

# Essex Fire Authority

## Report to the Constituent Authorities

### 5 September 2012

#### 1. EFA commitment to promote the use of Automatic Water Suppression Systems in residential and commercial premises

We support efforts to include Automatic Water Suppression Systems in Local Development Frameworks or revised planning mechanisms under the National Planning Policy Framework and the pro-active approach to the promotion of sprinklers within local planning arrangements.

#### 2. Impacts of Changes to the Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) Policy

In 2010/11 the Service undertook to review its activity regarding incident types. This showed that the Service was responding to a disproportionate number of incidents generated by Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS) from Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs). This amounted to 28% of all incidents attended being calls to automatic fire alarms, with 96.6% of those being false alarms.

Subsequent amendments to the operational response to UwFS were introduced by the Service in February 2011, as noted by the Essex Fire Authority Policy & Strategy Committee on 10 November 2010 (EFA/105/10). This meant that the Service only responded to fire signals from automatic fire alarms originating from schools, sleeping risks and high risk premises.

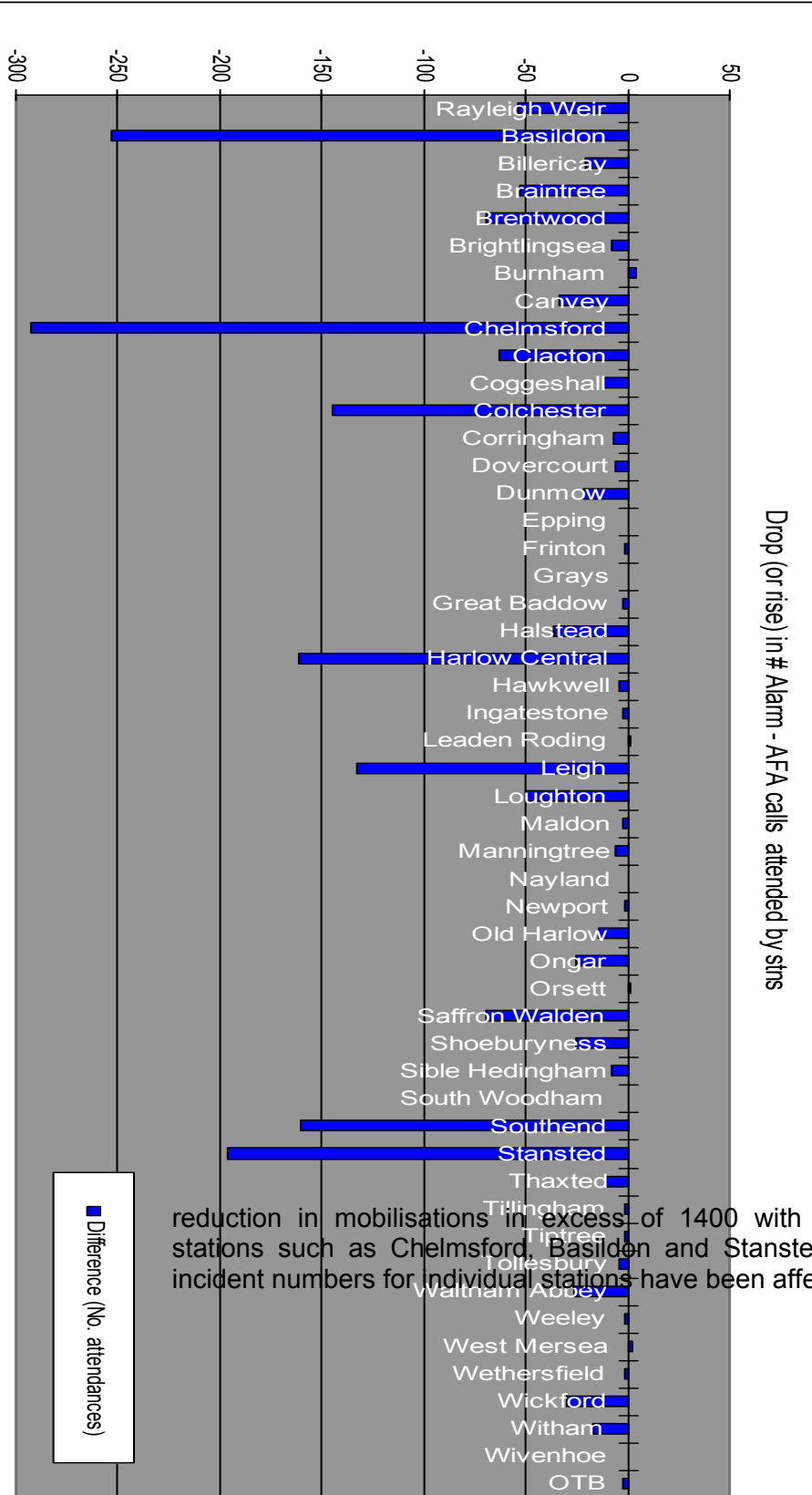
The table below identifies the impact of change observed over the first 12 months following revised Service policy.

	Mar 2010 – Feb 2011	Mar 2011 – Feb 2012
Incidents Attended	18756	16043 (Down 14%)
AFA Calls Received	4907	4146 (Down 16%)
AFA calls received not attended	6	1428
AFA Calls Attended	4901	2718 (Down 45%)
AFA calls attended recorded as False Alarm	4740	2607 (Down 45%)
AFA calls attended recorded as Fire	138	95 <sup>1</sup> (Down 31%)
AFA calls attended Not Level 1	1934	252 <sup>2</sup> (Down 87%)
AFA calls attended Level 1	2967	2466 (Down 17%)

<sup>1</sup> These were mainly level 1 calls e.g. sleeping risks and schools. 20 were not but these were recorded as fires due to interpretation of detail on receipt of call or on entry into the Incident Recording System e.g. out on arrival, which should have been reported as a fire.

<sup>2</sup> These include initial calls that were to Level 1 premises but turned out to be Level 3 premises e.g. a health centre apparently treated as a hospital.

It is reported that there has been a



Drop (or rise) in # Alarm - AFA calls attended by stns

reduction in mobilisations in excess of 1400 with significant reductions noted for stations such as Chelmsford, Basildon and Stansted. The chart below shows how incident numbers for individual stations have been affected by the change in policy.

### **3. Operational Incidents Report and Incidents of Notable Interest**

#### **Commentary**

For the period 1 April 2012 to 30 June 2012 the Service has attended 3569 incidents compared with 4564 for the same period last year. Incidents of fire have been reduced from 1890 to 1105, with the number of Primary fires reducing from 749 to 570. There has been a significant drop in secondary fires, with 506 attended compared to 1123 for the same period last year.

The number of false alarms have continued to drop with false alarm due to apparatus coming down to 636 compared to 728 for the same period the previous year, and the number of hoax calls reducing from 84 to 63. It is also noteworthy that water incidents (flooding/rescue or evacuation from water) increased compared to last years data due to the inclement weather during this period.

**Table One - Summary of Incident attended by ECFRS –  
2012/13 compared to 2011/12**

**Summary of Incident Attended by ECFRS – 2011/12 compared to 2012/13**

<b>Incident Type</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>
<b>Fires</b>	<b>1890</b>	<b>1105</b>
<b>Special Services</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>968</b>
<b>False Alarms</b>	<b>1768</b>	<b>1496</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4564</b>	<b>3569</b>
 <b><u>Fires</u></b>		
<b>Primary Fires</b>		
Dwelling	272	225
Other building	175	104
Vehicle	204	185

Other	98	56
Secondary Fires	1123	506
Chimney Fires	18	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>1890</b>	<b>1105</b>
<b><u>Special Services</u></b>		
RTC	300	298
Effecting entry/exit	110	100
Lift Release	87	85
Animal assistance incidents	65	36
Flooding	65	142
Other rescue/release of persons	50	51
Assist other agencies	38	34
Removal of objects from people	37	49
Spills and Leaks (not RTC)	35	44
Making Safe (not RTC)	28	25
No action (not false alarm)	25	13
Medical Incident - First responder	21	17
Hazardous Materials incident	14	7
Stand By	10	5
Other Transport incident	7	12
Removal of people from objects	0	12
Rescue or evacuation from water	6	22
Advice Only	3	4
Suicide/attempts	3	8
Evacuation (no fire)	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>968</b>
<b><u>False Alarms</u></b>		
False alarm due to apparatus	728	636
False alarm good intent	956	797
Malicious false alarm	84	63
<b>Total</b>	<b>1768</b>	<b>1496</b>

The table set out below highlights the number and incident types at which the Service has encountered fatalities, injuries or has effected rescues for the period 1 April 12 to 30 June 2012.

<b>April 2012 – June 2012</b>				
<b>Incident Type</b>	<b>Fatalities</b>	<b>Injuries</b>	<b>Rescues</b>	<b>Persons Involved (Total)</b>
<b>False Alarm</b>	0	0	0	0
<b>Fire</b>	3	52	4	59
<b>*Special Service</b>	14	234	253	501

\* The majority of the figures within Special Service incidents are from Road Traffic Collisions.

### **Definition of “Primary Fire”:**

This group of fires includes those occurring in buildings fit for occupation; caravans; non-derelict vehicles; outdoor storage, plant and machinery; agricultural and forestry premises and property; outdoor structures such as post-boxes, tunnels, bridges etc. If a fire would normally be defined as a secondary fire and also involves casualties, rescues or escapes; spread from one secondary fire location to another; or is attended by five or more appliances where either the firefighters, appliances or equipment were employed in fighting the fire, the definition changes to a primary fire.

### **Definition of “Secondary Fire”:**

A fire confined to single derelict buildings, single trees, refuse containers, attended by four or fewer appliances and which did not involve casualties, rescues or escapes.

### **Definition of “Emergency Special Service”:**

Incidents including RTCs, extrications, lift rescues, lock ins/outs, hazardous materials or chemicals (Hazchem), ladder/ALP rescues, water rescues and any other incident not falling into the previous categories with confirmed fatalities, casualties or rescues or first aid rendered by ECFRS personnel.

### Recent Incidents of Notable Interest

**Incident No:** 6116

**Date:** 02-04-2012

**Time:** 02:27

**Details:** House Collapsed

**Address:** Wellesley Rd, Clacton

**Attendance:** 1 x Colchester, 2 x Clacton, 1 x Frinton, 1 x Weeley, 1 x Brightlingsea, Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)

The Service attracted national and international headlines when called to a house collapse following an explosion. In addition to its normal frontline response USAR crews, including a dog handler and Kirby the Rescue Dog, were mobilised.

Unfortunately the explosion, which destroyed a house which had been divided into three flats, claimed the life of an elderly woman and forced a family of five to evacuate onto a flat roof. One man, who lived alone on the first floor of the house, was left buried in the rubble, however he escaped with only minor injuries thanks to the skills of dog team Kirby and his handler USAR Technician Graham Currie who said:

*"It took Kirby less than a minute to locate the man in the rubble and we were able to speak to him to confirm his location. We then got a specialist camera into the rubble to visually confirm where the man was and ascertain the condition he was in and his position in the rubble. Then it was a matter of removing the rubble to rescue him."*

Speaking from the scene Incident Commander Divisional Officer Neil Holloway said:

*"This has been a complicated and difficult job but firefighters and the Urban Search and Rescue team have done an excellent job. When crews arrived they were faced with a house which had almost totally collapsed. Four people had been led to safety and a woman was quickly rescued*



*from the rear of the building. The Urban Search and Rescue Team quickly located a man trapped in the rubble and were able to safely rescue him."*



**Incident No:** 13044  
**Date:** 15-07-2012  
**Time:** 19:01  
**Details:** Fire in school building  
**Address:** Felsted School, Felsted, Dunmow  
**Attendance:** 2 x Great Dunmow, 1 x Braintree, 1 x Thaxted, 3 x Chelmsford, 1 x Coggeshall, 2 x Halstead, 1 x Witham

Crews arrived to face an already well established blaze affecting the roof void and upper storey of a boarding house at Felsted

School in Dunmow. The first appliance Officer-in-charge requested eight pumps en-route to the incident such was the extent of the fire. The incident was made more problematic by poor water supplies predominantly caused by a collapsed water main.

The 25 foreign students who had been staying in a different part the building were all safely evacuated by staff at the school before the Service's arrival.

Speaking from the scene Divisional Officer Ray Skinner said: *"We have been hampered throughout this incident by a poor water supply; we are using the high volume pump to get water from a lake around half a mile away. Crews will be here throughout the night working to contain the fire and this will supply the many gallons of water they will need. Firefighters have been working extremely hard in difficult conditions. On arrival crews were faced with a large and well established fire which has spread inside the building which is now completely alight."*

Firefighters had the fire under control by 23:41, but crews remained on scene until around 23:30hrs the following night turning over and damping down.

The Service is soon to introduce two Water Bowsers into its frontline response to help with operational situations such as this; one will be located at Halsted and the second one at Chelmsford

### Olympics July 2012

The costs of the resources used to plan and deliver appropriate responses for the Olympics by ECFRS were met within existing budget reallocation. Assistant Divisional Officer Benson-Ryal was seconded on a full-time basis to the project for 18 months, and Senior Divisional Officer Hill for the last 8 months as part of his special projects role. Work successfully delivered included:

- Liaison, consultation and negotiation with stakeholders (internal and external)
- Risk Assessments (Venues, processes, policy, equipment, shared working etc.)
- Command Structure (ECFRS command, integrated command, shared responsibilities, reporting and influence)
- Inter-agency memorandums of understanding
- Operational plans for all types of events (Fire / Road Traffic Collision / Chemical, Biological, Radiation and Nuclear / Terrorist type etc.)

- Collaborative planning and compromise agreements (partner agencies, blue light services, suppliers etc.)
- Input into plans from all involved organisations / authorities / sponsors etc.
- Input by all functions of the Service

The outcomes of this work were realised throughout the Olympic period, with particular planning and resources required for:

- The Olympic Torch Relay
- Lee Valley (White Water Olympic Venue)
- Hadleigh Farm (Mountain Bike Venue)
- Olympic Road Network
- Olympic Park and Ride
  - North Weald
  - New Holland (Basildon)
  - Barleylands
  - Lakeside
- Olympic Transport Network
  - Rail (Hadleigh, Leigh, Pitsea)
  - Air (Stansted, Southend)
  - Road (M11 Logistics centre, A13, M25, A127)
  - Sea (Harwich, Tilbury Docks)
  - 'Last Mile' (Surrounding Olympic Venues)
- Sparks will fly promotional events
  - Chelmsford
  - Southend
- Parallel promotional events
  - Approximately 15 events that required active involvement in the planning and delivery and many others that only required input for the planning and general advice.

This project has led ECFRS to work with an unprecedented number and variety of organisations towards the achievement of a shared goal with immovable timelines. The collaborative working and partnership arrangements continued throughout the delivery of the events and worked extremely well without exception. The planning, delivery and reporting of our part in these Olympics is recognised as excellent by the London Olympic Organising Committee and all others ECFRS have had contact with in the governance of the games.

The closure of the project will be completed with the following actions will be completed over the next month:

- De-briefs
  - a. Operational Plans at Hadleigh Farm (booked 5 September)
  - b. Operational Plans at Lee Valley (led by Hertfordshire FRS (Date TBA)
  - c. Olympic Planning and Organising Group (OPOG) (Sub-Group of ERF) (Date TBA)
  - d. National Olympic Coordinating Group (Date TBA)



- Project Closure Report to be produced to include lessons learnt during the preparation for the Olympics and how the work delivered can impact on future delivery.
- The sub group of the Resilience Forum (Olympic Planning and Organising Group) to meet and to capture evidence for the creation of a continuation of the inter-agency group as a legacy of the excellent working relationships and Olympic planning delivery outcomes.

**Councillor Anthony Hedley**  
**Chairman**