

For Publication

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group
14 September 2017
Item No. 9**

REPORT AUTHOR: HEAD OF SERVICE DELIVERY

SUBJECT: DELIBERATE FIRE DATA 2016 - 17

For further information on this Report contact: Gary Jeffery
Head of Service Delivery

Background Papers:
SERVICE DELIVERY PROGRAMME AND PERFORMANCE 2016/17 - QUARTER 4 (APRIL TO MARCH 2017) – 15th June 2017

Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL		FINANCIAL	
HUMAN RESOURCES		EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
CORPORATE RISK	Known	OTHER (please specify)	
	New	CORE BRIEF	

Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group with a breakdown of deliberate fire data for 2016 – 2017.

RECOMMENDATION

That Members note the report and data contained within.

1. Introduction

In line with its Terms of Reference, the Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group is required to monitor performance against key performance indicators and associated targets for areas falling within the scope of the Group.

During the Service Delivery Policy and Challenge Group meeting held on the 15th June 2017, whilst discussing performance target PI04, it was agreed that further information would be presented on the breakdown of deliberate fires attended by the Service during 2016 - 2017. The following sections of this report provide a number of tables and graphs with the comparison of the deliberate fires for the years 2015/16 and 2016/17.

The data does not include secondary deliberate fires set by the owners of a property as the vast majority of these fires are bonfires, controlled burning of rubbish and garden waste etc., as these are not set with any malicious intent.

2. Comparison of 2015/16 data with 2016/17 for Bedfordshire

In respect of the County there has been a 6% overall increase in deliberate fires. Although there has been a reduction in fires within buildings and dwellings (other/unknown owner), however fires within dwellings (own property), outdoors and road vehicles have increased.

Property Type	2015/16	2016/17	No.	%	
Buildings	68	53	-15	↓	-22%
Dwellings (other/unknown owner)	25	19	-6	↓	-24%
Dwellings (own property)	10	17	7	↑	70%
Outdoor – Rubbish, Furniture, Grass	480	515	35	↑	7%
Vehicles	160	180	20	↑	13%
Total	743	784	41	↑	6%

2.1 Building fires

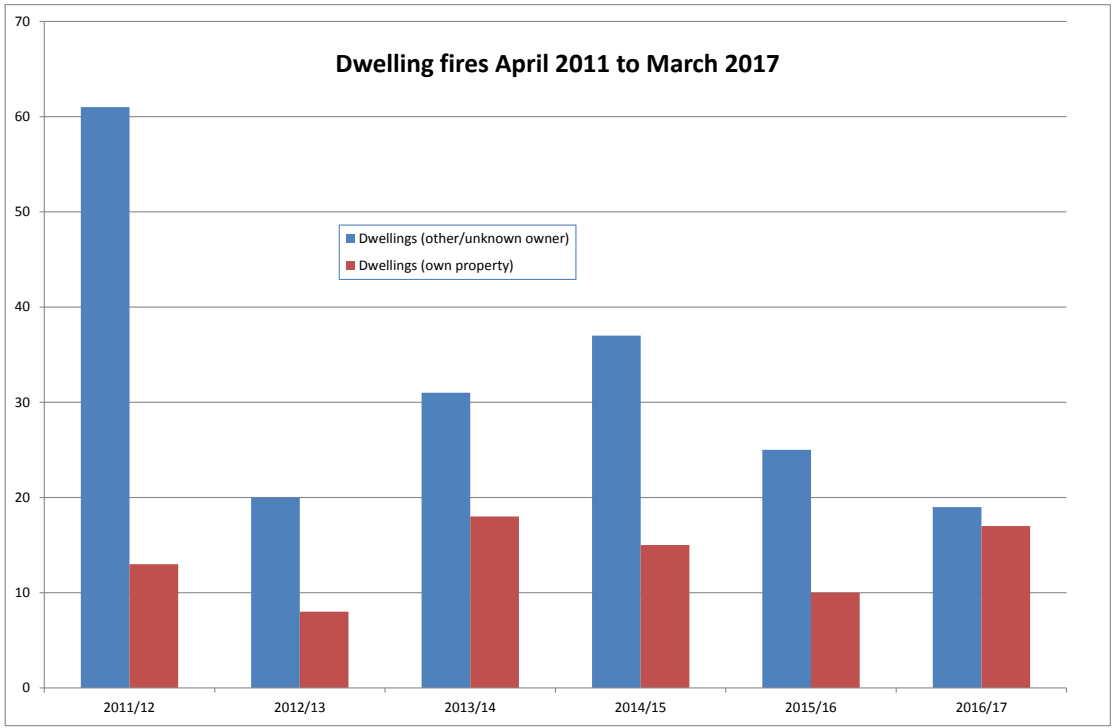
Analysis of the overall buildings fires reveals that there is a reduction in both Luton Borough and Bedford Borough, however there has been a very small increase in Central Bedfordshire, up from 17 to 18 (6%).

2.2 Dwelling fires (other/unknown owner)

Analysis of dwelling fires (other/unknown owner) reveals that there is a reduction in both Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough, with a very small increase in Luton Borough, up from 9 to 10 (11%).

2.3 Dwelling fires (own property)

What may seem to be the largest percentage increase in deliberate fires is within dwellings (own property), analysis identifies the increase from 10 to 17 (70%) is across the County.

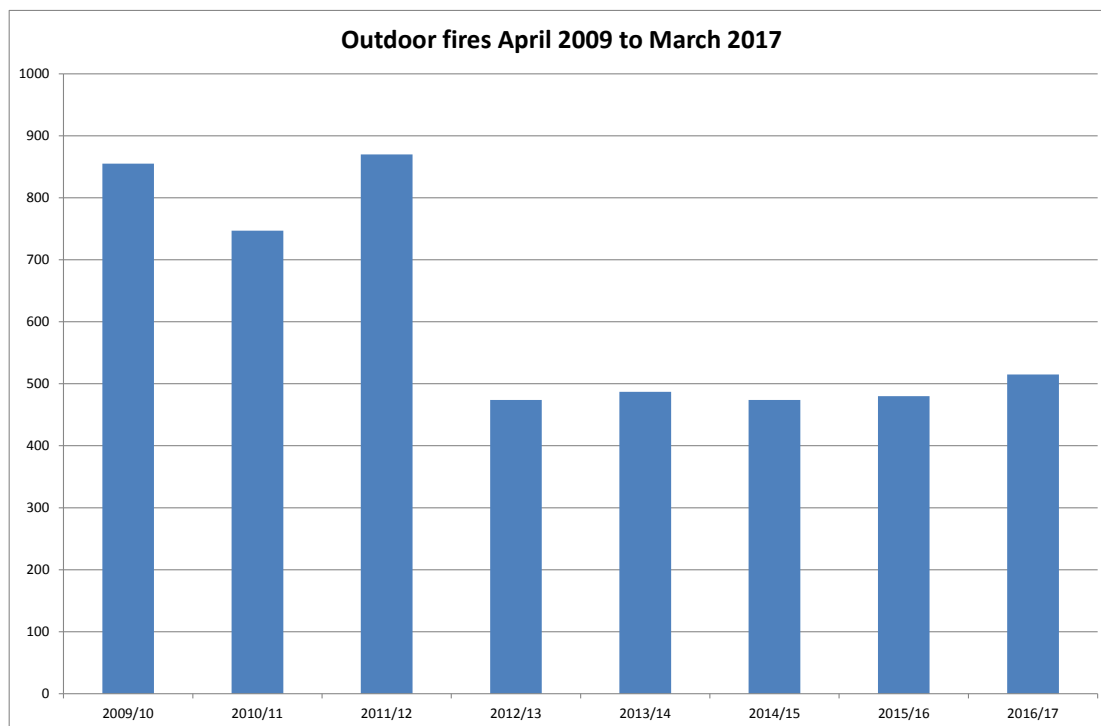


2.4 Outdoor fires

An increase in outdoor fires has been identified in Luton Borough and Central Bedfordshire, with a reduction in Bedford Borough, down from 87 to 80 (-8%).

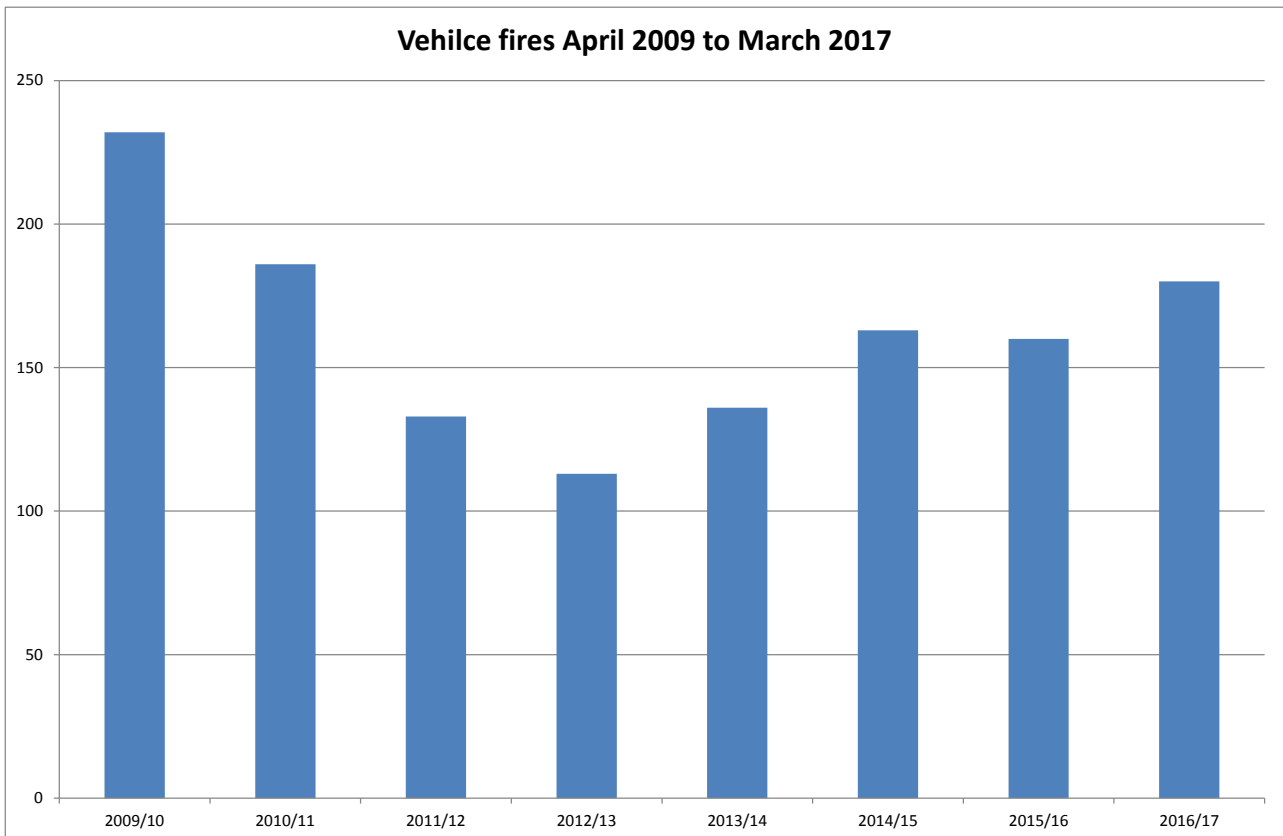
The chart below shows the annual breakdown of outdoor fires (excluding secondary fires set by the owner of the property) since 2009/10. From this data it can be seen that there were over 700 in the first three years before a significant reduction to less than 500 in 2012/13. The reason(s) for the significant reduction in 2012/13 when compared to previous years is not known.

Analysis of outdoor fires (excluding secondary fires set by the owner of the property) since April 2009 indicates that there is a correlation between the number of fires and the amount of rainfall in any given month, the correlation being that fewer outdoor fires occur in wetter months.



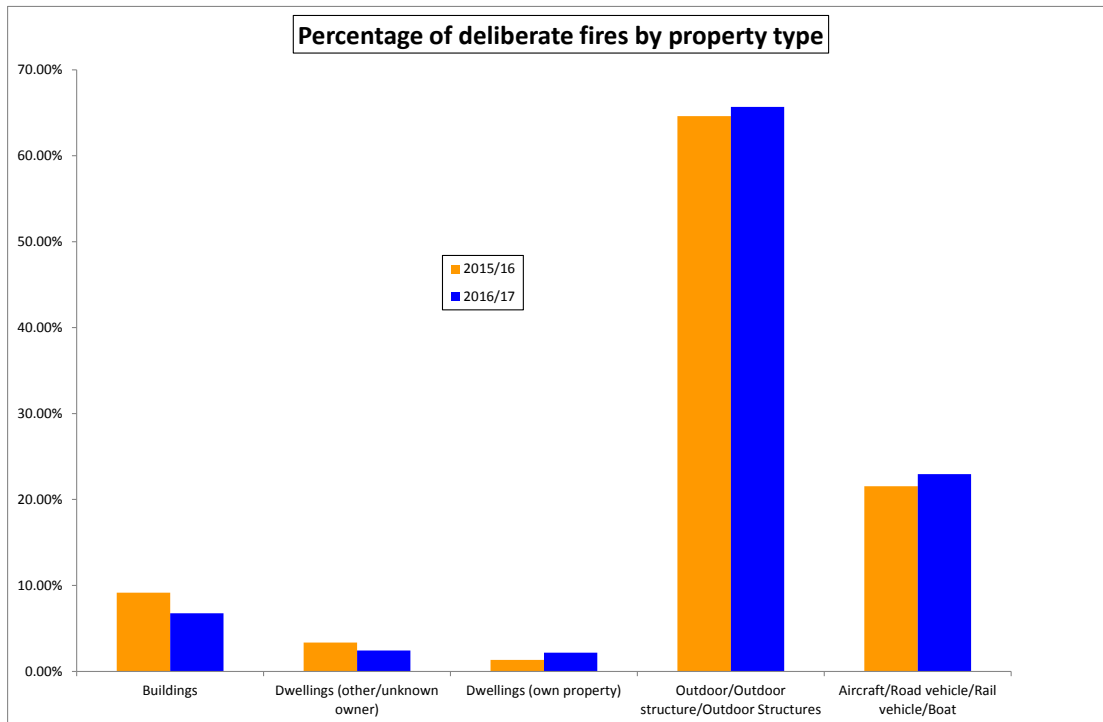
2.5 Vehicle fires

Analysis of the vehicle fires within the County identifies an increase of 20, the largest increase in Bedford Borough, up from 22 to 38 (73%), a small increase in Central Bedfordshire and a very small reduction in Luton Borough.



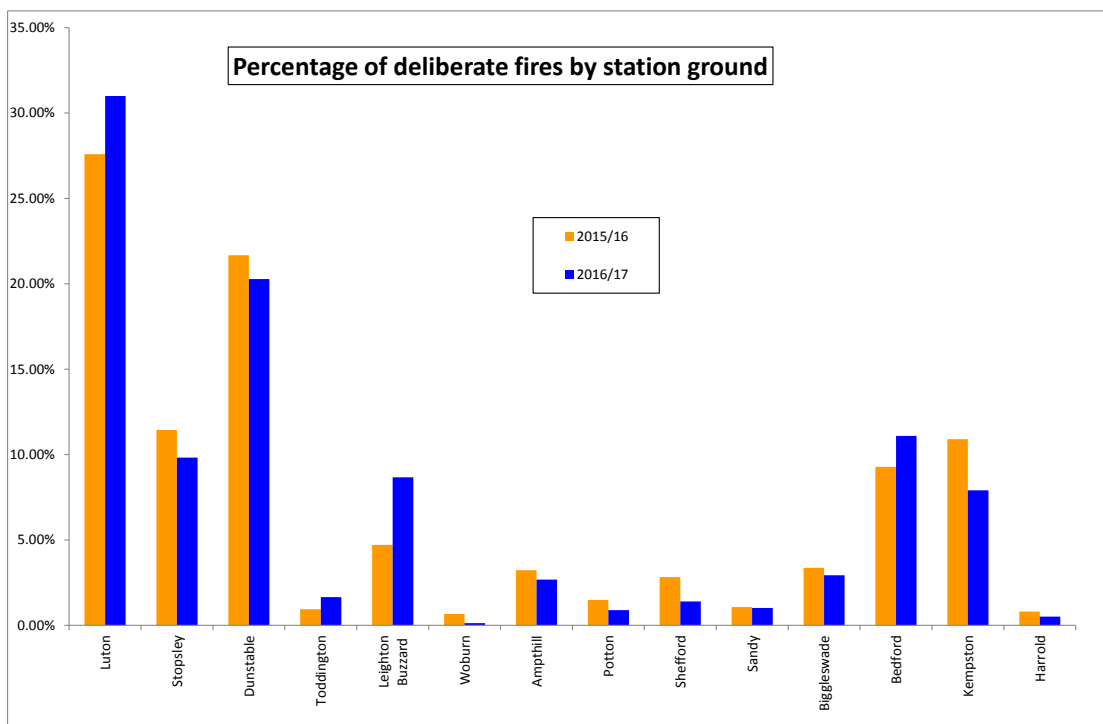
The increasing trend of deliberate fires involving vehicles (car, vans, motorcycles) can be aligned to an increase of criminal activity; however analysis of the data for the 180 vehicle fires in 2016/17 does not reveal any discernible patterns in terms of time of day, day of week, specific location etc. Nevertheless it does identify 'hot spots' in the urban areas around the County, with the majority of those in the more heavily populated areas.

3. Deliberate fires by property type



Outdoor fires continue to account for the bulk of all deliberate fires across the County. There has been a small increase in the percentage of outdoor fires compared to all deliberate fires, up from 65% in 2015/16 to 66% in 2016/17.

4. Deliberate fires by station ground



The above table identifies that Luton and Dunstable attend the largest number of deliberate fires within County. Luton Station Ground has seen an increase in the number of deliberate fires attended, whereas Dunstable Station Ground has seen a decrease. Bedford, Leighton Buzzard and Toddington have also seen increases when comparing 2015/16 to 2016/17.

5. Arson/Deliberate Fire Reduction

Amongst many partner agencies the Service plays a key role in the development of joint actions for addressing community crime, anti-social behaviour and disorder issues.

Appropriate action has been taken to address any repeat location fires within the County and recognised 'hot spots', this positive action has led to the numbers of fires within many of these locations being reduced.

Other arson/deliberate fire reduction activities include:

- After Incident Response
- Joint Fire Investigation
- Tri-force Fire Investigation
- Arson proof letter box installation
- School Crime and Arson Risk Evaluations (SCARE)
- Environmental Action Days
- Joint deliberate fire analysis review (Bedfordshire Police).

6. Conclusions

Comparisons between 2015/16 and 2016/17 shows an increase of 6% in deliberate fires overall. The overall increase is not significant, however it is something being continually monitored by the Community Safety Team. Deliberate fires within buildings and dwellings (other/unknown owner & own property), as a group, have been a contributor to a reduction in numbers. Whereas those deliberate fires outdoors and vehicles are responsible for the increase.

Disparities in the number of outdoor fires can be associated to weather conditions and during months where rainfall is higher often results with fewer outdoor fires. Vehicle fires are on the increase and the Service continues to work with partner agencies developing initiatives and campaigns to reduce these fires and the impact this has on the environment and the local community.

7. Recommendation

That Members note the report and data contained within.

**STRATEGIC OPERATIONAL COMMANDER GARY JEFFERY
HEAD OF SERVICE DELIVERY**