



## 1. Introduction

1.1 In September this year the Committee was presented with a report outlining the 2006 Fireworks and Bonfire Campaign. The campaign included:-

- A Multi agency approach to planning and coordinating the campaign.
- High level of commitment by all agencies to control the anti social use of fireworks.
- Publicity using the local media and posters.
- Information provision to the local community on the powers and services available to tackle fireworks and bonfire misuse.

This report details the outcome of this work.

## 2. Results of the Campaign

2.1 The agencies involved in the multi-agency campaign have provided the following feedback.

### 2.1.1 **Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service (GMF&RS)**

<b>GMF&amp;RS</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
Rubbish fires	413	348	526
Attacks on Fire Fighters	13	20	12

There was a marked increase in rubbish fires which was a significant strain on resources particularly on the weekend of 4 & 5 November. However the prompt response to dealing with small fires meant these were extinguished before they became serious fires. A key change in the way GMF&RS responds comes into effect next year. At the moment GMF&RS will assess potential bonfires and request their removal before they are set alight. Due to resource constraints and policy change, from next year they will only respond to fires that are actually burning.

Although the number of attacks on firefighters is significantly down on last year this is still a worryingly high level of attack on an emergency service. Thankfully no serious injuries were sustained. The above figure also includes a firework attack on an unstaffed fire station.

GMF&RS also had significant successes with stopping dangerous fireworks getting onto the streets of Manchester. One private residence where it was suspected fireworks were being sold to children had £3000 worth of fireworks removed. A warehouse in Cheetham Hill had 3 tonnes of fireworks sent back to the suppliers.

## 2.1.2 Contracting Services

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Daytime	77	38	69	63
6pm to 10pm	30	20	11	34

Ward breakdown of bonfires cleared:

Ward	Bonfires removed 05	Bonfires removed 06
Ancoats and Clayton	7	17
Ardwick	4	7
Bradford	13	7
Baguely	0	4
Burnage	0	1
Cheetham	3	10
Crumpsall	2	2
Didsbury East	0	1
Fallowfield	0	1
Gorton North	3	2
Harpurhey	12	13
Hr Blackley	9	1
Hulme	2	2
Longsight	4	1
Moss Side	1	1
Moston	4	1
Miles Platting and Newton Heath	12	19
Northenden	0	3
Sharston	0	4
Woodhouse Park	4	0
Total	80	97

There was a significant increase in workload for the Contracting Services Clean Teams who take responsibility for clearing or reducing bonfires. The increases were most marked in Ancoats and Clayton, Cheetham and Miles Platting and Newton Heath. There were, however, welcome reductions in Bradford and Higher Blackley in particular. The largest bonfire cleared was from Bowler Street in Newton Heath which consisted of 5 tonnes of materials.

Dangerous items, including gas cannisters were removed from bonfires. Clean team staff explained to residents the dangers of some of the items they had stacked on to bonfires which was well received in some areas. There was only one incident of an attack on the clean teams who withdrew from the scene immediately. GMP agreed to provide assistance to the clean teams throughout the operation.

### 2.1.3 Trading Standards

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number of attempted test purchases	44	52	36	30
Number of sales to young volunteers	0	4	2	4
Number of complaints from residents and other agencies regarding fireworks	19	16	55	25

#### Complaints

Of the 25 complaints 14 were made by residents, 8 by Wardens/SEM's, 2 by GMP and 1 by another TS authority.

9 of the calls were regarding underage sales (3 of which led to 2 sales to underage volunteers) several of the premises people reported as selling fireworks to underage volunteers were not in fact selling fireworks when checked. Prosecutions will be taken forward on the premises where underage sales were made.

8 were about unregistered premises – all of these were unjustified as when checks were carried out the premises were in fact registered or not selling fireworks.

5 were about selling fireworks before 15 October. Test purchases were carried out at all of these but no sales were made. As with last year, registered premises were again asked to display a sticker confirming registration. The fact that residents can now see which premises are registered may have led to the drop in complaints.

2 complaints were about suspected white van sales. No activity was verified.

1 complaint was about storage.

#### Seizure of unsafe fireworks

Trading Standards seized unsafe mini rockets from 8 premises

### 2.1.4 Greater Manchester Police

	Total 2005	Total 2006
<b>Arrests*</b>	9	10
<b>Incidents **</b>	285	304
<b>Firework Seizures</b>	19	7
<b>FPN</b>	11	12
<b>Youth Interventions***</b>	247	260

- \* There were a total of 10 arrests made as part of Operation Sealyham II. 6 of these were fireworks related
- \*\* Incidents attended included general complaints from the public regarding youths throwing fireworks, concerns about unlit and lit bonfires, youths in possession of fireworks, fireworks being pushed through letter boxes, officers attending premises to check registrations, fireworks being thrown at cars and general youth nuisance.
- \*\*\* Youth interventions are the number of youths spoken to.

GMP once again coordinated and ran a very successful multi agency operation (Operation Sealyham II). The Silver control room was staffed by a range of agencies and ran between 4pm and midnight on 28 October to 5 November. GMP had 30 staff including silver control command, dedicated to the operation every night. The communication between silver control and staff on the ground was excellent and complaints were responded to quickly. The weekend of 4 & 5 November was particularly busy with resources from all agencies stretched on these nights. Although there was a slight increase in the overall number of incidents and youth interventions the operation ran over 9 days whereas last year it covered 7 days. 2 off road bikes were also seized during the operation.

#### 2.1.5 Leisure Services - Organised displays

	<b>Attendance 2005</b>	<b>Attendance 2006</b>	<b>Accidents 2005</b>	<b>Accidents 2006</b>
<b>Wythenshawe Park</b>	Approx 10,000	Approx 14,000	No accidents	No accidents
<b>Heaton Park</b>	Approx 20,000	Approx 17,000	No accidents	No accidents
<b>Debdale Park</b>	Approx 4,000	Approx 6,000	No accidents	No accidents
<b>Philips Park</b>	Approx 6,000	Approx 3,000	No accidents	No accidents
<b>Boggart Hole Clough</b>	Approx 6,000	Approx 6,000	No accidents	No accidents
<b>Platt Fields Park</b>	Approx 6,000	Approx 8,000	No accidents	No accidents
<b>Chorlton Park</b>	No event in 2005	Approx 700	Not applicable	No accidents
<b>Cringle Park</b>	No event in 2005	Approx 5,000	Not applicable	No accidents
<b>Brookdale Park</b>	No event in 2005	Approx 2,000	Not applicable	No accidents
<b>Crumpsall Park</b>	No event in 2005	Approx 600	Not applicable	No accidents
<b>TOTAL</b>	Approx 52,000	Approx 62,300		

Attendance figures were significantly up overall at the organised events, which was a key aim of the campaign. There were fireworks displays at a number of new venues this year. There were some minor issues with anti social

behaviour at the Heaton Park Event but all the organised events were successful with no major incidents or accidents reported.

### **3. Publicity**

3.1 The objectives of the press and publicity campaign were:

- To publicise in the local media the organised displays arranged by Manchester City Council and encourage people to attend
- To reinforce safety issues around fireworks
- To raise public awareness of the environmental impact of holding firework displays and bonfires in private gardens
- To make the public aware of the legislation surrounding fireworks and bonfires
- To reassure public of effective enforcement.

3.2 The publicity consisted of bus stop advertising, ward newsletters, posters, bus streetliners, adverts in the local newspapers and stickers on the registered premises. There was also information on Manchester City Council's website which during the campaign received 1537 hits.

3.3 A dedicated telephone number was set up in EOC so that Members of the public could call one no with any fireworks or bonfire related complaints. The 0161 954 9005 number received 82 calls – an increase from 27 calls in 2005. Callers were asked how they had heard about the number and it would appear that the most effective form of communication has been through the ward newsletters and bus stop advertising.

3.4 There was good press coverage resulting from the press release on Manchester City Council's Website which was also sent to local newspaper and broadcast journalists. Take up resulted in 1 television interview, 1 radio interview, 3 MEN articles and 1 Middleton Guardian article. There was also a half page article in Manchester People outlining the dangers of fireworks, environmental impact and safety issues surrounding fireworks and bonfires. The article also publicised the Environment On Call number and dates and venues for city council organised displays.

3.5 It is a challenge to find original angles to generate media interest in firework stories around safety issues and legislation. The media tend to focus on sensational injury stories for example "Teenager maimed by firework" however, council organised displays received good coverage, both before and after the event which is reflected in the the increased attendance figures.

### **4. Conclusions**

4.1 Despite a very busy fireworks season the proactive approach taken by all agencies meant that it passed without major incident. All agencies responded with speed and efficiency to an increase in calls.

- 4.2 Attendance at organised events increased and all events took place without any accidents or major incidents so the key objective of encouraging people to have a safe and enjoyable fireworks season through attending organised events appear to have been achieved.