

Freedom of Information request reference number: FOIA2688.2

Date of response: 3 August 2016

Request and response:

I made a request for information on the 8th of June 2016 in regards to the effect to emergency services of multiple permanent road closures in Walthamstow.

I have received a reply today on the 6th of July 2016 which has failed to answer key points.

The question of whether the LFB envisages scenarios where the multiple road closures by the local council could DIRECTLY lead to delays has been unanswered.

Also, the data provided in the LFB's response to the FOI after some of the road closures shows on average a slight increase in response times between July 2015 and March 2016. This increase is creeping towards the 6 minutes point and the data ends in March 2016 after which even more roads have been closed.

This clearly shows that the data was only collected after roads had been closed and the LFB are unsure what these road closures could lead to.

Under the FOI and in your internal review which I am now requesting please provide the details of the last scheme of multiple road closures in London and the data from that scheme that the LFB used in their decision not to raise concerns with the council of Waltham Forest. Or alternatively please say whether there was no previous scheme to compare and the LFB was 'going in blind' to the meetings with the council and assumptions to response times.

Furthermore, as an example the LFB station in Walthamstow is on Forest Road. Previously if there was an incident on Hoe Street or any roads leading from Hoe Street the LFB could use and did use multiple roads directly in front of them. Now ALL these roads have been closed and the only way to get to Hoe Street or Church Hill Road is to go either via the traffic lights at bell corner or on the other end from past Walthamstow tube station. Is the LFB officially confirming in this real example that the road closures will not cause delays and more specifically push them by some seconds thereby going over the six minutes mark? In addition can the LFB confirm that none of the road closures will lead to unacceptable response times.

In addition, the council has now started closing Aubrey Road from Church Hill Road. Now if an emergency service vehicle on Church Hill Road needs to access any of five roads previously served by Aubrey road they would have to go to Hoe Street traffic lights and around.

Please note that the safety of people is not to be used in local politics. If there is an incident where a delay in the response by the emergency services directly linked to the road closures leads to an unfortunate outcome then all involved could be held responsible. This includes the local commander Jamie Jenkins who is in charge of all contact with the local council.

I refer to your request of 6 July 2016 asking for a review of Mr Sivell's reply to your Freedom of Information request (FOIA 2688.1). I have set out my review below.

I must first advise you – as I mentioned briefly in my acknowledgement – that some of the matters which you have asked me to review require an opinion of the Brigade, and not the provision of data we hold. Under FOIA, you only have a right to the data we hold.

Putting your rights under FOIA aside for a moment, I think it would be fair to say that road closures can cause delays to the arrival of LFB appliances at emergency incidents. Those closures would need to reflect the main traffic routes used by Brigade vehicles, and the extent of delay that might arise from the closure of minor (or side) roads, would depend on the numbers of incidents we expect to attend in the areas affected by the closure. Road closures are a frequently occurring feature of London's infrastructure and, so far, they have never caused a detrimental delay to our emergency response. We know from analysis that the cause of most delay's in our response is the time it takes for people to call the Brigade. An analysis of fires shows that on nearly half of occasions it takes more than 10 minutes from the start of the fire for the Brigade to be called (and it taking us less than 6 minutes, on average, to arrive).

I'll now turn my attention to the data we do hold and how that may in some way, answer the questions you raise. As you may know, the Brigade has a commitment to meet its average attendance standard for first and second appliances (of 6 and 8 minutes on average) at London-wide level. We also seek to meet those standards for each borough, although we do not do so in some boroughs. We do not make any commitment to meet our standards in any other geography below borough level (i.e. in particular local areas).

I have updated the monthly attendance time performance data for Waltham Forest that Mr Sivell supplied in his response with a further three months data (April, May and June 2016). My review of this performance does not show any sustained degradation in attendance time performance in the borough. We do expect attendance times to vary month by month, and would seek to measure performance over a 12 month period which would take account of these fluctuations. Some performance in 2016/17 is better than in 2014/15. More importantly, performance in Waltham Forest is comfortably within the Brigade's target to achieve the arrival of a first appliance in six minutes, on average, and a second (where needed) in an average of eight minutes.

1 st Pump Average Attendance Time												
FinYear	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2014/15	05:04	05:08	05:09	05:04	05:02	05:11	05:04	05:04	05:01	05:21	05:14	05:17
2015/16	05:36	04:55	05:30	05:37	05:25	05:18	05:30	05:28	05:18	05:09	05:23	05:06
2016/17	04:55	05:04	04:59									

2 nd Pump Average Attendance Time												
FinYear	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2014/15	06:52	06:54	06:20	07:00	06:20	06:43	06:21	06:53	06:09	06:40	06:32	06:54
2015/16	06:27	06:22	06:14	06:57	06:39	06:53	07:02	06:17	06:20	06:01	06:41	06:51
2016/17	06:15	06:31	06:47									

It is my view that this data does not show an increase in response times and therefore that the road closures in Waltham Forest have not had a significant impact on our services

That concludes my review of your of request to the extent of which the Freedom of Information Act applies.

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