



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item No:

Date: 17 September 2010

Purpose of Report:

To present to Members the outcomes of the Operational Assessment Peer Review.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Operational assessment (OPA) is a 'sector developed' assessment process which focuses on the frontline delivery of services. It looks at how effectively a Fire and Rescue Authority is working operationally and with its partners, to plan and deliver services to the local people.
- 1.2 The OPA process is designed to:
 - Form a structured and consistent basis to drive continuous improvement within the Fire and Rescue service, and;
 - Assure the public and stakeholders that the Fire and Rescue Authority is discharging its services safely and successfully.
- 1.3 Originally designed as part of the integrated Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) process for Fire and Rescue, a decision was taken to undertake the process by the Chief Fire Officer and the Fire Authority, even though the Audit Commission's role has now changed and CAA has been withdrawn. This is recognised as a testament to Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's ambition.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue service undertook its OPA during 13 – 16 July 2010, where a team consisting of members of the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA), Local Government Association (LGA) and Local Government Improvement and Development (LGID – formerly IDeA).
- 2.2 The basis for the review was the operational assessment toolkit developed by the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor (CFRA) to Communities and Local Government (CLG) and CFOA. The key lines of enquiry (KLOE) were:
 - Community risk management.
 - Prevention.
 - Protection.
 - Response.
 - Health and safety.
 - Training and development.
 - Call management and incident support.
- 2.3 In the case of each of these aspects, the Service had previously undertaken a self-assessment process against specific key lines of enquiry. These had been submitted by the team in advance of the inspection and were used as the basis of the peer process.
- 2.4 The KLOEs form part of the toolkit for OPA which delivers a common approach across the country. It is the interpretation of the evidence

submitted and gathered which forms the basis of the professional judgement given.

- 2.5 Interviews involved everyone from Fire Authority Members to employees and a number of forums were held. Stakeholders from the Police, Councils and neighbouring Services were all interviewed.
- 2.6 Overall, the peer assessment process was very positive about the Service and what it is trying to achieve. In each of the areas reviewed there were a number of positive comments and strengths identified, which reflected well on the organisation (Appendix A).
- 2.7 As with any process, the report has made a number of recommendations within each KLOE. These are all now being put in to the Service's overall improvement process to ensure that Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service continues to demonstrate value for money and high levels of performance.
- 2.8 With the new moves to local accountability, the undertaking of the OPA will serve the Service well in respect of being able to demonstrate to its communities that the money it receives is being well spent and that the standard of delivery is of a high standard.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The peer assessment costs were met from the Service's audit contingencies and were circa £11k in total. This does not include time spent by Service staff in preparing for the assessment.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

The learning and development implications are contained within the review, as there was a specific section on training within the audit. The Service will act on the recommendations made. In respect of HR, the inspection team were very complimentary towards the department and this is reflected through the report. As the peer process focuses on service delivery to the community, there is no specific KLOE with regard to this function.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

There are no specific equalities implications arising from this report and this process. A similar peer review approach is scheduled to be undertaken in late autumn 2010, as part of the Fire and Rescue Service's equality framework diversity peer challenge process.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

The peer review process does examine how the Service engages with the wider community and addresses other aspects of community risk management. The report was very complimentary on its leadership on anti-social behaviour, and its partnership working.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The OPA is a way by which the fire Authority can demonstrate to its community that it is fulfilling its statutory duties under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

By undertaking this process and other peer review assessments, the Service does give itself resilience to any external criticism of its operations. By demonstrating the desire to continuously improve and deliver value for money, the Service can demonstrate it is acting in the best interests of its community.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members accept the findings of the Operational Assessment Peer Review and task the Chief Fire Officer with actioning the recommendations.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



Operational Assessment Peer Review

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue
Authority
13th – 16th July 2010

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Executive summary and key recommendations

Summary

1. The Operational Assessment Peer Review was undertaken in the spirit of sector led improvement against a background of major change in the demise of CAA and the change in Audit Commissions' role in the fire sector. The service engaged in this process in order to obtain a view of itself from peers and seek to improve as a result which is a testament to its ambition.
2. The staff of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) enjoy working for the service and see the management style of the Corporate Management Board as open and progressive.
3. The Peer Review has been able to identify both strengths and areas for consideration across the service. The strengths were particularly in the KLOES on Health and Safety and Call Management and Incident Support.
4. The Peer Review Team also found some areas of notable practice which could, and are being shared with, the sector e.g. Community Safety initiatives.
5. In the recent past the service has made significant progress in organisational development in terms of the how staff feel about working for the organisation and now the focus should move to be upon improved performance outcomes.
6. There were a number of corporate and cultural cross cutting themes that emerged from the review that are not explicitly covered in the operational assessment Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs), but which do have an overall impact on the improvement journey of the service. The review team agreed that, although technically outside of the scope of the operational assessment peer review, it would provide added value if these themes were highlighted for consideration by the service.

Key Findings

The recommendations of the peer-review team are set out under the main themes of the operational assessment Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) and the cross cutting themes, as follows:

Cross cutting themes

- The Corporate Management Board (CMB) of the service are liked and respected.
- The communication style of the CMB is seen as open and progressive.
- The feedback from the recent staff survey results support the communication style of the CMB.
- Relationships with the representative bodies are strong and progressive.

- The Members and CMB demonstrate they have a clear grasp of the future challenges.
- The Fire Authority Members effectively engage with the service through the committee structure.
- There is multi-level scrutiny through performance and finance committees.
- The FRA is in a strong financial position, which should benefit the organisation in the coming financial climate.
- The impending national funding reductions for all public sector organisations will very likely result in budget reductions in NFRS, this will demand clearer links between prioritisation and financial planning and more clarity on what the priorities of the service are.
- The service should through its proposed Knowledge Transfer Partnership provide reassurance through evaluation that community focus activities are achieving desired outcomes.
- Five years after its implementation consideration should be given to reviewing the governance arrangements against other models of governance to ensure the arrangements remain fit for purpose and deliver the right amount of scrutiny and engagement.
- Whilst the service has a good understanding of the risk it deals with it should as a matter of priority create a formal up to date strategic Corporate Risk Register.
- An evaluation of the beneficial change in leadership style would help to identify why there are some isolated pockets of staff.

Community risk management

- There is excellent provision of socio-economic, demographic and activity data to stations.
- The use of whole community profiling using risks analysis allows planning at station and group level.
- The Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) with Nottingham Trent University (KTP) should bring substantial benefits once developed.
- The service provides strong leadership on anti-social behaviour which partners appreciate.
- There is a strong partnership approach to delivering community safety activity.
- There should be a clearer link between community risk activities and budget planning.
- The service has yet not fully capitalised on the opportunity to move resources from low risk to high risk activity and should look to do so.

- The service should through its proposed Knowledge Transfer Partnership arrangement use the opportunity to fully evaluate its Community Safety activity to ensure it fully addresses its risks.
- Outcomes from the Fire Cover Review should include Community Safety and Fire Protection compensatory measures where changes to Operational resources may be made.

Prevention

- There are enthusiastic and committed staff delivering Community Safety initiatives in a variety of ways.
- The Community Safety Advocates are seen as core to the delivery of Community Safety delivery.
- There are numerous examples of excellent Community Safety initiatives.
- There is effective service wide engagement with core delivery partners.
- Across the work of the service there are examples of strong and effective work with young people.
- The partnership approach needs to be structured with clear evidence of the desired outcomes which are anticipated.
- Existing initiatives should be evaluated to ensure they are targeting the right groups i.e. target the elderly.
- The service could benefit from greater integration between Community Safety and operational staff.
- Assumptions around socio-demographic data should be tested to ensure they are accurate.

Protection

- There is good evidence of regional collaboration in areas such as legislative training and enforcement.
- There is an effective risk based approach to building control consultation.
- There is effective targeted training to specific groups in Protection and on watches, such as Bond Solon training.
- Fire Protection would benefit from a greater exchange of risk information with operational colleagues.
- The service should ensure that the value of Fire Protection is recognised by all functions.

Response

- The service has invested heavily in operational resource and specialist rescue.
- The Resilience Team effectively engage with the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and show strong leadership.
- There is good strategic support for resilience (Incident Liaison Officers (ILO), Defra Agreement, exercises).
- There is good engagement with core response partners.
- The service has good regional and national involvement.
- Operational Assurance Team recording system presents a good opportunity to gather personnel risk critical information.
- The service should, as a priority, formally review, communicate and implement a revised Incident Command System providing a clear audit trail for its outcomes.
- The service should ensure outcomes from the Operation Assurance Team (OAT) reporting system are effectively implemented through closer engagement with the Learning and Development function.
- Those middle managers implementing the OAT system should be encouraged to do so in a constructive manner as it would appear their present style of interaction has the potential to have a disproportionately negative impact on operational staff.
- As the service moves forward it should consider the development of outcomes based performance targets.

Health and safety

- This is a strong area for NFRS with good leadership, planning and self awareness.
- There is evident strong corporate support and effective Health Safety and Welfare Committee.
- Health and Safety responsibilities are now included in operational job descriptions combined with the 'Managing Safely' course and are now bearing fruit.
- There is effective interaction with representative bodies in the Health and Safety arena.
- National Generic Risk Assessments (GRAs) are effectively integrated into own procedures.
- The leadership of the Health and Safety and Risk Management departments could be more effective if a more collaborative style was adopted.

- Consideration should be given to involving a lead member in Health and Safety via existing committee structures.
- Procurement systems must be explicitly cognisant of health and safety issues.
- Consideration should be given to the risk created by self regulating dual contracts.
- The service should work with premise owner-occupiers to ensure that their duty to provide risk critical information to the service is fulfilled.

Training and development

- The stability at a corporate and strategic level is providing re-assurance in the Training and Development function.
- The Member Development Charter has been signed up to.
- Portfolio based evidence is being used to demonstrate service wide competence.
- Peripatetic training teams are supporting training within districts.
- The Training Board monthly meetings and quarterly de-brief analysis is aiding learning and development.
- The Human Resources team is very positive and effectively engaging down to district level.
- There is a consistent approach to delivering equality and diversity training.
- The service should consider the efficacy of its Incident Command competence assessment.
- Budgeting for training and development would benefit from local and external cost analysis.
- The outcomes from the Retained Duty System Review which refer to training should be implemented as a priority.
- Greater scope exists for collaboration on wider organisational training at a regional or sub regional level.

Call management and incident support

- There is strong and supportive leadership within the Control function.
- The attitude of staff within control is admirable and positive in the face of the adverse uncertainty and should be commended.
- The function has benefited from the introduction of day duty Station Managers.
- The introduction of key skills is supporting the development of staff.

- The new Call Challenge Policy for Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) is having a significant positive impact on call rates.
- The service could consider challenging some of the timing aspects of the staffing process issues associated with the Regional Control Centre timetable.
- Although Control staff are involved in a number of operational debriefs this should be encouraged as widely as possible.
- The Peer Review Team support the intention to introduce the Expectation document into Control.

Report

Background

7. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) requested an Operational Assessment Peer Review. This review is part of sector led improvement for FRS's. These arrangements have a strong focus on peer review and self assessment.
8. It was recommended by the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) and approved by Fire Services Management Committee of the Local Government Association that CFOA and IDeA (now local Government Improvement and Development - LGID) operate a partnership approach that included developing the already established IDeA local government peer review process to fully meet the FRS sector requirements. The peer review process is designed to help an FRS assess its current achievements and its capacity to change. The peer review is not an inspection. Instead it offers a supportive approach, undertaken by friends – albeit 'critical friends'. It aims to help an FRS identify its current strengths, as much as what it needs to improve.
9. The basis for this review is the Toolkit for Operational Assessment developed by CFRA and CFOA. The Key Lines Of Enquiry (KLOE) are:
 - Community risk management
 - Prevention
 - Protection
 - Response
 - Health and safety
 - Training and development
 - Call management and incident support.
10. The members of the peer review team were:
 - David Johnson, Chief Fire Officer, Essex FRS
 - Howard Jones, Fire and Rescue Adviser, Office of the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser, CLG (seconded from Cumbria FRS)
 - Dave McCabe, Group Manager for York and Selby Service Delivery, North Yorkshire FRS
 - Councillor Mary Baldwin - Lead Member Diversity & Equality - Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority
 - Sara Williams, Strategic Adviser, LG Improvement & Development
 - Marcus Coulson, Review Manager, LG Improvement & Development.
11. The team was onsite from 13th – 16th July 2010. The programme for the onsite phase included activities designed to enable members of the team to meet and talk to a range of internal and external stakeholders. These activities included:
 - interviews and discussions with councillors, officers and partners

- focus groups with senior and middle managers and frontline staff
 - visits to fire stations and the Control Room
 - reading documents provided by the FRS, including a self-assessment of progress against the operational assessment KLOEs.
12. The team would especially like to thank Gary Swinn and Simon Glew for their tireless assistance in organising the review.
13. The feedback delivered to NFRS on the last day of the review gave an overview of the key messages. This report builds on the initial findings and gives a detailed account of the review. The report is structured around the seven areas of the KLOEs listed above.

Context

14. NFRS employs 1,200 people to provide services to the public, including firefighters, Fire Control Operators, IT professionals, estates managers, accountants, Human Resources (HR) professionals and safety advisors.
15. The 24 fire stations are positioned strategically across the county, staffed by full-time and part-time firefighters. There is a Specialist Rescue Team based at two locations, providing expert support at incidents such as rescues from height, water, multiple road traffic accidents or building collapse.
16. In 2008/9 the service attended a total of 15,337 incidents, 6,323 of these were fires, 6,587 were false alarms and 2,427 responses were to other emergency incidents (Special Service incidents). Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire Authority is an independent body comprising 18 elected councillors from the city and county councils.
17. These councillors ensure that the FRS meets both its statutory obligations and provides a service to the public. This is achieved by a committee structure providing scrutiny in areas such as finance, HR, Community Safety and service performance.
18. Nottinghamshire lies in the heart of England and covers an area of 805 sq miles, with a population of just over one million people and a working population of 360,000.
19. The largest concentration of people is found in the Greater Nottingham conurbation, the suburbs of which lie mostly in the county. In total, including Nottingham City (292,400) Greater Nottingham has a population in excess of 656,900. The other main county towns are Mansfield (87,500), Kirkby-in-Ashfield (27,000), Sutton-in-Ashfield (45,400), Newark (26,700), Worksop (43,500) and Retford (21,700).
20. Nottingham itself is a city of contrasts. It has the highest rate of employment growth of any major UK city, and an attractive and successful city centre. It is a leading city in the East Midlands region; its shopping facilities are ranked as amongst the best in England outside London and it has a vibrant and growing

leisure and cultural scene. However, it also has some of the worst areas of deprivation and under-achievement in the country.

21. Greater Nottingham is a big conurbation – one of the 10 largest in the country – but only half the population live within the city boundaries. Deprivation in Nottinghamshire is above the national average, with a deprivation score of 113 (GB as a whole = 100) and health, education and crime above the national average. Nottingham city has the highest level of deprivation.
22. Despite its wealth and commercial success, many Nottingham city residents live in areas of deprivation. In fact, over 60 per cent of Nottingham's population lives in an area of deprivation and 13 of the 20 city wards are within the 10 per cent most deprived nationally, with pockets of deprivation in other wards.
23. This presents an issue for NFRS and similar authorities when comparing performance with authorities which are more affluent. Many of the incidences of fire are manifestations of deep social problems which exist in more deprived areas. NFRS are working hard to develop links and partnerships at district level to deal with these issues. Although the performance indicators used are primarily an output measure, the service does invest a substantial amount of resources in Prevention work. Due to the socio- economic and deprivation factors, the performance indicators are only a crude measure and do not fully represent the preventative work that goes into solving the problems of these areas.
24. NFRS have therefore embarked upon a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Nottingham Trent University to evaluate the impact of community safety initiatives. This will attempt to identify the relationship between inputs and outcomes in this complex area of inter-dependencies. We believe this is the first such initiative in the country.
25. Nottinghamshire has successfully managed the economic changes forced upon it during the last 20 years. These changes have had a major influence upon mining and some manufacturing industries, and the communities they supported. Overall, unemployment has been relatively low. However, labour market disparities remain, with qualification and skills levels causing concern. In 2008 the recession began to impact upon the local economy and employment, and substantial numbers of job losses were reported.
26. Nottinghamshire has become economically diverse and innovative however, some areas of the county share problems which are faced by the wider East Midlands region, primarily that of a low skills/low innovation/low wage economy.

Cross cutting themes

Strengths

- Corporate Management Board (CMB) are liked and respected
 - Communication style of the CMB is seen as open and progressive
 - Recent staff survey results support CMB communication style
 - Relationships with the representative bodies are strong
 - Members and CMB have a clear grasp of the future challenges
 - Members effectively engage with the service through the committee structure
 - There is multi-level scrutiny through performance and finance committees
 - The FRA is in a strong financial position.
27. The Corporate Management Board (CMB) is strong and well respected by staff at all levels, with their communication style being seen as open and progressive. This is supported by recent staff survey results and is a sound basis from which to develop the service further. Members of the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) work well with CMB through a well-defined committee structure, and the chair leads confidently.
28. Relationships with the representative bodies are strong through the work of Industrial Relations Officer Mark Healy. The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) in particular is seen to have achieved a relationship of trust with these groups. This would seem to be a good place to start from to be able to manage any developments of the service.
29. The FRA is in an extremely strong financial position and like all services it is likely to be facing significant challenges over the next few years. Members and CMB have a clear grasp of these challenges but rising to them will require far clearer links between service prioritisation and financial planning than is currently the case.
30. Chair and members are very ambitious for the FRA. Members are clear on future challenges but should consider greater use of pre-emptive communication.
31. In future the development of strategic decisions should include all of the top team including the elected members and should be involved at an earlier stage in the process. This would ensure a clear commitment at the senior level from across the Fire Authority and Fire Service.
32. Members effectively engage with the service through the committee structure. The Comprehensive performance Assessment (CPA) audit in 2005 recognised that governance was poor so changes were made to the

committee structure. Members said it now gave them “a greater understanding of what’s happening” one member commented “we give officers a hard time, I am confident that elected members challenge”. Members use a system called Cardiff Checks to challenge procurement and finance decisions and receive quarterly budget monitoring reports in a detailed and informed manner.

Areas for consideration

- Budget reductions will demand clearer links between prioritisation and financial planning
 - Having made significant progress in organisational development the service should focus upon performance outcomes
 - The service should provide reassurance through evaluation that community focus activities are achieving desired outcomes
 - Five years after its implementation consideration should be given to reviewing the governance arrangements against other models of governance to ensure the arrangements remain fit for purpose and deliver the right amount of scrutiny and engagement.
 - As a priority the service should have an up to date strategic Corporate Risk Register
 - An evaluation of the beneficial change in leadership style would help to identify why there are isolated pockets of staff.
33. Budget reductions will demand clearer links between prioritisation and financial planning. The Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) sets out the general strategy of the organisation but is not costed which makes it difficult for members to set priorities in conjunction with the Medium Term Plan.
34. NFRS has made significant progress in developing and improving the operation and morale of the service and this provides a strong basis for a shift to a more hard-headed focus on performance outcomes.
35. The community-based activities offer many examples of excellent and innovative practice and the plans for evaluation should give the rigour needed in judging whether these are contributing to achieving desired outcomes.
36. While managing risk is well-embedded in the organisation, the service urgently needs an up-to-date strategic Corporate Risk Register.
37. Consideration could be given to alternative models of governance to increase scrutiny. The members operate well within the committee structure but it is very heavy with ten sub committee and only 18 members to service them. A more streamlined approach may well benefit members and the service alike.

38. Whilst the general morale of the service has improved in recent times due to the change in leadership style there are still some pockets of staff who do not feel valued by the organisation. Consideration should be given to why this is and how it can be addressed.

Community risk management

Strengths

- There is excellent provision of socio-economic, demographic and activity data to stations
 - Whole community profiling using risks analysis allows planning at station and group level
 - The Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) with Nottingham Trent University (KTP) should bring substantial benefits once developed
 - The service provides strong leadership on anti-social behaviour
 - There is a strong partnership approach to delivering community safety activity.
39. The introduction of an information technology based analysis tool allows district and station-based personnel to query socio-demographic data and match this against incident data for comparative purposes. Using data in this way provides staff with the opportunity to develop tailored community safety responses based on need.
40. A new planning system is being introduced which allows for a continuous planning thread to be developed down to district and station level. This ensures that Group Commanders can match activity to demand and plan community safety activity with a direct link to Group priorities.
41. The efficacy of sharing information and data specific to potential target groups and the subsequent development of targeted community safety campaigns will be measured for success through the development of a Knowledge Transfer Partnership. Undertaken in conjunction with Nottingham Trent University, once fully developed, this initiative will allow an assessment of investment in numerous community safety campaigns.
42. Although not directly a core responsibility, the service has shown strong leadership in taking the lead within the county on anti-social behaviour, in doing so it has been able to build secondary fires in as a key performance indicator within the Safer Nottinghamshire Board ensuring that it directly benefits from its involvement.
43. The service engages across the city and county with numerous partners in delivering to its communities. Examples such as First Contact, Bendigo and FireSafe provide excellent examples of what can be achieved with a strong partnering approach and partners are delighted with the support that the service provides and its enthusiasm to make things happen.

Areas for consideration

- Impending budget reductions will require clarity on what are the service's key priorities
 - There is no clear link between community risk activities and budget planning
 - The service has not yet fully capitalised on the opportunity to move resources from low risk to high risk activity
 - Failing to evaluate Community Safety activity may prevent the service from fully addressing its risks
 - Outcomes from the Fire Cover Review should include Community Safety and Fire Protection compensatory measures where changes to operational response may be made.
44. At a time when it is almost a certainty that financial challenges will come to the fore it will be essential for the service to be clear on what its priorities are. The use of broad-base objectives, whilst allowing a degree of flexibility, will not encourage hard targeting of resources on what matters most and may prevent an organisation-wide understanding of what its core deliverables are.
45. The success of Community Safety activity cannot be measured in outcomes alone and strong consideration must be given to the real cost of such activity so that a whole cycle benefit analysis can be undertaken. Setting clear links between community risk activity and budget planning will allow the service to understand the cost of its community delivered activity and prioritise where resources may best be invested.
46. The service has been successful in driving out significant efficiency savings through a range of planned activities and these have generated the potential for increases in productivity. Greater benefit could potentially be derived from these savings if resources are explicitly moved from lower to higher priority activity in a transparent and planned way. For example, significant reductions in sickness levels has increased capacity within station-based resources and whilst this has improved appliance availability a proportion of this capacity could be focussed in other high demand areas.
47. Although the service has a comprehensive range of Community Safety activity it is not yet able to demonstrate their efficacy across the board. Whilst the development of the Knowledge Transfer Partnership is intended to address this issue, depending on the timescale for project delivery the service should consider introducing alternative evaluation tools which focus on the outcomes of activity.
48. The general principles of the IRMP require a balanced approach which offsets changes to response by considering increased reduction activity. It will be an essential element within the Fire Cover Review for both Community Safety and statutory enforcement activity to be considered as alternative risk reduction tools.

Prevention

Strengths

- There are enthusiastic and committed staff delivering Community Safety initiatives
 - The Community Safety Advocates are seen as core to delivery of Community Safety delivery
 - There the numerous examples of excellent Community Safety initiatives
 - Effective service wide engagement with core delivery partners
 - There are examples of strong and effective work with young people.
49. The service Community Risk Reduction Strategy 2006-2009 provided an opportunity to undertake an extensive range of diverse activities. There are examples of numerous Community Safety initiatives conducted under the Community Risk Framework by a team of dedicated and enthusiastic personnel. Engagement in partnerships is driven by local need and activities are coordinated between Group Managers and the district advocates. The addition of the Partnership Manager will enhance NFRSs ability to prioritise external partnerships and provide opportunity for adding a strategic focus at the same time as developing robust relationships for the future. The use of Fire Safety advocates on a district basis also brings resilience to the delivery network and a local focus for crews. There is also evidence of excellent engagement of senior managers and FRA members with key external partners and this is seen as a positive message amongst staff at all levels within the organisation.
50. Bendigo Project and Princes Trust provide excellent evidence of engagement with children and young people in diversionary activity that has brought increased confidence and safety awareness to participants and has added to the reduction in deliberate secondary fires experienced by the service. Evaluation of previous events has led to investment in further Bendigo projects at the commencement of the school year, September 2010/2011 and the inclusion of a similar youth engagement activity, Boot Camps, throughout the summer. The service is also included with Youth Offending Service and the Youth Service in the 2010 -2013 Nottingham Youth Crime Strategy and is the lead authority on anti social behaviour.
51. The Risk watch project is embedded within local schools and crews are delivering Prevention advice to primary schools in a structured manner which is planned and monitored via an electronic calendar.
52. The service is working well to reduce the number of Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs). Engagement with children and young people using the presentation known as Danger Zone is increasing road safety awareness among young

people and addressing the safety issues of being a pedestrian, passenger and cyclist on the county's roads.

53. The combined efforts of the Arson Task Force and the Fire Investigation Team has led to the inclusion of secondary fires as an indicator of anti social behaviour thus combining the strategic direction of the service's plan with the priorities and plans of partner agencies. This added focus has allowed the service to access partner resources to achieve a reduction in secondary fires in a constructive way that should bring greater benefits going forward.

Areas for consideration

- The partnership approach needs to be structured with clear evidence of desired outcomes
 - Existing initiatives should be evaluated to ensure they are targeting the right groups i.e. elderly
 - The service could benefit from greater integration between Community Safety and operational staff
 - Assumptions around socio-demographic data should be tested to ensure they are accurate.
54. The introduction of a Partnership Manager and the consequent review has recognised the number and variation of existing partnerships and the need for a consistent service wide approach that avoids duplication and repetition. This also provides the opportunity to strengthen the links between the Service Plan/IRMP and the Community Risk Team.
 55. The service is aware it needs to refine its approach to the evaluation of some of its Community Safety work. It should be clearer where the existing initiatives are adding value and are targeting the right groups. Working with young people to embed the fire safety message is an essential aspect on a modern FRS's work, but thought should be given to targeting other groups such as the elderly who figure prominently in the numbers of fire deaths.
 56. Assumptions around socio-demographic data should be tested to ensure they are accurate. In the submission there is sufficient data to indicate that the older demographic is experiencing a disproportionate number of fire injuries to the number of fires yet, there was insufficient evidence to conclude that there was any investigation into underlying causes. However, there is evidence of the ability to identify vulnerable people down to household level which presents an opportunity to focus future activity as further investigation supports it.
 57. Service personnel could benefit from a greater understanding of the needs of both the Prevention and Response roles in the service of the community. There are differing and sometimes opposing views over the importance of one

strand or another that can lead to inconsistencies in delivery. The benefits of a focussed coordinated approach are easily identifiable, for example the service's involvement in the Nottingham Youth Crime Strategy as the anti social behaviour lead from the service has led to benefits for a number of agencies and young people. Successes like this provide opportunities to restate the service's commitment at all levels and provide a clear and consistent message of the importance of all aspects of Prevention and Response working.

Protection

Strengths

- There is good evidence of regional collaboration in areas such as legislative training and enforcement
 - There is an effective risk based approach to building control consultation
 - There is effective targeted training to specific groups in Protection and on watches, such as Bond Solon training.
58. There is good evidence of regional collaboration in areas such as training and enforcement. Regional CFOA sub groups relating to enforcement, training and Fire Engineering are well established, this has assisted in promoting consistency of enforcement.
59. There is an effective risk based approach to building control consultation. This has streamlined the process and ensures that more detailed consideration is targeted at buildings which pose a higher risk.
60. There is effective targeted training to specific groups in Protection and also on watches. The Bond Solon training provides a cadre of well trained officers for the role based Enforcement Team.

Areas for consideration

- Fire Protection would benefit from a greater exchange of risk information with operational colleagues
 - There is some evidence that the value of Protection is not recognised by all functions.
61. Fire Protection would benefit from a greater exchange of risk information with operational colleagues. The exchange of information in relation to 7 (2) (d) premises needs to be more robust to ensure an effective two way process is established.
62. There is some evidence that the value of Protection is not recognised by all functions. Staff expressed concerns in relation to the profile of Fire Protection within the organisation.
63. Greater emphasis on consultation would benefit stakeholders who are affected by changes in service policy. The introduction of the Call Challenge Policy would have benefited from a consultation process to take account of concerns of those affected by the changes.

Response

Strengths

- The service has invested heavily in operational resource and specialist rescue
 - The Resilience Team effectively engage with the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and show strong leadership
 - Good strategic support for resilience (Incident Liaison Officers (ILO), Defra Agreement, exercises)
 - Good engagement with core response partners
 - The service has good regional and national involvement
 - Operational Assurance Team recording system presents a good opportunity to gather personnel risk critical information.
64. The investment of funds into Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and front line equipment is significant and staff are appreciative that they are being provided for in the best possible way. The introduction of the medium level rescue capability and the dedicated Road Traffic Collision (RTC) equipment in particular has been received in a positive way by operational personnel. The continued investment in leasing schemes to provide new fire appliances on a regular basis is also seen by staff as a strong statement of commitment to crew safety from management. The introduction of Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) and Airwave have provided the service with a secure and interoperable radio system which have similarly enhanced staff confidence.
65. NFRS have an excellent reputation within the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) based on commitment and professionalism and are viewed as a key player critical to the continued success of the forum. NFRSs lead role in quality assurance has added significantly to the production of the Community Risk Register and exercise planning. The role played by NFRS in the Scrutiny Committee also adds to the structure and effectiveness of the forum.
66. NFRS is an active participant in national and regional development. In providing support for CFOA by providing the lead for counter terrorism and supporting the national development of water rescue as a strategic level adviser they are continually demonstrating their commitment to excellence and developing their reputation.
67. There is considerable evidence of monitoring and reviewing activity to ensure compliance and inform policy. The Expectations document provides an iterative process that collects information, informs action plans and monitors local response to those plans. It also allows managers to spot trends across a wider area that may need to effect a change in policy or a change in resource allocation. Similarly the Operational Assurance Team (OAT) process allows for collection of information at operational incidents and once again provides

an opportunity for specific activities and wider trends to be addressed in a way that controls organisational risk. The use of Rushcliffe Emergency Alarm Call Team (REACT) meetings, Partner Board views and Group and Area Manager Forums to monitor and direct the service add to the IRMP process making it robust and truly reflective of the service needs.

Areas for consideration

- The Service should, as a priority, formally review, communicate and implement a revised Incident Command System providing a clear audit trail for its outcomes.
 - The service should ensure outcomes from the Operation Assurance Team (OAT) reporting system are effectively implemented through closer engagement with the Learning and Development function.
 - Those middle managers implementing the OAT system should be encouraged to do so in a constructive manner as it would appear their present style of interaction has the potential to have a disproportionately negative impact on operational staff.
 - As the service moves forward it should consider the development of outcomes based performance targets.
68. The service had identified the need to review the Incident Command System (ICS) to reflect the changes as set out in the Manual of Firemanship. The subsequent critical reflections on the ICS proposed that there was further actions needed on the ICS at a national level but did not identify any actions for NFRS. Consequently ICS within NFRS does not reflect changes identified in the manual and there is no evidence to suggest that there will be any further review before the review of Incident Command Communications that has been identified for July 2011. This appears to present a risk to the organisation in that other FRSs nationally are moving toward command and control systems that implement analytical risk assessments at increasingly smaller incidents while NFRS has not yet addressed this trend.
69. As stated previously the Operational Assurance Team (OAT) system is a positive process for monitoring operational activity but there does not appear to be a method of ensuring compliance with the outcomes that are delivered on a monthly basis. Once the OAT report is delivered to stations there is no assurance that actions are taken at a local level and with crews expressing the opinion that it is becoming an ever more onerous document there is uncertainty over the level of compliance.
70. The collection of the information that provides the basis for the OAT report comes from monitoring carried out by Station Managers. The feedback from Crew and Watch Managers is that this could be done in a more positive way. One of the principles of the ICS is to provide support in a way that improves morale, however, feedback has contained comments such as; *“Is there a*

need to dress people down at an incident?” and “Silly nit picking stuff that an experienced officer would just fix”. The style of this intervention has a disproportionately negative impact on operational staff and their faith in the service to support them to carry out their role effectively and if it continues in this way could significantly damage morale.

71. The service has changed in recent years which is supported by the feedback from across the service in the last staff survey. The next focus of the service should be to concentrate upon improving its performance through the use of outcomes based performance targets. This should take the organisation to the next level.

Health and safety

Strengths

- A strong area with good leadership, planning and self awareness
 - Strong corporate support and effective Health Safety and Welfare Committee
 - Health and Safety responsibilities are now included in operational job descriptions combined with the 'Managing Safely' course and are now bearing fruit
 - Effective interaction with representative bodies in the Health and Safety arena
 - National Generic Risk Assessments (GRAs) effectively integrated into own procedures.
72. Leadership within this function is strong with a clear understanding of what should be delivered, which is converted into effective, planned delivery. There is a clear focus on developing sustained improvements and an organisation-wide health and safety culture, this is reflected by a downward trend in accidents and near-misses. This is a good thing in this service.
73. There is clear and strong strategic support for Health and Safety which is conveyed through the Health, Safety and Welfare Committee. Areas where improvements are required are addressed and an effective audit loop exists to ensure that the Committee is satisfied that remedial actions have been completed.
74. The service has re-developed operational job descriptions to include contractual, personal Health and Safety responsibilities which are well communicated to individuals. The continued delivery of the 'Managing Safely' course combined with the amended job descriptions is supporting the development of an effective Health and Safety culture.
75. The relationship between the service and the representative bodies on Health and Safety matters is strong and this cross-interest working, particularly at the Health Safety and Welfare Committee is allowing a mature approach to progressing health and safety business.
76. Rather than simply adopting national Generic Risk Assessments the Service considers these from its own organisational perspective and subsequently builds these into its own operating procedures. This is a pragmatic approach which ensures that strengths from national work can be incorporated into tailored local assessments.

Areas for consideration

- Leadership of the Health and Safety and Risk Management departments could be more effective if a more collaborative style was adopted
 - Consideration should be given to involving a lead member in Health and Safety. This could be achieved through existing FA structures
 - Procurement systems must be explicitly cognisant of Health and Safety issues
 - Consideration should be given to the risk created by self regulating dual contracts
 - The service should work with premise owner-occupiers to ensure that their duty to provide risk critical information to the service is fulfilled.
77. There are clear synergies between Health and Safety and Risk Management however it is apparent that these are not being fully exploited. The adoption of a more collaborative style of working between these two functions as a minimum and the potential for integration in the longer-term would benefit the service greatly and reduce any potential risk that may develop as a consequence of self induced functional independence.
78. Whilst there is strong leadership from within the service on Health and Safety matters it is not a responsibility that should be completely removed from FRA members. Allowing members to more effectively engage over Health and Safety will add strength to the function and as such consideration should be given to introducing a lead member for Health and Safety who should work with the function's leadership whilst at the same time provide reassurance to the FRA through an annual reporting framework. It is uncommon within FRSs generally for an FRA member not to have direct involvement in Health and Safety. The existing HR committee and its chair would provide an ideal reporting mechanism for the service to update and inform FA members on its Health and Safety Management.
79. Procurement undertaken in a less effective manner can be responsible for importing risk into an organisation; it is for this reason that procurement systems must be controlled and take full consideration of Health and Safety implications of any purchasing decision. Until such time as the new financial system is introduced which requires appropriate authorisation of spending decisions which enforces consideration of Health and Safety, the Service should review its purchasing process in order that risk may be more effectively eliminated
80. The service has in place rules and guidelines which govern the application of dual-contracts for personnel working both the whole-time and retained duty systems, the application of which are largely self-governed and locally managed. It has been suggested through anecdotal evidence that these rules are not being adhered to on all occasions with individuals working outside of the agreed limits. If this were to be the case it would present a substantial risk

and therefore, as a priority, the service should seek to establish the veracity of this anecdotal evidence and if necessary put in place systems which more tightly control the application of the dual contracts.

81. Commercial premise owners/occupiers have a duty to share information with the service where such information refers to risks which may be encountered by service personnel. Presently only a small number of owner/occupiers fulfil this duty and as such the service should consider working with local and national partners to raise awareness amongst the commercial community of the extent of their obligations.

Training and development

Strengths

- Stability at a corporate and strategic level is providing re-assurance in the Training and Development function
 - The Member Development Charter has been signed up to
 - Portfolio based evidence is being used to demonstrate service wide competence
 - Peripatetic training teams supporting training within districts
 - Training Board monthly meetings and quarterly de-brief analysis is aiding learning and development
 - The HR team is very positive and effectively engaging down to district level
 - There is a consistent approach to delivering equality and diversity training.
82. Stability at a corporate and strategic level is providing re-assurance in the training and development function. A review of the department in 2007 has resulted in realignment to ensure objectives feed into the organisation's overall Corporate Plan/IRMP.
83. There is evidence to show that the Regional Member Development Charter has been signed up to that members also have Personal Development Plans. This engagement should benefit the service in the clarity of its decision-making structures.
84. Portfolios are being used to demonstrate service wide confidence. Role map based maintenance of competence folders have been introduced for all roles. This provides evidence and assurance in respect of the competence of the workforce.
85. Peripatetic training teams are supporting training within districts. The teams provide greater flexibility for training delivery and enable watches and retained development to be enhanced through the provision of specialist trainers programmed to conduct sessions at a local level.
86. The introduction of the Training Steering Group is aiding learning and development and promoting enhanced communication within the organisation. The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and Unison are represented on the Group which meets monthly to consider progress on training and development issues and risk management issues (de-brief analysis, accidents, near misses, etc.).
87. The HR team is very positive and effectively engaging down to district level. The business partner model has seen a closer integration of HR staff at

district level in supporting operational personnel. Dedicated support to Control staff over the Regional Control Centre (RCC) project is assisting in smoothing a difficult project. Across the organisation HR staff are experienced and very positive and enthusiastic.

88. There is a consistent approach to delivering equality and diversity training. Following the introduction of a Single Equalities Scheme the service has maintained focus and momentum by delivering equalities training to circa 200 managers. The lead for equality and diversity has a good grasp of the complexity of the area and a clear view of how to move the service towards embedding the concepts into the practice of the organisation.

Areas for consideration

- The service should consider the efficacy of its incident command competence assessment
 - Budgeting for training and development would benefit from local and external cost analysis
 - The outcomes from the Retained Duty System (RDS) Review which refer to training should be implemented as a priority
 - Greater scope exists for collaboration on wider organisational training at a regional or sub regional level.
89. The service should consider the efficacy of its Incident Command competence assessment. It is noted that enhancements are planned for the future utilising 'Vector' however the need to address this area should be considered as a matter priority. This is to ensure the service has a clear and coherent approach to delivering effective Incident Command.
90. Budgeting for Training and Development would benefit from local and external cost analysis. This would provide bench marking for cost of provision and help ensure the service can demonstrate value for money.
91. The outcomes from the RDS Review which refer to training should be implemented as a priority as some RDS staff feel undervalued. Implementing the recommendations will provide greater support, flexibility and accessibility of training opportunity for RDS personnel.
92. Greater scope exists for collaboration on training at a regional level. Although regional collaboration takes place in relation to recruitment, Assessment and Development Centres (ADCs) and development programmes it is recognised that there are more opportunities for collaboration for the Training and Development activities.

Call management and incident support

Strengths

- There is strong and supportive leadership within the Control function
 - The attitude of staff within control is admirable and positive in the face of the adverse uncertainty and should be commended
 - The function has benefited from the introduction of day duty Station Managers
 - The introduction of key skills is supporting the development of staff
 - The new Call Challenge Policy for Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) is having a significant positive impact on call rates.
93. There is strong and supportive leadership within the Control function. This is reflected by the positive attitude displayed by Control staff. An independent review looked at call management, incident management and L & D records and recommendations have been implemented which have greatly improved arrangements.
94. The attitude of staff within control is admirable and positive in the face of the adverse uncertainty and should be commended. The level of uncertainty around the RCC project and the implications for staff is inevitably causing anxiety and distress. Despite these circumstances staff remained upbeat and positive towards the service they deliver.
95. The function has benefited from the introduction of day duty Station Managers. This restructuring has resulted in more effective management of Control with the Station Managers allocated responsibility for individual references and the Watch Managers running the watch supported by two Crew Managers. Greatly improved arrangements for performance management and learning and development are two particularly evident areas.
96. The introduction of 'Key Skills' is supporting the development of staff. 'Key skills' is based on the national occupational standards and provides a modular system to ensure staff are trained to a competent level.
97. The new Call Challenge Policy for AFAs is having a significant positive impact on call rates. The impact of unwanted fire signals provides a significant resource requirement for the service in terms of appliance mobilisation. The introduction of this policy has delivered immediate improvements in terms of reduced appliance mobilisation.

Areas for consideration

- The service could consider challenging some of the timing aspects of the staffing process issues associated with the RCC timetable
 - Although Control staff are involved in an number of operational debriefs this should be encouraged as widely as possible
 - We support the intention to introduce the Expectation document into Control.
98. The service could consider challenging some staffing process issues associated with the RCC timetable. Staff wishing to work in the RCC are currently engaged in an application process and will be informed of the result in October 2010 despite the programmed transfer date being November 2011. This process could have a negative effect on staff morale and motivation with respect of the unsuccessful staff.
99. Although Control staff are involved in a number of operational debriefs this should be encouraged to occur as widely as possible. The benefit of highlighting issues and encouraging learning will assist in driving improvements in service delivery. The need to consider including Control staff in incident debriefs needs to be embedded.
100. We support the intention to introduce the Expectation document to Control. This will allow a benchmarking system to be implemented to provide the basis for evaluating effectiveness of Fire Control processes.

Contact details

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