

## **SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY**

Meeting	<b>FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>
Meeting Date	<b>21 NOVEMBER 2022</b>
Report of	<b>CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>
Report Sponsor(s)	<b>DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DEVELOPMENT</b>
Subject	<b>EXTREME WEATHER JULY 2022</b>

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This purpose of this report is to provide members with an overview of the operational activity levels during the extreme weather of July 2022 and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue's (SYFR's) response to the challenges presented by the extreme prolonged heat.

The report will also provide details of the lessons learned and the contingency plans that are in place and any additional measures the Service may adopt following learning from the events in summer 2022. It is important to emphasise that the debriefing process is still ongoing, so the learning points that have been identified so far are included.

Data is presented for comparison between the summer of 2022 and previous years, and includes identifying the lessons learned from this period.

### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

Members are recommended to:

- a. Note the information and ongoing work.

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### **CONTENTS**

Main Report

## BACKGROUND

1. The summer of 2022 saw temperatures around the UK reach record breaking levels, for a prolonged period of time. Nationally, the dry weather and high temperatures proved challenging for all fire and rescue services throughout the country.
2. The high level of operational activity peaked mid-July 2022, and as Figure.1 below shows, throughout this time SYFR control operatives were handling a higher than average number of emergency calls compared to the previous 3 years.

Figure.1

DATE (July)	No. emergency calls received			
	2019	2020	2021	2022
13	76	87	75	244
14	76	65	79	219
15	67	62	72	148
16	79	130	66	200
17	76	102	98	303
18	86	72	92	654
19	135	76	93	1645
20	84	72	92	618
21	81	117	88	168
22	112	62	115	144
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>845</b>	<b>870</b>	<b>4343</b>

3. The challenges for SYFR started on 13 July 2022, from there, the volume of emergency calls and incidents started to rise, peaking on the 19 July with SYFR Control personnel handling 1645 emergency calls. In the whole of July 2022, SYFR attended 1121 fire incidents, compared with 505 in 2021 and 468 in 2020. BT transferred approximately 13000 calls nationally to Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) control rooms on 19 July, of which, 12.5% were handled within the SYFR control room. The normal average amount of calls handled in a 24 hour period within South Yorkshire is approximately 100.
4. The SYFR control manager declared 'Operation Willow Beck' during the afternoon of 19 July. Operation Willow Beck is currently under trial across the UK and is designed for when a single FRS control room can no longer handle large volumes of emergency calls, transferring a percentage of these calls to other control rooms across the UK. On 19 July, a number of FRSs declared Operation Willow Beck resulting in some control rooms being overwhelmed with emergency calls from both their own and other control rooms. Nationally, Operation Willow Beck is still currently under trial and control room managers continue to provide feedback to the project working group.
5. The average number of Secondary fires on 19 July over the last 3 years in South Yorkshire is 11, compared with 46 in 2022. Similarly, the average number of Primary fires on the day of July 19 over the last three years is 5, compared to 22 Primary fires on 19 July 2022.

SYFR also dealt with three significant property fires on 19 July 2022.

- Moorland Avenue, Barnsley – 3 properties involved.
  - Hamilton Road, Maltby – 4 properties involved.
  - Stockwell Avenue, Kiveton Park – 3 properties involved.
6. 10 property fires occurred within 37 minutes, requiring 10 appliances and 2 turntable ladders.
  7. Up to 20 July, SYFR utilised overtime to maintain a full staffing provision across the Service including Fire Control. Additional middle managers and control staff were assigned to both Fire Control and to support officers on the flexi-duty system over 18 and 19 July. On 20 July Recall to Duty (as per Grey Book) was initiated, for front line operational staff.
  8. During these peak demand periods there were multiple 'stacked' calls and SYFR Control staff were triaging calls - giving priority to those involving threat to life and property. Throughout the afternoon of 19 July, there were several calls between SYFR Operational Commanders and South Yorkshire Police (SYP) relating to the extreme weather and fire related incidents across the County.
  9. During the morning of 19 July, our Strategic Command Team (SCG) (Area Managers and Principal Officers) were involved in a Senior Leadership Team Action Plan Workshop at our Training and Development Centre. This lasted until around lunch when specific officers, were then relocated into our Control room to support with operational activity.
  10. The Operational Support Cell (OSC) had already been established and had been running from 13 July. The purpose of OSC, is be to direct and co-ordinate the SYFR's response to major incidents and to support the operations on the incident ground by anticipating needs, acting as liaison with the Incident Command Post (ICP) and the Strategic Fire Commander.
  11. OSC acts under the command of an Area Manager or in their absence another nominated Officer who will be responsible for the co-ordination and control of the Service's response to the major incident, and ensure business continuity is assured.
  12. OSC is normally staffed by HQ based personnel, although other personnel may be seconded, brought in on pre arranged overtime, or recalled to duty as required. The Area Manager, or in their absence another nominated Officer, is be responsible for the setting up and staffing of the OSC.
  13. On the late afternoon of Tuesday 19 July, SYP requested a Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Strategic Coordinating Group meeting in response to receiving a high number of 999 calls from members of the South Yorkshire public. The SCG was held at 1700 hours and during the meeting, it was agreed by partners across the LRF to declare a LRF multiagency Major Incident.

*A Major Incident is defined as 'An event or situation with a range of serious consequences which required special arrangements to be implemented by one of more emergency responder agency' (JESIP – Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles).*

14. A Second SCG was held at 2100 hours and a final SCG was held on Wednesday 20 July 2022 at 1200 hours at which the Major Incident was stood down as at 1225hrs.
15. A South Yorkshire LRF multiagency debrief was held on the 28 July 2022 that identified learning points and notable good practice. 11 multiagency recommendations have been agreed as a result of the multiagency debrief. These include having a better awareness and understanding of Operation Willow Beck, a review of adverse weather plans and the early consideration and activation of a Strategic Assessment Meeting (SAM), these recommendations are being allocated and will form the basis of the cold debrief. This will be where a greater analysis of the learning points and notable practice will take place, along with tracking any and all actions allocated to partners.
16. Throughout 18 and 19 of July, SYFR had 5 accident reports from operational crew members who had suffered ill effects as a result of the extreme heat. All 5 accident reports have been investigated collectively at Health and Safety Level 2 status. The rationale for investigating these events at Level 2 instead of a normal Level 1, was to attempt to find common factors that could have contributed to the accidents as well as to identify any future learning to prevent these accidents from occurring. The findings of this report along with any recommendations are being presented at the next Health and Safety Level 2 meeting. Out of 5 individual accidents, 3 members of staff were able to continue work that day, 2 members of staff received medical treatment and had to leave work, however both were back and able to work the following day.
17. 21 separate operational debrief submissions have been submitted to our internal platform SHOAL. A number of internal Structured Debriefs are scheduled for autumn, covering all internal roles and stakeholders.
18. A number of initial learning outcomes have already been identified within SYFR. These include:
  - Review the OSC function, training and policy for middle managers, along with how this cell links with other departments, such as Finance and Procurement. Firefighter Safety Team and RPaC have commenced this review.
  - Formalise and train middle management around their role within the SYFR Control room should they be called upon to assist in Control during spate conditions.
  - The need to review of SYFR internal policies around spate and hot weather conditions. RPaC (Resilience, Planning and Contingencies) have commenced this review.
  - The effective use of recall to duty via text messages.
  - Formalising the effective use of all available operational staff during spate conditions. Both pre-arranged overtime and Recall to Duty are voluntary in nature and do not guarantee the required level of staff to deal with the demand that we experienced during this heat wave; notwithstanding the additional vehicles and equipment also required to support any staffing uplift. Going forward it is necessary to look at how the Service provides a more guaranteed staffing uplift in response to these peak demand events. We have circa. 550 staff attached to fire stations and require circa. 100 to maintain our business as usual level of

response. We need a way to access the circa. 450 staff who are not at work to support our staffing requirements at peak incident demand periods.

- On 20 July, operational staff were using Service people carriers to support operational crews at protracted incidents. This allowed operational crews to rotate more frequently enhancing welfare provisions and relief arrangements. It is clear that we need better arrangements in terms of procedures, vehicles and equipment in order to support the required short term uplifts in staffing required to deal with ad hoc peak demand periods.
- The primary staffing of 2 all-terrain vehicles (Polaris) during spate conditions. These vehicles were purchased, following the Hatfield Moor incident in 2020, along with the procurement of additional wildfire firefighting equipment and the training of Wildfire Tactical Advisors.
- The effective use of Wholetime staff riding the small incident units (SIUs) where on-call staff were not available.
- A review of the training SYFR gives to operational managers at all levels, along with control staff, around personal and crew welfare.

## NEXT STEPS

19. As stated above, SYFR has planned a number of structured debrief sessions set to take place throughout the autumn of 2022, however, dates may be subject to change due to the potential of industrial action. These debrief sessions will focus on the learning areas that have been submitted into SHOAL and will form the basis of future recommendations within the service. Once the structured debriefs have been completed the recommendations will be presented to the Head of Service Development who will assign any actions to the relevant department heads. These will be tracked through SHOAL, for updates and timely completion.
20. To date, SYFR has not identified any immediate learning that has triggered a submission to National Operational Learning (NOL), however this may change following the planned structured debriefs and more detailed analysis of the learning.
21. Nationally the fire sector faced unprecedented challenges during the extreme weather event of July 2022. Locally, SYFR along with our regional and national partners will look to see how we can respond more effectively to any climate change risks in the future.

## CONTRIBUTION TO OUR ASPIRATIONS

- Be a great place to work-** we will create the right culture, values and behaviours to make this a brilliant place to work that is inclusive for all
- Put people first-** we will spend money carefully, use our resources wisely and collaborate with others to provide the best deal to the communities we serve
- Strive to be the best in everything we do-** we will work with others, make the most of technology and develop leaders to become the very best at what we can be

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

- Yes
- No

If you have ticked 'Yes' please provide brief details in the box below and include the third party/parties it would involve:

SYFR is a member of the Local Resilience Forum., local, regional and national multi agency learning with shared and acted upon.

### CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY IMPLICATIONS

22. Each of the learning outcomes will be assessed for corporate risk and business continuity implication and this also will be captured within the Service Improvement structures.

### EQUALITY ANALYSIS COMPLETED

Yes

If you have ticked 'Yes' please complete the below comment boxes providing details as follows:

Summary of any Adverse Impacts Identified:	Key Mitigating Actions Proposed and Agreed:

No

N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why an EA is not required/is outstanding:

This report provides a summary of information.

### HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT COMPLETED

Yes

No

N/A

If you have ticked 'No' or 'N/A' please complete the comments box below providing details of why a Health and Safety Risk Assessment is not required/is outstanding:

This report is a summary of information.

### SCHEME OF DELEGATION

23. Under the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority [Scheme of Delegation](#) a decision \*is required / \*has been approved at Service level.

Delegated Power

Yes  
 No

If yes, please complete the comments box indicating under which delegated power.

D: General  
D1: Legislation

## IMPLICATIONS

24. Consider whether this report has any of the following implications and if so, address them below:., Diversity, Financial, Asset Management, Environmental and Sustainability, Fleet, Communications, ICT, Health and Safety, Data Protection, Collaboration, Legal and Industrial Relations implications have been considered in compiling this report.

List of background documents		
Report Author:	Name:	GM John Billings, Operational Risk Manager
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