

Summary of Annual Performance against Service Targets

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

This report summarises performance against the Service Targets over the last year, the learning that has come out of the last year's efforts to meet those targets and the plans for how the Service intends to meet the increasingly challenging targets going forward to 2020. It also includes national comparator graphs to assist in this work.

2 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

3 Background

In 2015, as part of its 5 year Service Plan (2015-20), the Fire Authority agreed its strategic objectives and a number of service delivery targets that, if met through the life of the plan, would amply demonstrate the attainment of those objectives. Performance against the targets is reported to the Service Management Team on a monthly basis, with a summary of that performance also being reported to the Fire Authority through this committee.

Where relevant, the five year Service Delivery targets were set based on the aim of improving performance by 25% across the five years; the only exception to this being that of the Response target, which was set to be maintained at 89%, despite the pressures the Service was experiencing from diminishing budgets.

An additional target, which endeavours to summarise the overall quality of all aspects of our service delivery work, was introduced during 2017/18. Having now had a full year of monitoring against this new target, and wishing to drive improvements in this overarching measure of performance, the Fire Authority have agreed to raise this from the current 89% target, to 89.5% for the remaining two years of the plan.

With the continuing pressures on the Service's budgets, combined with the more general increasing social and environmental pressures being experienced by all parts of the public sector, the 5 year targets are known to be very challenging. This report not only summarises how the Service performed against those targets over the last year, but also how our learning over the years since the Service Plan was published, can help us to improve the chances of delivering against the objectives set by the Fire Authority in 2015.

4 Comparative graphs

As well as graphs showing the Service's performance against its own target measures, this report also includes a series of graphs that attempt to compare that performance against other 'similar' fire and rescue services, as well as more broadly with the average performance across all English fire services.

The services indicated as 'similar' are those that have a number of characteristics similar to Shropshire. Six characteristics have been used to inform this comparison. These are:

1. Population
2. Total fires per population
3. Total staffing
4. Number of stations
5. Area covered per station
6. Area covered per appliance

Data provided by the CIPFA Benchmarking report 2016/17 was used to rank all English fire and rescue services in order, against each of these indicators, and it was then noted how often each service appeared in the same quartile as Shropshire.

The results suggest that the service 'most similar' to Shropshire is Cumbria, with 5 similar characteristics, followed by Northumberland (4) and then Oxfordshire and Leicestershire who both share 3 characteristics with Shropshire. This work also suggested that North Wales (4 characteristics) and Mid and West Wales (3) are also similar, but the Government's Fire Statistics data, used to create the graphs, only covers the England services.

These services can be said to be similar, but are not exactly the same. Therefore, with no form of statistical levelling having been conducted on the performance figures provided for each service, the comparator graphs cannot be used as a literal comparison between the services. However, they can be

used to compare the trends in performance that are occurring across these services.

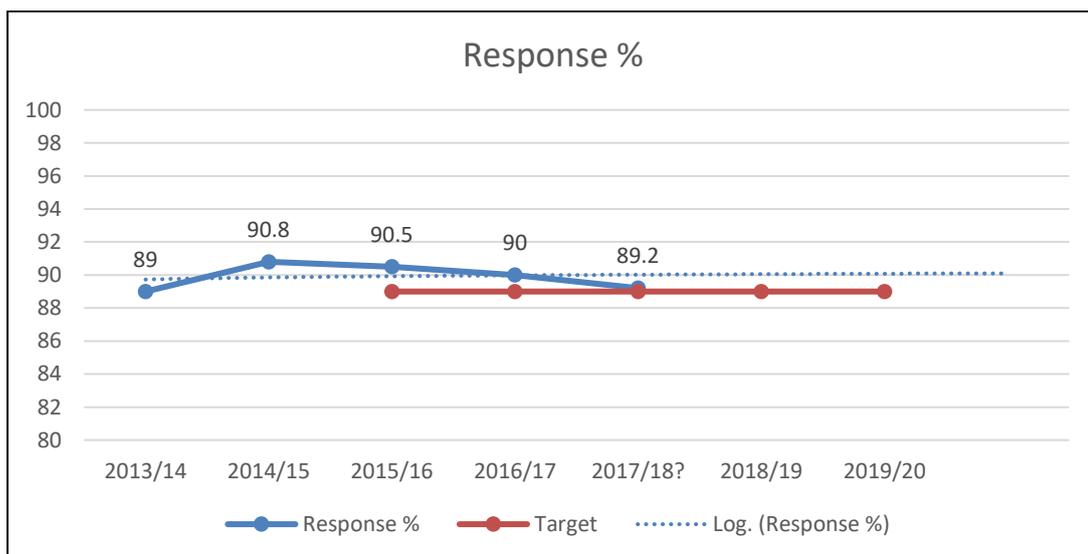
In most cases (i.e. where the measure is not a percentage figure) the figures reported for England are simply the total figures for all English services divided by 100. Again, whilst this does not support direct comparison of Shropshire’s performance against these measures, it does support a comparison of trends that are happening across the country. Where the indicator is a percentage figure, the Shropshire performance is directly comparable to the English services.

5 Response

2017/18 Target	Actual Performance 2017/18	Pass/Fail
89%	89.2%	Pass

The target of 89% was achieved in this annual period. The 1% reduction in performance over the previous two years represents around 60 incidents.

Performance throughout the year remained consistent and slightly above the 89% target. A drop in performance was experienced during December and again in March which can be attributed to the severe weather conditions experienced particularly during those months. During periods of severe weather such as these the service works with local staff and where appropriate local authorities, to ensure access and egress routes to and from stations remain open and appliances remain available for emergency response.



As shown above, performance against this target has remained fairly consistent across the previous 5 years and remains on track to meet the 2020 target.

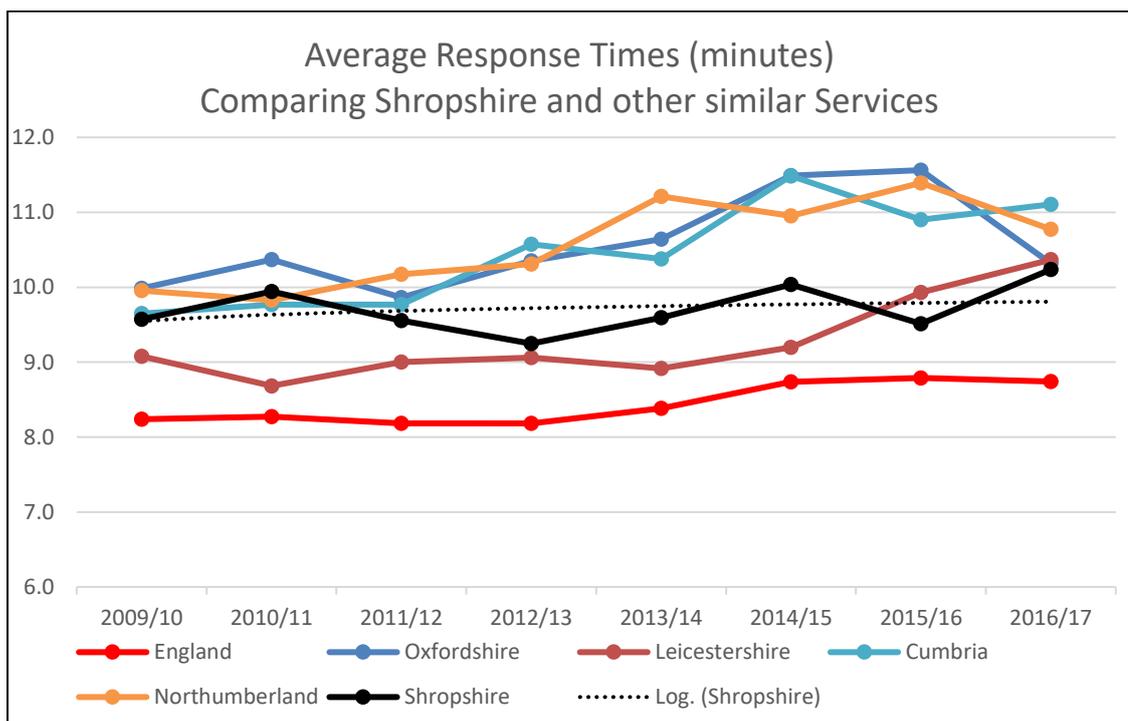
Performance in this area is made up of three elements:

- 999 Call handling times;
- Response time for travel into the station for Retained Duty System (RDS) personnel plus the time to turnout from the station for Wholetime and RDS crews;
- Travel time from the station to the incident.

Analysis of this area of the Services' work continues to identify that the vast majority of the 11% of incidents that fail this target are in rural areas where the travel distance to the incident is excessive and therefore attainment of the 15 minute target is challenging or impossible. Recognising this, the Service prioritises much of its prevention work, with vulnerable people in these more rural areas.

The Service continues to support the achievement of this target by closely monitoring call handling times within fire control and taking advantage of any technological advancements to aid this, via our current and any future Command and Control system.

In addition the Service invests a lot of time and resource into striving to attract and maintain sufficient staff living or working within 5 minutes of its RDS stations. Maintaining RDS availability of around 98%, ensures that on almost all occasions it is the nearest possible fire engine that actually responds to the incidents. In many services, where their RDS availability is much lower than this, this would not be possible. Future Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) will continue to ensure that the Service has stations sited in the most appropriate locations to meet ever changing risk and demand across the county.



In comparing the Service’s performance against those of other similar fire and rescue services, as well as the average across England (see above), it is clear that there is a general trend towards increasing response times. National data shows that this has been an ongoing trend over the last 20 years or so. National research into this matter surmises that there could be numerous possible reasons for this:

These may include changing traffic levels, health and safety policies, ‘drive to arrive’ policies and control staff typically asking more questions of the caller to better assess the risk and attendance needed. However, it is difficult to isolate the impact of any of these individual factors, and there may also be other factors, locally or nationally, which affect response times.¹

It is certainly true to say that all of these factors are potentially at play within Shropshire. It is, however, pleasing to note that the apparent increase in risk, which could be expected to result as a consequence of this trend, is not apparent in terms of the numbers of fires and resultant casualties we are seeing either in Shropshire, or across England. This is explored further in later sections of this report, where the Service’s prevention activities are discussed.

6 Accidental Primary Fires

2017/18 Target	Projected Performance 2017/18	Pass/Fail
490	499	Fail

As can be seen from the table above, the Service is predicting that it will marginally fail to achieve the target against this measure. The current total of 488 accidental fires (as of 23/3/18) comprises of;

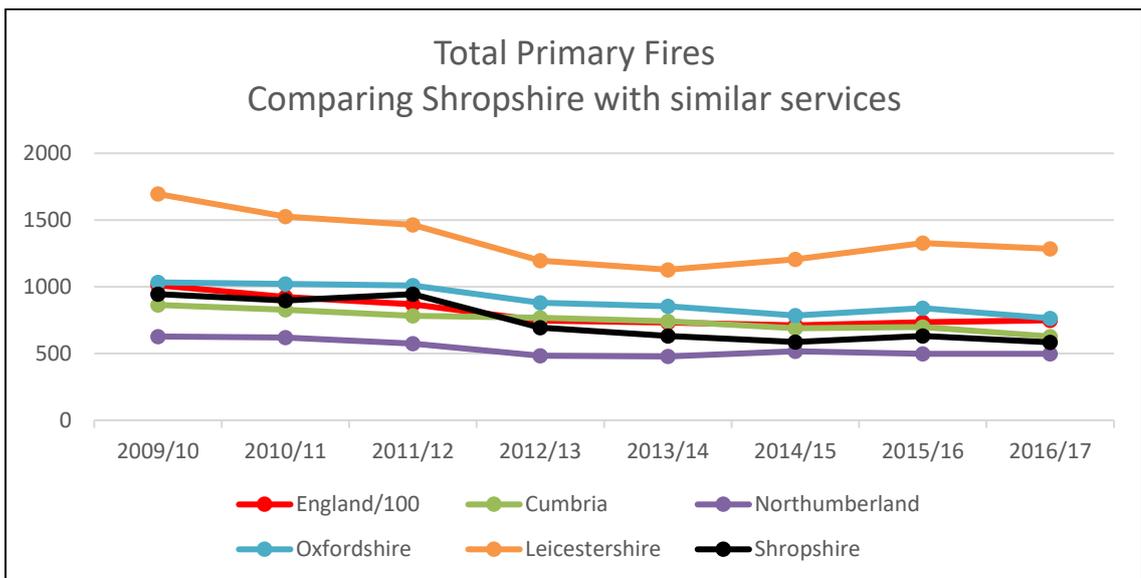
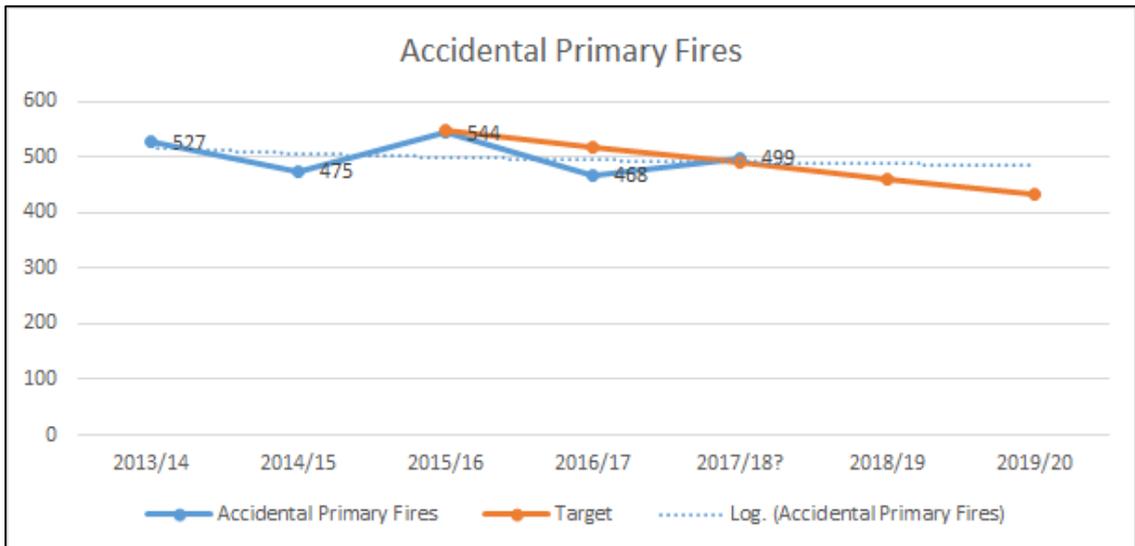
- 224 Dwelling fires;
- 125 Vehicle fires; (2016/17 total was 107)
- 15 Other residential property fires;
- 104 Commercial property fires; (2016/17 total was 102)
- 20 Other fires.

The projected rise in fires and the resulting marginal target failure is largely attributable to a 17% increase in accidental vehicle fires. This figure is influenced by the quality of fire investigation work and in recent history has “yo-yoed” up and down. The number of vehicles and the quality of vehicles on the road, are influencing factors in this rise. The financial and social impact of less maintenance and less upgrading of vehicles will also inevitably lead to more fires.

¹

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/675939/respo-nse-times-fires-england-1617-hosb0318.pdf

The increase in accidental dwelling fires will be addressed later in this report. The other types of 'primary fires' remain relatively static with no significant trends or changes.



As can be seen from the graph above, Shropshire's performance over the last 5 years mirrors our benchmark FRS colleagues and is marginally favourable to the English FRS performance trend.

Currently at the end of the third year of the 5-year plan, we are projecting a slight rise in the number of primary fires in the county. This trend appears to be in line with our comparable FRS colleagues, who have also experienced fluctuations in fire incidents since 2014/15. During this period, it would appear that the major reductions in fire incidents, witnessed across most of the country over the last 10 years or so, has now started to plateau out and fire services are starting to see small increases.

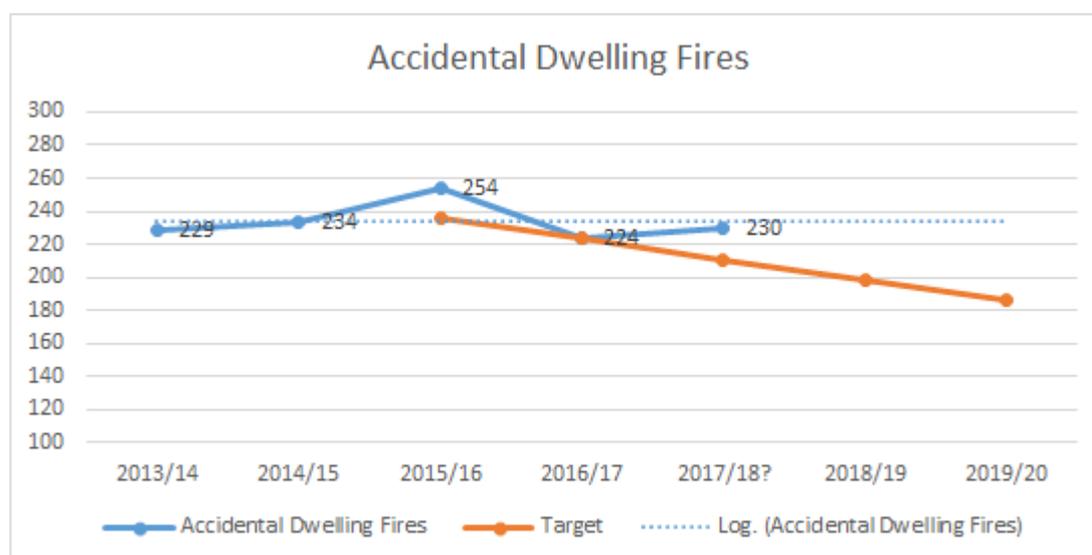
The next 2-year targets will therefore be very challenging. The new Accidental Dwelling Fire Prevention Strategy explains how the Service intends to achieve meet this challenge over that period, with the main focus being on exploiting collaboration with partners more effectively. However, the Service is also mindful that increasing financial constraints on those partners will undoubtedly influence their ability to support this work.

7 Accidental Dwelling Fires

2017/18 Target	Projected Performance 2017/18	Pass/Fail
211	230	Fail

This target is seen as a key one for driving innovation in prevention activity and as such was set knowing it would be extremely stretching and hard to meet.

The Service is predicting that it will fail to meet the challenging target set for the last 12 months. Whilst it has been able to stabilise the number of Accident Dwelling Fires (ADF) in Telford & Wrekin and reduced them in Shrewsbury, the numbers have increased in the south and west, more rural areas, of the county.



As shown above, the targets set within the 5 Year Service Plan were successfully met in 2016/17, but will be increasingly difficult to achieve in the last two years of the plan. It should also be noted that when the 5-year targets were set, SFRS could not predict the continuing impact that austerity might have on the social/care landscape. This continues to evolve and is only expected to bring even greater challenge to the meeting of the remaining 2-year target.

This last year has therefore seen the Service undertake a complete review of its current prevention strategies, resulting in the development of a new ADF Strategy 2018-20. From analysis of these fires, the key vulnerabilities continue to be linked to people living alone, especially the more elderly population. This is now a major consideration when assessing new data sets and future targeting.

The Prevention Team is now aligned to the district areas that manage the fire stations. This provides direct support to stations and consistent lines of communications, especially in relation to prevention campaigns across the county. The development of locality working has also enabled closer partnership intervention at grass roots level, which supports the work needed to tackle any in-year trends that may be identified.

It is anticipated this realignment of structures will go even further in 2018 to create stronger and clearer links with local authority boundaries. This will make it easier to link joint ambitions and share resources locally.

The introduction of the 'Safe and Well' visits is an excellent example of the improvements in partnership working over the last 12 months, with the safety remit now moving out beyond fire. This process has allowed SFRS to focus much more on a person's specific needs, rather than simply on ensuring smoke alarm ownership is increasing. The new process has resulted in a direct referral pathway between all of the partner organisations involved, thereby ensuring that the Service is notified where partners have fire safety concerns about one of their clients.

In order to target the younger population, SFRS has a structured education programme in place that is delivered across the county. The specialist I-Learn team and programme is designed to support early intervention and educate both the child and family/support worker in cases where there is a concern around fire-setting.

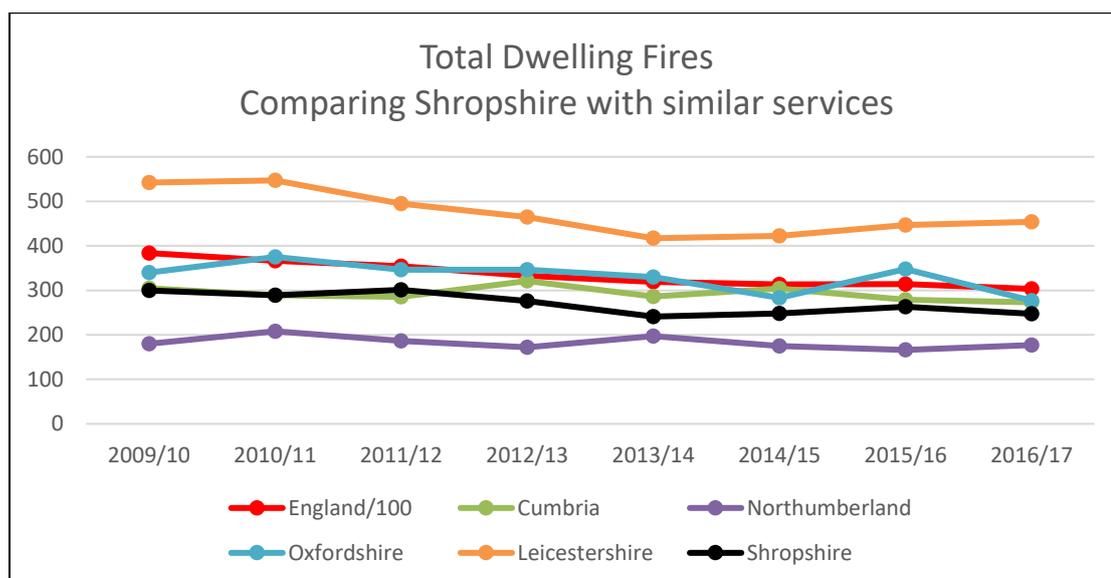
As stated above, the Service has experienced a rise in ADF across the south and west rural parts of Shropshire. The new ADF Strategy has identified 12 key high-risk areas. The ADF numbers have dropped in Shrewsbury but have remained relatively static in Telford and Wrekin. Statistical analysis has shown that living alone is a common factor in ADF across the whole county. Demographics shows that in the Shropshire Council unitary area the trend is towards elderly persons living alone, whilst in the Telford and Wrekin Council area the prevalence of fires is more significant amongst families.

Having specific data sets that can identify and target this risk is certainly the way forward. However, an abundance of poor data can, and usually does, result in inefficient use of limited resources – e.g. a failure to obtain a contact number for at risk persons can hugely reduce the Service's capacity to deliver 'Safe and Well' visits successfully. The changes to the data protection regulations (GDPR) is also likely to provide further challenges in obtaining effective data, but there is a willingness by all partners to work through these issues.

The last 12 months has seen some excellent improvements in data sharing with the two unitary authorities. In partnership with Telford & Wrekin, we have established 2 data streams; one from Adult Social Care and one from Benefits. We have also developed an agreement with Shropshire Council to share their Strengthening Families data, which will be rolled out over the coming 12 months. Telford have also agreed to start to share this data.

The social impact of increasing demand for care in the community that supports independent living, links to the increasingly aging profile of the Shropshire Council area. The increases we have seen in west and south Shropshire is consistent with this aging rural population and will increase demand on care support resources into the future; resources that are already in great demand.

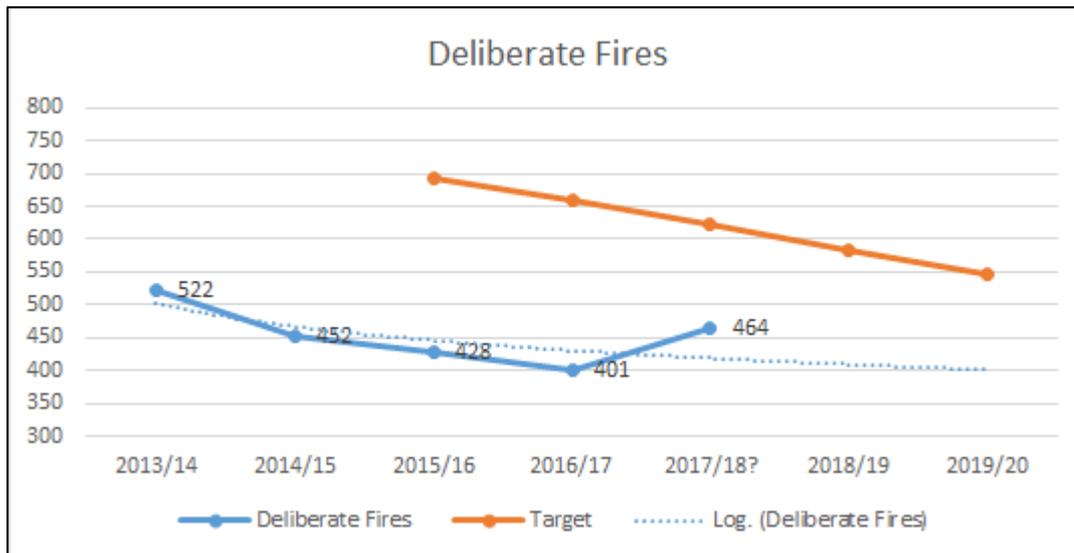
The identification of those at highest risk, through working with partners to access and share data, has also helped the Service to review and modify its Accidental Dwelling Fire Prevention Strategy, which aims to ensure the Service plans its risk intervention work in a way that maximises the use of its finite resources.



Note that the graph above includes both accidental and deliberate dwelling fires and therefore the numbers shown do not directly correlate to this specific target measure. However, the graph does serve to demonstrate that the trend being seen in Shropshire, for the dwelling fires to now be plateauing rather than continuing the reductions we have seen over the last 10 years, is also being seen in other similar fire services, as well as more generally across England.

8 Deliberate Fires

2017/18 Target	Projected Performance 2017/18	Pass/Fail
622	464	Pass



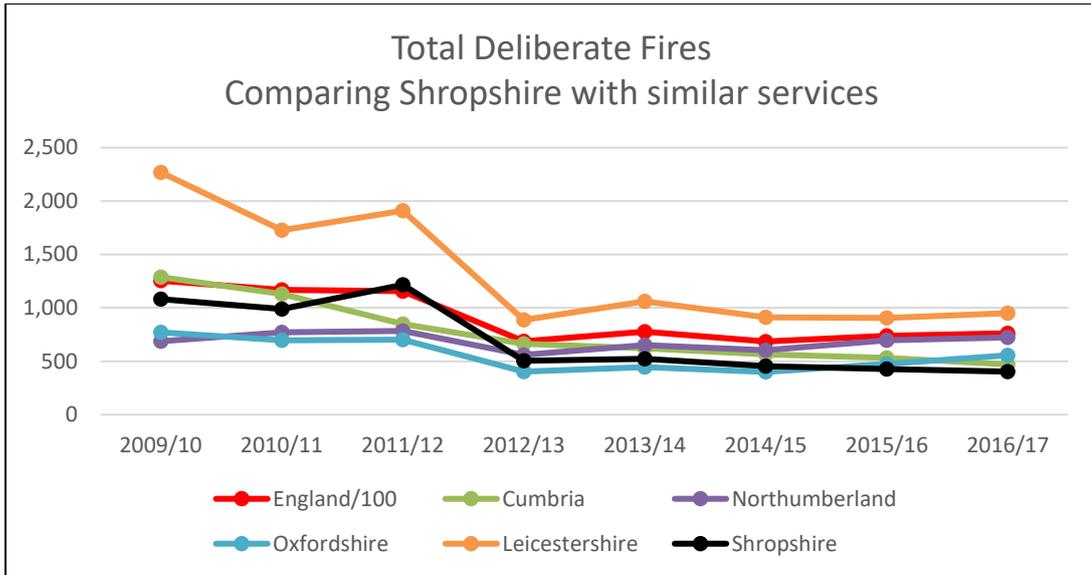
As shown in the table and graph above, SFRS has successfully achieved the targets set for the first three years of the 5 year plan. The Fire Crime Officer role was created prior to this 5-year period, however the professional trust fostered with Police and other partners has been key to the consistent success in arson reduction. Early intervention with partners has enabled SFRS to identify and proactively stop arson, including re-offending.

I-Learn has also been developed to cover 'Looked after Children' and support Children's Services. After dealing with several 'Looked after Children's' cases, we are currently reviewing our schools' education programme to assess the viability of including specialist schools, that support Children placed in care, in the future schools programme. SFRS are currently developing a bespoke package to deliver to 'Looked after Children' referrals. Our improvements in this particular area will further help the Service to play its part in helping to reduce many forms of anti-social behaviour, as well as arson.

SFRS has multiple established working partnerships that are proactive in risk reduction. Examples of new initiatives that have been developed during 2017/18 include;

- A serious crime forum primarily targeting drug distribution, SOCJAG, (Serious Organised Crime Joint Action Group).
- MATES (Multi-Agency Targeted Enforcement Strategy) partnership, targeting people trafficking and child sexual exploitation.

Increasing domestic violence awareness has also resulted in SFRS carrying out greater numbers of risk visits and providing more safety devices to these very vulnerable people. This proactive approach has ensured that the individual and their family have early warning and a basic defence against attack. SFRS plans to continue and further develop this work through working with the Safeguarding Board's Domestic Abuse Forums. The Safe and Well visits also provide a framework for signposting such risk.



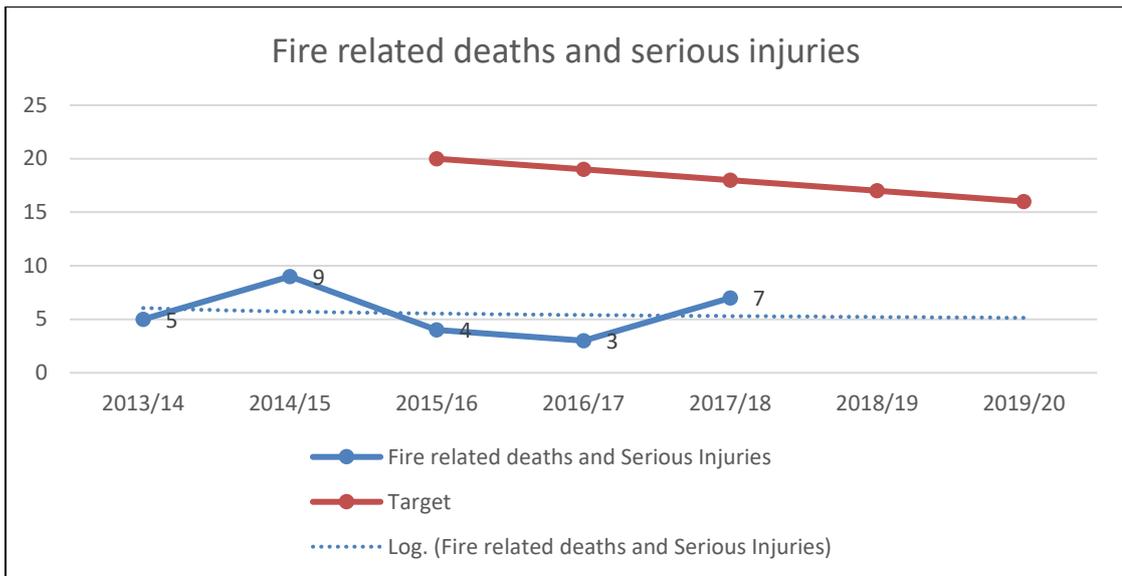
As shown above, the 5-year trend for SFRS compares favourably with other comparable FRS who, unlike Shropshire, all experienced small rises in arson in 2016/17; something Shropshire also saw a year later in 2017/18. SFRS will therefore continue to work with established partners to reduce risk and meet the remaining 2-year targets.

9 Fire related deaths and serious injuries

2017/18 Target	Actual Performance 2017/18	Pass/Fail
18	7	Pass

As demonstrated in the table above and the graph on the next page, SFRS have successfully achieved this 5-year target for the first three years. The 7 fatalities and casualties experienced over the last 12 months consisted of;

- 2 Accidental Dwelling Fire fatalities - (a detached house and a static caravan fire)
- 1 fire fatality following a Road Traffic Collision (RTC);
- 1 Serious injury from an Accidental Dwelling Fire;
- 1 Serious fire injury from a RTC; and
- 2 Serious injuries from Commercial fires



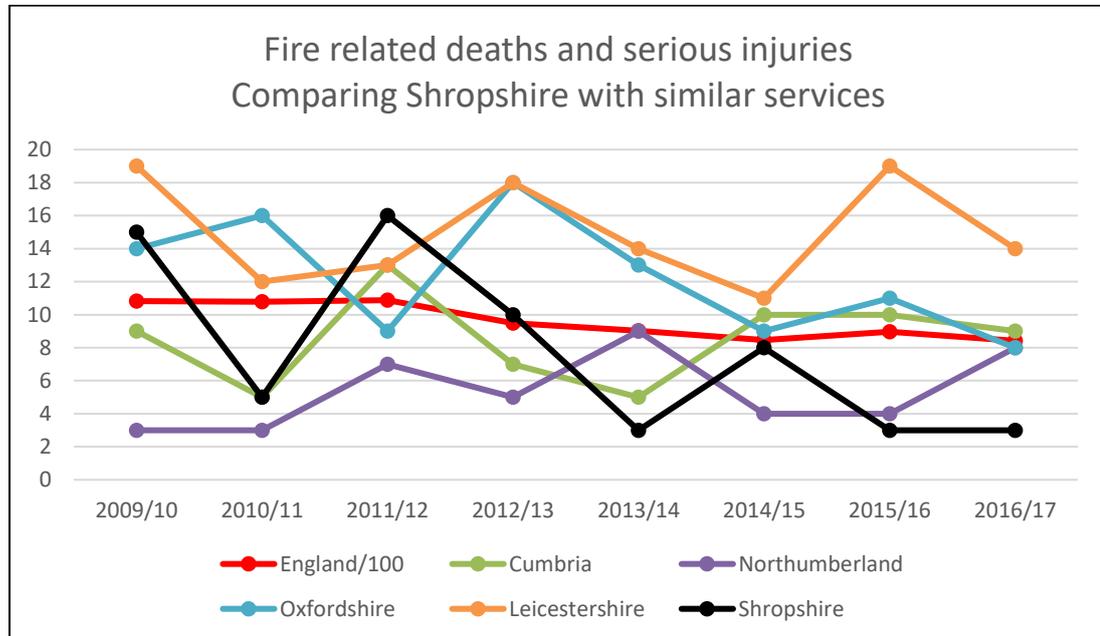
Previous years has seen a rise in self-immolation, but thankfully only one such incident occurred this year. There have been occasions across the country where cases of self-harm can lead to increased numbers of these incidents due to the occurrence of local trends (most notably in South Wales), but this has not been the case in Shropshire. The provision of mental health support in the community is a key influencer on this target. This again will be impacted by increasing independent living and more care in the community. The provision of secure treatment for those assessed as high risk will influence the risk posed by deliberate fire setting and self-harm. SFRS are part of the Mental Health Partnership Board (Suicide Prevention Action Group) and are actively seeking to build partnerships to identify and support this type of risk.

The Service adopts a graded fire prevention response to all incidents involving fires in dwellings:

- Quick strike 'Safe and Well' campaigns are carried out within 48 hours following a fire involving a fatality. This raises the profile of safety in the homes in that local area, whilst the event is current and in people's minds;
- Level 2 campaigns are carried out after all serious dwelling fires and involve knocking doors surrounding the property affected and using the opportunity to discuss safety messages;
- Level 1 campaigns involve leaflet dropping and are carried out after all dwelling fires.

With such a low target figure and, thankfully, even lower numbers of actual casualties, the accuracy of our data is a constant challenge. We have a partnership in place with the local hospital trust (SATH) to review patient status, which is further supported through liaison with the Coroner's Office to ensure we obtain accurate information about the cause of an individual's death.

The future challenge is to improve intelligence and internal communications to help identify serious injuries and confirm cause of death. All incidents of this nature are treated as significant events and a Serious Case Review is conducted looking at the circumstances surrounding that incident. This in-depth analysis helps the Service to identify any possible areas for improvement for the Service and its partners.



Looking at the five year comparison with other fire services, the numbers are all low and are therefore vulnerable to individual events that might involve multiple casualties. Whilst the graph therefore shows the large variances that can exist within individual fire services, the trend across England continues to be slightly downward.

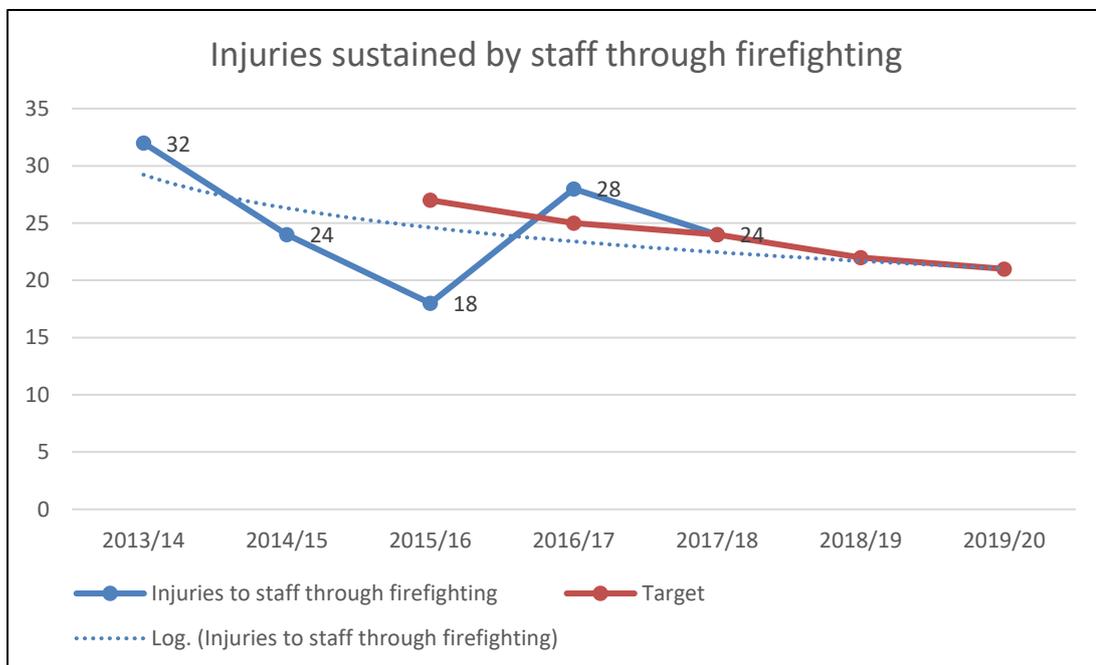
The target has been met over the last 3 years and is projected to be achieved over the remaining 2 years of the 5-year plan. However, population changes may challenge this. In particular, the projected growth in the elderly population of Shropshire increases the risk of more fire related deaths and injuries. National statistics 2016/17 show a fire fatality rate of 19.8 fatalities per million population, for the 80+ age group. This compares to just 0.5 f/mp for the 17-24 age group. Shropshire projects a 135% increase in the 80+ age group in the next 20 years, resulting in 7% of Shropshire's population projected to be over 85 by 2037.

More people living independently (some fiercely independent), with multiple conditions, often in remote rural locations, will present challenge. To assist in addressing this, SFRS are developing access to risk data through partnerships with Adult Social Care, Age UK and others.

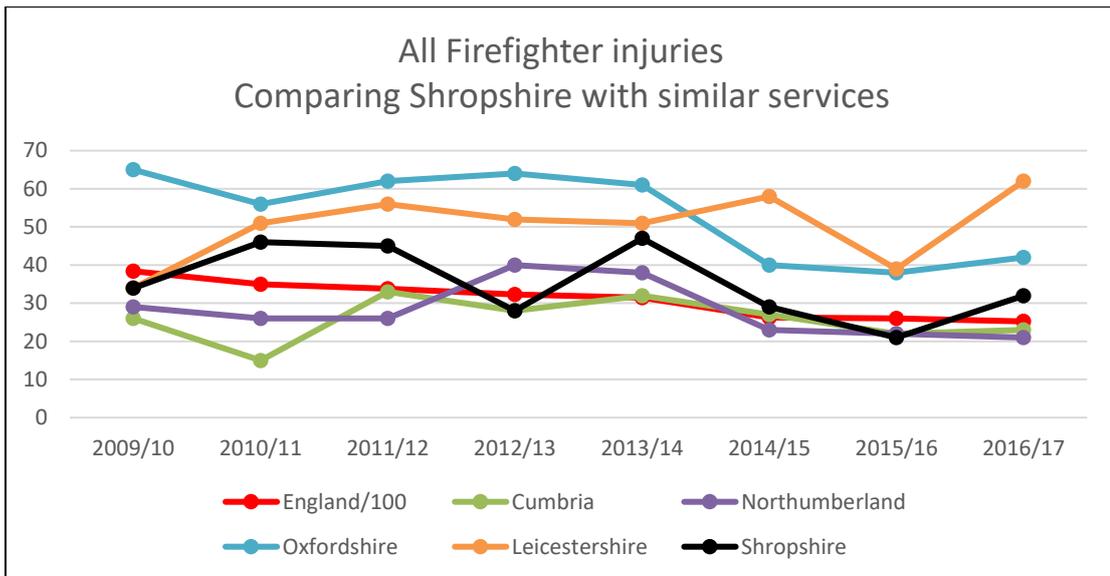
10 Injuries sustained by staff through firefighting

2017/18 Target	Actual Performance 2017/18	Pass/Fail
24	24	Pass

The Service achieved the 2017/18 target for this measure and remains on track to achieve the Service Plan targets for 2015-2020; reducing the total number of injuries sustained to staff through firefighting to 21. With such relatively low numbers of injuries occurring each year, it is easy for the Service to miss this indicator due to accidents that involve more than one person (e.g. where a fire appliance is involved in an accident). It was exactly this type of incident that impacted on the 2016/17 year's performance (as shown in the graph below).



The common trend across the accidents that do occur continues to be in relation to slips, trips and falls, either during training events or actually at an incident. This also continues to be the most common cause of accidents across all of the fire services in the West Midlands region.



As demonstrated in the graph above, the focus on safety within the fire sector results in relatively low numbers of injuries being sustained across the board. Again, whilst annual variability in such low numbers can impact on the ability to see a year on year trend, the long-term downward trend in Shropshire is similar to that being seen across England as a whole.

Achievement of the targets set for the next two years will require a further reduction in injuries of 12.5%. The Service will continue to actively encourage the reporting, monitoring and thorough investigation of all accidents and near misses. Best practice continues to be actively shared with neighbouring services through a well-established regional audit programme and network of health and safety professionals.

In addition to this local and regional sharing, learning is also shared across the fire sector as a whole, following any national incidents of significance. This is achieved through well-established National Operational Learning structures and also the Joint Operational Learning processes set up across all three emergency services. In addition, over the coming years the Service intends to fully adopt the suite of guidance produced by the National Operational Guidance Programme, which will further help to ensure that the Service is maintaining national best practice in all areas of operational response.

11 Fires Confined to the Room of Origin

2017/18 Target	Actual Performance 2017/18	Pass/Fail
89%	89.2%	Pass

The target has been achieved in this, the first year of monitoring against this measure. This measure is considered to be an excellent way of the Service getting an overall view on the quality of its services to the people of Shropshire.

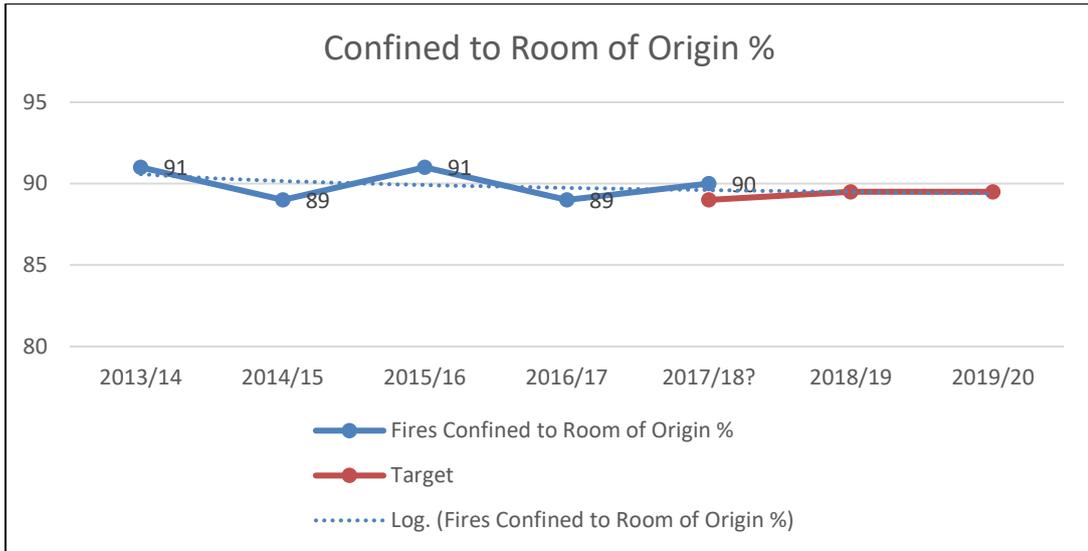
In order for success to be achieved, not only does the Service's prevention campaigns have to be effective (i.e. how to avoid having a fire in the first place, but if you do have one make sure you have a smoke alarm for early detection and close the doors behind you as you evacuate the property and await the fire service), but its response performance also needs to be effective (taking the 999 call quickly, accurately and effectively, getting the fire engines responding as quickly and safely as possible and then deal with the fire as effectively as possible. To that end, many of the issues described in the previous sections are also pertinent to this measure.

Over the last 12 months the focus has been on ensuring that the Service has the accurate and timely data available that it needs to monitor against this target. This has involved the Prevention and Protection department liaising with Area Command (the firefighters), to ensure the consistency and accuracy of the data. Further training is being developed to support this work, as will ongoing monitoring of the reports that are completed following every incident.

Fire Safety messages will need to be continually reviewed and assessed to ensure they are relevant and appropriate. Such work was undertaken on "Stay in Place" or "Stay Put" following the Grenfell Tower incident in London. As stated earlier, Serious Case Reviews are carried out into all fatal fires. This helps measure the success of community safety messages. During 2018/19, the Service will also undertake detailed reviews of all accidental dwelling fires that were not confined to the room of origin.

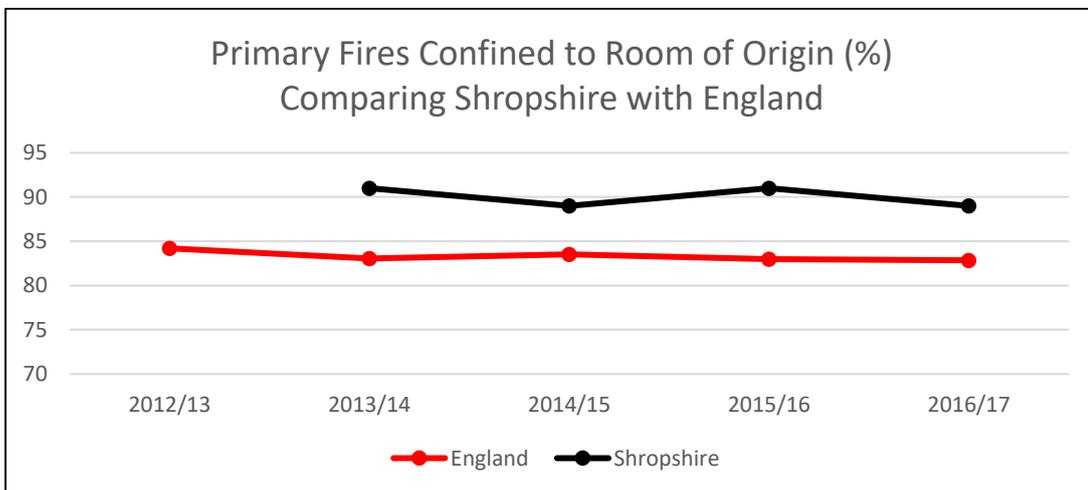
These reviews will attempt to identify what, if any, prevention work has been undertaken with the occupants of these properties, in order to inform on any improvements required to the Service's current prevention campaigns. The reviews will also seek to identify and analyse, in line with current response standards, delays in call handling, response times and travel times to incidents.

The Prevention and Protection Team will also look to break the target down into Commercial and Domestic properties, so that it can be monitored more accurately. Of particular relevance here is the number of barn fires the Service responds to and the impact these have on this particular indicator.



Having had the first year's success, the Fire Authority is keen to drive further improvement against this overarching indicator and has therefore approved the target moving up from the current 89%, to 89.5% for the next two years. This will further encourage innovation against the way that the Service manages its approach to this indicator.

The graph below demonstrates that Shropshire's current performance is already better than the average across all English fire services. The additional focus the Service is planning to put into this measure should help it to sustain this excellent performance into the future.



12 Collaboration

Information relating to how the Service has worked in collaboration with other organisations, in an effort to achieve the Service's targets, has been provided in the relevant sections of this report.

13 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

14 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

15 Initial Impact Assessment

This report contains merely statements of fact / historical data. An Initial Impact Assessment is not, therefore, required.

16 Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report. An e-EQIA is not, therefore, required.

17 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

18 Background Papers

[Service Plan 2015-20](#)