

For Publication

**Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Service Delivery Policy and Challenge
Group
30 November 2017
Item No. 7**

REPORT AUTHOR: HEAD OF SERVICE DELIVERY

**SUBJECT: ARSON REDUCTION FORUM REPORT
STATE OF THE NATION 2017**

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Background Papers:

Arson Prevention Forum; State of the Nation 2017 report can be found as appendix A

Implications (tick ✓):

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

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 an overview of the State of the Nation 2017 report produced by the Arson Prevention Forum.

RECOMMENDATION:

Members acknowledge the contents of this report and the information contained within the attached document.

1. Background

- 1.1. The Arson Reduction Forum (ARF) is a national strategic stakeholder body formed through a merger of the UK Government-backed Arson Control Forum and the Association of British Insurers Arson Prevention Bureau.
- 1.2. This is the second State of the Nation report from the ARF and it provides an overview of the cost and consequences of arson as well as insight as to what is being done to reduce its impact.
- 1.3. The purpose of their report is to identify the benefits of a more coordinated approach to arson identification, investigation and prosecution, thus reducing the demand and impact on Police and Fire and Rescue Service resources, and most importantly improving public safety.

2. Summary of findings 'State of the Nation 2017'

- 2.1. The ARF report utilises data from government sources which indicates an increase in national arson/deliberate fire setting between 2014/15 and 2016/17. The summary of key findings are that:
 - 47% of fires attended by FRS in England are deliberate
 - 47 Deaths are recorded as being linked to deliberate fires
 - 11% Increase in deliberate fires (since the 2014/15 ARF report)
 - 44% increase in deliberate road vehicle fires
 - 19% increase in deliberate other building fires (includes Office & Commercial).
- 2.2. The table below provides a comparison of local data with the national figures provided within the ARF report.

%age increase	England	Bedfordshire	Difference BFRS v England
All deliberate	11%	9%	-2%
Primary	27%	7%	-20%
Dwellings	3%	-26%	-29%
Buildings	19%	20%	+1%
Vehicles	44%	10%	-34%
Outdoors	10%	21%	+11%
Secondary	6%	10%	+4%

Table 1, excludes the category 'Secondary Fires; Deliberate Own Property' equates to bonfires or controlled burning and is recorded as accidental)

- 2.3. From the table we can see that over the same period of time (2014/15 - 2016/17) within Bedfordshire there has been a slight year on year increases in most areas, however not to the same degree as seen nationally.
- 2.4. Whilst BFRS has experienced a rise in all primary fires, it remains 20 percentage points lower than the rise nationally, and likewise for primary dwellings fires there has been a significant percentage reduction locally, in comparison to the slight rise seen nationally.

- 2.5. BFRS have experienced a slightly higher percentage increase than seen nationally in respect of primary buildings fires, and a more significant percentage increase in primary outdoor fires, however the percentage rise of vehicle fires experienced by BFRS is well below the rise seen nationally.
- 2.6. The reduction in deliberate primary dwelling fires in BFRS is particularly noteworthy not only because it is significantly better than the national picture but more importantly because these are the incidents where lives are most likely to be put in danger. This reduction in life threatening deliberate fires is reflected in the Bedfordshire Police arson crime report data. From the table below it can be seen that crimes of arson with intent to endanger life are down by 8% and all crimes of arson are down by 12%.

	2014/15	2016/17	Difference
Arson (no intent to endanger life)	46	33	-28%
Arson with intent to endanger life	169	156	-8%
Total	215	189	-12%

Table 2

- 2.7 Table 3 below identifies some of the key points contained within the ARF report and highlights areas where progress has been made by BFRS and dealing with deliberate fires.

The ARF report identifies:	Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue do:
The relationship between Fire and Police is 'strong' and appears to have increased significantly since the last State of the Nation report.	There is a strong working relationship between BFRS and Bedfordshire Police. All deliberate fire information is made available direct to the Police Control Room, and further supported by monthly reports to Community Safety Tasking Groups. The two Services are proactively looking into further opportunities where shared data and information lead to joint intelligence.
Community Policing teams are a valuable source of intelligence and shared teams are used to drive a prevention agenda.	BFRS Arson Reduction Officers have forged strong links with the Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT). They share data and intelligence including that relating to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), looking for patterns and trends. Police/Fire collaboration has led to members of Community Safety Teams (from each authority) collocating at Bedford Community Fire Station

The ARF report identifies:	Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue do:
Fire and Rescue Service Integrated Risk Management Planning arrangements should be explicit in terms of arson reduction (where this is a local risk) and these should link to Police and Crime Commissioner Crime Plans given the need for both Police and Fire Services to work better together.	This is something which the Service will consider further as work continues on the next iteration of the Community Risk Management Plan.
Fire and Rescue Services do not have a duty to investigate fires, only a power. However, recognition is given for the valuable insight, skills and experience in investigating fires including arson. Although Fire and Rescue Service personnel are often the first to arrive at a fire and the information gained by responding crews can provide vital intelligence to others in coming to a view as to whether the incident is deliberate or accidental, however arson is not something that can be resolved on our own.	First on scene Commanders are trained and experienced in scene preservation and identifying fire spread patterns in order to determine origin, cause and spread. Fire Incident Commanders will request Police to attend whenever a fire is suspected to be deliberate and where necessary Fire Investigation Teams will investigate jointly with Police Scenes of Crime Officers (SOCO), and this is further supported by a memorandum of understanding.
Local Fire and Rescue Services are encouraged to provide joint training in arson identification with Police Officers and at the same time, jointly explore how agencies can better work together in the initial stages of any arson related criminal investigation.	BFRS Fire Investigation Teams and Bedfordshire SOCO's attend accredited Fire Investigation training. Police SOCO's also attend quarterly Fire Investigation Meetings and Case Study days which provide CPD opportunities and support standardisation of approach between both Services.
ARF make reference to the future role of the HMICFRS.	BFRS should ensure evidence is captured of the joint working arrangements.

Table 3

3. Summary

3.1. The ARF report does provide a summary of activity across the sectors represented by the ARF membership, including Fire and Rescue Services, and we can identify that:

- Arson and associated costs are on the increase, locally and nationally
- BFRS have seen a lower increase in all deliberate, primary, dwelling and vehicle fires when compared to national data
- BFRS have seen a slight increase in deliberate buildings, outdoors and secondary fires when compared nationally

- Good work relationships between BFRS and Bedfordshire Police have been established
- Commitment is needed from all parties working together to continue tackling arson
- Good levels of training and awareness are delivered
- BFRS will continue gathering evidence to support future inspections.

4. Recommendation

4.1. Members acknowledge the contents of this report and the information contained within the attached document.

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