



Media Release

Strictly Embargoed until 00.01am 2nd May 2019

Lithium ion battery most likely responsible for last year's fire at Guernsey Recycling

A lithium ion battery, possibly from a States-owned recycling site was responsible for last year's fire at Guernsey Recycling, a report has found.

Written by Chief Fire Officer Jon Le Page, the 19-page report into last August's blaze sets out 14 recommendations on how to prevent a similar incident occurring again.

"Last August's fire pushed the Guernsey Fire & Rescue Service to its limits," he said. "Major incidents of this nature are, thankfully, rare in Guernsey, so it is important that when they do occur, we thoroughly review what happened to both prevent a repeat and ensure the response plan incorporates any lessons learned."

"I am pleased that the majority of the recommendations included are already being worked on. While there are critical points made in the report, including ones I have directed at the GFRS, nothing can or should detract from what was a highly successful operation to extinguish a major fire in challenging circumstances. I am extremely proud of each and every one of the firefighters, and extend my thanks once again to all those who contributed to the operation on the day."

Guernsey Recycling Managing Director Michael Grime said:

"Following the fire at Guernsey Recycling's scrap metal yard at Bulwer Avenue last summer, the management team has been working hard with authorities and interested parties to understand the causes of the fire, and how to mitigate the risk of such a fire occurring again in the future.

"We wish to thank again the professional and stoic work of the Guernsey Fire and Rescue Service, who worked tirelessly with our own courageous staff to get the fire under control as quickly as possible. We are extremely grateful to them for all their support following the fire, and the support they continue to give us. We are working together, consulting on our site management and site safety to make sure that we work as safely as possible.

"We are also working closely with International Fire Consultants Ltd, the industry-renowned expert on fires in the waste sector, and one of the main authors of the Waste Industry Safety and Health Forum Guidelines."

Facts from incident:

- First calls about incident received by JESCC at 0913hrs
- First Appliance on scene at 0923hrs
- Fire declared as 'contained' at 1118hrs
- Fire declared as 'extinguished' at 2236hrs

- All crews left scene at 2321hrs, but two pumps and hose left in position for use during night if required
- Two-man crew attended every two hours through the night to check for any re-ignition
- Incident officially closed at 0947hrs on Saturday 4th August, when clear up crew left scene with remaining equipment
- At height of incident there were two Water Tenders, Two Water Carriers, a Turntable Ladder and a Command Support vehicle at the scene, with Two Water Tenders, an Emergency Tender and a mini-Water Tender/Off-road Fire Appliance, still available to be mobilized from the Fire Station for any further incidents.
- The maximum number of Firefighters at the incident at one time was 23, which included a crew of four who assisted from the Airport Fire & Rescue Service.
- A total of 18 off-duty Firefighters were required to be called back from their rest days to attend the incident.
- Although a crew of five was maintained at the Fire Station to respond to any subsequent incident, if it had been significant or serious, extra staff would have been called to assist from the Airport Fire & Rescue Service (with the potential of closing the Airport), as all available personnel from the Guernsey Fire & Rescue Service were in use.
- Whilst the Bulwer Avenue incident was open, the Guernsey Fire & Rescue Service was also dispatched by JESCC to attend two additional minor incidents.