HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

PUBLIC HEALTH, PREVENTION AND PERFORMANCE CABINET PANEL

OVERVIEW OF THE CHALLENGES FACING THE COMMUNITY PROTECTION DIRECTORATE IN RESPONDING TO AN INCREASE IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY FIRES

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Executive Member/s: - Richard Roberts, Public Health, Prevention and
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Local Member/s:-

1.   Purpose of report

1.1 To provide Panel with an overview of the challenges facing the Community Protection Directorate in responding to an increase in primary and secondary fires.

1.2 Panel is asked to consider the contents of the report which seeks to evidence the wider challenges facing the Community Protection Directorate.

1.3 In raising awareness of the current demands the report also aims to highlight the work being done to mitigate the impact on residents, the County Council and its partners in caring for, and keeping safe, residents and visitors to Hertfordshire.

2.   Summary

2.1 Cabinet panel has asked for a focused session on the Community Protection Directorate to better understanding the challenges and pressures facing CPD and how these challenges are being addressed.

2.2 This report gives narrative detail and will be supported by a presentation at panel.

3.   Recommendation

3.1 Panel notes and comments on the challenges facing the Community Protection Directorate and highlights any further information that could be of value.

4. Overview of the demographic challenges

4.1 People impacts

4.1.1 Demographic data from Herts insight shows that the age profile of Hertfordshire is changing, with more people within the 65+ age bracket than ever before.

Hertfordshire	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Difference	% change
Aged 65 or over count	181,900	186,700	191,300	194,300	197,200	15,300	8.4%
Aged 65 or over % of total population	16.8%	17.2%	17.6%	17.9%	18.2%		

4.1.2 This represents a particular challenge for the Community Protection Directorate because of issues of frailty, levels of medication, lack of mobility and ability to escape in the event of an incident.

4.1.3 Another demographic change that represents a challenge for Fire and Rescue is the number of people living alone. The number of people living alone increased by 11.28% between 2001 and 2011. People living alone have higher levels of social isolation, are at greater risk of issues such as depression and are less able to identify, prevent and escape from an incident in their home.

	2001		2011	
Household Composition	number	%	number	%
All categories: Household composition	420,650	100.0	453,817	100.0
One person household	115,758	27.5	128,815	28.4
One person household: Aged 65 and over	56,026	13.3	53,926	11.9
One person household: Other	59,732	14.2	74,889	16.5

4.1.4 The Population of Hertfordshire is expected to increase by over 10% from 2011 to 2021 and the number of over 85s is expected to increase by approximately 45% from 2011 to 2021.

4.1.5 Income deprivation is also a key factor for the Directorate to consider. Historically, more fires occur in areas where deprivation is high (see Appendix A).

4.1.6 In 2010 there were 683 Lower Social Output Areas (LSOAs) in Hertfordshire and of these, 6 (0.9%) were in the most deprived quintile in England. 20 (2.9%) were in the most deprived quintile for Income Deprivation in England and 27 (4.0%) were in the most deprived quintile for Income Deprivation affecting older people in England.
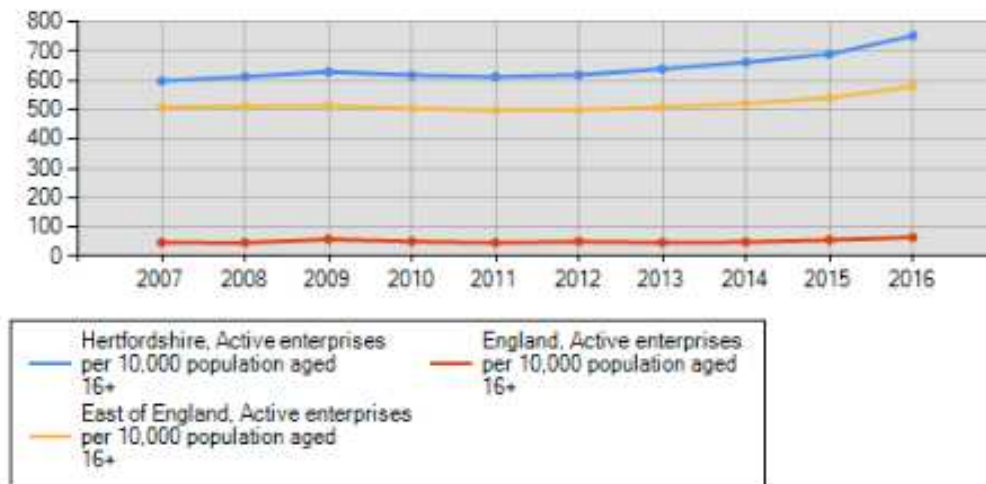
4.1.7 In 2015 there were 690 LSOAs in Hertfordshire and of these, 9 (1.3%) were in the most deprived quintile in England. 25 (3.6%) were in the most deprived quintile for Income Deprivation in England and 25 (3.6%)

were in the most deprived quintile for Income Deprivation affecting older people in England.
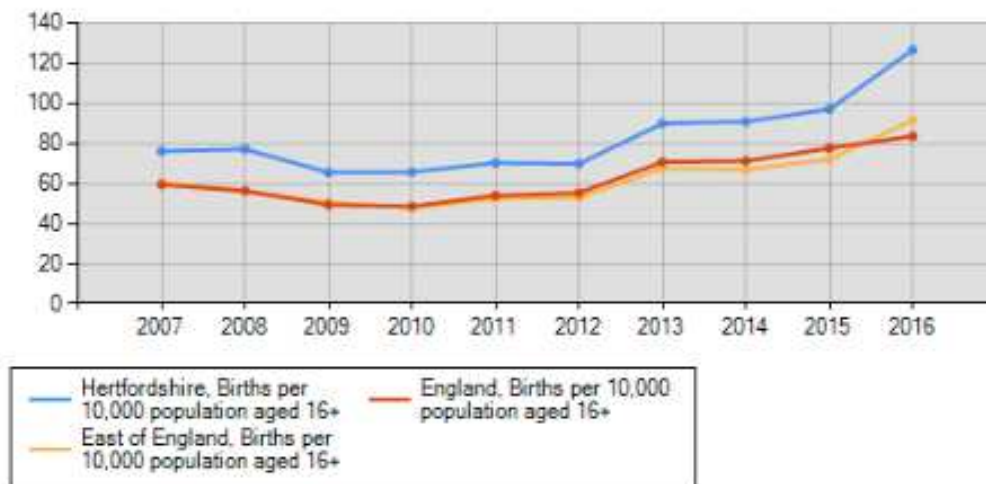
4.2   Economic growth impacts

4.2.1   Business growth also adds to the Fire and Rescue risk profile, business growth in Hertfordshire has outstripped the National and East of England trend over the past ten years.

Active Business Rate: 10 year Trend

Hertfordshire, Active enterprises per 10,000 population aged 16+

England, Active enterprises per 10,000 population aged 16+

East of England, Active enterprises per 10,000 population aged 16+

Business Births Rate: 10 year trend

Hertfordshire, Births per 10,000 population aged 16+

England, Births per 10,000 population aged 16+

East of England, Births per 10,000 population aged 16+

4.2.2   New business, whilst good for the economy, introduces more potential for risk. For example, in manufacturing and scientific sectors there is an increased potential for risk from both fire and hazardous processes which must be managed. Any new business could be subject to regulation and therefore places additional demand on the regulatory functions of CPD (education or inspection) irrespective of the impact of Fire and Rescue responding to an increase in emergency calls.

5.   Service demand data

5.1   The data below outlines the current picture with regard to the numbers of Primary and Secondary fires. The data presented on this page relates to the period up to the end of Q2 17/18 and represents the latest figures available.

	17/18	16/17	Vs Last Year	Target	Vs Target
Primary fires	739	766	↑3.52%	791	↑ 6.57%
Secondary fires	851	740	↓15.0%	943	↑ 9.76%

5.2   Primary Fires – fires involving property including buildings, vehicles, crops etc. The total number of primary fires decreased by 3.5% compared to the same period last year, and has increased by 3.5% in the last 5 years. This increase is in line with increases identified in the fire statistics monitor 2015/16 where a 3% rise was recorded. Primary fires are 13% lower than for the same period ten years ago.

Primary Fires as at Q2 2013/14 - 2017/18
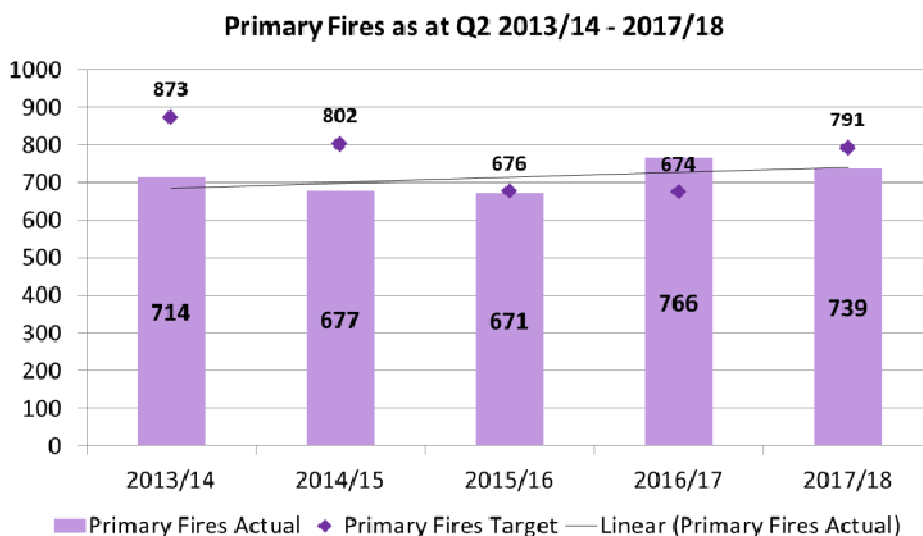
5.3   Secondary Fires – fires of no discernible value or ownership e.g. scrubland, grassland, rubbish etc. The total number of secondary fires has risen by 15.0% compared to the same period last year. There has also been an increase of 21.57% in the last 5 years. This increase is in line with increases identified in the fire statistics monitor 2015/16 where a 7% rise was recorded and is 11.35% lower than for the same period ten years ago.

Secondary Fires as at Q2 2013/14 - 2017/18

Legend: Secondary Fires Actual · Secondary Fires Target — Linear (Secondary Fires Actual)
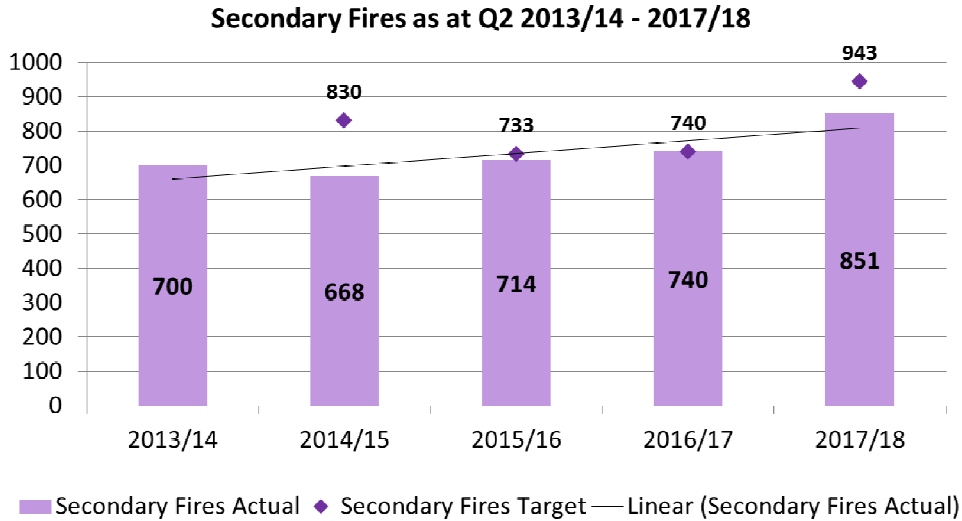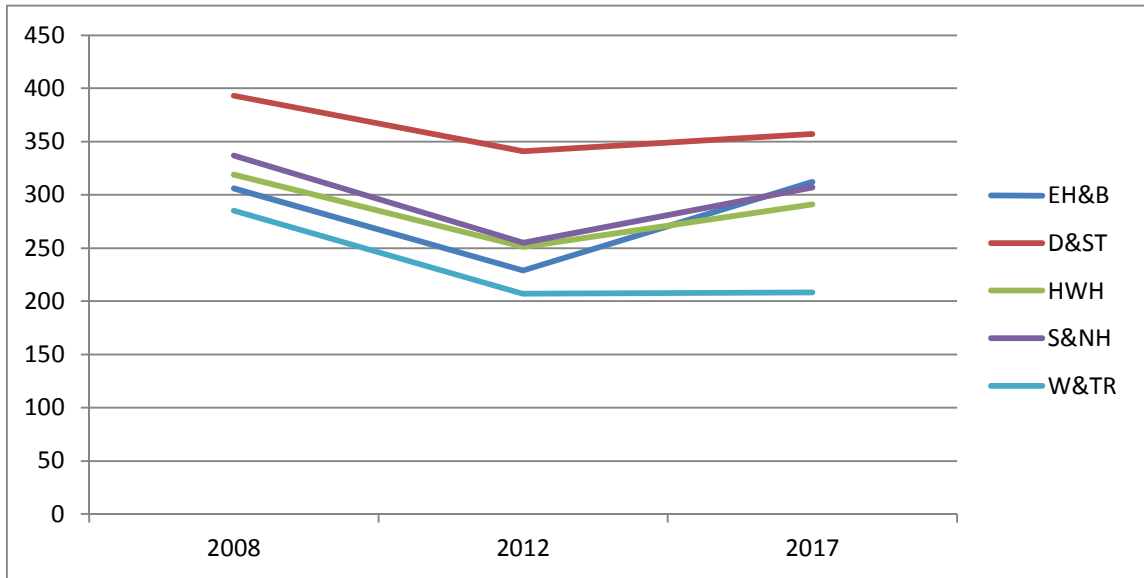
6. Fire data by district areas

6.1 Primary fires

6.1.1 A district breakdown of Primary fires shows that all five districts have had increases when compared with five years ago. The largest increase has occurred in East Herts and Broxbourne district with an increase of 83 fires or 36%. The average increase across all districts is 38 fires or 15.54%
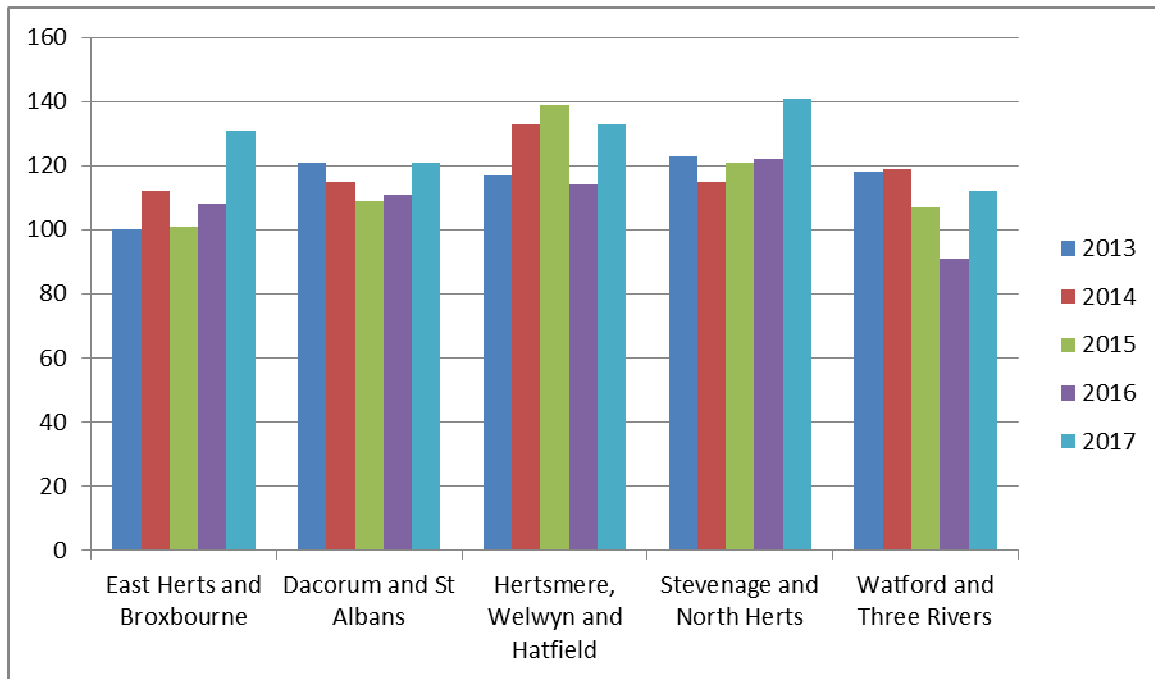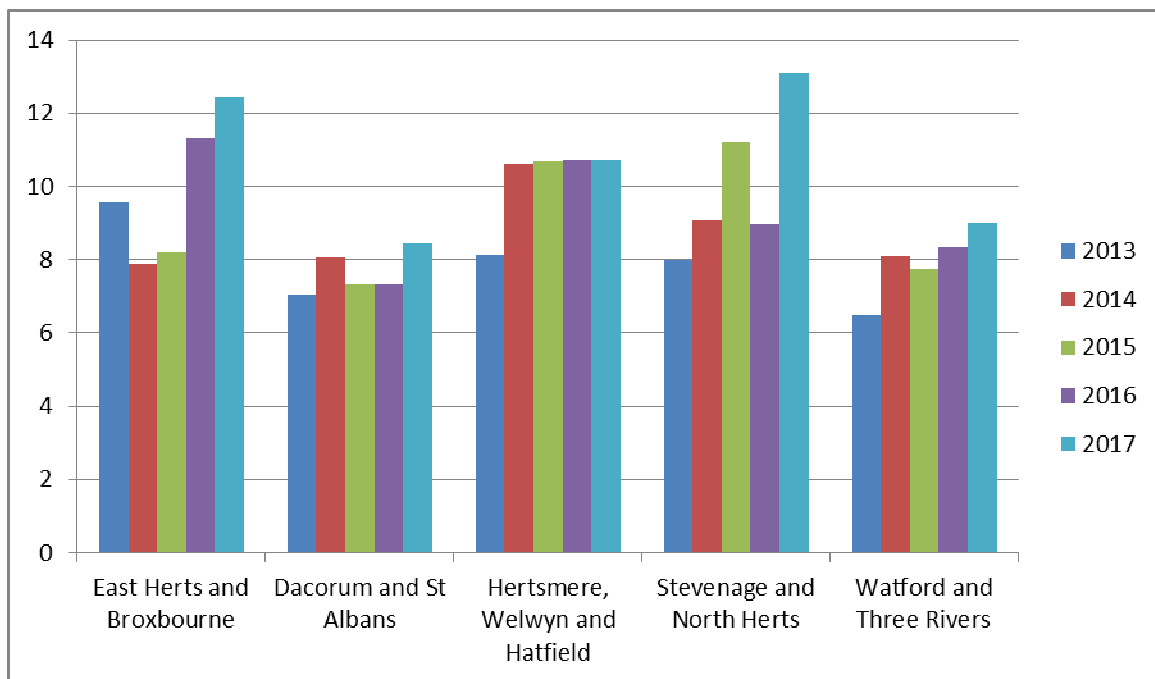

**Primary fires five year trend per 10,000 of the population**

Primary fires 10 year district trend

6.2 Secondary fires

6.2.1 A district breakdown of Secondary fires shows that all five districts have had increases when compared with five years ago. The largest increase has occurred in Stevenage and North Herts district with an increase of 118 or 71%. The average increase across all districts is 72 or 42.67%. The increase in secondary fires is in line with national trends but local Districts continue to work with partner agencies in order to bring the numbers down. Although there have been increases in the last five years, the numbers are still 11% down on where they were 10 years ago.

Secondary fires five year trend per 10,000 of the population
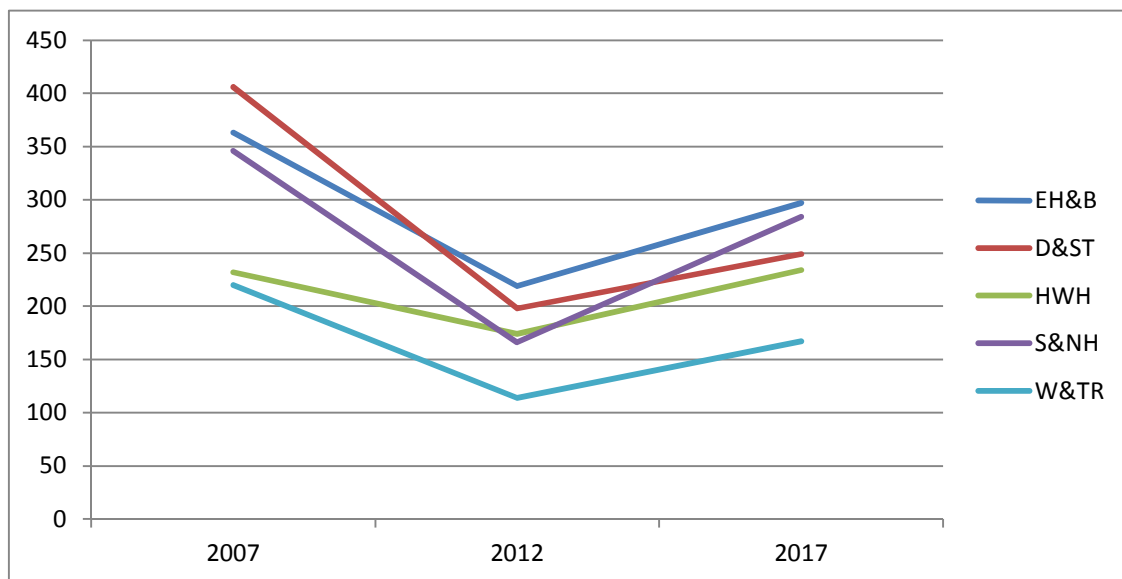
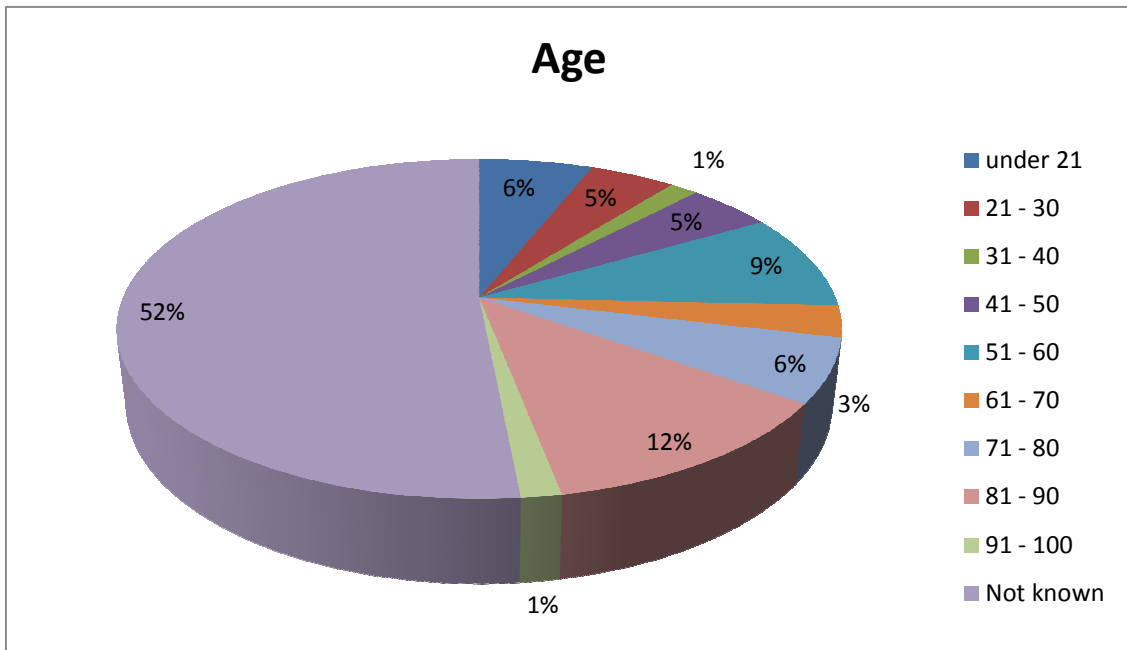**Secondary fires 10 year district trend**

7. National trend analysis

7.1 The Home Office Incident statistics report for the year ending June 2017 notes that in England, Fire and Rescue Services attended 175,673 fires. This was a 14% increase when compared to the previous year, the largest reported annual increase for over a decade. However this figure is a 48% decrease compared with ten years ago.

7.2 Secondary fires have seen the largest increase nationally with a 22% increase, Primary fires increased nationally by 6%.

7.3 Nationally the percentage of overall incidents that are fires is 31%, in Hertfordshire this figure is 27.6%.

8. Local analysis

8.1 Analysis of the types of property affected by fire shows that the last five years has seen a reduction in the percentage of fires in residential premises and non-residential premises. However, the total number of fires in the last year has increased in residential premises up from 602 to 633 and in non-residential premises has reduced from 219 to 203.

8.2 The reasons for the increase in residential premises are believed to be related to the increase in the number of elderly more vulnerable people, the number of people living alone and the number of people living closer to poverty and with reduced incomes (see Appendix A). Reductions in the number of fires in non-residential premises are most likely due to better housekeeping and compliance with statutory guidelines and more

education and awareness initiatives such as the Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) for commercial premises.

8.3   The largest single known group that have suffered injuries as a result of a fire are the 81 – 90 category, which accounted for 12% of all injuries. The not known group is large at 52%. However this is generally because age is a factor that requires a response from the casualty and this is sometimes difficult to ascertain if the injuries are being treated or have left the casualty unconscious.

Age

■ under 21	
■ 21 - 30	
■ 31 - 40	
■ 41 - 50	
■ 51 - 60	
■ 61 - 70	
■ 71 - 80	
■ 81 - 90	
■ 91 - 100	
■ Not known	

6% 5% 1% 5% 9% 6% 3% 12% 1% 52%

Casualties by age: using data from 1/11/16 to 31/10/17

8.4   The ten year fire data shows that 2012 saw a plateau or 'bottoming out' of the year on year reductions that the previous five years had brought. Since this bottoming out we have seen steady increases in the numbers of Primary and Secondary fires.

8.5   To better understand the underlying factors CPD commissioned a research report that considered a number of human and behavioural factors. The report, *Fire Deaths in Hertfordshire 2000-17*, is appended as appendix A.

8.6   The study considered each fire death between 2000 and 2017 noting the presence of lifestyle, medical or behavioural factors that were key influencers in the outcomes for the deceased.

8.7   These factors in order of prevalence were:

• Victim lived alone
• Smoking
• Limited mobility
• Alcohol
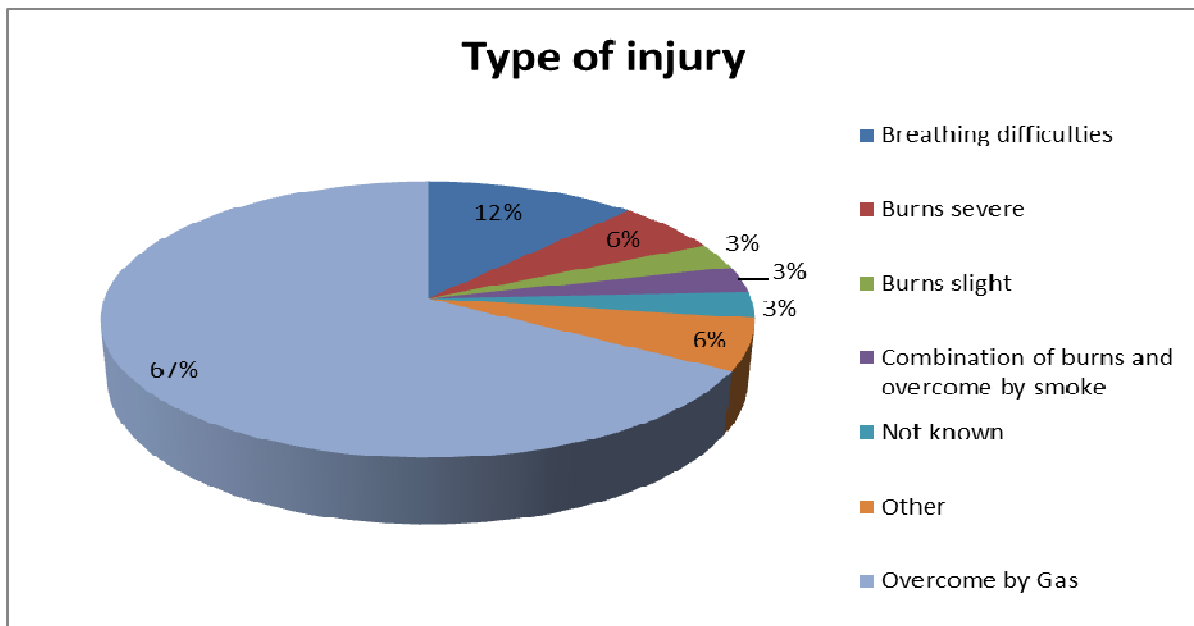• Poor health
• Drugs (both prescription and illegal)

• Mental health.

Some 82% of all dwelling fire fatalities since 2012 included the top two factors.

8.8   As well as the above; deprivation and age were also identified as factors. By mapping dwelling fire occurrences against Indexes of Multiple Deprivation (IMD score), there is a strong correlation between dwelling fire fatalities and the property being located in wards with higher levels of deprivation.

8.9   Regarding age, the report supports assumptions drawn from the injury data above and shows that:

- 60% of both male and female victims were aged 65 and over
- Over a third (36%) of female victims were aged 80+
- 43% of all male victims were in the 65-79 age group
- The average age of a male victim was 64 years compared to 70 years for a female victim.

Type of injury

- Breathing difficulties
- Burns severe
- Burns slight
- Combination of burns and overcome by smoke
- Not known
- Other
- Overcome by Gas

12%   6%   3%   3%   3%   6%   67%

Using data from 1/11/16 to 31/10/17

8.10   The above chart highlights that the majority of injuries received from fire related incidents are related to being overcome by gas/smoke (67%) with only 9% of injuries being related to burns, either severe or slight. This indicates that most people that are injured are not present at the point of the ignition of the fire and are not injured by the fire itself. It also suggests that the current speed of the F&RS response (attendance standard) is contributing to positive outcomes for victims of fire, as these types of injuries tend to happen as a result of smoke spread rather than fire spread. A delayed response would result in more fires spreading from a

single room and more burns injuries because the spread and severity of the fire would be greater.

9.   How we are responding? - Prevention and Partnerships

9.1   Risk Based Inspections

	17/18	16/17
	↓ **384**	**433**
RBIPs undertaken by Fire Crews		
RBIPs undertaken by Fire Protection Officers	↓ **175**	**180**
Total RBIPs undertaken	↓ **451**	**613**

9.1.1   The Fire and Rescue Authority are the primary agency responsible for enforcing The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 legislation in most premises. In Hertfordshire, inspections of those premises that present the highest risk to the community are completed by the Fire and Rescue Service following our risk based inspection programme. We aim to work in support of individuals and organisations to make their premises safe. However, we will take legal enforcement action to ensure that appropriate work is carried out.

9.1.2   Our fire safety 'Risk Based Inspection Programme' (RBIP) is devised using local statistical information on fires in non-domestic premises combined with national data and the professional judgement of the Fire Protection management team.

9.1.3   The overall potential for loss of life or serious injury is the major determinant of risk for the purposes of the RBIP.

9.1.4   When we receive intelligence of an alleged fire risk we aim to respond within four hours to investigate the allegation, determine the severity of any breach of fire safety legislation and take immediate enforcement action if necessary.

9.1.5   The reduction in the number of RBIPs conducted this year is due to the Directorate changing focus as a direct result of both Grenfell and the New Grange Care Home fire. Both of these significant events have led to staff focussing on high rise and care settings.

9.1.6   These building/occupancy types require more detailed inspections which has used more officer time to complete.

9.2   Prevention and education initiatives

9.2.1 The Community Protection Directorate delivers thousands of prevention initiatives every year, from Elderly Patient participation groups in Potters Bar to teaching reception aged children fire safety in Wheathampstead. The range of initiatives is diverse and inclusive.

9.2.2 In 2011/12 the Community Protection Directorate delivered 3481 prevention initiatives. In 2015/16, 9185 initiatives were delivered, an increase of 164%.

Prevention initiative	Identified group
LiFe	Youth engagement
Princes Trust	Youth engagement
Cadets	Youth engagement
Duke of Edinburgh	Youth engagement
Fit and Fed	Youth engagement
Learn to Live	Road safety – youth engagement
Driving Home for Christmas	Road safety
Biker down	Road safety – powered two wheelers
Crucial Crew	School year six
Spark	School year five and six
Safe and Well	Elderly and lone residents
Opals	Elderly and lone residents
Caring Together	Elderly and lone residents

Some examples of centrally delivered Prevention initiatives

9.3   Safe and Well Visits (S&WV)

	17/18	**16/17**
S&WVs undertaken by Fire Crews	1641	163

9.3.1 S&WVs involve the provision of health and wellbeing advice, guidance and signposting to elderly and vulnerable people within the community and includes fire safety advice and the fitting of smoke detectors. The service is free of charge to all households in Hertfordshire, with awareness campaigns and risk profiling tools used to identify and target 'high risk' areas and households. S&WVs are also provided for 'at risk' individuals when referrals are received from other agencies or services. CPD can supply and fit specialist protection where a need is identified, this includes arson proof letterboxes, smoke alarms for the hearing impaired, portable suppression systems and fire resistant bedding packs, throws and clothing. The introduction of 'Safe and Well' visits have and will improve outcomes for vulnerable people.

9.4   Hertfordshire Home Safety Service

9.4.1   In April 2015 the Hertfordshire Home Security Service (HHSS) contract was brought in-house and amalgamated together with the Home Fire Safety Service. This amalgamation of service has provided a greater range of provision of safety and security equipment allowing for a more bespoke service to enable and support independent living.

9.4.2   The aim of this service is for Hertfordshire residents to feel safer in their home, to remain in their own home for longer and to provide a one stop shop to prevent vulnerable residents becoming victims of crime, perishing in a fire, improve health choices (smoking cessation and good nutrition) and to mitigate the risk of slips, trips and falls.   Around the concept of Making Every Contact Count, training has been provided to the team that provides this service and referral pathways have been developed with various partner agencies. This also includes promoting the service HHSS provides through initiatives such as caring together and OPALS.

9.4.3   What HHSS does

- Reduces the number of domestic and distraction burglaries
- Reduces the opportunities for such burglaries
- Reduces the fear of crime, especially in relation to burglary, domestic violence and racial harassment
- Provides safer local communities
- Improves home safety and security, particularly for older and vulnerable people
- Reduces the risk of accident and injuries in the home
- Reduces the risk of falling in the home
- Reduces the risk of harm or damage from fire

9.4.4   Who provides this service?

The HHSS is an umbrella organisation which includes partners from across the county. These include:

- Hertfordshire County Council
- Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue
- Hertfordshire Constabulary

9.5   <u>Volunteers</u>

	17/18	16/17
Hours provided by Fire and Rescue volunteers	**3881**	**4064**
Total hours provided by volunteers	**4225**	**4713**
Standby hours provided by the VIST team	**10,000**	**10,000**

9.5.1   We have continued to build upon the success of our Volunteer Scheme which was established with the primary aim of empowering local communities to become more closely involved with delivery of our services. The number of volunteers on the scheme currently exceeds 150, including the UK's first Trading Standards volunteers.

9.5.2   Our volunteers undertake a wide range of duties including some high profile initiatives, which they deliver for their local districts and include regular arson and reassurance patrols on horseback and on bicycles. Volunteers also help to deliver Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV's) and support their local Fire and Rescue Service crews with all types of community engagement, including youth and positive action events and are now trained to crew reception centres on behalf of Hertfordshire Resilience in the event of a major incident.

9.5.3   The Volunteer Incident Support Team (VIST) is based in St Albans and covers the whole of Hertfordshire. The primary function of the team is to provide support to victims of fires in helping them clear up following a fire in their home.

10.   Conclusion

10.1   The challenges faced by the Community Protection Directorate in preventing and responding to increases in Primary and Secondary fires must be seen against the backdrop of increasing levels of fires nationally, an increasing age profile in Hertfordshire, growing numbers of lone residents and an increasing proportion of people experiencing income deprivation. A relentless focus on prevention and protection will be key for the next iteration of the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and CPD is working with partners to be fully cognisant of the local demographic challenges and trends.

10.2   Data shows that both in Hertfordshire and nationally Primary and Secondary fires are on the increase. This increase follows a steady period of reductions in all fire incidents that resulted in a 'bottoming out' of operational activity approximately five years ago. It is however important to understand the context. Both locally and nationally it is still

too early to determine whether the increases in fire in particular are the beginnings of an upward trend or if it is simply a natural correction after substantial decreases over a 10 year period.

10.3   The increased number of prevention initiatives combined with strategic and local partnerships is helping to curb these increases. The Directorate is planning for a number of challenges, both known and anticipated, doing so in the knowledge that the framework for response, prevention and partnership working is well established and functioning well. However, continuing to improve on performance and service delivery will be driving everything CPD does over the course of the next 5-10 years and beyond. The role of the fire and rescue service is continuing to evolve and so are the challenges it must plan for and respond to.

10.4   The CPD more broadly has a widening remit of responsibilities, for example, youth engagement being an area of focus. The Princes Trust Team Programme and LiFE courses are among the initiatives that have developed with great success. This multifaceted portfolio only looks set to increase.

10.5   Blue light collaboration continues to develop at pace with increased levels of partnership working in areas such as Co responding and forced entry. Initiatives such as Telecare response and community defibrillators will help improve outcomes for the communities of Hertfordshire. Like all public sector organisations, the 'wicked problems' of the 21st century will mean CPD must constantly understand the context in which it operates and respond accordingly.

11.   Equality Impact Assessment

11.1   When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.

11.2   Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.

11.3   The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

11.4 No EqIA was undertaken in relation to this matter because the report is for information only.

12. Financial Implications

12.1 No financial implications within this report