



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

SERVICE STRUCTURE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item No:

Date: 28 June 2013

Purpose of Report:

To update the Fire Authority on the current situation regarding the implementation of the revised Service structure and to advise of the scheduled 12 monthly review which may lead to further rationalisation, subject to appropriate consultation with representative bodies.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In May 2012 the Fire Authority received a report relating to proposals to amend the existing Service structure and the associated salary bill. This matter had already been agreed by the Human Resources Committee through normal process, although their recommendations had to be ratified before any post deletions and post creations could be actioned.
- 1.2 The Fire Authority approved the amendments which saw the total establishment reduce from 1086.5 to 1029 full time equivalents, with the associated reduction in staff cost of £1,161,898.
- 1.3 The basis for the revised structure had been a combination of the outcomes of the Fire Cover Review and a move to a more intelligence based approach to managing community risk. An internal voluntary redundancy process and re-allocation of roles between uniform and non-uniform staff were part of the outcomes, which enabled the establishment reduction with associated cost savings.
- 1.4 As part of the implementation, senior managers agreed to a further review 12 months from the implementation date, which is scheduled for August 2013.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The new structure was implemented on time and delivered through effective consultation and engagement with staff and their representatives. Many roles were changed and a number of staff opted for redeployment. The number of redundancies was kept to a minimum and as a consequence the number of compulsory redundancies amongst support staff was zero.
- 2.2 It is therefore appropriate to further review the new structure over the next few weeks with the support of the Human Resources Committee. This will ensure that there is confidence that things are still working effectively, but will also help to establish whether any further rationalisation can be achieved.
- 2.3 Elsewhere on this agenda the Fire Authority will consider the budget implications, proposals for rationalisation of operational delivery and the report by Sir Ken Knight on efficiency within the Fire and Rescue Service. These reports put into full context the challenges the Service faces.
- 2.4 There is no suggestion that the current structure is not working, however as the Service faces a £1.8 million deficit in its budget predictions for 2014/15, all options for further rationalisation of the organisation must be explored.
- 2.5 Additionally, and in tandem with the above, a review of management capacity will be undertaken. In relation to uniform staff, senior management is now very lean. Members will note that in Sir Ken Knight's review, he refers to anomalies in this area. The Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service ratio is 63:1, which is the leanest CFA structure quoted in Sir Ken Knight's report.

However, this does not mean the Service should not review further how this can be more cost effective.

- 2.6 The Service has already moved into areas such as commissioning, outsourcing and attracting potential income to support its financial position. These aspects will also affect the establishment number, and will be considered as part of any impact analysis. Additionally, the Chief Fire Officer and his immediate team will seek to engage regional partners and other organisations about the potential for sharing some services which may equally improve the current finances.
- 2.7 If the outcomes of the review reveal any further rationalisation can be achieved, the approach to staff reductions would be applied on a basis of voluntary redundancy first (depending on departmental capacity), followed by re-training and re-deployment. At this stage the Service would seek to avoid any compulsory redundancies from this process.
- 2.8 There are still a number of vacancies within the new structure to which appointments have not been made or have become vacant due to staff departures. All vacancies will be reviewed to ensure that they are still relevant and where necessary, the approval to delete posts will be sought.
- 2.9 The key for the Service is to utilise the time between now and February 2014 to achieve as many actual or proposed savings to enable the Fire Authority to set a balanced budget, whilst ensuring that it maintains the level of service the public would expect from its Fire and Rescue Service.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The key financial implications arising out of this report relate primarily to achieving a reduction in revenue costs. The medium term financial strategy identifies a budget deficit for 2014/15 of £1.8 million which will need to be addressed. Officers have sought to manage the budget carefully to ensure any underspends can be used as transitional funding to lessen the impact on the organisation and the community.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

Informal discussions have already been held with the various representative bodies with regard to the impact of the current financial situation. Proper negotiation and process will have to be employed to comply with both internal policies and employment law. Any re-training required as a re-deployment option will be provided by the Service as part of any process.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific equalities implications arising from this report. The Service's processes and policies are all subject to an equality impact assessment as part of their development.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Service will need to ensure that all relevant legal processes are complied with to ensure that correct procedures in relation to any staff reductions are applied.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The key risks relate to the Service's ability to further reduce its establishment levels, whilst maintaining an effective and efficient delivery of service to the public. By applying a measured approach, the risk of the service delivery being affected will be mitigated.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the report and proposed review and agree to receive any further recommendations from the Human Resource Committee on any permanent changes to the establishment.

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

None.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER