

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Meeting to be held on 22 February 2021

FIRE PROTECTION REPORTS

Contact for further information:

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Executive Summary

This report summarises LFRS fire safety prosecutions and arson incidents (where evidence has been provided by Fire Investigators into the Criminal Justice system) where court proceedings have progressed to trial and sentencing stage.

Fire Protection and Business Support information are also included.

Recommendation

The Authority is asked to note the report.

FIRE SAFETY CONVICTIONS

Fire Safety Prosecutions.

Sentencing related to the Plaza Beach Hotel, Albert Road Blackpool at Preston Crown Court is listed for the 22nd February 2020. On the 4th September 2017 an inspection identified a number of serious breaches of the Fire Safety Order that had the potential to cause serious injury or death in the event of a fire situation. The owner was charged with 10 offences at Blackpool Magistrates Court on the 15th May 2017, pleading guilty to 8 at Preston Crown Court on the 4th February 2020. Subsequently sentencing has been adjourned on several occasions due to ill health.

Prosecution case files continue to be prepared in relation to six further premises.

FIRE PROTECTION & BUSINESS SUPPORT INFORMATION

Risk Based Inspection programme

The Inspection Programme for 2021-24 is currently being quality assured before release to Inspection Teams during planning seminars in February.

Inspection activity is currently being prioritised towards High Rise premises and Residential Care / Nursing Homes. The latter is being undertaken utilising additional information and data from the Care Quality Commission and Care Commissioners to assist effective targeting.

Recognising the ongoing challenges of Covid 19 infection control in the care sector, inspectors will initially undertake a telephone audit, requesting key records by e-mail, with full audits being undertaken where compliance cannot be demonstrated.

Building Risk Review

The Building Risk Review work to audit and assess all Lancashire's 72 residential High-Rise premises over 18m continues. The findings are being reported to the NFCC Protection Policy Reform Unit who in turn update the commissioners of the work, MHCLG and Home Office. The project concludes in Dec 21 and LFRS is currently ahead of schedule (39 of 72 inspections completed). LFRS aims to have all audits completed by June in recognition that the provision of technical reports by building owners and managers can be a lengthy process due to the paucity of suitably qualified building surveyors and competing national demand for the skill.

Currently Lancashire has six premises with interim measures due to the presence of non-compliant cladding and a further three due to compartmentation issues

Business Safety

The Residential Care sector is receiving ongoing fire safety business support in the form of a 7-minute briefing (a recognised format to effectively share key messages) to all Lancashire Care and Nursing Home providers which has been produced in conjunction with the Lancashire Safeguarding Adults Board. In addition, Fire Protection staff are delivering fire safety talks to providers via on-line webinars.

ARSON RISK REDUCTION

R v Mark BIRD

FLAT 1 132 ST HELIERS ROAD BLACKPOOL FY1 6JD

Date and time of call 08/10/2019 20:50:16

This Incident involved deliberate ignition of cloth materials by the occupier.

On 26th November Mr BIRD pleaded Guilty to a charge accepted by the court and received 27 months in prison and a victim surcharge of £181.

R v Declan HUTCHFIELD

122 St. Heliers Road, Blackpool FY1 6JD

Date and time of call 05/07/2020 11:21:53

This incident was a late fire call relating to fire which had occurred at the property in the early hours of 5/7/20. Fire was out on arrival. The incident involved deliberate ignition, in separate locations, to carpet, clothing, furniture, and a mattress.

Declan HUTCHFIELD was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment in a Young Offenders Institution with a 20% reduction for guilty plea.

R v Joshua BIBBY

26-28 St Oswalds Close Knuzden

Date and time of call 07/04/2020 12:00:58

Late Fire call received on 8th April 2020, initial incident occurred on Monday 6th April 2020 at 20:20hrs. This incident involved ignition of an ignitable liquid on a driveway following a disagreement with relatives. The fire was captured on CCTV and a suspect subsequently arrested.

Joshua BIBBY was sentenced to a Community Order which included a rehabilitation Activity Requirement, 100 hours of unpaid work and a £90 victim surcharge.

8 Boundary Court, Dinmore Avenue, Blackpool, FY3 7TU,

Date and time of call 20/08/2020, 1648hrs

At a trial at Preston Crown Court on Tuesday 12th January 2021 the defendant was found guilty of arson with intent to endanger life. Sentencing is due to take place on Monday 10th May 2021, although this could change due to the pandemic situation. A further update will be provided.

13-15 Barton Avenue, Blackpool, FY1 6AP.

Date and time of call - 26/09/2019, 23:55hrs

The accused has been charged with arson with intent to endanger life and also arson reckless as to whether life is endangered.

The trial was originally set for April 2020, however it has been moved on several occasions and is now scheduled for 7th June 2022.

All outstanding court hearings have been delayed until 2021, partly due to Covid 19.

Business Risk

Moderate – Members need to be aware of prosecutions related to fire safety activity and/or arson within Lancashire in order to satisfy themselves that the required robust approach is being pursued.

Environmental Impact

None

Equality and Diversity Implications

None

HR Implications

None

Financial Implications

None

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate:		