Public Document Pack

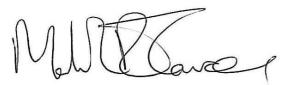**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE & CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY - COMMUNITY SAFETY**

Date: Friday, 10 January 2014 **Time:** 10.00 am

Venue: Fire and Rescue Services HQ, Bestwood Lodge, Arnold Nottingham NG5 8PD

Members are requested to attend the above meeting to be held at the time, place and date mentioned to transact the following business

Clerk to the Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority

ANY COUNCILLOR WHO IS UNABLE TO ATTEND THE MEETING AND WISHES TO SUBMIT APOLOGIES SHOULD DO SO VIA THE PERONAL ASSISTANT TO THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AT FIRE SERVICES HEADQUARTERS ON 0115 967 0880

IF YOU NEED ANY ADVICE ON DECLARING AN INTEREST IN ANY ITEM ABOVE, PLEASE CONTACT THE CONSTITUTIONAL SERVICES OFFICER SHOWN ON THIS AGENDA, IF POSSIBLE BEFORE THE DAY OF THE MEETING.

Constitutional Services Officer: *Carol M Jackson Telephone: 0115 8764297*

carol.jackson@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Agenda, reports and minutes for all public meetings can be viewed online at:-
[website address to be inserted]

**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM
FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on **4 OCTOBER 2013** at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham from 10.00 am to 11.02 am.

Membership

Councillor Harwood   (Chair)
Councillor Barnfather
Councillor Grocock
Councillor Rigby
Councillor Wilmott

Members absent are marked **^**

7   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

8   DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None

9   MINUTES

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2013 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

10   FIRE INVESTIGATION

Deputy Chief Fire Officer John Buckley introduced the report of the Chief Fire Officer informing members of the arrangements for fire investigation currently in place in Nottinghamshire and the effectiveness of it. Station Manager, Glenn Mears and Police

Liaison Officer Kevin Poxon presented the report to the Members, the main points of which were:

- fire investigation currently operates at two levels in Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS); level 1 is conducted by Supervisory Managers and level 2 is conducted by specialist Fire Investigation Officers;

- level 1 investigation is conducted by supervisory managers at the scene of all fires and produces information that is recorded as the most likely cause of the fire on the Incident Recording System (IRS). Information from this system is used, together with other factors to direct where community safety resources and interventions are allocated. Where a cause cannot be established, a level 2 Fire Investigation Officer may be requested to attend the scene;

- level 2 Fire Investigators are mobilised by Fire Control to various situations including; fires involving fatalities or serious injury, fires requiring the use of six or more pumping appliances and on request from the senior police investigating officer. From 1 January 2013 to date, 57 level 2 fire investigations have been conducted in Nottinghamshire, compared to 102 in total for 2012;

- the fire investigation function is managed and co-ordinated by the Station Manager in the Arson Reduction and Investigation Team;

- the crews attending fires are regarded as the eyes and ears of the Service. As part of the investigation process, statements will be taken from crew members attending the scene of a fire as well as from other witnesses. Fire and burglar alarms are interrogated and photographs and videos taken of the scene. Any CCTV footage can be very useful;

- the first stage of an investigation at the scene of a fire involves identifying the room of origin of the fire followed by the ignition point in the room of origin and identifying any smoke patterns. Preservation of any evidence at the scene is crucial to the investigation. The first decision to be made is to ascertain whether a fire is accidental or deliberate and then to eliminate possible causes;

- the NFRS prides itself on a very close working relationship both with the police and H M Coroners office. There have been two fire fatalities in Nottinghamshire so far this year and these have been investigated by level 2 Investigators in conjunction with the Police. Reports on the deaths are then presented to H M Coroner for consideration. When asked to prepare a report for the Coroner, the Coroner will not only require information on the origin and cause of the fire, but on the circumstances of the individual and their lifestyle in order to show why this individual has died as a result of the fire and to make recommendations for further actions or interventions to prevent further deaths or injury from fire;

- if the Coroner feels that the evidence he/she receives gives rise to a concern that circumstances creating a risk of other deaths will occur or continue to exist, he/she may make a Rule 43 Report (Coroners' Rules 1984) which is sent to the organisation that has responsibility for the circumstances. A recipient of a Rule 43 Report must send a written response within 56 days. The response must give details of any action which has been or is proposed will be taken, or provide an explanation when no action is proposed. Rule 43 Reports may offer

some assurance that the circumstances which brought about the death are being addressed, and that future deaths may be avoided;

- the Fire Investigation Officers may be contacted by others with a vested interest in the investigation, for example, insurance companies;

- a regional agreement provides funding for a regional hydrocarbon detection dog and handler. The dog and handler can be requested 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by level 2 Fire Investigators or by request from the police. The dog will be requested at all fatal fires and those resulting in serious injury together with those where an accelerant is suspected to have been used. The dog will not be used where there is any threat to its safety.

The meeting was then given a demonstration by Dave Coss, Dog Handler and Freckle, the dog. Mr Coss dropped a very small amount of accelerant on the carpet whilst Freckle was outside the room. On entry to the room Freckle demonstrated to Members that she was able to sniff out even a very small amount of accelerant and indicate to Mr Coss where it was in the room. Since April this year, Freckle has attended around 40 investigations in Nottinghamshire.

The Chair thanked Glenn Mears and Kevin Poxon for their very interesting presentation and Mr Coss and Freckle for their impressive demonstration.

Councillors suggested that a further report would be welcome at a future meeting of the Committee, on identifying vulnerable individuals and the action being taken to mitigate risks in relation to vulnerable people. Mr Buckley agreed to arrange for this.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report and to continue to support the activity of the Fire Investigation Team.

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**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service**
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Community Safety Committee

SERVICE DELIVERY PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Agenda:

Date: 10 January 2014

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on how Service Delivery monitors, manages and reports on risk reduction initiatives and data

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CONTACT OFFICER

Name :	John Buckley Deputy Chief Fire Officer
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Media Enquiries Contact :	Bridget Aherne (0115) 9670880 bridget.aherne@notts-fire.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Under the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) is accountable to communities for the service it provides. This service covers a broad range of actions and responsibilities including resilience, prevention, protection and response.

1.2 Accountability is demonstrated by having the required scrutiny arrangements in place. Performance is assessed across a number of key areas with our suite of indicators providing for both qualitative and quantitative monitoring of organisational performance. Although no longer a statutory requirement, the National Indicators (NI) data continue to be collected. Performance figures are monitored on a daily basis, with a comprehensive review of performance against NIs and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) being undertaken each Quarter. As well as formally presenting the outcomes to the Fire Authority, the results are published on the Internet to give the latest information to the public. The overall summary of reports is published each summer as part of the Annual report.

1.3 A key element of the National Framework is greater transparency. With FRAs ultimately accountable to their local communities, there is a requirement to be transparent about decisions and actions taken, and engage with communities so local people can scrutinise and influence service delivery. Our open approach towards data and information, plus actions in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, provides this transparency for our communities.

1.4 A further element of our regulatory framework is DCLG guidance on statements of assurance for FRAs. The priorities in the Service plan are a means for us to achieve our community fire safety objectives, which in turn serve to drive our performance measures. Publishing our statement of assurance provides an accessible way for communities, Government, Local Authorities and other partners to make a valid assessment of our performance.

1.5 The current suite of indicators from a Service Delivery perspective are related to Fire Protection, Fire Prevention and a number of Response activities.

2. REPORT

2.1 The Head of Service Delivery will be in attendance to give a brief presentation on this report.

2.2 The Service re-structure provided an opportunity for a re-energised intelligence driven Service Delivery model necessary to meet the demands of a changing risk profile within Nottinghamshire, enhancing and enabling:

- resources deployed and centred on identified risk;
- the distinction and ownership of analysis, evaluation and delivery;
- fire fighter safety;
- fact-based evaluation;

- clear standards and expectations;
- improved control and management of resources;
- continual improvement.

2.2 The governance arrangements of the Service include scrutiny and reporting performance. The reporting process covers Protection, Prevention and Response indicators. Preparedness and additional Response functions within Service Delivery need to be included which are now in the draft IRMP. Response interventions start with the emergency call to Fire Control, effective Response enabled by effective, appropriate preparedness and resilience.

2.3 Currently information resulting from a number of processes and procedures is collected and stored in different formats and locations. Some of the information used for management purposes, some for monitoring, some for measurement. The current reporting is negative in nature. Work is in progress to determine what Service Delivery are to measure and why.

2.4 The Response element could include fire survival numbers, attendance times, weight of attack (PDA), incidents of particular interest, number of rescues, customer and other agency feedback, Incidents attended, Fire Investigation findings.

2.5 For preparedness the report could include off the run statistics, risk inspections and plans completed, operational exercises completed, equipment related matters, ridership levels and resilience matters. For Fire Protection the report could be enhanced to include the number of enforcements, prohibitions and risk information received from others. For Prevention the definition and report could include Road Traffic Collision data and interventions.

2.6 To manage the information Service Delivery have a robust framework in place, intelligence is gleaned from numerous sources of different timescales including analysts, partner agencies, incident log books, Fire Protection, Arson Task Force, local knowledge, national and regional matters, monthly planners, Performance Indicator monitoring. The information is captured and stored in a number of formats including CFRMIS and PB Views.

2.7 The members of the Risk Reduction Teams, the Corporate Performance Team and the Thematic Leads interpret and analyse the data and intelligence. To prevent duplication of effort and to provide the requisite standards, scrutiny and support, there is a performance meeting timeline in place. Including quarterly joint meetings, Group Manager review and Service Delivery Scrutiny meeting.

2.8 Reports are populated and amended at each stage under the headings Action Plan, Progress and Interventions. All interventions are evaluated to create a library of potential solutions to matters arising. An appendices of embedded interventions is being created, focus and attention will then be drawn to new initiatives. The final report is populated by the Head of Service Delivery, formatted by Corporate and forwarded to CMB, then Performance Committee, all reports can be seen via the City Council website.

2.9   Clear standards and expectations are provided at each stage of the process, the resources of the Risk Reduction Teams are flexible, moved around the Service to meet demand, the risk may not be a Fire Prevention matter the teams may be utilised for other critical work e.g. operational planning or supporting RDS availability, hence the terminology is Risk Reduction Teams and not Community Safety Teams.

2.10   The challenge moving forward is to determine and provide the necessary sources of intelligence, evidence and dependencies. Some information will be used for management purposes, other for performance reporting purposes.

3.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Targeting resources improves the Services efficiency and effectiveness. With a reduction in resources and a more challenging economic climate, the Service must focus on the intelligence driven interventions that have the greatest level of success. This will ensure that the level of service provided to those deemed to be at a greater risk is maximised within the community.

4.   HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no Human Resources and Learning and Development implications arising from this report.

5.   EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

The Service needs to take different actions to meet the varying needs of each community. Each initiative is evaluated and the results shared and used as future good practice. This process will continually improve the Services knowledge and understanding or the diverse communities it serves.

6.   CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

The Service must use and share data with others to achieve shared outcomes as directed by the Crime and Disorder Act 2003. The processes in place ensure that this opportunity is maximised.

7.   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Robust management of performance and risk ensures compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. This process provides assurance that data is processed in a timely manner and utilised to inform future activity.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Through the performance monitoring and reporting mechanisms, Nottinghamshire and the City of Nottingham Fire Authority are able to clearly see the progress being made towards its targets, as laid down within the NFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

8.2 By ensuring that this mechanism remains in place and is further developed allows open scrutiny of the Governance and Improvement arrangements for performance within the Authority and fully supports the discharge of its responsibilities and duties under the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004, via the IRMP process.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report and support the procedures in place to monitor performance and reduce risk.

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

None.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service**
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Community Safety Committee

Fire Protection Department Update

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item No:

Date: 10 January 2014

Purpose of Report:

To provide Members with an update on Fire Protection activity.

CONTACT OFFICER

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) came into effect in October 2006 and replaced over 70 pieces of fire safety law. The requirements for enforcement in the FSO were not new to Fire and Rescue Authorities as there were similarities with the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997. However, the FSO covers a far larger range of premises including:

- non-domestic premises including common parts of houses in multiple occupation;
- premises used by self- employed (including family run businesses);
- premises used by the voluntary sector.

1.2 Exceptions include Crown occupied/owner properties, premises in armed forces establishments, certain specified premises including construction sites, ships under repair and construction, nuclear installations; and sports grounds and stands designated as needing a safety certificate by a local authority.

1.3 Article 26 of the FSO requires that every enforcing authority must enforce the provisions of the Order and any regulations made under it. The Chief Fire Officer has responsibility to ensure that the Service fulfils any requirement made on the Fire Authority within the FSO.

1.4 Fire safety enforcement activities are designed to ensure the Fire Authority's statutory requirements, under the remit of the Fire Safety Order (2005) (FSO), are met and that risk to life and property is reduced.

1.5 The enforcement of fire safety is a critical element of the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Plan and the Authority's strategy for the enforcement of fire safety forms a key part of its overall strategy for the protection of its community. Fire Protection will ascertain the risks in the community and then analyse them and assign resources in the most effective way to reduce or eliminate those risks.

1.6 This report builds on previous reports to the Committee and highlights how the Fire Protection department's activities contribute to risk reduction. The report will be supported by a presentation which will focus on how the department will:

- maintain a risk-based approach to enforce our statutory responsibilities;
- meet the fire safety enforcement statutory requirements;
- continue to reduce unwanted fire signals;
- achieve safer business and community sectors.

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2. REPORT

Risk Based Approach to Inspections

2.1 The Fire Protection inspectorate consists of 21 officers, some of whom are Operational, have management responsibilities and are conditioned to different duty systems and Conditions of Service etc. Additionally, each Officer will be at a different stage of development and may also have additional responsibilities that reduce available time for Fire Protection inspection activity. Based on this information the inspection capacity of the Department can be calculated.

2.2 Fire Protection staff collect high quality risk data about premises and prioritise inspections based upon the level of risk. This enables the service to target prevention, protection and response options effectively, efficiently and in a verifiable manner. The inspection activity aims to reduce the risk and impact of fire on the community, safeguard fire fighters and protect heritage and the environment. It also reduces loss of life, injuries and economic and social costs.

2.3 The risk-based inspection programme is a key part of the overall risk reduction strategy. The Fire Safety Order makes a risk assessment approach central to determining the necessary level of fire precautions in premises.

2.4 Premises managed by public, commercial or voluntary organisations which present the highest risk are inspected on a more frequent basis. Those premises considered to be lower risk are inspected primarily in response to complaints, or on a sample basis to verify their lower risk classification.

2.5 Fire Protection relies heavily on quality data sets, and this is predominantly contained within the Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS). There is an ongoing process of refining and identifying issues relating to the datasets contained within the system and how they impact upon the Fire Protection aspect of service delivery.

2.6 The Fire Protection department has changed significantly over the last few years to ensure the delivery model is as efficient as possible. This has been achieved by restructuring the department and converting some roles to non-uniformed Inspecting Officers, utilising technology to enable mobile working and modernising inspection processes.

2.7 A proposed web-based version of CFRMIS is being progressed and once the implementation project is complete it will increase the ability to work remotely and reduce the requirement to return to base and therefore release more time for inspection activity.

2.8 Due to the risk-based approach taken in the inspection regime, there are a range of different activity types available to the Officer to enable an

appropriate response relative to the different circumstances and risks they may find. These are defined below:

Audit
The 'Fire Safety Audit and Data Gathering Form' is the principle tool at the heart of the inspection programme. It enables the Officer to collect identification and risk data about premises in a systematic and consistent manner. In pre-planning these inspections it will be expected that a minimum notice period of four weeks is given to the responsible persons at the premises.

Thematic
Designed to allow the Officer to visit the premises, gather some critical data (as per the Audit process) and assess the general risk in a shorter time than a full audit would take. For example a number of small hotels which had previously not been visited by the Service, could form the basis of thematic inspections. The risks could then be assessed and decisions taken on any future actions. These inspections can also be used in assessing the risk(s) within multi–occupied premises.

Follow up
A follow-up inspection is one which is carried out in order to ascertain the progress made in carrying out the measures required or recommended following a previous visit; e.g. steps included in a notice of deficiencies issued under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Peak risk inspection
There is an increased risk within certain premises when they are operating at their 'peak risk'. For example, it may well be necessary, on occasion, to visit licensed premises when they are operating at or near to full capacity or to visit premises with overnight life risk at times when staffing levels may be reduced, or to visit shops when they are trading at their busiest times e.g. during the lead up to Christmas.

Specific
A specific inspection is one that covers a range of instances and that requires something less than a thorough and comprehensive examination of the premises in question, but deals with one or more specific items at the request of the occupier of the premise. It may be instigated by the Service to check specifically on the availability of exits following a complaint or allegation from a member of the public etc.

Enforcement

2.9   The principle aim of the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) is to make Nottinghamshire a safer place by reducing as far as possible the risks and social and economic costs of fires and other dangers, without imposing unnecessary burden. Securing compliance with legal regulatory requirements is an important part of achieving this aim.

2.10   The purpose of the enforcement function is to ensure that preventative remedial action is taken to protect relevant persons and to secure compliance with the regulatory system. The need for enforcement may stem from a lack of knowledge or a deliberate or negligent act. The term enforcement has a wide meaning and applies to all dealings between the Service and those on whom the law places a duty.

2.11   The purpose of enforcement is to:

- Promote and achieve sustained compliance with the law;
- Ensure that the person responsible for premises subject to fire safety regulation takes action to deal immediately with serious risks to the safety of relevant persons.
- Ensure those individuals, businesses and other undertakings that breach fire safety requirements are held to account, which may include bringing alleged offenders before the courts.

2.12   The Service has a wide range of interventions at its disposal to secure compliance with the law and to ensure a proportionate response to criminal offences. Officers may offer individuals, businesses and other undertakings information and advice either in person, in writing by letter or email, or over the telephone. This may include a warning that, in the opinion of the officer, they are failing to comply with the law. Where appropriate, officers may agree an action plan; provide a notification of deficiencies report or serve enforcement or alterations notice; prohibit or restrict the use of premises; or they may prosecute.

2.13   Enforcement notices, prohibition notices, and prosecutions are important ways to bring individuals, businesses and other undertakings to account for alleged breaches of the law. Where it is appropriate to do so and in accordance with this policy the Service will use one or more of these measures to secure compliance with fire safety law.

2.14   Investigating the circumstances encountered during audits or following incidents or complaints is essential before taking any enforcement action. In deciding what resources to devote to these investigations, the Service will have regard to the principles of enforcement within the Regulators' Code.

2.15   A specialist role based team exists within the Fire Protection Department that deals with specific enforcement issues namely prohibition and restriction of premises and the responsibility for progressing fire safety breaches that may result in prosecution. There are two Officers within the team and two shadow officers who gather certain skill sets and provide business continuity assurance.

2.16   This team is managed by a Station Manager within the Fire Protection Support Team and will actively pursue litigation against those who breach the legislation in order to set a clear example that such breaches are unacceptable and a risk to public safety.

Enforcement Case Studies

2.17   Fire protection officers from Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service visited a fast food outlet, in Nottingham in October 2012 and found that the fire precautions that should have been provided in the event of a fire were inadequate. This presented a serious risk to the lives of staff at the premises. Enforcement and Prohibition Notices were issued, which limited the use of the premises and required fire safety improvements.

2.18   The offences in full, on or before 8 October 2012, were as follows . . . .

1.   Failure to create a suitable and sufficient Fire Risk Assessment – fine of £1,334

2.   Failure to install a fire detection and warning system – fine of £2,667

3.   Failure to keep emergency escape routes free from obstruction – fine of £1,667

4.   Failure to ensure that emergency escape routes led to a place of safety fine of £1,334

5.   Failure to ensure that emergency escape routes were sufficiently protected from smoke or fire – fine of £2,000

6.   Failure to install appropriate emergency lighting on escape routes – fine of £1,667

The Magistrates emphasised that safety must always take priority over financial considerations.

2.19   Securing a conviction of this nature requires considerable effort, technical expertise and cost. Media Service are utilised to maximise coverage of such outcomes in order to encourage compliance with the FSO and secure safer business and community sectors.

2.20   In July 2012 a hotel was audited. The hotel had been audited previously in June 2010 and had been issued with a Notice of Deficiencies (NOD). During the audit serious breaches were discovered in service voids which resulted in a lack of fire separation throughout the hotel, both vertically and horizontally.

2.21   There were other contraventions of the FSO including lack of fire resistance to doors and opening on escape routes and insufficient and unsuitable fire risk assessments and reviews. A meeting subsequently took place at which time all the problems identified were made known to the Hotel Manager.

2.22   Upon completion of the audit it was confirmed that an Enforcement notice should be issued. The hotel took immediate action to reduce the risk in case of

fire including the introduction of improved management arrangements. An action plan was produced by the premises to address the fire safety deficiencies. As the corrective works commenced areas were closed in phases until the works in that area were completed.

2.23   The Hotel Manager contracted a specialist company to reinstate the required compartmentation and was able to provide initial timescales for the completion of the works. The specialists conducted a full survey of the premises and concluded that the problem more serious than initially suspected which increased both the timescales and costs for the work. Throughout the process regular meetings took place between City Fire Protection, the hotel managers and the surveyors. Solutions were proposed and agreed by all sides. Technical difficulties which prevented the reinstatement of the original compartmentation were overcome through the use of fire curtains and other fire stopping measures.

2.24   The Fire Protection department was kept informed of the progress of the works throughout and was consulted regularly on the acceptability of the various proposed solutions. The works were completed at the end of March 2013 and a completion certificate to the hotel by fire engineers. A follow up inspection by Fire Protection staff confirmed the measures taken by the hotel were reasonable and that no further action was required.

2.25   The total cost of the refurbishment required to comply with the FSO was over £160,000. Despite these costs the business expressed their gratitude to Fire Protection both for highlighting the issues and for the level of engagement and consultation demonstrated throughout the process. This project provides an example of good regulatory practice which assists organisations to achieve compliance in the most cost effective manner and builds on supporting economic growth.

Unwanted Fire Signals

2.26   An Unwanted Fire Signal (UFS) is defined as a signal transmitted through an Automatic Fire Detection System (AFD) reporting a fire where upon arrival of the fire service it is found that a fire has not occurred. UFS can be reduced through design, management practice, procedure, maintenance and the appropriate use of space within buildings.

2.27   The number of AFD systems installed in Nottinghamshire and the City of Nottingham is not known and, as Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service has no direct control of these systems, the Service needs to be pro-active in influencing the management of such systems in order to reduce the adverse impact caused by UFS.

2.28 The impact on the Service generated by UFS includes:

- diverting essential services from attending other more serious emergencies;
- increased risk of accidents and collisions as a result of the service responding under emergency conditions;
- demoralising to personnel through frequent attendance;
- disruption to the programmed activity of the Service, e.g. community fire safety education, fire prevention activities and operational training;
- adverse effect on performance;
- significant financial burden particularly when retained staff are mobilised.

2.29 The impact of UFS on the community includes:

- disruption to business through downtime and loss of revenue;
- loss of credibility in the alarm system which may result in occupant complacency leading to inappropriate response in the event of a real fire;
- cost to business from retained duty system fire fighters being released from duty;
- impact on the environment caused by unnecessary appliance movements;
- drain on public finances.

2.30 The strategy for reducing responses to UFS calls is based on the following principles:

- the use of clear protocols for call challenging by Fire Control staff. In most circumstances, where there is no risk to life, the caller will be asked to establish the cause of an alarm before Fire Control mobilises any PDA to the premises;

- liaising with and educating the responsible person taking full responsibility for the alarm system and all fire safety measures in his or her premises as detailed in the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005;

- the adoption of a robust off line policy whereby there is a delay in the signal being transmitted to the Service at certain times of the day;

- the recognition that the key purpose of an alarm system is to give the occupiers of a premises warning that there may be a fire so that the occupiers can evacuate the premises or otherwise as directed by the premises Emergency Action Plan;

- the adoption of a generic pre-determined attendance (PDA) based on risk assessments and call challenging protocols;

- the introduction of protocols to ensure the safety of vulnerable people and high risk buildings;

- the provision of appropriate protocols for control staff to support the mobilisation decision making process.

2.31   The implementation of the unwanted fire signal reduction policy has resulted in a continued reduction of unwanted fire alarms since its implementation in 2009 with 4028 calls in 2009 compared to 2658 calls during 2012 giving a reduction in unwanted fire alarms of 34%

2.32   The ability of authorities to charge for certain actions/services could lead to increased opportunities for revenue generation. However the focus is likely to be upon using charges to help influence better behavior e.g. reduction in automatic fire alarms.

Local Better Regulation

2.33   Businesses need to be confident that FRSs can provide them with the right information and advice to support them in being compliant; they also need to be assured that those enforcing the legislation are consistent in their decision making and, where possible to avoid confusion, the processes are similar. In the Autumn Statement 2012 the Government announced that it would introduce a package of measures to improve the way regulation is delivered. It is intended to do this through the introduction of a package of measures that the Fire Protection Department is working towards ensuring compliance with:

- the Fire Minister Brandon Lewis and the BIS Minister Michael Fallon have decided that primary authority will be extended to the fire safety order 2005 (applicable to Engand and Wales) on a statutory basis with a planned implementation date of April 2014 subject to parliamentary process;

- the Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO) has published the Regulators' Code and specified that regulators **must** have regard to the Code when setting standards or giving guidance. This statutory code of practice is expected to replace the Regulators' Compliance Code in spring 2014. It provides a framework for how regulators – whether local authorities or national organisations – should interact with those they regulate;

- CFOA has produced a framework for the development of fire safety enforcement officers. The framework is expected to be adopted by FRSs by April 2014.

3.	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1   Although there are no direct financial implications arising from this report it is worthy of note that the cost of pursuing a conviction for a contravention of the Fire Safety Order is generally fully recovered in the courts and this is used to offset the legal services budget.

3.2   Compliance with the package of measures designed to meet the Local Better Regulation agenda may have financial implications. This will be outlined in future papers to the Community Safety Committee.

4.   HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources or learning and development implications arising from this report.

5.   EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because the purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress of the Fire Protection Department and does not seek to change policy or procedures.

6.   CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7.   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Fire Authority is legally bound to pursue convictions for contraventions of the Fire Safety Order (2005). Furthermore there is a legal responsibility to mitigate risk and prevent fires within the Fire Services Act (2004). The activities of the Fire Protection Department assist the Authority in meeting these legal obligations.

8.   RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The work of the Fire Protection Department is a key strand to ensuring the Authority is managing risk within the community through a robust regime of inspection, information gathering and enforcement. Failure to undertake such work has the potential to affect the safety of the public and fire fighters alike, and poses a real risk to the reputation of the Service.

9.   RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report and continue to support the activities of the Fire Protection Department.

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

None.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Community Safety Committee

Vulnerable Persons Update

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item No:

Date: 10 January 2014

Purpose of Report:

To provide an update to Members regarding the Service's targeting of those most vulnerable to fire in the communities we serve.

CONTACT OFFICER

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) defines a vulnerable person as "Any person(s) that we, as a Service, consider to be at increased risk of death or injury from fire".

1.2 It is a fundamental aim of NFRS to target vulnerability by working across individual agency boundaries, collecting data to identify risk and engage with these groups as a risk reduction priority.

1.3 Home Safety Checks were introduced into NFRS in 2002 as part of the Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). Since then Home Safety Checks (HSCs) have become the best tool available to the Service in targeting and reducing fire deaths and injuries in the home.

1.4 Upon completing a HSC, the household is given an over-all risk-rating based upon the visual safety check that the firefighters complete. Risk levels can be low, medium, high or very high; and this equates to the likelihood of a fire occurring within the property.

1.5 In November 2011 the Service launched a new Vulnerable Person's policy, targeting the way HSCs are delivered, ensuring NFRS is reaching those most vulnerable to fire.

1.6 To-date, NFRS has conducted over 68,000 HSCs in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. In the last year the percentage of highly vulnerable households NFRS has visited through this scheme has risen from 4.5% to 24%, of all HSCs.

1.7 Since 2006 NFRS has experienced 38 fire deaths; of these 4 were known to the Service through HSC visits, 3 had refused visits and 31 were unknown.

1.8 Whilst NFRS is steadily improving interaction with vulnerable households it is recognised that the most vulnerable and most likely to experience a fire are the hardest for the Service to reach.

2. REPORT

Introduction

2.1 The establishment of the Vulnerable Person's policy in 2011 has seen the number of referrals from other agencies rise by 45% in the last 2 years.

2.2 The involvement the Service has with these agencies will vary on a case by case basis; from the initial referral to joint visits and changes in social care (incorporating fire safety considerations into everyday care) to changes in the home environment itself and on occasion re-location to a safer environment and increased levels of care for the individual. Agencies NFRS regularly work with range from Occupational Therapists, Mental Health Teams, Hospital Discharge Teams, Stroke Support Units, Domiciliary Care Teams to Women's

Aid, The Police, The Red Cross and many different housing providers and support associations.

2.3   Streamlining the referral and targeting process has seen NFRS's involvement with extremely vulnerable individuals increase. Through experience and as the Service's knowledge increases it's appreciated that a standard approach to home safety checks is not always appropriate. NFRS has since changed this response to a more tailored and bespoke service for the individuals who need it the most.

2.4   NFRS has learnt from local and national statistics that the most vulnerable to fire are the elderly (the risk significantly increases over the age of 85 or with conditions like dementia), individuals with mental health issues (including hoarders) as well as those living in deprived or socially isolated communities.

2.5   Through the establishment of a Serious Incident Review Panel, NFRS is bringing together internal departments with external partners to look at each fire death or fires causing life changing injury to establish whether there are lessons to be learned from the circumstances of the case.

Targeting

2.6   To ensure the Service is receiving the correct referrals and allowing us to target the most vulnerable, a strategic approach is necessary.

2.7   One of the most effective tools the Service has is the 'Vulnerable Person's Awareness Training' that has been delivered to over 5000 frontline workers and carers across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. This helps other agencies identify those at risk from fire and gives them the tools to make a referral to NFRS in a robust and timely manner.

2.8   As well as referrals, data-sharing agreements are forged between NFRS and key agencies to allow data about at risk individuals to be shared in a robust manner.

2.9   NFRS is continuing activities to target individuals that become disengaged with mainstream providers. Many of the more vulnerable and socially isolated individuals do not always engage with community activities and support services. Reaching these individuals and the few partners that do work with them is a continuing challenge.

2.10   Solely targeting high risk individuals would be a short-sighted approach for the Service to adopt. NFRS recognise that they have a major part to play in early intervention with those that have the potential to become the high risk of the future. Much of the Service's early intervention work is done in partnership with other agencies to promote a holistic approach. This is in-keeping with recommendations from the impending Care Bill. Schemes such as First Contact and City Signposting support this work.

2.11 Through partnerships and experience NFRS now recognises that identifying dementia or long-term health condition is more effective than intervening once someone has become high-risk or even had a fire.

Strategic Approaches to Data-Sharing

2.12 In order to seek partnerships at a strategic level it is essential for senior NFRS employees to promote risk reduction activities to policy makers, ensuring consideration is given to FRS agenda and performance indicators as well as ensuring NFRS is seen as a key partner to keeping people safe and well.

2.13 In September 2012 NFRS began a data-sharing pilot with Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) Social Care. This scheme saw every 85 year old living alone accessing their services contacted by NCC and offered a home safety check from NFRS. This trial scheme started in the Ashfield district and saw 11% of individuals contacted referred for a HSC, whereby 20% of these consequently came out at medium or high risk. Research shows that over 85's are the least likely to respond to generic fire safety campaigns and one of the most likely groups to have a fire, therefore data-sharing is the most effective way NFRS can reach these individuals. This pilot has since been expanded and the same exercise is being repeated to include all of the county's districts. The age group has also been lowered to 65 in order to achieve an early intervention strategy agenda too.

2.14 Since 2012 NFRS has been working with social housing providers to gain lists of all their properties and data on tenants as well as exact locations and addresses. This has led to the creation of 'Memorandums of Understanding' to assist data-sharing as well as promoting best practise in fire safety among the different associations. NFRS host a quarterly meeting to facilitate sharing of best fire safety practise among the associations.

2.15 Gaining data on housing stock has proved an extremely beneficial exercise; for instance the Service now knows that 40% of all fires within Nottingham City occur in Nottingham City Homes (NCH) properties. This has allowed NFRS to work very closely with NCH on new initiatives and home improvements as well as targeting their tenants for different safety campaigns. Through NFRS's partnership work with NCH they are now looking into fitting heat detection and sprinkler systems into their sheltered housing and many new build properties.

2.16 In January 2013, Manton in Worksop had a rise of accidental dwelling fires in the homes of over 65's, caused by cooking. Through cross-referencing the data it was identified that all of these households were tenants of A1 Housing. Working with A1 Housing, NFRS was able to identify all of their elderly tenants with cooking facilities and invite them to a Safety Day organised by the Service. Joined by The Red Cross and Trading Standards, NFRS spent a day with local people talking to them about fire safety with particular reference to cooking. In the quarter following the event, fires in Manton had reduced by 42%.

The Elderly

2.17   There has been an improvement in health over recent decades and, as a result, a growing number of people over 65 are expected to remain fit and active for years to come. However, the benefits of good health can slip away quickly and failing health decreases an individual's ability to survive an injury or cope with a traumatic experience such as fire.

2.18   Nottinghamshire has a higher proportion of older people than the national average with 18.1% of the population being over 65 years and 13,420 individuals living with dementia. The forecasted growth for older people in the County shows a predicted increase of 31% among those aged 65 and over by 2020, as well as the over 85 age group set to increase by 39% in the same period.

2.19   The fact that someone is twice as likely to die in a fire after the age of 50 means that this forecasted rise could have quite an impact on fire deaths and casualties unless action is taken now.

2.20   Research by the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) informs FRS's that making contact with people from the age of 50 has considerable advantages, as early intervention may prevent the person becoming a fire risk. At this point individuals can make decisions and changes to their current lifestyle which will have greater impact in later life. Therefore educating this group on the dangers of fire and how they can keep themselves safe and independent is becoming a risk reduction priority.

2.21   NFRS recognises that our interventions, smoke detectors, flame retardant safety equipment and deep fat fryers to name a few, have limitations. For example, there is little benefit fitting a smoke detector in the home of an individual with advanced dementia as they would be unable to understand the implications of a detector activating. NFRS recognise that fire prevention advice can only be effective if it is communicated to the target audience in a way that can be understood and acted upon. This is why partnership working across individual agency boundaries is paramount to achieving successful risk reduction.

2.22   Last year a group called Positive about Fire Prevention was established. This group brings together NFRS and Occupational Therapists (OT's) from Mental Health Services for Older People who meet on a quarterly basis to discuss challenging cases and safety interventions. Most recently the group has developed a fire safety in the home booklet for people in the early stages of memory difficulties. Future projects include the secondment of an Occupational Therapist into NFRS as well as trialling new technologies to help keep people with dementia cooking independently and safely.

2.23   NFRS is an active member of external partnerships such as Dementia Action Alliance and Age Action Alliance as well as CFOA's Dementia Research Group. Membership of these groups helps NFRS maintain relationships with key agencies and carers. Working with other fire and rescue services through

CFOA ensures NFRS are at the forefront of developments in technologies and strategy.

2.24 To assist crews and risk reduction teams in targeting this group, a new elderly person's fire safety presentation has been developed. Smoke alarm testing sticks, cooking timers, oil filled radiators and electric blankets are also available as interventions for households at risk.

2.25 A post incident review for fires in the homes of over 65's has recently been piloted. The qualitative data collected is already proving extremely beneficial for the Service in understanding how and why fires start in the homes of over 65's. This work will form the basis of future safety campaigns targeted at this group.

2.26 In Bassetlaw, the Service has a Service Level Agreement with the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS). RVS support the Service's work through their Home from Hospital, Befriending and Shopping services. Each service-user is assessed for a home safety check, smoke alarms are tested on a weekly basis and fire safety advice is reiterated and practised with elderly clients.

Utilising New Technology

2.27 Assistive technology is a device or system that allows an individual to perform a task that they would otherwise have been unable to do. Monitored smoke and heat detectors that if activated alert a call centre, are playing an increasingly vital role in keeping people living independently and safer for longer. NFRS refer hundreds of individuals a year for these services as well as assisting a few local service providers with the installations and maintenance.

2.28 Four stand-alone water misting systems have been purchased by the Service for trialling. These systems are activated by a linked smoke alarm. A number of the systems are already in use by other FRS's in the UK, which have proven they are an effective method of risk reduction by saving the lives of four individuals who would have almost certainly been unable to escape from the fire in their home.

Mental Health

2.29 Research by CFOA into 211 fire deaths concluded that 75% had a recorded history of mental health problems at inquest.

2.30 The link between mental health and fire is complex and internally and externally our understanding continues to develop.

2.31 NFRS is working with partners in order to improve awareness of the links between mental ill health and fire. Key to this approach is training partners to recognise vulnerability at an early stage so individuals can be referred and appropriate safety measures put into place.

2.32   Newly developed training for crews and risk reduction teams regularly take place to ensure there is an improved awareness of mental health within NFRS. This helps to promote a culture of recognising those at risk and ensuring they receive the right support.

2.33   The training developed between NFRS and Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust around the Mental Capacity Act is the first of its kind and is now being adopted by other FRS's.

Commissioning

2.34   In the last five years NFRS has developed a number of commissioning agreements with agencies such as AGE UK, and Framework. NFRS recognise that in some cases other agencies are best placed to provide the pro-active holistic or early intervention support individuals need. These agencies conduct basic home safety checks on behalf of the Service, as well as referring any of the more difficult cases to the local risk reduction team.

2.35   During 2012-13, 57% of home safety checks conducted by Framework were for high-risk individuals. When compared against a figure of 24% across the Service, the benefits of this commissioning are evident.

Hoarding

2.36   Hoarders pose a fire risk not only to themselves but neighbours and fire crews too. Over the last two years the Service has steadily been receiving increasing amounts of referrals for individuals considered as hoarders.

2.37   This has instigated the development of the Nottinghamshire Hoarding Steering Group, chaired by NFRS. This group brings together agencies across the board to work together and support individuals with this issue. NFRS is now working towards encouraging all agencies to adopt a universal clutter rating. This is a scale of 1 – 9 (1 being no clutter to 9 being a room filled completely with clutter) in order to streamline processes and assist referrals.

The Future

2.38   Work is already on going within the Service to re-visit the Vulnerable Person's policy. The scoring criteria requires altering to reflect the effect the HSC visit has had upon an individual's safety as well as to ensure the Service is sufficiently targeting those at risk.

2.39   Those not meeting the criteria for a HSC visit should continue to be signposted to the Service's website or relevant literature.

2.40   In addition to targeting vulnerability, a strategy must be established within the Service to target and record the pro-active early intervention work at groups likely to become high risk in the future. Work such as this will become increasingly prevalent under the new Care Bill, which will change the way agencies work together.

2.41   The Service needs to continue promoting the FRS's work to key policy makers in Social Care and Health to ensure data is shared in a robust and timely manner. As well as data sharing, all agencies would benefit from collective knowledge gained through the secondment of fire service and social care or health employees into partner organisations. New partnerships should also be forged with agencies such as Department for Work and Pensions who hold valuable data about vulnerable individuals.

2.42   The Service must continue to invest in new technology, trial new interventions and promote their effectiveness to housing providers and those responsible for the care of vulnerable groups. Through current trials and partnership working NFRS will have a range of assistive technologies available to meet the diverse needs of the vulnerable individuals whom they come into contact.

3.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no new financial implications arising from this report as all expenditure is contained within agreed budgets. However, this front-line service requires continuing resource to ensure that those most at risk from fire receive timely and appropriate interventions.

4.   HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no Human Resources or Learning and Development implications arising from this report.

5.   EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken because this report is compiled to ensure members are updated on our work with vulnerable people.

6.   CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

Under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act the Service is a statutory partner. It is expected that the Service works in partnership to reduce the number of incidents associated with fire related and other antisocial behavioural incidents.

7.   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Focussing resources on those most vulnerable ensures that the Service is effective as possible in driving down risk in the community.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report and continue to support the Service's Risk Reduction initiatives aimed at Vulnerable People.

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

None.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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