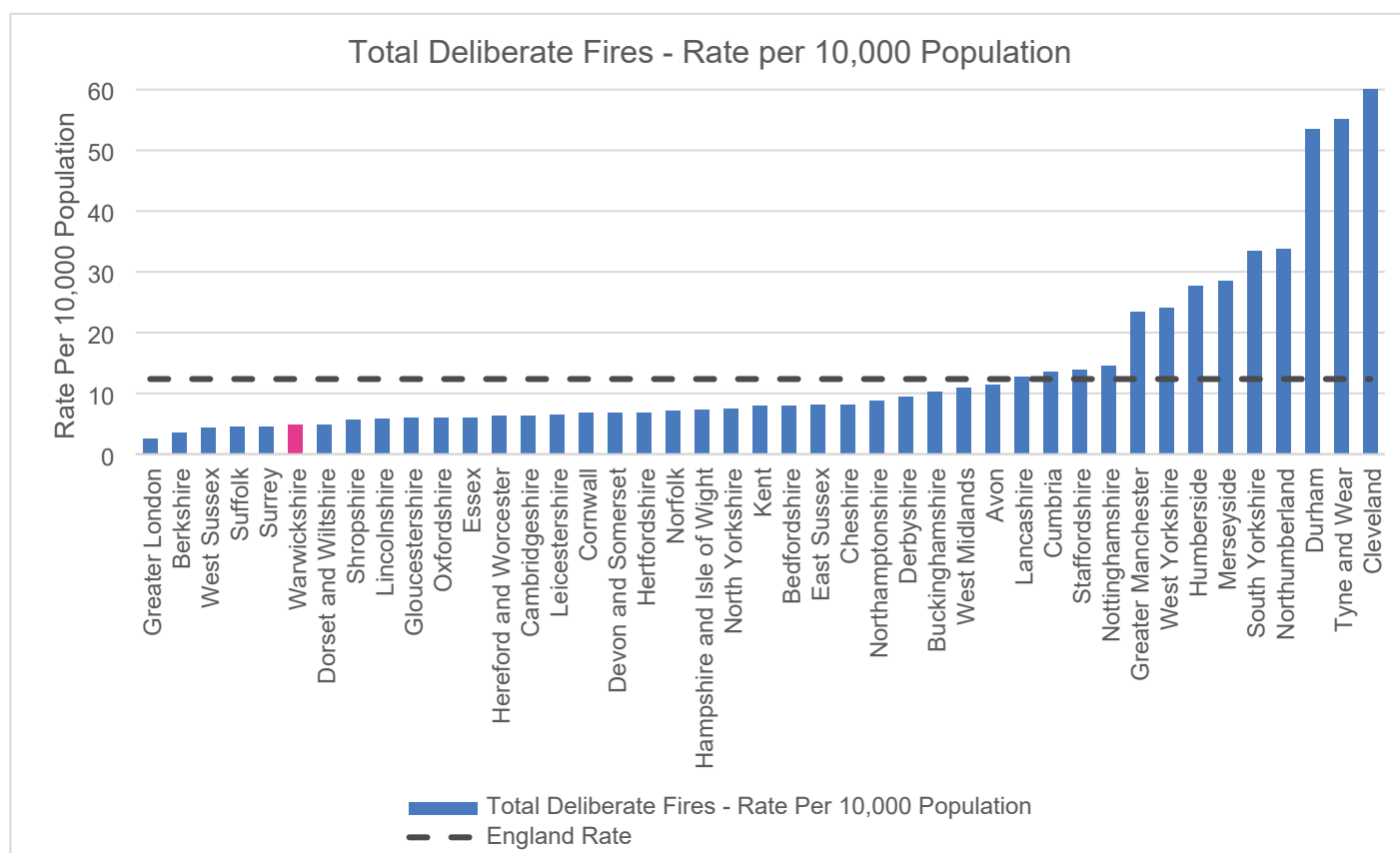
- 2.18 Warwickshire’s performance in terms of fire-related casualties per 10,000 population has increased slightly, with a rate of 0.69 in 2021/22 compared to 0.53 in 2020/21. At a national level the rate of fire-related injuries per 10,000 population has remained the same in

2021/22 as in 2020/21 at 1.12.

2.19 Warwickshire’s rate of fire related injuries per 10,000 population remains lower than the England rate of 1.12, the overall average rate of 1.03, and all other significantly rural English Services rate of 0.80.

Deliberate Fires

2.20 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.



(Source: IRS, Home Office, 2022)

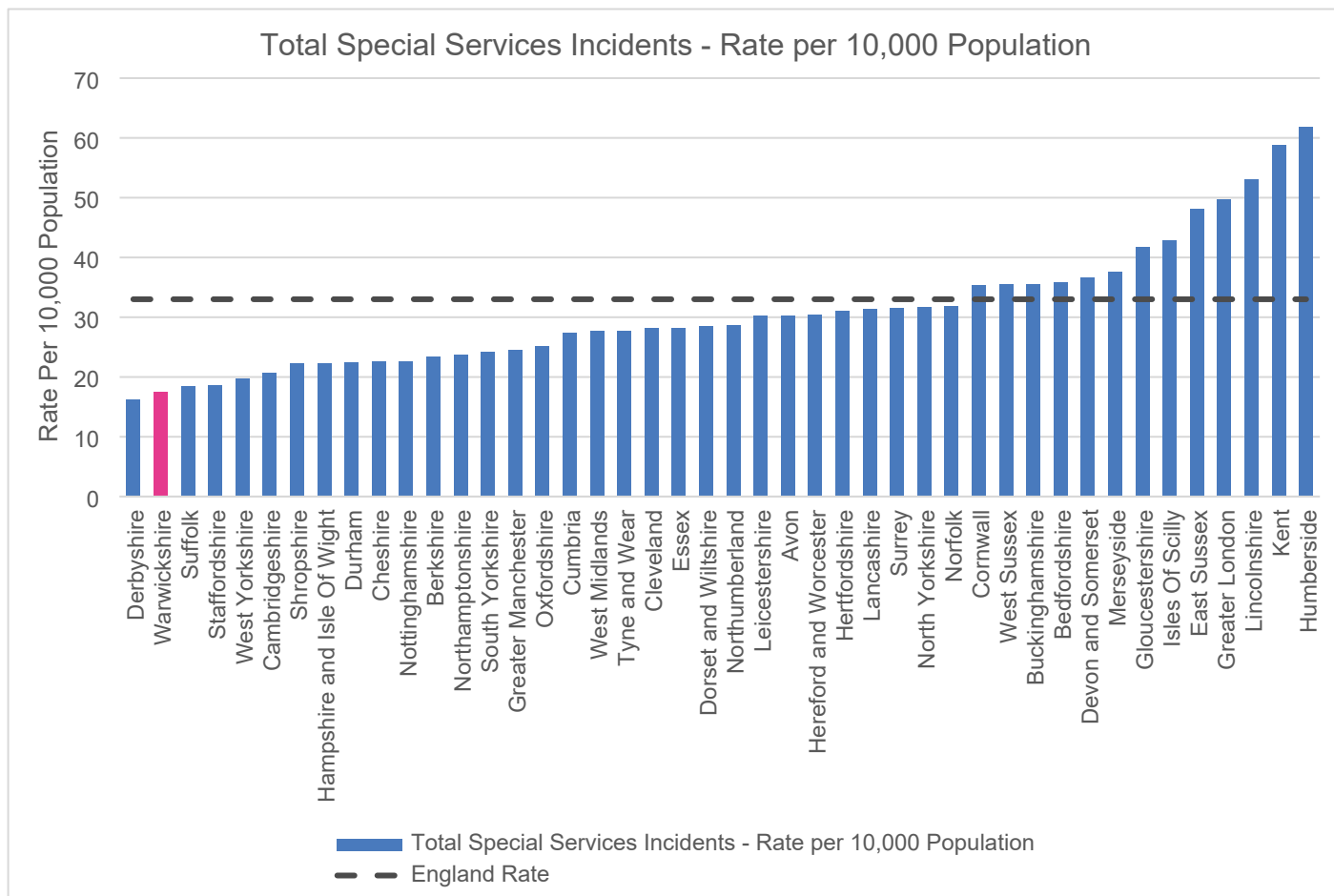
Warwickshire:	4.86
Position:	6/44
England:	11.36
Average:	14.30
Significantly Rural:	8.72

2.21 Nationally, the overall rate of deliberate fire setting has increased slightly from 11.27 in 2020/21 to 11.36 during 2021/22. The rate in Warwickshire reduced from 5.58 in 2020/21 to 4.86 in 2021/22, with Warwickshire’s ranking improving from 11th to 6th.

2.22 Warwickshire’s rate of deliberate fire incidents per 10,000 population remains lower than the England rate of 11.36, the overall average rate of 14.30, and all other significantly rural English Services rate of 8.72.

Special Services

2.23 This incident category includes a diverse range of incident types, including emergency medical response, flooding, hazardous material, and rescue or release of people.



(Source: IRS, Home Office, 2022)

Warwickshire:	17.51
Position:	2/45
England:	33.01
Average:	30.92
Significantly Rural:	32.65

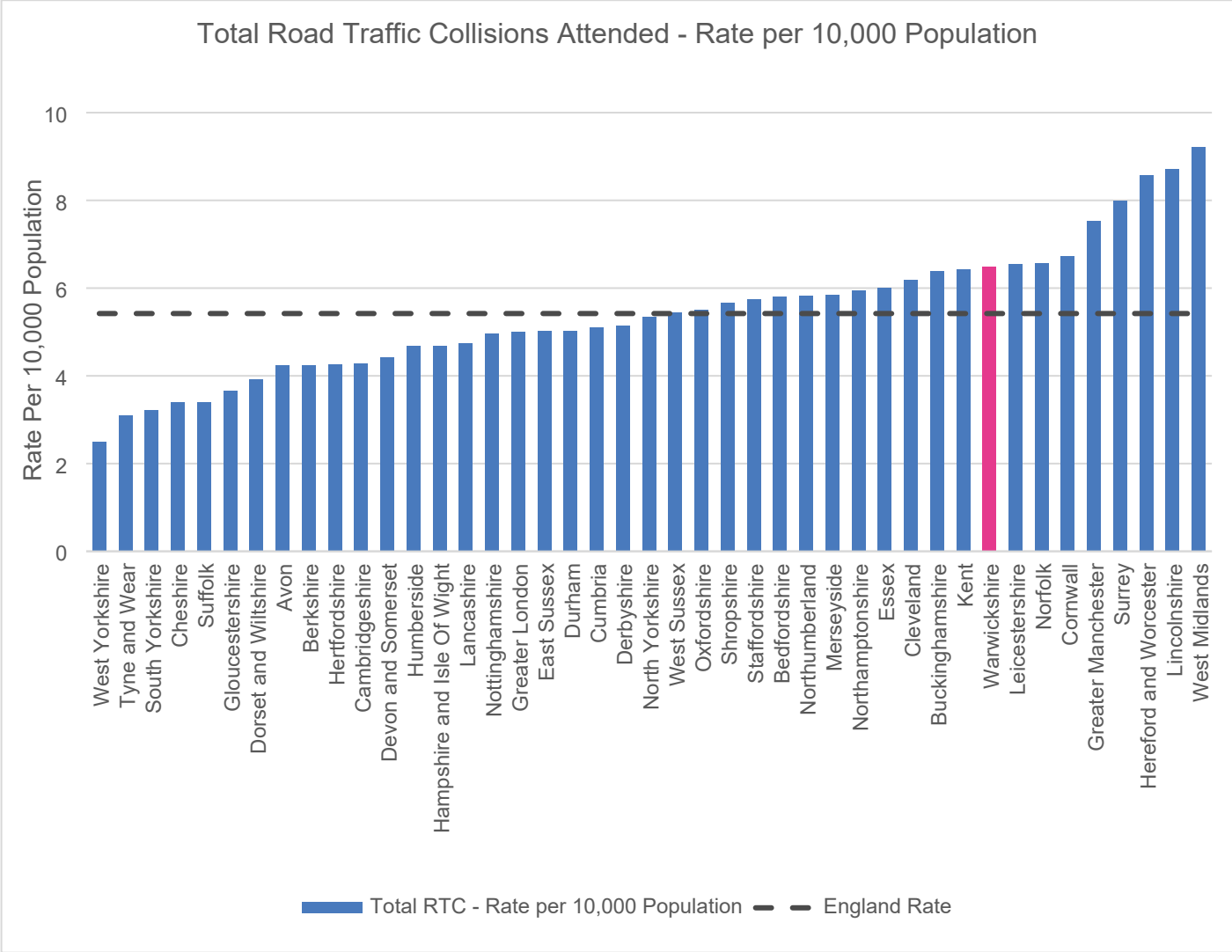
2.24 Warwickshire attends lower levels of special service incidents per 10,000 population compared to some other Services in part due to its challenge of 999 callers and its attendance policies. WFRS’s staff in control robustly challenge any call they believe may be malicious, resulting in numerous “prank” calls being abandoned and no attendance being made. WFRS also limit their attendance to non-life risk premises where an automatic fire alarm has activated during normal working hours, unless a back-up call is received from the

premises confirming that there is a fire. Compared to the previous financial year, there has been an increase in rate per 10,000 population from 14.53 in 2020/21 to 17.51 in 2021/22. However, Warwickshire’s ranking has remained the same as last year, still in 2nd. Nationally levels have also increased, from 25.53 in 2020/21 to 33.01 in 2021/22.

2.25 Warwickshire’s rate of special services incidents per 10,000 population remains significantly lower than the England rate of 33.01, the overall average rate of 30.92, and all other significantly rural English Services rate of 32.65.

Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)

2.26 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 RTCs 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.



(Source: IRS, Home Office, 2022)

Warwickshire:	6.48
Position:	35/44
England:	5.42
Average:	5.43
Significantly Rural:	5.52

- 2.27 Nationally, the rate of attended road traffic collision incidents increased from 3.98 in 2020/21 to 5.42 in 2021/22. Warwickshire has seen a similar increase, from 4.59 in 2020/21 to 6.48 in 2021/22, with its ranking going down from 33rd to 35th place.
- 2.28 Warwickshire's rate of attended road traffic collision incidents per 10,000 population remains higher than the England rate of 5.42, the overall average rate of 5.43, and all other significantly rural English Services rate of 5.52.
- 2.29 It is important to note here that the Warwickshire area has many 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 next highest local authority areas are Staffordshire (64.5 miles of motorway) and Worcestershire (48.5 miles of motorway). When comparing the number of RTCs attended in relation to the amount of motor vehicle traffic each FRS service area experienced, Warwickshire is one of the better performing FRSs, coming 4th (74.4 RTCs per billion motor vehicles) out of the 29 FRSs that can be compared (Department for Transport, 2021).

Conclusions on Incident Activity

- 2.30 Overall, performance remains consistently good in key areas, both in terms of comparing WFRS against other Fire Services and comparing WFRS to other Fire Services that are classified as being 'significantly rural'. Key areas of good performance nationally include the overall number of incidents, primary fires, secondary fires, accidental dwelling fires, deliberate fires and special services. Focus needs to remain on road traffic collisions and fire-related casualties, however recent weather-related spikes might affect benchmarking for other measures in 2022/23, such as small fires and accidental dwelling fires. Due to performance in these areas not showing signs of improvement, prioritising activity to reduce the risk and improve the safety of Warwickshire communities is recommended.

Prevention

- 2.31 The Fire Authority has a statutory duty to make provision for promoting fire safety in its area. This duty is delivered by the Prevention 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 to 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:
- i.) **Safe and Well Checks** - These are visits into the homes of 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 focuses on the individual's needs, by taking a

person-centered approach assessing the risks in the home, including from slips, trips and falls, smoking cessation, home security and winter warmth. The Prevention team have strengthened relations with partner agencies both public and private to further develop the referral process in order to maximise information sharing.

- ii.) **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 that 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 Prevention Officer and so have some knowledge of fire safety and arson awareness.
- iii.) **Targeted Campaigns** – These are delivered throughout the year. National campaigns such as 'test it Tuesdays' for smoke alarms, 'register my appliance' for white goods safety, 'no smoking day' as a health initiative and 'drowning prevention' as a water safety campaign 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.
- iv.) **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 throughout the county. The SFU will challenge anti-social behaviour and provide fire safety education and messages to young people. They are directly based on intelligence from Arson Reduction and Police.
- v.) **Anti-Social Behaviour Intervention Team (ASBIT)** - Joint high visibility patrols with Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) to challenge anti-social behaviour and provide fire safety/ASB education. Schemes run at peak times such as school holidays, exam results time and Halloween and the Bonfire Night period.
- vi.) **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 Warwickshire. This scheme runs on a peak demand basis.
- vii.) **Hospital to Home (HTH)** – This is a commissioned service providing a transportation and settling service for vulnerable members of our community. It was initially a 12-month pilot that started in August 2018 and, 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 – 22:00. On arrival at the customer's 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. In addition to the proactive safety intervention in the home, HTH realises wider benefits to the NHS by freeing up beds and ambulances for future patients.
- viii.) **Nursery Boxes** – These are an available resource for childminders and early years settings. They contain a selection of early years resources that fit in with the early

years' 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.

- ix.) **Heart Shield** – This 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 (PAD). 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.
- x.) **Rural Crime** - Work with Rural Crime Coordinators to visit rural victims of arson and to provide prevention advice to surrounding farms.
- xi.) **Road Safety Education** - WFRS works in partnership with Warwickshire County Council (WCC) Road Safety Partnership, supporting their current ten-year strategy to deliver education sessions within secondary schools and colleges across the county. The session aims to encourage safe driving habits with inexperienced drivers.

WFRS chair the Post Collision Sub-Group as part of the Warwickshire Road Safety Partnership (WRSP). This working group is made up of key stakeholders whose focus is to review data and trends so that response to road traffic collisions (RTCs) can be continually improved, and the number and severity of incidents reduced, through proactive collaboration.

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

Community Fire Protection

- 2.32 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 that will ensure the safety of employees, premises and the continuity of businesses.
- 2.33 **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 are offered during the visit as well as any improvement action that may be required and where necessary enforcement or prohibition notices may be served. The Protection team targets higher risk premises for audit by employing a risk- and intelligence-based principle that 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.

- 2.34 **Highrise Building Fire Safety** - The Fire Protection team have continued to work closely with the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC), the local authorities and private sector landlords to ensure that high rise buildings within Warwickshire are compliant with fire safety standards. In addition, work is progressing in preparation for the legislative changes that will come from the new Fire Safety Act and the Building Safety Bill, as well as the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry phase one.
- 2.35 **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, reducing burdens on business from multiple visits from the Fire Service whilst identifying and reducing risk to the community.
- 2.36 In addition to the full fire safety audits, the fire protection team undertakes a range of fire protection activities, including reactive calls, post fire audits, building regulation consultations, enforcement/prohibition action (including prosecutions), event safety and sports ground safety, as well as inspecting under other legislation such as the Housing Act, Marriage Act and Licensing Act.
- 2.37 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 levels review and challenge performance at bi-monthly 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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Other members: