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Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
Audit and Performance Management Committee
11 April 2019

Summary of Annual Performance against Service Targets

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Rod Hammerton, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Andy Johnson, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260196.

1 Purpose of Report

This report summarises performance against the Service Targets over the last year, the learning that has come from trying to meet them and the plans for continuing to do so. The report also includes national comparator graphs for benchmarking where possible.

2 Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

3 Background

In 2015, the Fire Authority agreed its strategic objectives and a number of service delivery targets as part of a 5 year plan. Performance against the targets is reported to, and managed through, the Service Management Team on a monthly basis.

The majority of the 5-year Service Delivery targets were set based on the aim of improving performance by 25% over the period; the only exception to this being that of meeting the response standard on at least 89% of occasions. It was recognised at the time that these were stretching targets; particularly against a backdrop of diminishing budgets and social change.

In 2017/18, the Service introduced an additional measure of how often fires were contained to the room of origin. This was considered to be a way of measuring the overall quality, and level of integration, of the Service's protection, prevention and response functions. Based upon the first full year's monitoring against this new target, and wishing to drive improvements in this overarching measure of performance, the Fire Authority agreed to raise this from the original 89% target, to 89.5% for the remaining two years of the plan.

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.

The projected results rely on calculations undertaken on 18 March and are therefore only providing an indicative measure for this year, although there is a high level of confidence in their accuracy.

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 Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy 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 actual performance graphs, only cover the English services.

These services can be said to be similar, but 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 addition to these 'similar' Services, and recognising the closer working relationship between Shropshire and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, as a consequence of the new Strategic Alliance, we have also included them as a comparator Service.

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 as a whole. Where the indicator is a percentage figure, the Shropshire performance is directly comparable to the English services.

5 Response

2018/19 Target	Projected Performance 2018/19	Pass/Fail
89%	86%	Fail

For the first year since the target was set, the Service has failed to meet the 15-minute Response Standard set in its 2015-20 Service Plan. As can be seen from figures 1 and 2, this is the second year that we have seen reduced performance against the target, which also coincides with two years of increase in the total number of incidents the Service attended each year (up by 4% during 2017/18 and another 17% during the current year). These increases could be exacerbating the impact from other factors underpinning this issue, as outlined below and covered in greater detail in a presentation to members at this meeting.

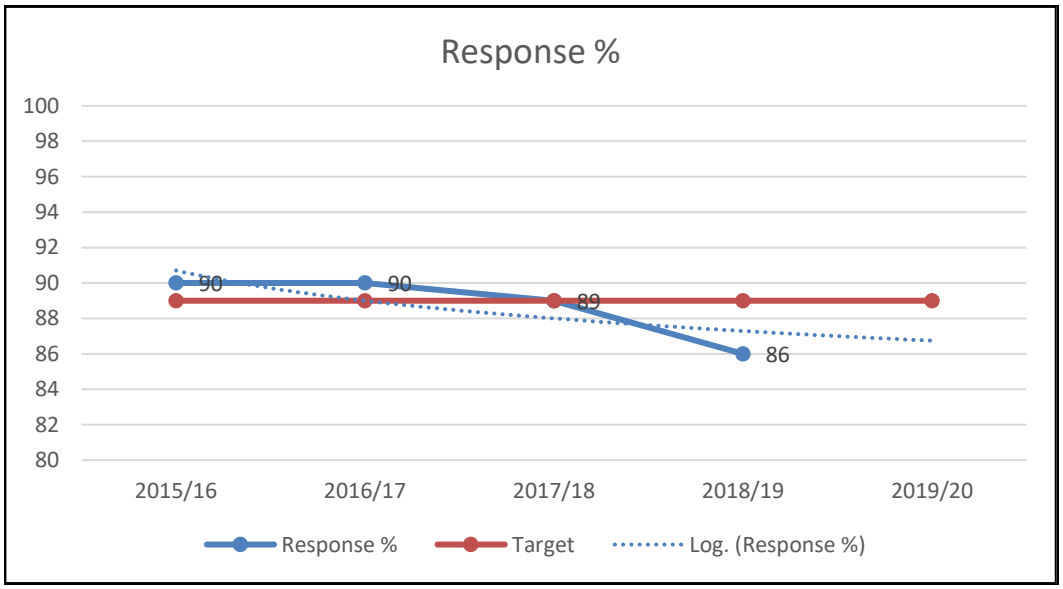

Figure 1 - Shropshire's annual performance against its 15-minute Response Standard

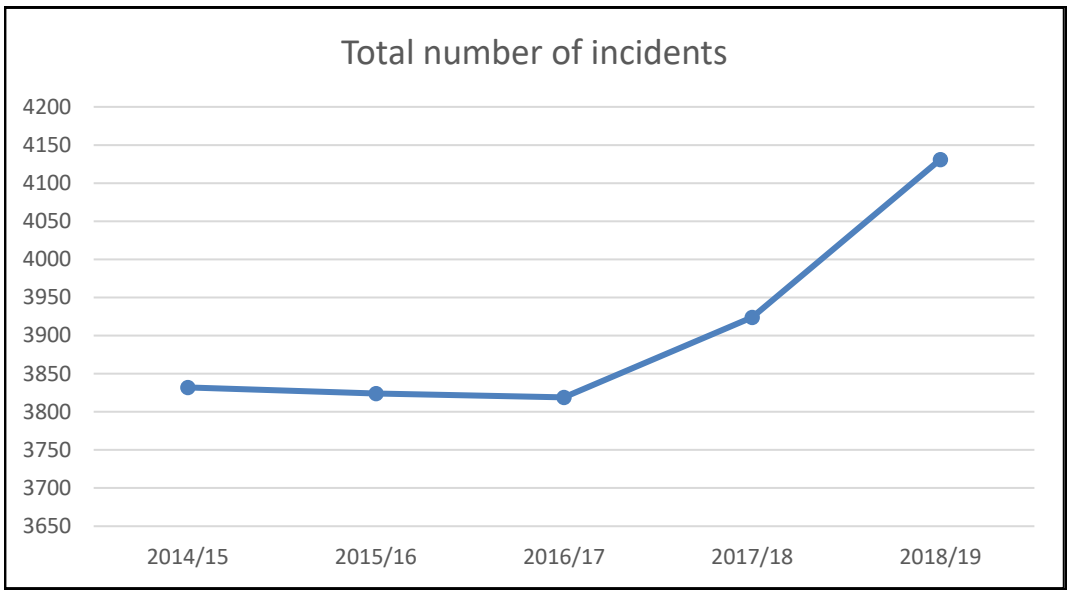

Figure 2 - Total number of incidents attended by SFRS between 2014/15 and 2018/19

Performance in this area is made up of three elements:

- 999 Call handling times;
- Response time for travel into the station for On Call personnel, plus the time to turnout from the station for Wholetime and On Call crews;
- Travel time from the station to the incident.

Analysis of those incidents where the Service has failed to meet the target, continues to show that the vast majority of the failures are in rural, and remote rural, areas. Here the actual travel distance to the incident is the determining factor and makes attainment of the 15-minute target challenging or impossible.

Figures 3 and 4 (below) compare the Service's performance against those of other similar fire and rescue services, as well as the average across England. It is clear there is a general trend towards increasing response times. National research shows that this has been an ongoing trend over the last 20 years or so.

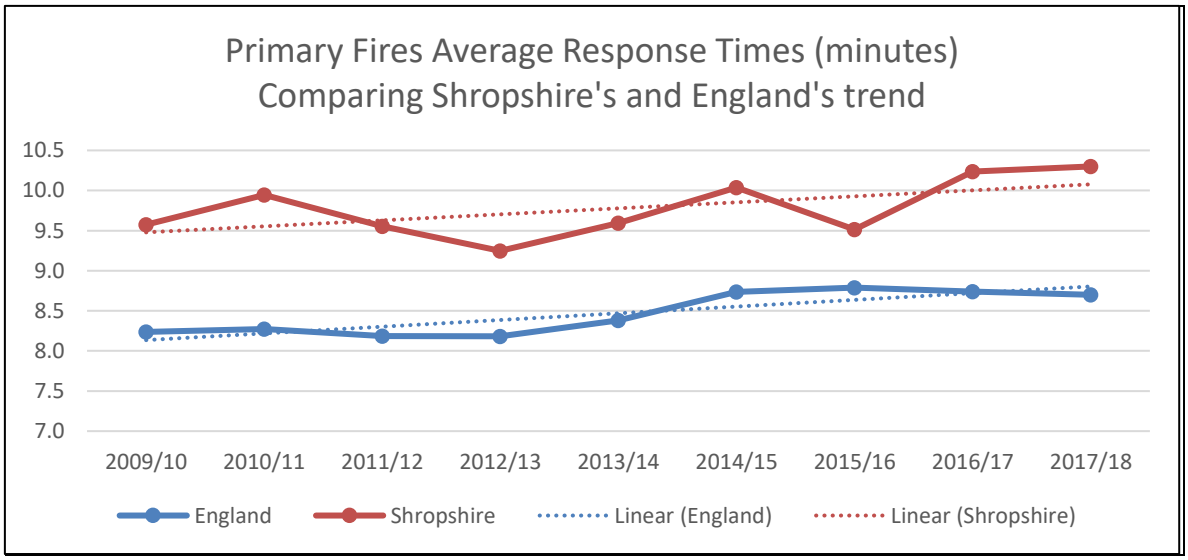

Figure 3 - Shropshire's average response time compared to England.

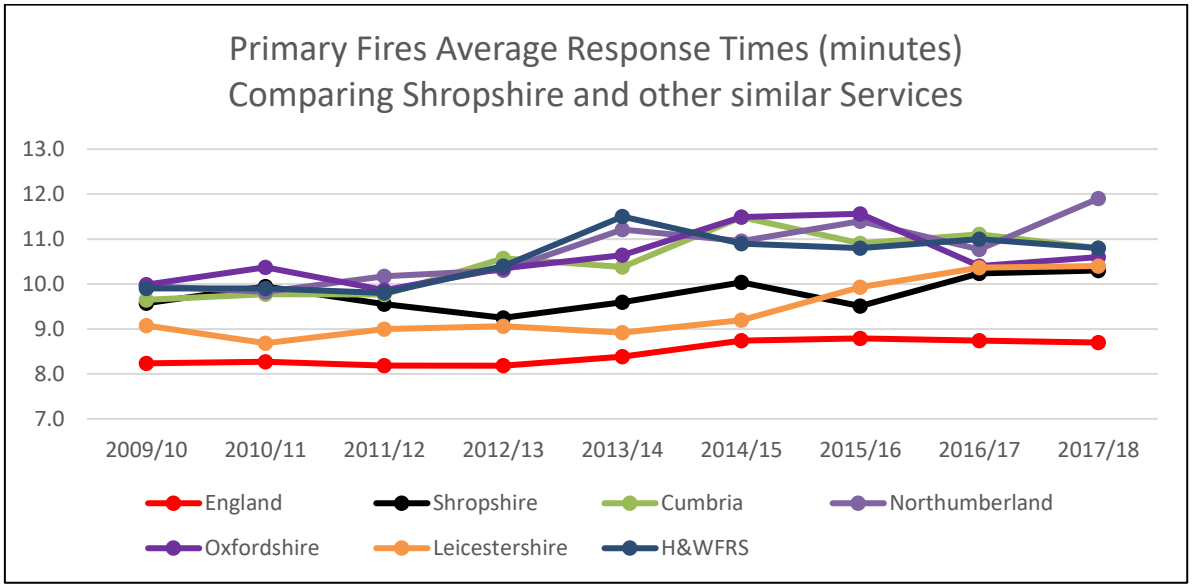

Figure 4 - Comparing Shropshire's response times to other similar Services and England

The national research have drawn the following conclusion about possible factors that have effected 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 these factors are, or have been, potentially at play within Shropshire. It is, however, pleasing to note that the apparent increase in risk, which could be expected to result because 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.

However, it is notable that these factors do not take any account of possible changes that may have occurred in 'where' the incidents are happening; instead assuming the incident profile has remained consistent. Local analysis has identified several other factors that may possibly be contributing to the change in performance over the last 12 months or more. These are summarised below.

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

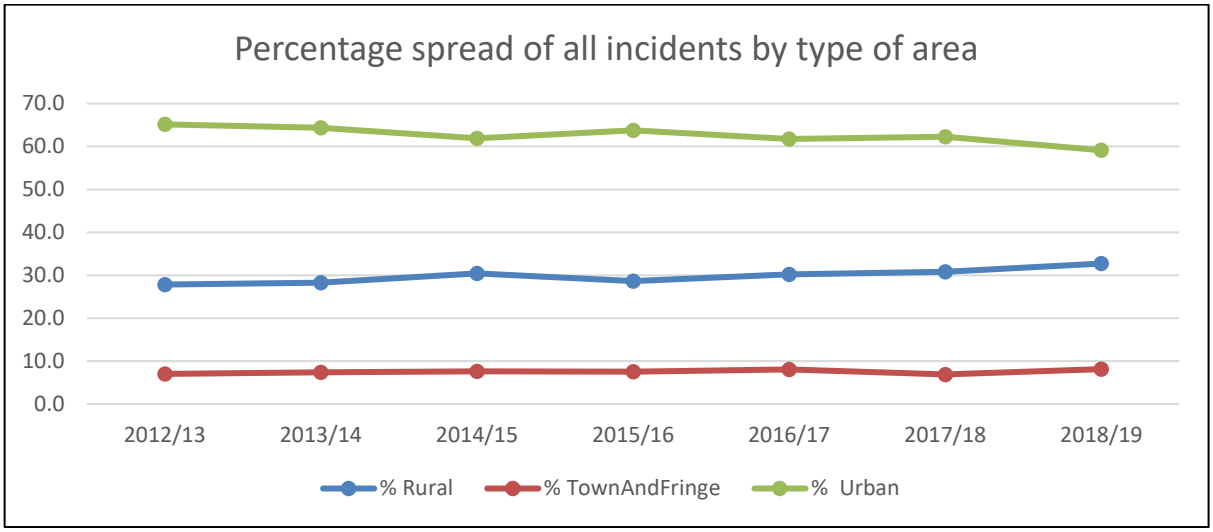

Figure 5 - Changes in the percentage of incidents occurring in different parts of the county

1. As illustrated in figure 5, the number of incidents occurring in different parts of the county has steadily changed since 2012/13; with proportionately fewer incidents in the more urban areas and more in the most rural parts of the county. The Service believes that this is a natural consequence of all the targeted prevention activity that has been undertaken by the Service, in conjunction with its partners, over the last 5-10 years, and it actually demonstrates success. The down side to this excellent work is that the 'average incident' is likely to be located further away from our fire stations, resulting in the 'average attendance time' inevitably being longer. This is believed to be the most significant factor at play in relation to the performance against this standard.

2. A lesser factor relates to the fact that ALL incident types are included in this measure and therefore the way that our fire engines respond to different types of incidents can impact on their response time. An example of this is the Service's response to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs), received from businesses and domestic properties. The Service is committed to attending all notifications of AFAs. However, our policy dictates that, in considering the most appropriate response to each incident (i.e. the appropriate weight and speed of response), account should be taken of the information received within the control room during that call for assistance. A primary response (i.e. using blue lights etc.) is appropriate if there is no information available to suggest this could be a false alarm. However, if we receive confirmation from the premises that it is a known false alarm, crews will proceed for details about the alarm, but will do so under normal road and driving conditions, resulting in slower response times. Continuing to respond for details about the alarm ensures that the Service continues to play its role in making sure that premises are managing their alarm systems effectively (thereby helping them to reduce the risk and disruption to their business that comes from repeated false alarms) but has a negative impact on the average response time.

   Unfortunately, our current method of collating data does not enable the Service to easily distinguish between the incidents that warranted a primary response and those that were for details only. AFA response is just one example of where the Service's response is varied, based on this type of risk assessed approach.

However, with AFAs accounting for approximately ¼ of all incidents, a relatively small change in the ratio of these two types of responses will inevitably have an impact on the average response time overall. Additional data development work is needed to improve the Service's current understanding of how this factor may have impacted on the Response Standard results achieved over the last few years.

3. Finally, over the last 10 years both Unitary Authorities have experienced significant population growth and corresponding housing and other building development across their entire area; not just confined to the mostly urban areas. The Service is working with the data analysis teams within both Authorities to understand what, if any, impact this is likely to have on our incident profile into the future.

All of these factors could be impacting, to a greater or lesser extent, on the Service's ability to achieve its Response Standard. As highlighted above, further analysis is needed to ascertain the impact that each is having, perhaps in combination with the general rise in the number of incidents being experienced across the country as a whole. This analysis is being undertaken as part of the ongoing Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) process and will be used to support a review of the Service's current prevention, protection and response strategies and the resources it commits to each. Any significant proposals for change, required to ensure the Service is having greatest effect against the changing risk profile, will be subject to appropriate wider consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

6 Accidental Primary Fires

2018/19 Target	Projected Performance 2018/19	Pass/Fail
462	480	Fail

As can be seen in the table above, the Service is predicting that it will marginally fail to achieve this year's target for this measure. The current total of 462 accidental fires (as of 18/3/19) consists of;

- 199 Dwelling fires;
- 111 Vehicle fires;
- 24 Other residential property fires;
- 105 Commercial property fires;
- 23 Other fires

Although the Service has ultimately missed the target by a small margin, the Service's performance since November has been very positive (see figure 6), this is despite a high number of accidental primary fires in the first half of the year as a consequence of the hot weather. As illustrated in figure 7, the Service's performance since the five-year plan was published continues to follow a downward trend, running at an annual reduction of approximately 4%, which is not too far away from the 5% year-on-year reduction target.

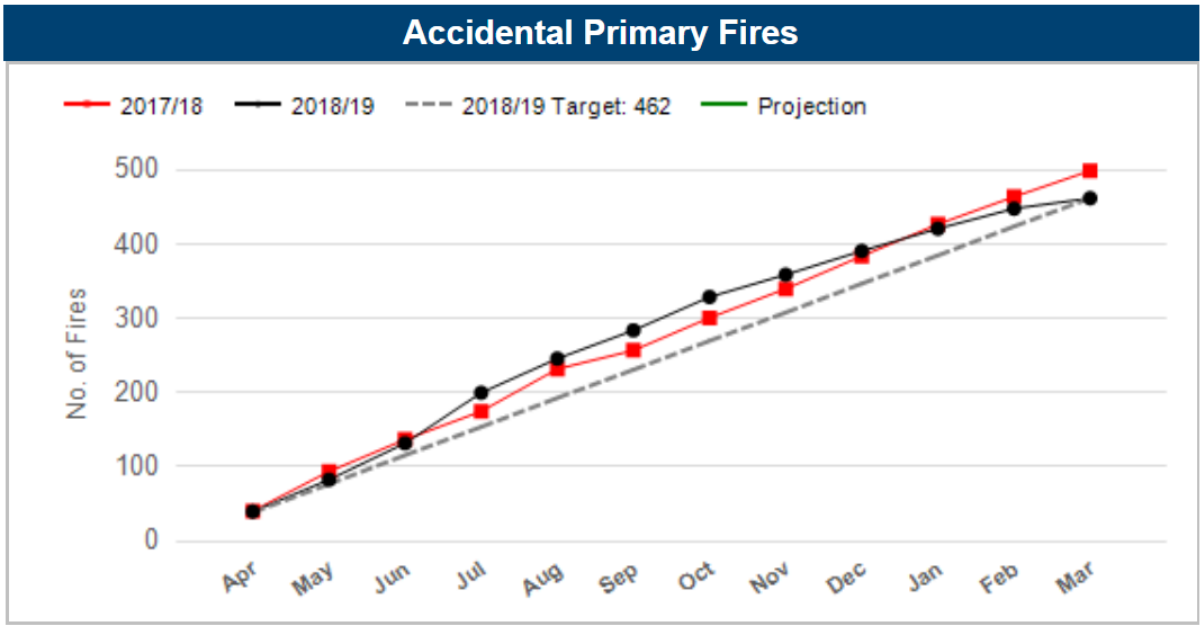

Figure 6 – Monthly performance against the annual target for Accidental Primary Fires

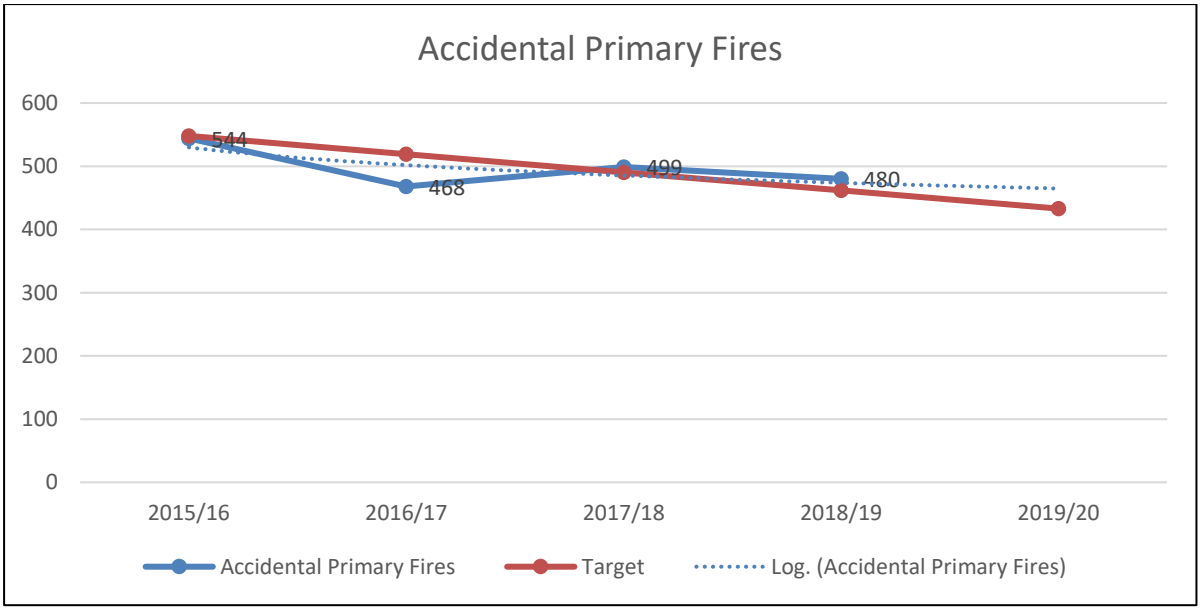

Figure 7 – Performance against the 5-year target for Accidental Primary Fires

As will be seen in the next section, the drop in the number of domestic fires has certainly contributed towards this improved performance. There has also been a significant reduction in the number of vehicle fires, where the Service has seen a 10% reduction on the 2017/18 figure (down from 127 to 114). This is despite higher than normal figures from May through to August, during the hot weather, which led to earlier harvests across much of the country. Consequently, it has very much been a year of two halves, in relation to vehicle fires, with a notable difference between the 79 fires during the first 6 months (half of which were in agricultural vehicles) and only 32 between October and March.

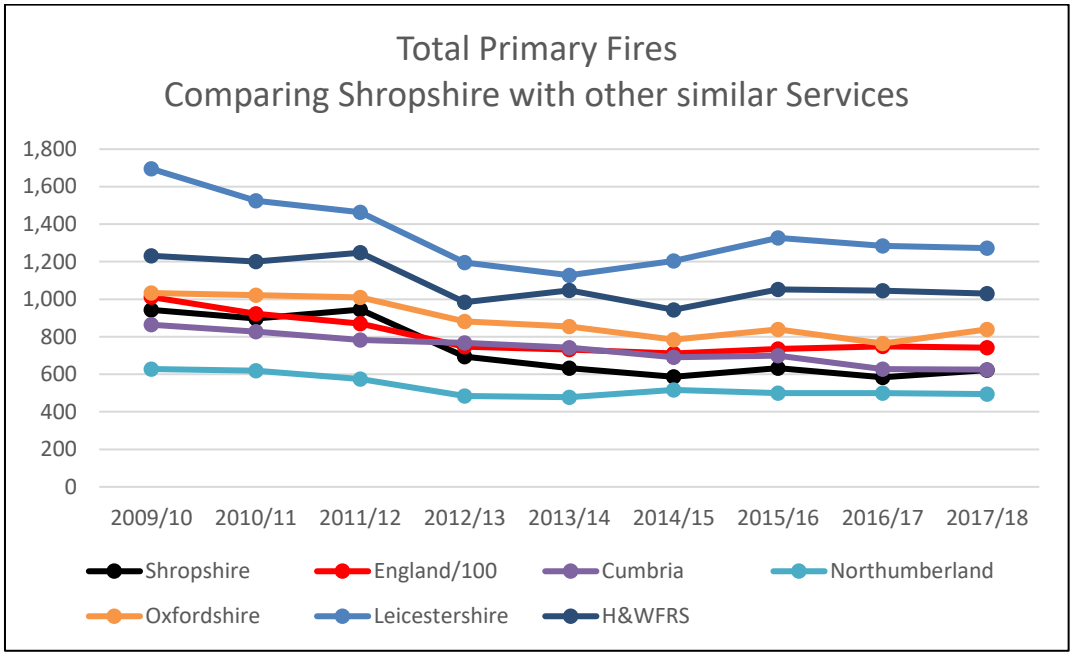

Figure 8 - Comparing the number of Primary Fires in Shropshire with other Service areas

As can be seen from the graph above, Shropshire's performance over the last 9 years mirrors our benchmark FRS colleagues, with a steady drop in fires up until 2013/14, but a levelling off since. This demonstrates the challenging target the Service has set itself over this five-year period but makes this year's reductions particularly pleasing.

Next year's target, aiming to continue the downward trend, will no doubt prove to be very challenging. In addition to the continued work we intend to do around Accident Dwelling Fires (explained in the next section), based upon the learning from this year the Service will look to focus further work on vehicle fires, including an increase in our prevention messaging, especially relating to vehicle maintenance, to Shropshire's farming community.

7 Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADF)

2018/19 Target	Projected Performance 2018/19	Pass/Fail
198	210	Fail

The Service is predicting that it will marginally fail to meet the challenging target set for the last 12 months. Having said that, this year has seen a significant improvement on the previous year and continues a general downward trend in these fires over the last 4 years. This has resulted in the lowest number of dwelling fires ever recorded in the county. The reduction from 254 fires in 2015/16, to 210 during this year, equates to a 4.3% year-on-year reduction over the last four years; not too far away from the 5% target.

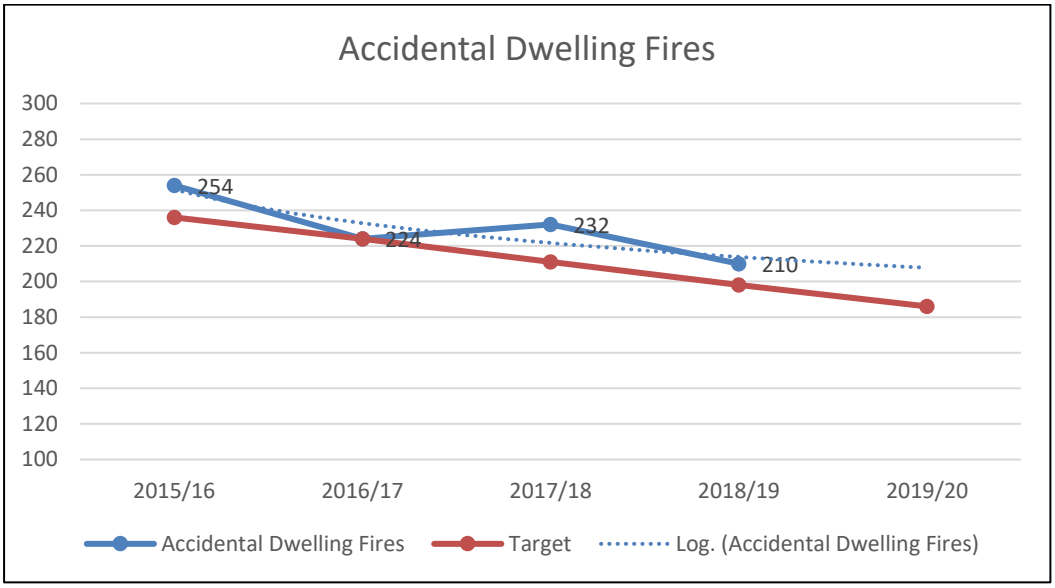

Figure 9 - Performance against the 5-year target for Accidental Dwelling Fires

In relation to where these fires are happening, in the Telford area we have seen quite significant drops across the southern and central areas, but fires have remained consistent with previous years in the Wellington area.

In Shrewsbury we have seen a slight increase on last year's figures (average of 45 per year previously and probably looking at 48 for the current year.)

Across the more rural parts of the county, whilst the number of fires in Oswestry and Ludlow are showing a slight year-on-year increase, therefore warranting the additional effort we are putting into these towns, the numbers have remained stable, or are even reducing, in other towns across the county; most notably in Whitchurch and Bridgnorth.

Our new ADF strategy, which is driving this work, was implemented during 2018, helping to ensure that the Service's limited resources are directed to the areas and people at most risk. The strategy achieves this through four steps:

1. Identify the areas of focus, based on their incident profile
2. Identify the specific risk profiles of the most vulnerable people in those individual areas
3. Use data to then locate the vulnerable people in each risk area; and finally
4. Target these vulnerable people with our ongoing prevention campaigns, including the 'Safe and Well' visits

The Service feels that this has progressed well in Telford, but there is still work to be done, especially in relation to steps 3 and 4, for the rest of the county.

Figure 10 (below) compares the trend in the number of dwelling fires in Shropshire with those in similar Services, as well as generally across England. Note that this includes both accidental and deliberate dwelling fires and therefore the numbers shown do not directly correlate to this specific indicator, however they do serve as a useful comparator. The graph serves to demonstrate that there is a general trend towards dwelling fires now plateauing, rather than continuing with the sort of reductions we have seen across the country over the last 10 years.

This demonstrates that the Service's target for the coming year, which continues the 5% year-on-year reduction, is likely to be extremely challenging, but our performance over the last four years does provide some optimism about this being achieved.

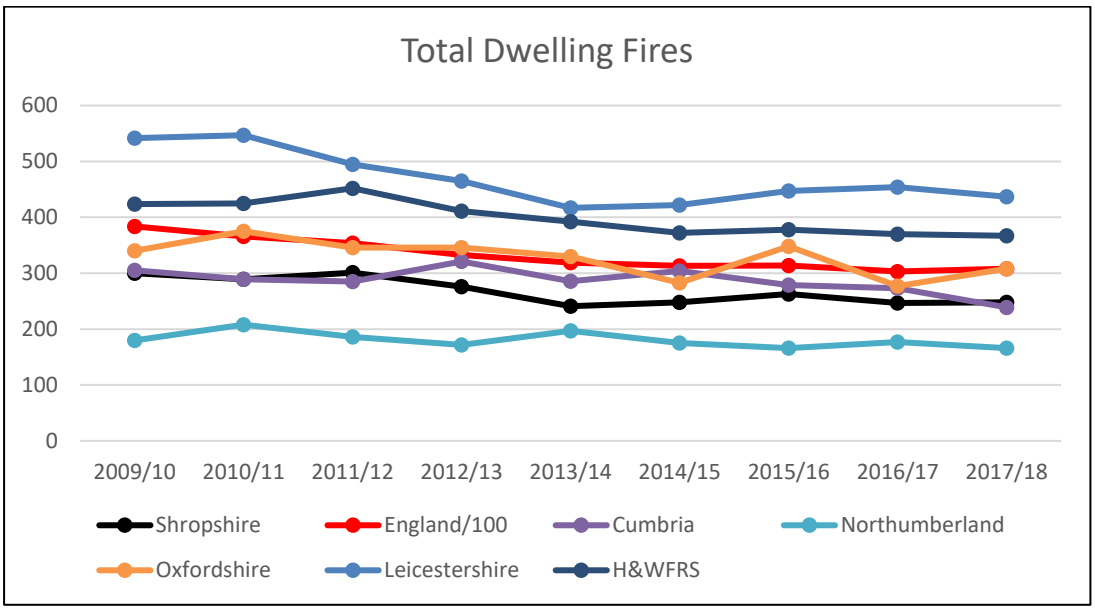

Figure 10 - Comparison between Shropshire and other Service areas in ALL Dwelling Fires - Accidental and Deliberate

8 Deliberate Fires

2018/19 Target	Projected Performance 2018/19	Pass/Fail
584	400	Pass

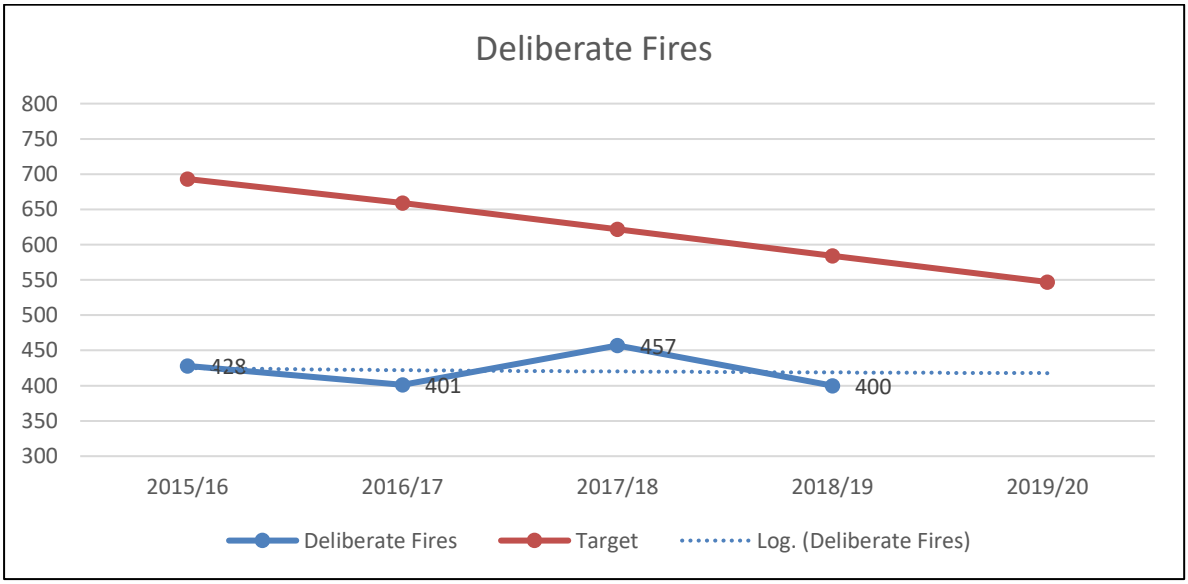

Figure 11 - Annual performance against the 5-year targets for Deliberate Fires

With a 16% drop in the number of deliberate fires in the last year, compared to 2017/18, the Service will meet this target. Whilst the Service has easily met the target for the last four years (a target based on much worse performance in the previous 5 years – see figure 12), the four-year trend is showing only a slight downward trend.

The ignition of rubbish, possibly through fly-tipping, appears to be the greatest contributor to the number of deliberate fires in the county. This predominantly occurs in both Shrewsbury and Telford, but there appears to be a significant issue with it in the Wellington and south Telford areas. The Rogue Landlord Task Force, which has recently come into force across Telford, is looking at this type of issue as part of their work, although this is very much in its infancy.

Our deliberate fires prevention programme is coordinated by the Fire Crimes Officer (FCO). The professional trust fostered between the FCO, West Mercia 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.

Our I-Learn programme has also been developed to cover 'Looked after Children' and support Children's Services. After dealing with several 'Looked after Children' cases, the Service has now modified its schools' education programme, to include specialist schools that support children placed in care. SFRS has also developed a bespoke package relating to 'Looked after Children' referrals. Our improvements in this area will further help the Service to play its part in helping to reduce many forms of anti-social behaviour, as well as arson.

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.

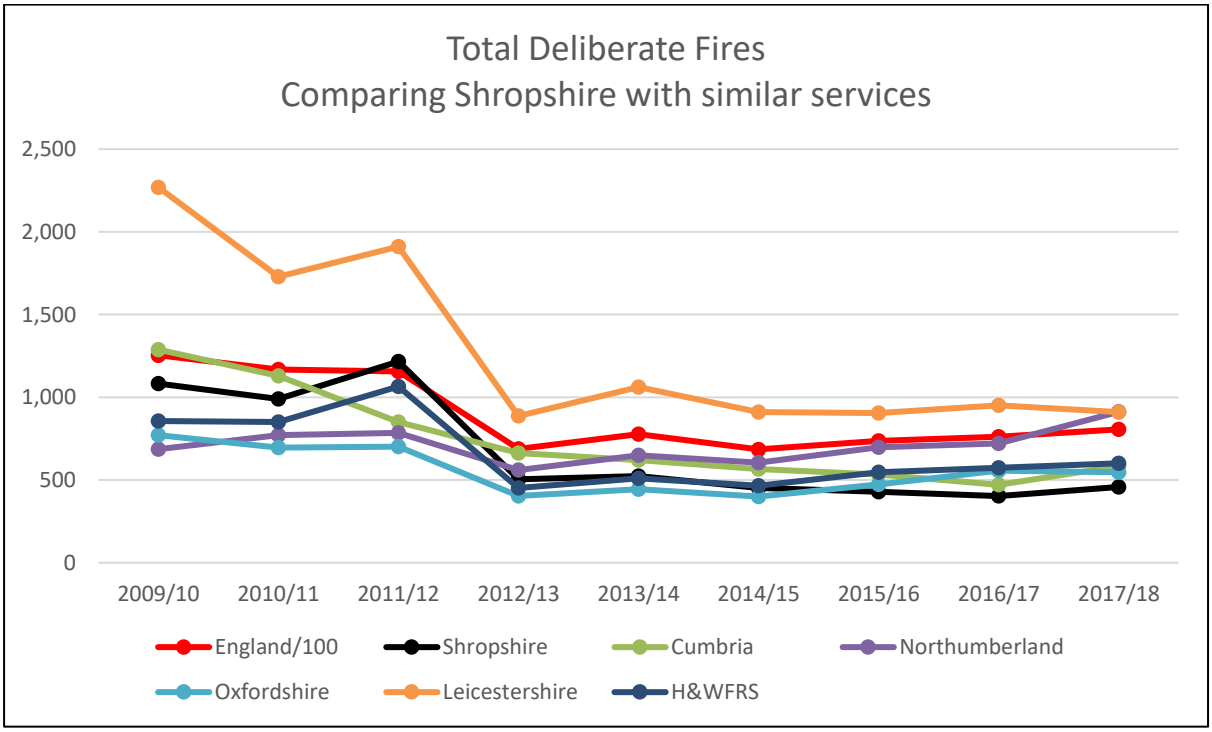

Figure 12 - Comparison between Shropshire and other Service areas in the number of Deliberate Fires

As shown in figure 12, the 9-year trend for SFRS is very similar to that being experienced across the rest of the country where, following a significant and steady drop in deliberate fires up until 2012/13, Services are now seeing a plateauing of these numbers.

9 Fire related deaths and serious injuries

2018/19 Target	Projected Performance 2018/19	Pass/Fail
17	4	Pass

As demonstrated in the table above and figure 13 below, SFRS have successfully achieved this 5-year target for the first four years. The incidents involving the 2 fatalities and 2 serious casualties, experienced over the last 12 months, were as follows;

- 2 Accidental Dwelling Fire fatalities - both involving fires in detached houses
- 2 Serious injuries in Dwelling Fires
- There have been no fatalities or serious injuries in commercial property fires.

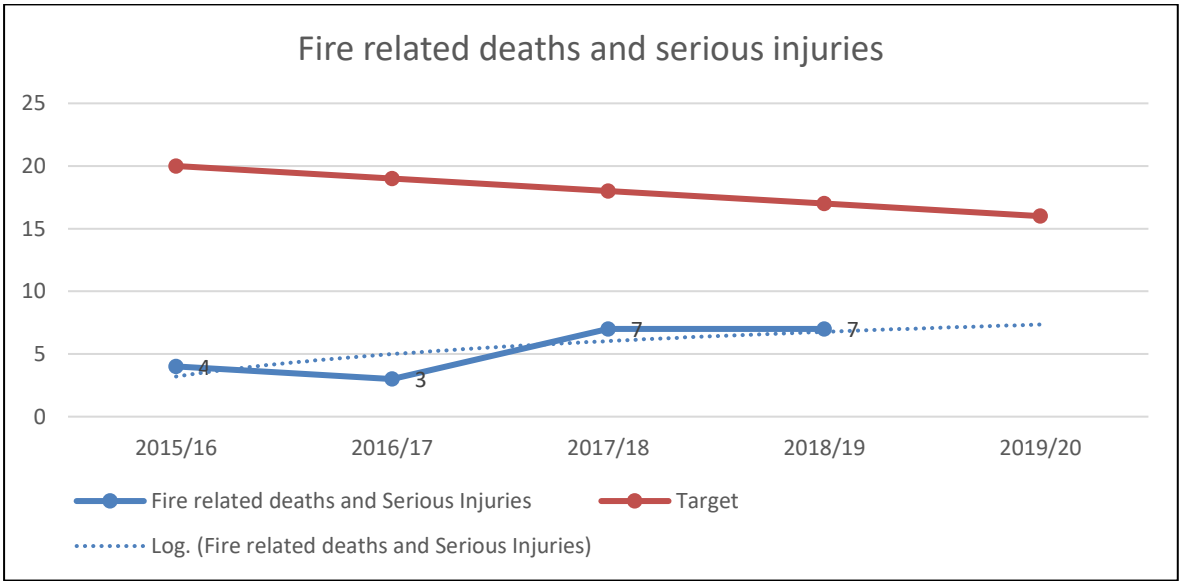

Figure 13 - Annual number of fire related deaths and serious injuries

Both fires occurred in homes where we identified the residents as being at risk, by virtue of being over-75, and had undertaken a 'Safe and Well' visit. In both cases, referrals had been made for additional support, smoke detectors had been fitted and home safety advice given.

It is disappointing that the prevention and care activities, undertaken by the Service and its partners in both of these tragic cases, did not ultimately make the difference we would all wish to see. Whilst this clearly demonstrates that the Service is targeting the right vulnerable groups, it also demonstrates that there is more work to be done to ensure that people are hearing and remembering our key messages; especially, if you do have a fire, 'Get out - Get the fire service out and Stay out'.

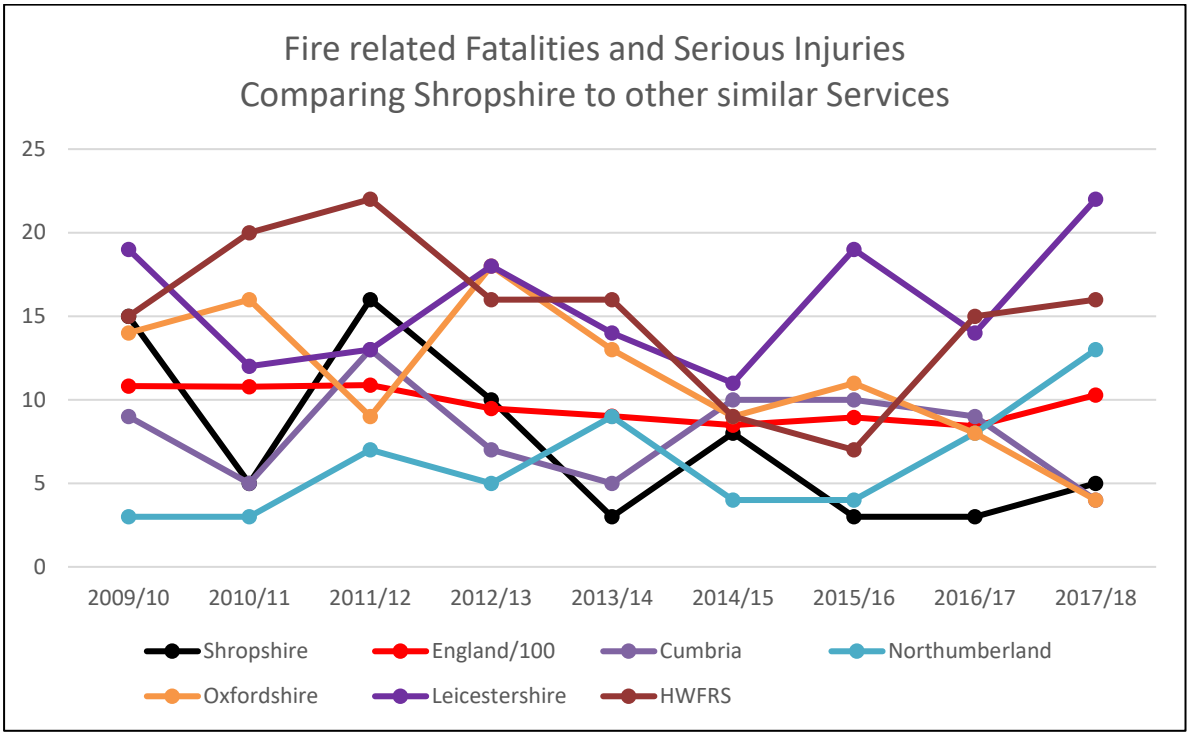

Figure 14 – Comparison between Shropshire and other Service areas in the number of Fatalities and Serious Injuries resulting from fires

Looking at the nine-year comparison with other fire services (figure 14), 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 has been tending to be slightly downward, although the 2017/18 figure was impacted by the tragic loss of 72 lives in the Grenfell fire, contributing to an upturn in that year.

Within Shropshire, the 5-year Service target has been met over the last 4 years and is projected to be achieved over the remaining year. 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. More people living independently (some fiercely independent), with multiple conditions, often in remote rural locations, will present challenges. To assist in addressing this, SFRS are constantly working with its partners to access risk data about where these vulnerable people live.

10 Injuries sustained by staff through firefighting

2018/19 Target	Projected Performance 2018/19	Pass/Fail
22	18	Pass

The Service is predicting that it will achieve the 2018/19 target for this measure and remains on track to achieve the 5-year Service Plan target; 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 (see figure 15 below.)

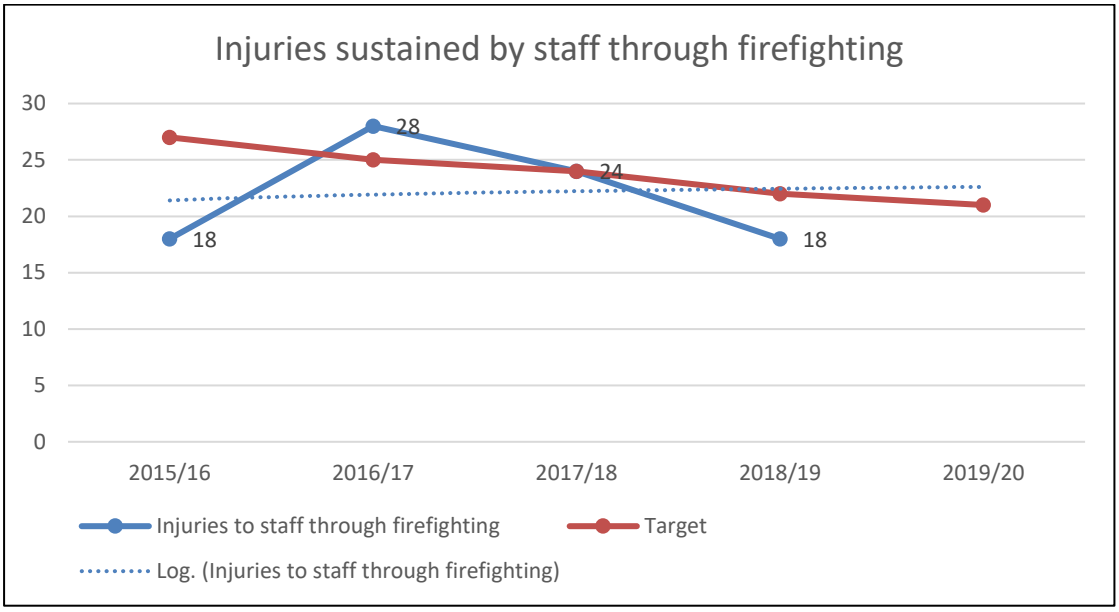

Figure 15 - Annual number of injuries sustained to staff through firefighting activities

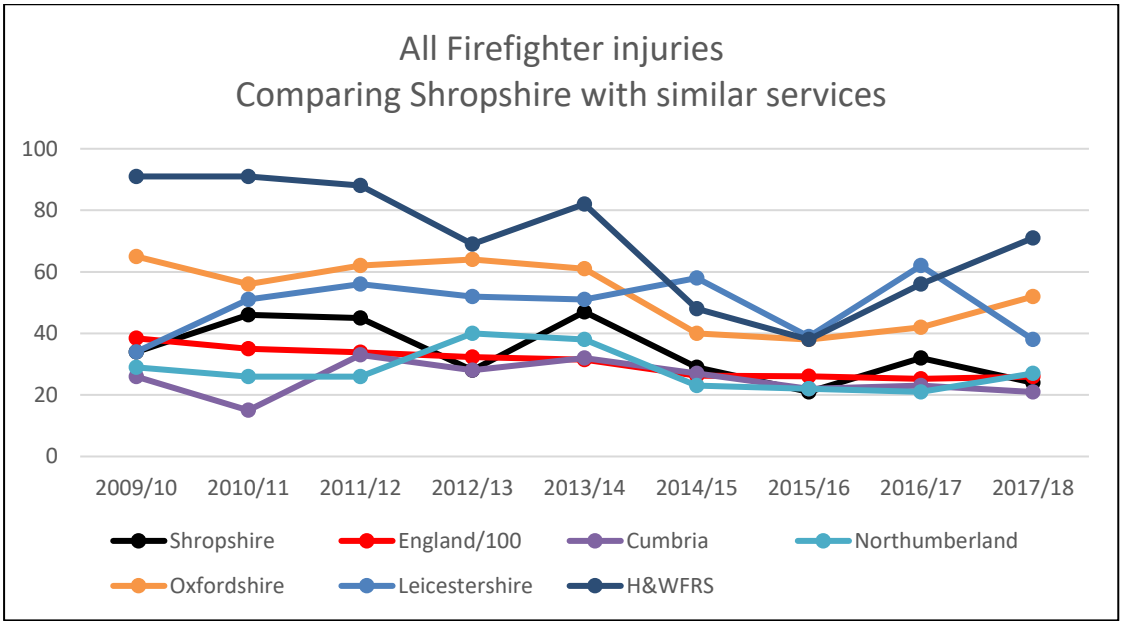

Figure 16 – Comparison between Shropshire and other Service areas in the number of Firefighter injuries

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 accident across all of the fire services in the West Midlands region.
As demonstrated in figure 16, 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 target set for the coming year will require the Service to maintain the excellent performance achieved this year. 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.

11 Fires Confined to the Room of Origin

2018/19 Target	Projected Performance 2018/19	Pass/Fail
89.5%	88.1%	Fail

The Service is predicting that it is likely to fail to meet this target, being 1.4% short of the 89.5% target set for 2018/19 (previously set at 89 %.)

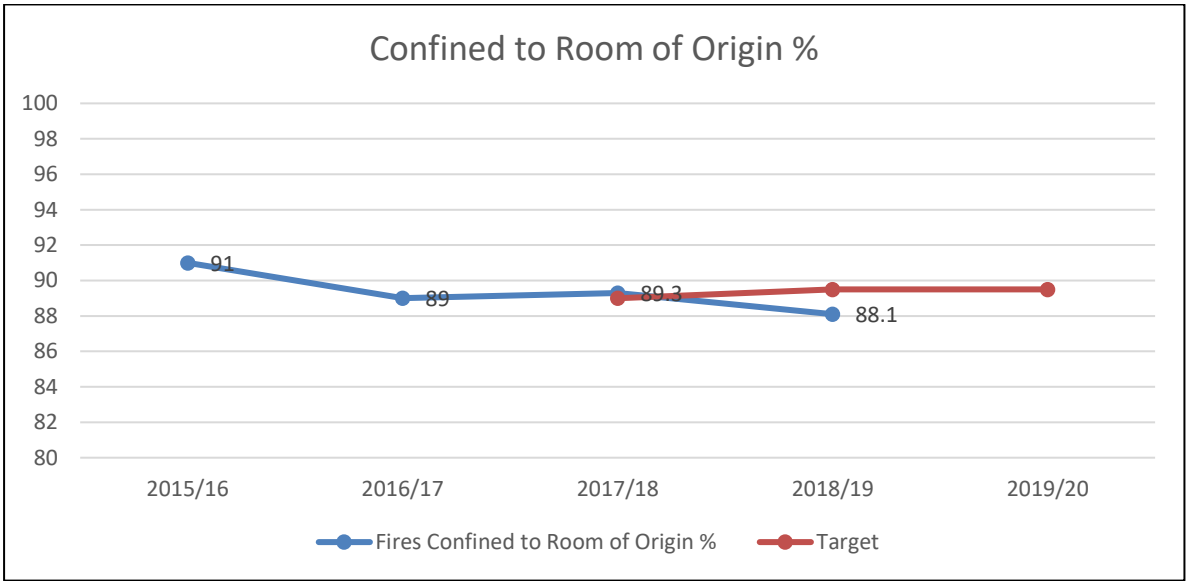

Figure 17 - Annual percentage of fires contained within the room of origin

The Service considers this measure to be an excellent way for it to get an overall view on the quality of the services it provides to the people of Shropshire, as its success depends on the effective integration of its prevention, protection and response activities. As such, many of the issues raised in the previous sections are also relevant here.

This is only the second year that this measure has been monitored, however the analysis that can now be undertaken, especially on those incidents where the fire is not contained to the room of origin, is starting to identify some significant issues that will help SFRS to further improve its services to the communities of Shropshire in the coming years.

Type of property	Number of fires	Confined to room of origin	Number extended beyond the room of origin	Fires contained to room of origin
Domestic	204	185	19	90.7%
Commercial	107	89	18	83.2%
Total	311	274	37	88.1%

As shown in the table above, this indicator includes fires in both domestic and commercial buildings. It also shows that, although commercial property fires only account for approximately a third of the fires included in this measure, they account for a disproportionately higher number of the failures (approximately half).

In looking at the commercial fires in particular (see the table below), we see that agricultural buildings have a disproportionate negative impact on the failures that occur in commercial fires; accounting for more than half of all of all commercial fires that are not contained within the room of origin. With most of these incidents involving fires in barns, with their significant fire loading, relatively light construction generally consisting of one large room, it is perhaps unsurprising that, when a fire does manage to take hold, it is more likely than not, to spread beyond the outer walls of the barn.

Year	Number of commercial fires (CF)	Number of CF spread beyond the room of origin	CF spread beyond room of origin (%)	Number of agricultural building fires (ABF)	ABF as a percentage of all CF (%)	Number of ABF spread beyond room of origin	ABF spread beyond the room of origin (%)
2018/19	107	18	16.8	16	15.0	7	43.8
2017/18	103	11	10.7	13	12.6	9	69.2
2016/17	102	17	16.7	18	17.6	7	38.9
2015/16	110	15	13.6	16	14.5	10	62.5
2014/15	135	18	13.3	16	11.9	11	68.8
Average	111	16	14.2	16	14.2	9	55.7

With the agricultural industry being so important to the economy of Shropshire, it is imperative that the Service makes best use of the lessons it has learnt over the last year, especially in relation to the risk of fire in barns and also the risk from poor maintenance of agricultural vehicles (see section 6). By working with our partners (e.g. the National Farmers Union) we hope to be able to play our part in helping the farming community to avoid the financial and other impacts that so often arise when a business is hit by fire.

Moving on to fires in domestic properties, investigations into the 19 fires that spread beyond the room of origin have identified some interesting points.

1. There is no correlation between the number that extend beyond the room of origin and their respective response times; with the ratio of fires that spread beyond the room of origin being lower in the rural areas than would be expected by the ratio of fires that occur there.
2. 50% of the failures are in owner occupied properties, which is a slightly higher ratio than would be expected from their ratio of all domestic fires (40%)
3. People are 2½ times more likely to have a fire that gets out of the room of origin if they don't have a working smoke alarm.
4. Unusually, only 6% of the fires that spread, started in the kitchen, compared to typically 63% of all domestic fires starting there. We do not yet understand why this should be the case, but a working assumption could be that people are perhaps more likely to be confident in tackling

the average small fire in the kitchen (e.g. burning food etc.), than they are in dealing with fires in other rooms in the house.

5. Candles and fires starting in electrical equipment or wiring are a common cause of these types of fires. Again, suggesting that fire risks left unattended lead to potentially more devastating fires in homes.
6. A fire starting between 10pm and 2am is three times more likely to spread beyond the room of origin. This is most likely to be related to people being in bed at this time, further emphasising the importance of having working smoke alarms fitted in all homes.

The Service will use this learning to further inform its future campaign messages and 'Safe and Well' visits.

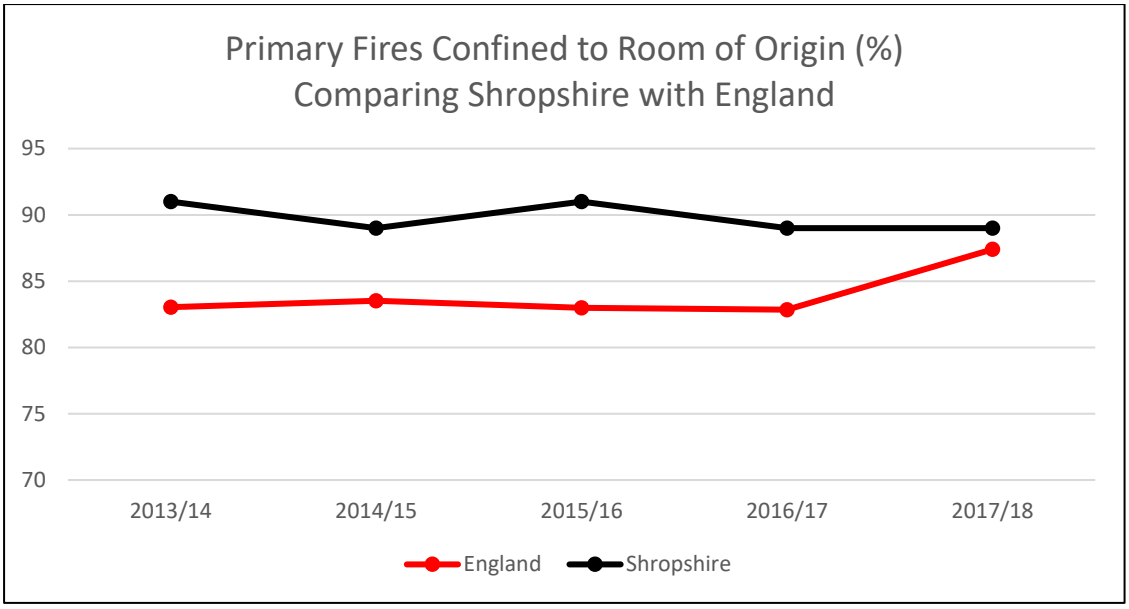

Figure 18 - Comparison between Shropshire and England in the percentage of all primary fires confined to the room of origin

Figure 18 demonstrates that, despite Shropshire's average response time to fires being over 1.6 minutes longer than the average for England (as shown in figure 3 previously), it is performing well in terms of ensuring that fires are confined to the room of origin. By implementing the lessons learnt to date, as outlined throughout this report, this should help the Service 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