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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE AUTHORITY

Date: Friday, 16 February 2018 **Time:** 10.30 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

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ANY COUNCILLOR WHO IS UNABLE TO ATTEND THE MEETING AND WISHES TO SUBMIT APOLOGIES SHOULD DO SO VIA THE PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AT FIRE SERVICES HEADQUARTERS ON 0115 9760880

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.

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

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Fire and Rescue Services HQ, Bestwood Lodge,
Arnold Nottingham NG5 8PD on 15 December 2017 from 10.30 am - 12.54 pm**

Adjournments took place 10:34am-10:45am and 11:48am-11:53am

Membership

Present

Councillor Brian Grocock (Chair)
Councillor Michael Payne (Vice Chair) (minutes 36-46)
Councillor Liaqat Ali
Councillor Andrew Brown
Councillor Eunice Campbell
Councillor Sybil Fielding
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora
Councillor John Longdon
Councillor Jackie Morris
Councillor Francis Purdue-Horan
Councillor Mike Quigley MBE (minutes 36- part of 46)
Councillor Parry Tsimbiridis (minutes 36-46)
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler
Councillor Malcolm Wood
Councillor Jason Zadrozny (minutes 37-46)

Absent

Councillor John Clarke
Councillor Vaughan Hopewell
Councillor Phil Rostance

Also in attendance

Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Paddy Tipping

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

John Buckley	-	Chief Fire Officer, NFRS (minutes 32-39, 41-46)
Wayne Bowcock	-	Deputy Chief Fire Officer, NFRS (minutes 32-39, 41-45)
Craig Parkin	-	Assistant Chief Fire Officer, NFRS (minutes 41-45 Only)
Malcolm Townroe	-	Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Fire Authority
Theresa Channell	-	Interim Treasurer
Becky Smeathers	-	Head of Finance (minutes 32-44)
Tracy Crump	-	Head of People and Organisational Development
Catherine Ziane-Pryor	-	Governance Officer

32 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor John Clarke – Other County Council Business
Councillor Phil Rostance – Personal
Councillor Vaughan Hopewell - Health

33 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, declared a personal interest in agenda item 8, Principal Officer Pay Review (minute 40) in so far as the outcome directly affected him.

Wayne Bowcock, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, declared a personal interest in agenda item 8, Principal Officer Pay Review (minute 40) in so far as the outcome directly affected him, and also agenda item 14, Outcomes of Disciplinary Panel Hearing (minute 46), in so far as he has been involved in the process.

Both John Buckley and Wayne Bowcock informed the Authority that they would leave the room prior to the Authority's consideration of the items for which they have declared interests.

In the interest of transparency, although not in attendance at the time of this item, on arrival at the meeting, Councillors Michael Payne, Mike Quigley and Parry Tsimbirdis informed the Authority of their involvement relating to agenda item 14, Outcomes of Disciplinary Panel Hearing (minute 46), and declared non-prejudicial interests which did not preclude them from speaking or voting on the item. Due to his involvement, Councillor Quigley felt it appropriate to withdraw from the meeting prior to the presentation of the submission within that item. Councillor Payne did not take part in the vote.

34 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2017 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

35 ADJOURNMENT

Resolved to adjourn the meeting for 15 minutes, until 10:45am, to enable members attending a separate meeting to conclude business.

36 CHAIRS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

Following a report to the HR Committee, the Authority has signed up to the 'Dying to Work' pledge regarding support for staff with a terminal illness.

Zoe Billingham, responsible for Fire and Rescue of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), met with the Chief Fire Officer and Chair of the Authority to discuss the new inspection regime for the Service. Further information is included within the report in this agenda.

When the Policing and Crime Act came into force it was recognised that the Fire Service Act would need to be amended to enable Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to be formally represented on Combined Fire Authorities. The Home Office has now launched a

consultation document to make those amendments, a copy of which will be circulated to members, who are encouraged to respond.

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) has accepted an interim pay rise of 1% this year, however, discussions continue as both sides of the National Joint Council (NJC) want this increased. Support staff have been offered a 2% pay raise for each of the next two years with those on lower grades receiving more to meet the national living wage target for 2020. This will be factored into the future budgets and adds to the financial pressures on the Authority as each 1% equates to approximately £300,000.

The Home Office is undertaking a 'basket of goods' exercise and has requested procurement data on the cost of facilities management and services. The intention is to publish a league table as was done previously to highlight the difference between services. The Head of Procurement and Resources will respond on behalf of the Authority and a report will be provided to the Finance and Resources Committee in due course.

The consultation on mixed and alternative crewing models will finish this weekend. The Chair has accompanied the Chief Fire Officer on some watch visits to stations as part of the consultation process, and has met with Ashfield Councillors and Members of Parliament.

37 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2017/18 TO 2020/21 AND BUDGET GUIDELINES 2018/19

Prior to consideration of this item, representatives of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) were invited to ask their question of the Authority.

In summary, the question referred to concerns around the need for the Authority to save £1.1m, and sought assurances that crewing policies will not be changed and result in appliance crews being reduced from 5 to 4 firefighters.

The Chair responded with a summary of the work undertaken to date to identify money-saving measures and referred to the current public consultation and the Chief Fire Officer's preference to maintain appliance ridership at five firefighters, but stated that it is not possible to provide any reassurances that this position would not change.

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance, presented the joint report of the Chief Fire Officer and Interim Treasurer which provides members with an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy and requests approval and the setting of general guidelines by which the Finance and Resources Committee can develop a detailed budget proposal for 2018/19.

It is noted that reserves have been, and will continue to be, used but that the current minimum level of general reserves has been set at £4.4 million, but may be subject to change. This results in available general reserves of £2.7m.

Whilst external funding has been cut by almost 21% up to 2019/20, it is anticipated that funding for future years will continue to be restrained. The referendum limit for Council tax currently stands at 2%, but there may be potential for this to be relaxed but clarification is yet to be received.

Growth is currently at 1.5% and the Office for Budget Responsibility has cut annual growth rates below 1.5% until 2020.

The higher than anticipated pay award of 2%, when only 1% has been budgeted for, is predicted to cost in the region of an additional £320,000 with additional cost regarding pensions and national insurance.

Business rates have increased substantially and require an additional £230,000 to be budgeted for.

The Finance and Resources Committee is requested to consider:

- (i) the options for Council tax to be recommended to the Fire Authority in February, as set out within the report;
- (ii) the options for eliminating any budget deficit to enable the Fire Authority to approve a balanced budget, as required by law, which may include tasking the Chief Fire Officer with identifying further savings, the potential further use of reserves.

Members questions were responded to as follows:

- (a) officers are working hard examining all budgets to find further savings and build resilience;
- (b) the cost implications of proposing a Council Tax precept higher than the 2% referendum limit has been considered in the past, but the cost of a referendum, if successful, would take approximately 3 years to recoup so is not considered feasible.

Councillor Malcolm Wood, Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee, paid tribute to the continuing hard work of finance officers in producing the budget following a loss of £13m of funding.

RESOLVED

- (1) to approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy as set out at Appendix A to the report;**
- (2) to task the Finance and Resources Committee with providing guidance to the Fire Authority in February in respect of:**
 - (a) the options for Council Tax limited to either a Council Tax freeze or an increase in Council Tax within the referendum limit;**
 - (b) the options for addressing any budget deficit to enable the Fire Authority to approve a balanced budget, as required by law.**

38 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID YEAR REVIEW 2017/18

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance, presented the report which updates members with the Treasury Management activity during the first half of the 2017/18 financial year.

The following points were highlighted:

- (i) the External Treasury Management Adviser (Capita Asset Services) has been bought out by Link Asset Services but the same service will continue to be provided by the same staff;
- (ii) economic growth is slow;
- (iii) inflation is increasing;
- (iv) the Authority will consider borrowing towards the end of the financial year;
- (v) one loan has a break clause to review interest rates in March 2018 and consequently has an option to repay at this point. This may impact on performance indicators but does not cause any concern.

RESOLVED to note the report.

39 JOINT PENSION BOARD

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance, presented the report of the Chief Fire Officer which seeks the approval of the Authority for the amalgamation of Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire Pension Boards to create the East Midlands Joint Pension Board.

The proposal has previously been discussed and agreed by the Authority, but since this was over a year ago and it then became apparent that the amalgamation required the approval of the Secretary of State, the confirmation of the Authority's approval is now requested.

Pension representatives on the Authority fully endorse the proposal as a future proof move.

RESOLVED

- (1) to approve the creation of an East Midlands Joint Pension Board;**
- (2) for a joint request be submitted to the Secretary of State to gain approval for the creation of an East Midlands Joint Pensions Board.**

40 PRINCIPAL OFFICER PAY REVIEW

Prior to the Authority's consideration of this item, Chief Fire Officer, John Buckley, and Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Wayne Bowcock, withdrew from the meeting and only returned once the item had concluded.

Malcolm Townroe, Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority, introduced the joint report the Clerk and Interim Treasurer, which presented the recommendation of the Policy and Strategy Committee following its consideration of the Chief Fire Officer's Salary Review.

It is noted that this review is undertaken every two years and compares principal officer pay within the 'family group' of Fire and Rescue Authorities.

RESOLVED

- (1) **to approve the recommendation of the Policy and Strategy Committee to apply no increase to the pay of the Chief Fire Officer based upon the outcomes of the local pay review;**
- (2) **to note that the next Principal Officer pay review take place in 2019, for application from 1 January 2020.**

41 INSPECTION OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES IN ENGLAND

Prior to consideration of this item, representatives of the FBU were invited to ask their question of the Authority.

The question is summarised as follows: It is believed that Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) will assess Fire and Rescue Services against a risk based approach to operational services and not a demand based approach. How will this affect the Authority's decisions on the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and given the 22% reduction of firefighters during the past 10 years, will there be firefighter capacity to focus resources into this new priority area?

The Chair responded that the Authority is still developing a new IRMP in line with the Fire and Rescue National Framework requirements. The inspection methodology is still in development so until confirmed, the true impact on resources cannot be identified. However, the Authority will continue to tackle risk in all areas of the Service.

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which informs the Authority of the intention of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary to take on the role of inspectorate of Fire and Rescue Services in England.

HMICFRS hosted an information and discussion event which the Chair and Chief Fire Officer attended. It is intended that the 45 Fire and Rescue Services in England will be assessed on efficiency, effectiveness and leadership. It is anticipated that once requested, the submission will be required within a one week timescale. The resourcing implications are difficult to assess but officers are working with Police colleagues to try and gauge this and an initial budget of £50,000 has been allocated. An officer has been seconded for 2 years to HMICFRS. This figure may be amended once further clarity is received.

The scope of the inspection will not include the activity of the Authority, even though it is the Authority which takes decisions. This was raised with Zoe Billingham, responsible for Fire and Rescue of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), as being very difficult to separate in the service inspection.

RESOLVED to note the content of the report and agree to accept future reports when more detail emerges in relation to the new inspection regime.

42 CONSULTATION UPDATE ON MIXED AND ALTERNATIVE CREWING

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which updates the Authority on the consultation which will close on Sunday. The full details of the proposals are included in the report to the last Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 22 September 2017.

The Opinion Research Services (ORS) will submit the outcome to the next meeting, alongside a report of the Chief Fire Officer.

Significant face-to-face staff consultation with senior officers has been undertaken alongside the use of social media. Overall the experience was positive, but some misguided feedback has been received regarding concerns that retained firefighters are not as competent as wholetime firefighters, and the potential for attendance time to be extended by 15 minutes, neither of which is correct.

A significant number of responses have been received from the Bassetlaw, Ashfield, Retford and Worksop areas compared to other areas of the county, but the potential of mixed crewing will affect the whole county.

Members of the Authority defended the efficiency and effectiveness of retained firefighters as committed and professional staff who are trained to the same high standards as wholetime firefighters.

Disapproval was expressed by an Ashfield member of the Authority at the proposals and the 'easy option' of targeting stations in the Ashfield area which will result in response times being extended by at least 5 minutes.

RESOLVED to note the progress on consultation on the mixed and alternative crewing options proposed in the Sustainability Strategy for 2020.

43 COMMITTEE OUTCOMES

RESOLVED to note the minutes of the following committees:

**Community Safety Committee 06 October 2017
Finance and Resources Committee 13 October 2017
Human Resources Committee 20 October 2017
Policy and Strategy Committee 10 November 2017**

44 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item in accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

45 RETAINED SUPPORT STRUCTURE

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendations as set out within the report.

46 OUTCOMES OF DISCIPLINARY PANEL HEARING

Prior to the Authority's consideration of this item, Wayne Bowcock, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, withdrew from the meeting having declared an interest within minute 33. Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, also withdrew from the meeting.

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, introduced the report of the Clerk to the Authority.

The minute, including recommendation, of this item is exempt from publication under Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it contains information which relates to an individual and to the financial affairs of the individual and the organisation.

The public interest in maintaining an exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because the posts specified within this report can lead to the identification of individuals within Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

PRUDENTIAL CODE FOR CAPITAL FINANCE 2018/19

Joint Report of the Interim Treasurer to the Fire Authority
and Chief Fire Officer

Date: 16 February 2018

Purpose of Report:

To inform Members of the Authority's obligations under the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance.

To seek the approval of Members to the proposed capital plans, prudential limits, and monitoring processes set out in the report.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Local Government Act 2003 set out a framework for the financing of capital investments in local authorities which came into operation from April 2004. Alongside this, the Prudential Code was developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) as a professional code of practice to support local authorities' decision making in the areas of capital investment and financing. Authorities are required by regulation to have regard to the Prudential Code.
- 1.2 CIPFA released an updated version of the Prudential Code in December 2017. The revised code is in a similar format to the previous 2011 edition, but includes the removal of some indicators and a new requirement for authorities to produce a Capital Strategy. CIPFA has acknowledged that the timing of the new Prudential Code's release will cause difficulties for some authorities as their planning processes for 2018/19 are already well advanced, so it has been confirmed that compliance with the revised Prudential Code and the recently updated CIPFA Treasury Management Code may take place at the next available opportunity. The Capital Strategy requirements may therefore be implemented after the 2018/19 budget cycle. The Authority's Capital Strategy will be presented to the members at the September meeting of the Fire Authority.
- 1.3 The objectives of the Prudential Code are to ensure that the capital investment plans of authorities are affordable, prudent and sustainable and that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice. In exceptional cases, the Code should provide a framework which will demonstrate where the objectives may not be ensured, so that timely remedial action can be taken.
- 1.4 The Prudential Code sets out a number of indicators which authorities must use to support decision making. These are not designed to be comparative performance indicators. In addition, the CIPFA Treasury Management code of practice and guidance notes sets out a series of treasury indicators. The prudential and treasury indicators should be considered in parallel and they are therefore included together in this report. The most recent version of the Prudential Code removed the requirement to produce the "Incremental Impact on Council Tax" indicator.
- 1.5 This report sets out the proposed prudential and treasury limits for the Authority for the 2018/19 financial year along with the implications of the proposed Capital Programme, which will be presented with the budget report also on the agenda.
- 1.6 Reports which monitor the Authority's performance against these indicators will be presented to the Finance and Resources Committee throughout the year.

2. REPORT

PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS FOR AFFORDABILITY

2.1 Estimates of the Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream for 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 and Actual Ratio of Financing Costs for 2016/17

2016/17 Actual £000s	2017/18 Estimate £000s	2018/19 Estimate £000s	2019/20 Estimate £000s	2020/21 Estimate £000s
Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream				
5.2%	5.4%	5.7%	6.5%	7.0%

On 24 October 2008 the Finance and Resources set a maximum limit for this ratio in order to meet the Prudential Code requirements of affordability and sustainability (as part of the Sustainable Capital Plans report). This is periodically reviewed by Treasury staff and it is still felt to be appropriate. This ratio is set to increase from 5.4% in 2017/18 to 7% in 2020/21. This is largely due to an increase in the minimum revenue provision as a result of significant capital expenditure in 2019/20 on a fire station and 2020/21 on replacement fire appliances as detailed in the budget report.

The estimated ratios for 2018/19 onwards assume an annual council tax increase of 2.95% for 2018/19 – 2019/20 and 1.95% for 2020/21. The ratio increases between 2017/18 and 2020/21 as the financing costs increase year on year whilst the revenue stream is initially reduced due to funding cuts. If no increase in council tax is assumed, the ratio increases to 7.3% by 2020/21. The projected ratio is still within the 8% limit.

PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS FOR PRUDENCE

2.2 Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement

In order to ensure that over the medium term gross debt will only be for capital purposes, this indicator requires that external debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the capital financing requirement estimated up to the end of 2020/21. Performance against this indicator will be monitored throughout the year. For information, at 31 March 2017 (2016/17 financial year), the Capital Financing Requirement was £23,885k, Net Debt (total debt less investments) was £13,755k and Gross Debt was £23,262. The estimate of the Capital Financing Requirement at the end of 2020/21 is £29,785k, thereby demonstrating that the indicator has not been breached. At the end of 2020/21, Gross Debt is expected to be in the region of £27.0m, with the Capital Financing Requirement estimated at £29.8m showing that this is realistic.

PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND EXTERNAL DEBT

2.3 Estimate of Total Capital Expenditure to be Incurred in 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21, and Actual Capital Expenditure for 2016/17

	2016/17 Actual £000s	2017/18 Estimate £000s	2018/19 Estimate £000s	2019/20 Estimate £000s	2020/21 Estimate £000s
Capital Expenditure	2,048	4,162	3,191	3,401	3,223
Funded by:					
Borrowing	0	2,052	1,369	1,293	1,186
Revenue	0	0	0	0	0
MRP re-investment	0	1,490	1,506	1,808	2,037
Capital Grant	6	0	41	0	0
Capital Receipts	2,042	620	275	300	0
Total	2,048	4,162	3,191	3,401	3,223

The estimates for 2018/19 to 2020/21 form part of the budget report on this agenda. However, the total for 2018/19 shown in the above table includes assumed slippage in addition to new capital expenditure and is therefore higher than the estimate included in the budget report. Various financing methods have been assumed for the future years but in reality, decisions relating to financing methods will be taken as part of options analyses which will consider the best long term options for the Authority. These options need to be assessed at the time of financing. "MRP re-investment" in the above table refers to the use of the minimum revenue provision which is used to reduce the borrowing need rather than repayment of debt due to the Authority's loans being payable on maturity.

2.4 Estimate of Capital Financing Requirement as at the end of 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21, and Actual Capital Financing Requirement as at 31/03/17

2016/ 17 Actual £000s	2017/18 Estimate £000s	2018/19 Estimate £000s	2019/20 Estimate £000s	2020/21 Estimate £000s
Capital Financing Requirement				
23,885	25,937	27,306	28,599	29,785

The Capital Financing Requirement is the sum of money required from external sources to fund Capital Expenditure, and represents the Authority's

underlying need to borrow for capital purposes. It will therefore be the aggregate of all capital expenditure, less any revenue contributions, capital grants or capital receipts. The above table shows that the Capital Financing Requirement increases year on year between 2016/17 and 2020/21 as annual capital expenditure exceeds the funding available from capital receipts, government grants and revenue sources.

The Sustainable Capital Plans report referred to in paragraph 2.1 also concluded that in order to meet the Prudential Code requirements of affordability and sustainability, the capital financing requirement in future years should not exceed £40m.

Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit for External Debt

- 2.5 The Operational Boundary is the Authority's estimate of its total external debt, including other long-term liabilities (such as finance leases) which are separately identified. This is to reflect the most likely scenario and not the worst case. It is possible for the operational boundary to be temporarily breached to take account of unusual movements in cash flow but this should not be a regular occurrence. A variation from the operational boundary is permissible, but will be reported to the Fire Authority.
- 2.6 The operational boundary includes allowances to borrow to fund the capital programme, replace maturing debt and to allow for any short term borrowing that may be needed to cover the cashflow of the authority.
- 2.7 The Authorised Limit is essentially the same as the Operational Boundary but allows headroom over and above it to take account of unusual movements in cash flow and therefore should be the maximum amount of external debt that the Authority is exposed to at any given time. Any proposed variation from the Authorised Limit must be authorised by the Fire Authority.

	2017/18 £'000s	2018/19 £000s	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s
Operational Boundary				
Borrowing	27,762	29,723	28,640	31,052
Other long term liabilities	0	0	0	0
Total External Debt	27,762	29,723	28,640	31,052
Authorised Limit				
Borrowing	30,538	32,695	31,504	34,157
Other long term liabilities	0	0	0	0
Total External Debt	30,538	32,695	31,504	34,157

2.8 Actual External Debt as at 31/03/17

	2016/17 £000s
Actual borrowing	23,262
Actual other long term liabilities	0
Total – Actual External Debt	23,262
Operational Boundary	28,026
Authorised Limit	30,829

INDICATORS FOR TREASURY MANAGEMENT

2.9 The Service carries out its own treasury management in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management, which was revised in 2017. The Authority has adopted a low risk approach to treasury management, which seeks to ensure that investments are secure and that there is sufficient liquidity of funds to enable the Authority to carry out its business.

Gross and Net Debt

2.10 The actual amount of external long term borrowing as at 31/03/17 was £21,183k, with short term borrowing totalling £2,079k. There were no other long term liabilities at the same date. At the same date, the amount of investments was £9,507k, giving a net debt position of £13,755k as at 31/03/17.

2.11 The Treasury Management Strategy 2017/18 report, also on this agenda, outlines the proposal to borrow over the next three years to finance the capital programme and to replace maturing loans, and the decision about when to borrow will depend upon interest rate forecasts. For the purposes of setting indicators, assumptions have been made about when borrowing may take place – the reality of this will be determined by Officers in conjunction with the Authority’s treasury advisers.

2.12 The proportion of net debt to gross debt can highlight where an Authority is borrowing in advance of need, as it shows the extent to which funds have been borrowed and then invested. Whilst the Authority is permitted to borrow in advance to finance the capital programme approved within the Medium Term Financial Strategy, where borrowing rates are higher than investment rates this creates a “cost of carry”. Therefore when investment interest rates are low, as they currently are, this cost is reduced by keeping the proportion of net debt to gross debt as high as is practicable. For information, the proportion of net debt to gross debt as at 31 March 2017 was 59%, and it is forecast to be 70% at the end of the current financial year. It is proposed that the Authority sets the following limits for the proportion of net debt to gross debt:

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Lower limit for proportion of net debt to gross debt	50%	50%	50%
Upper limit for proportion of net debt to gross debt	85%	85%	85%

Interest Rate Risk Exposure

- 2.13 In terms of borrowing, it has been considered prudent to use Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) fixed interest loans on most occasions. This is because the PWLB generally offers rates which cannot be obtained elsewhere in the marketplace. However, the Authority did take out a market loan in 2007/08, benefiting from an advantageous rate. Unlike lending, borrowing is a low risk activity so future borrowing arrangements will be entered into on the basis of what is most advantageous for the Authority at the time. Any proposals to borrow from alternative sources to the PWLB will be discussed and agreed with the Treasurer.
- 2.14 Borrowing in the past has been at fixed interest rates although variable rates are not ruled out. It is therefore considered that up to 30% of borrowing might come from variable rate sources if these are considered financially advantageous at the time of financing. For policy changes beyond this, however, it is suggested that Fire Authority approval should be sought.
- 2.15 The total value of lending is not expected to exceed £14m, which is likely to peak around July 2018 however it is difficult to assess what the likely investment profile might be as this depends upon capital expenditure timings as well as the level of pension top up grant received from the Government, and the timing of borrowing. All investments are made in line with the Treasury Management Strategy.
- 2.16 It is proposed that the Authority sets the following limits for interest rate exposures:

	Benchmark %	2017/18 %	2018/19 %	2019/20 %	2020/21 %
Interest Rate Exposures					
Upper Limit for fixed rate exposures	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Upper Limit for variable rate exposures	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%

Loan Maturity

- 2.17 The code of practice and CIPFA guidelines state that there should be no direct linkage between the assets financed and the term of loans taken out. Upper limits in terms of loan maturity are set to ensure that the Authority is

not exposed to the risk of having to repay loans and then re-borrow in the short term when interest rates might be high.

- 2.18 It is recommended that the maturity structure limits remain unchanged for 2018/19. The Authority holds a loan of £4m which is structured as a “Lender Option Borrower Option” (LOBO) loan. Whilst the end date of the loan is March 2078 there are options every five years for the lender to revise the interest rate. The Authority may choose to repay the loan without penalty if the amended rate is not advantageous. The next opportunities for the revision of interest rates is 7 March 2018 and 7 March 2023. The limits for these years will be kept under review to reflect that the investment may mature on these dates. However, as the risk of the LOBO rate increasing during the medium term is low due to downward pressures on interest rates, the re-financing risk arising from the loan maturing within 5 years is currently considered to be low.

Limits on the Maturity Structure of Borrowing		
	Upper Limit	Lower Limit
Under 12 months	20%	0%
12 months to 5 years	30%	0%
5 years to 10 years	75%	0%
10 years to 20 years	100%	0%
Over 20 years	100%	30%

2.19 Principal Sums Invested for Periods Longer than 365 Days

Investments arising from borrowing to support the capital programme are unlikely to exceed one year in duration, however for surplus cash which supports reserves it may be desirable to invest monies for a slightly longer period to achieve a level of certainty around interest receipts and perhaps beneficial interest rates. Such decisions will be influenced by market conditions at the time and the liquidity of funds will be of paramount importance. It is proposed that Officers should be able to invest monies for longer than a year if this appears to be an advantageous strategy, but that a maximum limit of £2m be applied to any such investments. This will contain the Authority’s exposure to the possibility of loss arising from having to seek early repayment of investments.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
£000s	£000s	£000s
Prudential Limits for Principal Sums Invested for Periods Longer than 365 Days		
2,000	2,000	2,000

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications are set out in full within the body of the report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific human resources or learning and development implications which arise directly from this report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

This is not a new policy or service, so no initial assessment has been completed. A previous assessment has shown that there are no specific equality impacts which arise directly from the Prudential Code.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific crime and disorder implications which arise directly from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Local Government Act 2003 imposes an obligation on the Authority to agree and monitor its prudential indicators.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The risk exposures in this report relate primarily to three areas:

- The risk of over exposure of the Authority to interest rate fluctuations;
- The risk that the Authority has an unmanageable or unaffordable level of borrowing;
- The risk of tying up investments, thereby reducing liquidity and exposing the Authority to possible losses arising from early repayment of investments.

This paper serves to set out those risks and ensure that they are managed.

9. COLLABORATION

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members approve the Prudential Limits for 2018/19 as follows:

Estimate of Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	5.7%
Estimate of Total Capital Expenditure to be Incurred	£3,191,000
Estimate of Capital Financing Requirement	£27,306,000
Operational Boundary	£29,723,000
Authorised Limit	£32,695,000
Upper limit for fixed rate interest exposures	100%
Upper limit for variable rate interest exposures	30%
Loan Maturity:	<u>Limits:</u>
Under 12 months	Upper 20% Lower 0%
12 months to 5 years	Upper 30% Lower 0%
5 years to 10 years	Upper 75% Lower 0%
Over 10 years	Upper 100% Lower 0%
Over 20 years	Upper 100% Lower 30%
Upper Limit for Principal Sums Invested for Periods Longer than 365 Days	£2,000,000

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

None.

Theresa Channell
INTERIM TREASURER TO THE FIRE AUTHORITY

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018/19

Report of the Interim Treasurer to the Fire Authority

Date: 16 February 2018

Purpose of Report:

To seek approval of the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/19.

To seek approval of the Authority's Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2018/19.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Authority to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an annual investment strategy; this sets out the Authority's policies for borrowing, for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments.
- 1.2 Treasury management is defined as "the management of investments and cash flows, banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."
- 1.3 The Authority adopted the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes 2009 (the Code) on 9 April 2010. The Treasury Management Code of Practice was updated in December 2017 and it now reflects developments arising from the Localism Act 2011, namely the use of non-treasury related investments. It also includes some minor changes around risk management practices. It is a requirement of the Code that the Authority creates and maintains:
 - A treasury management policy statement, which states the policies, objectives and approach to risk management of its treasury management activities. This statement is given in Appendix A.
 - Suitable treasury management practices, setting out how the Authority will seek to achieve those policies and objectives and how activities will be controlled and managed. The Authority's practices were reviewed in 2013/14.
- 1.4 A report on the Prudential Code for Capital Accounting is also on this agenda. This report sets out the prudential indicators for 2018/19, which are designed to ensure that the Authority's capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable and are in accordance with CIPFA's Prudential Code. This Treasury Management Strategy report is complementary to that Prudential Code report and the proposed prudential and treasury limits for 2018/19 are included in both reports for completeness.
- 1.5 This report also sets out the Authority's Minimum Revenue Provision policy for 2018/19 for approval by Members in paragraphs 2.43 to 2.46.
- 1.6 The Authority has appointed Link Asset Services (formerly Capita) as its external treasury management adviser. Link Asset Services has provided the Authority with its view on the economic outlook and on anticipated interest rates for the forthcoming year.

2. REPORT

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR 2018/19

- 2.1 The Local Government Act 2003 (the Act) and supporting regulations requires the Authority to 'have regard to' the CIPFA Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice to set Prudential and Treasury Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the Authority's capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable.
- 2.2 The Act therefore requires the Authority to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an annual investment strategy: this sets out the Authority's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments.
- 2.3 The suggested strategy for 2018/19 in respect of the following aspects of the treasury management function is based upon Officers' views on interest rates, supplemented with leading market forecasts provided by the Authority's treasury adviser, Link Asset Services.
- 2.4 The strategy covers:
- Prudential and treasury indicators;
 - The borrowing requirement;
 - Prospects for interest rates;
 - The borrowing strategy;
 - Policy on borrowing in advance of need;
 - Debt rescheduling;
 - The investment strategy;
 - Creditworthiness policy;
 - Policy on use of external service providers;
 - The Minimum Revenue Provision policy;
 - Training of Officers and Members.
- 2.5 The Authority recognises that whilst there is value in employing external providers of treasury management services in order to acquire access to specialist skills and resources, responsibility for treasury management decisions remains with the organisation at all times. The Authority will therefore ensure that undue reliance is not placed upon external service providers.

BALANCED BUDGET REQUIREMENT

- 2.6 It is a statutory requirement under Section 33 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for the Authority to produce a balanced budget. In particular, Section 32 requires a local authority to calculate its budget requirement for each financial year to include the revenue costs that flow from capital financing decisions. This includes a statutory requirement to make a prudent provision for an annual contribution from its revenue budget

towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement. This charge is known as the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). This therefore means that increases in capital expenditure must be limited to a level whereby increases in the following charges to revenue are limited to a level which is affordable within the projected income of the Authority for the foreseeable future:

- Increases in interest charges caused by increased borrowing to finance additional capital expenditure;
- Any increases in running costs from new capital projects, and
- Any increases in the Minimum Revenue Provision.

ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

2.7 After the UK's relatively strong economic growth in 2016, growth in 2017 has been somewhat weaker with annual growth in the region of 1.5%. This can mainly be attributed to the sharp increase in inflation caused by the devaluation of sterling after the EU referendum.

2.8 In response to rising inflation, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) increased bank rate from 0.25% to 0.5% at its meeting in November 2017. It also gave forward guidance that it expects to increase bank rate only twice more in the next three years to reach 1.0% by 2020.

2.9 A more in depth analysis of the economic backdrop to this report can be found at Appendix B.

2.10 Link Asset Services has provided a forecast on the bank interest rate, which draws on current City forecasts:

Link Asset Services Bank Rate Forecasts	
As at 31 March 2018	0.50%
As at 31 March 2019	0.75%
As at 31 March 2020	1.00%
As at 31 March 2021	1.25%

2.11 Economic and interest rate forecasting remains difficult with so many external influences weighing on the UK. The above forecast (and MPC decisions) will be liable to further amendment depending on how economic data and developments in financial markets transpire over the next year. Geopolitical developments, especially in the EU, could also have a major impact. Forecasts for average investment earnings beyond the three-year time horizon will be heavily dependent on economic and political developments.

MANAGEMENT OF CASH RESOURCES

2.12 The Authority uses a main current account, an investment account and a number of local petty cash accounts. All of these accounts are held with

Barclays Bank PLC and are managed online. This system allows the Authority to make transfers to and from accounts in real time and thus allows the current account balance to be maintained at a minimum level. All surplus funds are held either in the investment account for short periods or are lent to institutional borrowers over longer periods.

- 2.13 The bank overdraft level is £200,000 and this is usually sufficient. There are occasions when the overdraft exceeds £200,000 and temporary arrangements are made with the bank to increase the limit to £500,000. The Prudential Code report included an overdraft limit of £500,000 within the authorised limit to allow for such instances. It is proposed that the day to day overdraft facility remains at a level of £200,000.
- 2.14 Part of the treasury management operation is to ensure that cash flows are adequately planned, with cash being available when it is needed. A 3 year cash flow projection is prepared together with a 3 month rolling cash flow forecast. The 3 month forecast is updated regularly and this process reveals when cash surpluses or shortages are likely to arise.
- 2.15 Cash management processes have been examined by internal auditors and have been shown to be robust.

BORROWING STRATEGY

- 2.16 The prudential indicators for borrowing are set out in Appendix C. Background information relating to these indicators is contained within the Prudential Code for Capital Finance 2018/19 report which is elsewhere on this agenda.
- 2.17 The capital financing requirement is the sum of money required from external sources to fund capital expenditure i.e. the Authority's underlying need to borrow or lease. For 2018/19 this figure is estimated at £27,306,000. This figure is comprised of capital expenditure incurred historically by the Authority that has yet to be financed by capital receipts, grants, or contributions from revenue including MRP charges, plus estimated capital expenditure and capital financing for 2017/18 and 2018/19.
- 2.18 The Authority's strategy in the past has been to borrow funds from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB). The PWLB is an agent of HM Treasury and its function is to lend money from the National Loans Fund to local authorities and other prescribed bodies. Its interest rates are generally favourable compared to those applicable to borrowings from other sources within the marketplace. Following a period of consultation, the government has announced that it intends to abolish the PWLB and transfer its functions for lending to local authorities to the Treasury, with operational responsibility delegated to the Debt Management Office. However, this is not expected to have a tangible impact on the Authority's ability to borrow from the government at preferential rates and, as this change has yet to be implemented, this report will continue to refer to "the PWLB". In 2007/08, a £4m loan was borrowed from a bank, with a fixed interest rate which was lower than the equivalent PWLB rate. It is therefore proposed that the

Authority continues to borrow primarily from the PWLB, but considers fixed rate market borrowing when market rates are lower than PWLB rates. In addition to this, the Authority may also consider loans from the UK's Municipal Bond Agency, which is likely to be offering loans to local authorities in the near future.

- 2.19 The loan of £4m referred to in paragraph 2.18 is structured as a “Lender Option Borrower Option (LOBO)” loan. This means that on 7 March 2013 and on that anniversary every five years, the lender may revise the interest rate, which is currently 4.13%. The Authority may choose to repay the loan without penalty if the amended interest rate is not advantageous. If the lender does exercise the option to revise the interest rate, the strategy will be to either agree to continue the loan with the revised interest rate or to repay the loan and replace it with new, long term debt at a lower rate depending on which is the most advantageous option for the Authority. As the interest rate was not changed on 7 March 2013, the next opportunity for a revision is 7 March 2018. Given the current interest rate environment, it is unlikely that the LOBO rate will be revised at this time.
- 2.20 Over the next three years, it is anticipated that the Authority will need to borrow up to £8m to finance the capital programme and to replace up to £4m of maturing loans.
- 2.21 Link Asset Services’ view on future PWLB interest rates is:

	Mar 18	Jun 18	Sep 18	Dec 18	Mar 19	Mar 20	Mar 21
5 yr PWLB	1.60%	1.60%	1.70%	1.80%	1.80%	2.10%	2.30%
10 yr PWLB	2.20%	2.30%	2.40%	2.40%	2.50%	2.70%	3.00%
25 yr PWLB	2.90%	3.00%	3.00%	3.10%	3.10%	3.40%	3.60%
50 yr PWLB	2.60%	2.70%	2.80%	2.90%	2.90%	3.20%	3.40%

The table above has been adjusted for the PWLB certainty rate, which is a 20 basis points reduction in the interest rate for Authorities such as this one which have applied for it.

- 2.22 As stated in paragraph 2.11, economic forecasting is particularly difficult at this time. Gilt yields, and therefore PWLB rates, are influenced by geopolitical developments as well as developments in financial markets. These include:
- Timings of Bank of England base rate changes which could impact on the economy if incorrect;
 - Inflation levels;
 - Brexit negotiations;
 - Geopolitical risks such as North Korea, Europe and the Middle East;
 - European politics, in Germany for example;
 - A resurgence of the Eurozone debt crisis;
 - Rising US protectionism under President Trump.
- 2.23 In view of the above forecast the Authority’s borrowing strategy will be based upon the following information.

- A combination of capital receipts, internal funds and borrowing will be used to finance capital expenditure in 2018/19 and beyond.
- Three PWLB loans will mature in the medium term (£1m and £1.5m in 2018/19 and £1.5m in 2020/21). These will need to be replaced with new borrowing and it is estimated that new borrowing in the period 2018/19 to 2020/21 will be in the region of £8m.
- Link Asset Services' view is that PWLB rates are likely to rise over the next three years. It may therefore be advantageous to take out new loans earlier in the period, as this will have a lesser impact on the revenue budget for the periods of the loans. However, if this is in advance of the need to spend, there will be a cost of capital impact as referred to in paragraph 2.27 below.
- PWLB rates on loans of less than ten years duration are expected to be lower than longer term PWLB rates. However, the existing debt maturity profile of the Authority will also be taken into account when decisions are made regarding the duration of new borrowing. The Authority will strive to seek a balance between securing the most advantageous rate whilst ensuring that it is not unduly exposed to re-financing risk.
- Consideration will also be given to borrowing fixed rate market loans at 0.25% – 0.50% below the PWLB target rate and to maintaining an appropriate balance between PWLB and market debt in the debt portfolio.
- PWLB Maturity loans will continue to be taken if the overall cost of such loans is less than the equivalent Annuity loans. If this strategy results in a short term breach of the Gross Borrowing and Capital Financing Requirement indicator, then the reasons for this will be explained to members of the Authority.

2.24 The Authority is currently maintaining an under-borrowed position. This means that the capital financing requirement has not been fully funded with loan debt; instead the cash supporting the Authority's reserves and balances is being used as a temporary measure. The use of cash balances in this way is known as "internal borrowing", and this strategy is prudent as investment returns are low and counterparty risk is still an issue that needs to be considered. However, the Authority recognises that internal borrowing itself poses a different kind of risk, as there is a chance that balances may need to be replenished at a time when interest rates are higher. In this respect, internal borrowing is effectively variable rate debt. The Authority will therefore aim to build cash levels up again in the future in order to ensure that reserves and balances are "cash-backed" to an appropriate level, however the timing of this will very much depend on the prevailing economic conditions and the Authority's ability to ensure the security of funds.

2.25 Officers, in conjunction with treasury advisors, will continually monitor both the prevailing interest rates and market forecasts, adopting the following responses to a change in position:

- if it were felt that there was a significant risk of a sharp **fall** in long and short term rates (e.g. due to a marked increase of risks around relapse into recession or of risks of deflation), then long term borrowings will be postponed, and potential rescheduling from fixed rate funding into short term borrowing will be considered.
- if it were felt that there was a significant risk of a much sharper **rise** in long and short term rates than that currently forecast, perhaps arising from an acceleration in the start date and in the rate of increase in central rates in the USA and UK, an increase in world economic activity or a sudden increase in inflation risks, then the portfolio position will be re-appraised with the likely action that fixed rate funding will be drawn whilst interest rates are still lower than they will be in the next few years.

2.26 The Authority's gross debt position is projected to be £23.2m by the end of 2017/18, but investments of approximately £7m are expected to be in place at 31 March 2018, giving a net debt position of around £16.2m. Currently, investment interest rates are substantially lower than debt interest rates so the use of reserves rather than borrowing to finance capital expenditure over the past three years has resulted in better value for money in the short term (see paragraph 2.24 for more details). However, the Authority recognises that there will be requirement to borrow in the medium term when the cash from surplus reserves has been exhausted. Interest rates are forecast to rise slowly over the next three years, and the Authority will monitor rate changes closely when determining when the time is right to borrow.

2.27 The Authority will not borrow more than or in advance of its needs purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed, although this scenario is unlikely anyway given that current borrowing rates are higher than current investment interest rates, creating a cost of capital impact. Any decision to borrow in advance will be considered carefully to ensure value for money can be demonstrated and that the Authority can ensure the security of funds invested. In determining whether borrowing will be undertaken in advance of need the Authority will:

- Ensure that borrowing is only undertaken to finance the capital programme approved within the current Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- Ensure the ongoing revenue liabilities created, and the implications for the future plans and budgets have been considered;
- Evaluate the economic and market factors that might influence the manner and timing of any decision to borrow;
- Consider the alternative interest rate bases available, the most appropriate periods to fund and repayment profiles to use.

2.28 Where the Authority has made a decision to defer long term borrowing either in order to benefit from a forecasted reduction in interest rates or to avoid unnecessary carrying costs, it may undertake short term borrowing to alleviate

temporary cash shortages caused by internally borrowing cash balances to support capital expenditure.

2.29 The rescheduling of debt involves the early repayment of existing borrowings and their replacement with new loans. As short term borrowing rates will be cheaper than longer term fixed interest rates, this would indicate a potential to generate savings by switching from long to short term debt. However, a premium would be payable which may negate the savings, and the loan maturity profile of the Authority indicates that this would increase exposure to interest rate risk. It is therefore unlikely that rescheduling of debt will take place in 2018/19 although this will be kept under review should circumstances change. Rescheduling will be considered for the following reasons:

- The generation of cash savings and / or discounted cash flow savings;
- Enhancing the balance of the portfolio by amending the maturity profile.

Any rescheduling of debt will be reported to Members at the earliest meeting following its action.

INVESTMENT STRATEGY

2.30 The Authority will have regard to the CLG's Guidance on Local Government Investments, the Audit Commission's report on Icelandic investments and the 2017 revised CIPFA Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes. The Authority's investment priorities are:

- (a) the security of capital and
- (b) the liquidity of its investments.

The Authority will also aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity. The risk appetite of this Authority is low in order to give priority to security of its investments. The borrowing of monies purely to invest or on-lend and make a return is unlawful and this Authority will not engage in such activity.

2.31 Investment opportunities will arise when there are temporary cash surpluses. In accordance with guidance from CIPFA, and in order to minimise the risk to investments, the Authority sets a minimum acceptable credit quality of counterparties for investment. To determine the institutions with which investments may be placed, the Authority uses the creditworthiness service provided by Link Asset Services. This service uses a sophisticated modelling approach with credit ratings from all three rating agencies - Fitch, Moodys and Standard and Poors forming the core element. It is recognised that ratings should not be the sole determinant of the quality of an institution, and Capita's creditworthiness service does not rely solely on the current credit ratings of counterparties but also uses the following as overlays:

- Credit watches and credit outlooks from credit rating agencies;

- Credit Default Swap (CDS) spreads to give early warning of likely changes in credit ratings;
- Sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries;
- Information from the financial press and share price information.

2.32 The modelling approach combines credit ratings, credit watches, credit outlooks in a weighted scoring system which is then combined with an overlay of CDS spreads. The end product is a series of colour code bands which indicate the relative creditworthiness of counterparties and enable diversification in investments. These colour codes are used by the Authority to determine both the credit-worthiness of institutions and the duration for investments. It is regarded as an essential tool, which the Authority would not be able to replicate using in house resources.

2.33 The selection of counterparties with a high level of creditworthiness will be achieved by selection of institutions down to a minimum durational band within Capita's weekly credit list of potential counterparties. The Authority will therefore use counterparties within the following durational bands:

- Blue 1 year (only applies to nationalised or semi nationalised UK Banks)
- Orange 1 year
- Red 6 months
- Green 100 days

Institutions within the "purple band" (24 months), the "yellow band" (5 years) or with no colour band will not be used.

2.34 The Authority has previously determined that it will only use approved counterparties from countries with a minimum sovereign credit rating of AA from Fitch Ratings (or equivalent from other agencies if Fitch does not provide). The list of countries that qualify using this credit criteria as at the date of this report are shown in Appendix D. This list will be added to or deducted from by Officers should ratings change in accordance with this policy. The UK currently has a sovereign rating of AA and has been placed on "negative outlook" which raises the potential for it to be downgraded further within the next eighteen months if the economic outlook for the UK deteriorates. If the UK were to be downgraded to AA- this would remove the option of investing with the Authority's existing bankers and all other UK institutions. It is therefore proposed that the strategy be changed for 2018/19 to continue to use counterparties from the UK should its sovereign credit rating be downgraded to AA-. Investments with UK counterparties will remain subject to creditworthiness criteria outlined in 2.33.

2.35 The credit list provided by Link as at 26 January is attached at Appendix E. This will be updated for changes on a daily basis.

- 2.36 The Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (“MIFID I”) came into force in 2007. “MIFID II” is a revision of the Directive which is effective from 3 January 2018. Under the revised regulations, Local Authorities are categorised as “retail clients”. This categorisation limits both the financial instruments and providers available to authorities for treasury management purposes. However, authorities can opt up to become “elective professional clients” if certain criteria are satisfied. This Authority was able to satisfy the criteria, and so has opted up to elective professional status, and has therefore retained its access to a wider range of financial products.
- 2.37 In accordance with its low risk appetite, the Authority may undertake the following types of “specified” investments:
- Deposits with the Debt Management Office (Government);
 - Term deposits with Banks and Building Societies;
 - Call deposits with Banks and Building Societies;
 - Term Deposits with uncapped English and Welsh local authority bodies;
 - Triple-A rated Money Market Funds (CNAV, LVNAV and VNAV);
 - UK Treasury Bills;
 - Certificates of Deposit.
- 2.38 The risks associated with investing will be reduced if investments are spread e.g. over counterparties or over countries. The Authority will therefore aim to limit its investment with any single counterparty to £2m. It is, however, difficult to impose any further spreading requirement due to the relatively small size of the Authority’s investments and the fact that investment institutions will often only accept a minimum investment sum, which may render any such policy unworkable. Despite this Officers will, wherever possible, avoid the concentration of investments with one counterparty or group.
- 2.39 The majority of past investments have been for periods of 3 months or less. In the current financial climate no term deposit investments with other counterparties, such as UK semi-nationalised banks and local authorities, will be made for more than 1 year without the prior approval of the Treasurer and the Chair of Finance and Resources Committee. The Authority will avoid locking into longer term deals while investment rates are down at historically low levels unless exceptionally attractive rates are available which make longer term deals worthwhile.
- 2.40 All credit ratings will be monitored via a weekly update from Link Asset Services. The Authority is alerted to changes to ratings of all three agencies as and when they occur through its use of the Link creditworthiness service. If a downgrade results in the counterparty/investment scheme no longer meeting the Authority’s minimum criteria, its further use as a new investment will be withdrawn immediately. In addition to the use of Credit Ratings the

Authority will be advised of information in movements in Credit Default Swap against the iTraxx benchmark and other market data on a weekly basis. Extreme market movements may result in downgrade of an institution or removal from the Authority's lending list.

- 2.41 Investments will normally be made for durations which accord with Link's credit quality list so, for example, an investment would be made for no more than 100 days (3 months) with a "Green" rated counterparty. This policy works well with fixed term deposits but where the Authority invests in a "call" account in a bank there is no fixed duration for the deposit. In such instances, officers will monitor intelligence about the bank and give notice to withdraw funds immediately if there is any indication of a substantially increased risk to the security of the deposit. Where call accounts are used, deposits will only be made where the minimum notice period is no longer than the Link suggested duration for that institution, and it is therefore recognised that the total period of the investment may be longer than the Link suggested duration in some cases.
- 2.42 Sole reliance will not be placed on the use of this external service. In addition this Authority will also use market data and market information, information on government support for banks and the credit ratings of that government support.

MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY 2018/19

- 2.43 The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 came into force on 31 March 2008. These regulations were an amendment to the 2003 regulations and introduced several changes to the capital finance regime for local authorities (including fire authorities) in England. The most significant of these were provisions dealing with the calculation of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), which is the amount an authority charges to its revenue account in respect of the financing of capital expenditure.
- 2.44 Under the regulations, Authorities must make a "prudent provision" for MRP and guidance is given on the interpretation of this: "provision for the borrowing which financed the acquisition of an asset should be made over a period bearing some relation to that over which the asset continues to provide a service". This guidance translates into the asset life method. Authorities are permitted to continue charging MRP calculated using the old method for borrowing and credit arrangements which funded capital expenditure incurred before 1 April 2007. This method calculates a charge of 4% of the capital financing requirement each year to revenue.
- 2.45 The following policy on MRP is therefore recommended to members and budgetary provision for MRP has been made on this basis:
- For all borrowing and credit arrangements to fund capital expenditure incurred before or during 2006/07, the minimum revenue provision applied in 2018/19 will continue to be calculated on the basis of the 4% CFR (capital financing requirement) method. This method will continue to be

used in future years for capital expenditure incurred during or before 2006/07.

- For all borrowing and credit arrangements to fund capital expenditure incurred from 2007/08 onwards, the minimum revenue provision applied in 2018/19 will be calculated on the basis of the Asset Life method.

2.46 The regulations also allow for Voluntary Revenue Provision (VRP) charges to be made. A VRP charge would be in addition to the MRP charge, and would have the effect of reducing MRP charges in future years, resulting in revenue budget savings. If the situation arises in the year whereby Officers feel that a VRP charge would be advantageous (e.g. if there are revenue budget underspends), then a recommendation will be made to Finance and Resources Committee to approve a VRP charge during the year.

TRAINING OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

2.47 Under the Code, good practice is defined as ensuring that all staff involved in treasury management are appropriately trained and experienced to undertake their duties. Employees within the Finance Department who carry out treasury management activities are suitably trained and experienced and routinely attend at least one treasury management update event each year to ensure that their knowledge keeps pace with changes

2.48 It is also suggested that those tasked with treasury management scrutiny responsibilities also have access to suitable training. A treasury management training seminar was last held for Members of the Fire Authority in January 2017, and further training is planned for April 2018.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications of this report are set out in full within the body of the report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

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

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no equalities issues arising directly from this report.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report, other than the requirement to act within the Authority's powers when undertaking treasury management borrowings and investments.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The investment of local authority funds cannot be achieved without some element of risk. Careful choice of borrowers using creditworthiness indices will minimise this risk. This prudent approach will undoubtedly result in some interest rate loss but the principles of security and liquidity are paramount.

9. COLLABORATION

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Approve the Treasury Management Strategy 2018/19 as set out in this report.
- 10.2 Approve the continued use of UK counterparties should the UK sovereign rating fall to AA-.
- 10.3 Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision policy 2018/19 as set out in paragraphs 2.43 to 2.46.

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

None.

Theresa Channell
INTERIM TREASURER TO THE FIRE AUTHORITY

TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT

1. The Authority defines its treasury management activities as: “The management of the authority’s investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks”.
2. The Authority regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Accordingly, the analysis and reporting of treasury management activities will focus on their risk implications for the organisation.
3. The Authority acknowledges that effective treasury management will provide support towards the achievement of its business and service objectives. It is therefore committed to the principles of achieving value for money in treasury management, and to employing suitable comprehensive performance measurement techniques, within the context of effective risk management.”

After the UK's relatively strong economic growth in 2016, growth in 2017 has been somewhat weaker: quarter 1 was just +0.3% (+1.8% y/y), quarter 2 was +0.3% (+1.5% y/y) and quarter 3 was +0.4% (+1.5% y/y). This can mainly be attributed to the sharp increase in inflation caused by the devaluation of sterling after the EU referendum, which increased the cost of imports and in turn led to a reduction in consumer disposable income. This has impacted on the services sector of the economy, which accounts for around 80% of GDP, as consumers have cut back on their expenditure.

In response to rising inflation, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) increased bank rate from 0.25% to 0.5% at its meeting in November 2017. It also gave forward guidance that it expects to increase bank rate only twice more in the next three years to reach 1.0% by 2020. However, some forecasters expect growth to accelerate significantly in 2018. This view is based primarily on the coming fall in inflation (as the effect of the devaluation of sterling after the EU referendum drops out of the CPI statistics), which will bring an end to the negative impact on consumer spending power. In addition, a strong export performance will compensate for weak sector services growth. If this scenario were to materialise then the MPC would be likely to accelerate its pace of increases in bank rate during 2018 and onwards.

One key area of risk is that consumers may have become used to the cheap borrowing rates that have prevailed since 2008, especially for mortgages. There is concern that some consumers may have over-extended their borrowing and become complacent about interest rates going up as the bank rate had been unchanged at 0.50% since March 2009 until falling further to 0.25% in August 2016. This is why forward guidance from the Bank of England continues to emphasise slow and gradual increases in bank rate in the coming years. Consumer borrowing is a particularly vulnerable area in terms of the MPC getting the pace and strength of bank rate increases right, without causing a sudden shock to consumer demand, confidence and thereby to the pace of economic growth.

Nearly ten years on from the financial crash of 2008, it can be assessed that central banks' monetary policy measures to counter the sharp world recession were successful. The key monetary policy measures were a combination of lowering central interest rates, and flooding financial markets with liquidity through means such as quantitative easing (QE). The key issue now is that the period of stimulating economic recovery is coming to a close, and a new period has begun during which monetary policy is refocusing on countering the threat of rising inflationary pressures as stronger growth becomes more firmly established. The time has therefore come to begin reversing the previous monetary policy measures of low interest rates and QE, and this must be carefully managed in order to avoid shocks to the world economy. In particular, a key risk is that because QE-driven purchases of bonds drove up the price of government debt, and therefore caused a sharp drop in income yields, this also encouraged investors into a search for higher yields and therefore into investing in riskier assets such as equities. This resulted in bond markets and equity market prices both rising to historically high valuation levels simultaneously. This makes both asset categories vulnerable to a sharp correction.

It is important therefore that central banks gradually unwind their holdings of bonds in order to prevent destabilising financial markets. It is also likely that the timeframe for central banks unwinding their holdings of QE debt purchases will be over several years. The timing of this must be balanced, as taking action that is too rapid or too strong could squash economic recovery, whilst taking action that is too weak or too slow could cause inflation to get out of control.

World growth seems to be on an encouraging trend of stronger performance, rising earnings and falling levels of employment. In October the International Monetary Fund upgraded its forecast for world growth from 3.2% to 3.6% for 2017 and 3.7% for 2018.

Economic growth in the Eurozone picked up in 2016 and has now gathered strength and momentum thanks to the monetary stimulus provided by the European Central Bank (ECB). However, the ECB is still struggling to get inflation up to its 2% target and in November inflation is 1.5%. It is therefore unlikely to start raising bank rates until possibly 2019.

Growth in the US economy has been fairly erratic, ranging from 1.2% in quarter 1 of 2017 to 3.2% in quarter 3. Unemployment has fallen to the lowest level in many years, while wage inflation pressures (and inflationary pressures generally) have been building. The Federal Reserve has started to gradually increase rates, with four increases since December 2016. At its September meeting, the Federal Reserve said it would start to gradually unwind its \$4.5 trillion balance sheet holdings of bonds and mortgage backed securities.

Source – Link Asset Management.

PRUDENTIAL AND TREASURY INDICATORS FOR 2018/19

Estimate of Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	5.7%
Estimate of Total Capital Expenditure to be Incurred	£3,191,000
Estimate of Capital Financing Requirement	£27,306,000
Operational Boundary	£29,723,000
Authorised Limit	£32,695,000
Upper limit for fixed rate interest exposures	100%
Upper limit for variable rate interest exposures	30%
Loan Maturity:	<u>Limits:</u>
Under 12 months	Upper 20% Lower 0%
12 months to 5 years	Upper 30% Lower 0%
5 years to 10 years	Upper 75% Lower 0%
Over 10 years	Upper 100% Lower 0%
Over 20 years	Upper 100% Lower 30%
Upper Limit for Principal Sums Invested for Periods Longer than 365 Days	£2,000,000

APPROVED COUNTRIES FOR INVESTMENTS – FITCH RATINGS

AAA	AA+	AA
Australia	Finland	Abu Dhabi (U.A.E)
Canada	Hong Kong	France
Denmark		U.K.
Germany		
Luxembourg		
Netherlands		
Norway		
Singapore		
Sweden		
Switzerland		
U.S.A.		

APPENDIX E

NFRS Approved Counterparty Lending List as at 26 January 2018

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Counterparty	Fitch Ratings		Moody's Ratings		S&P Ratings		Suggested Duration	(Watch/ Outlook Adjusted)	CDS Price	CDS Status	(CDS Adjusted with manual override)	Monetary Limit	Duration	
	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term								
Australia	SB	AAA			SB	Aaa								13.16
Banks														
Australia and New Zealand Banking Group Ltd.	SB	AA-	F1+	SB	Aa3	P-1	NO	AA-	A-1+	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths	38.09	●	O - 12 mths
Commonwealth Bank of Australia	SB	AA-	F1+	SB	Aa3	P-1	NO	AA-	A-1+	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths	40.25	●	O - 12 mths
Macquarie Bank Ltd.	SB	A	F1	SB	A2	P-1	NO	A	A-1	R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths			R - 6 mths
National Australia Bank Ltd.	SB	AA-	F1+	SB	Aa3	P-1	NO	AA-	A-1+	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths	40.25	●	O - 12 mths
Westpac Banking Corp.	SB	AA-	F1+	SB	Aa3	P-1	NO	AA-	A-1+	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths	40.25	●	O - 12 mths
Belgium	SB	AA-			SB	Aa3			SB	AA				12.23
Banks														
BNP Paribas Fortis	SB	A+	F1	SB	A1	P-1	SB	A	A-1	R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths			R - 6 mths
KBC Bank N.V.	PO	A	F1	SB	A1	P-1	PO	A	A-1	R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths			R - 6 mths
Canada	SB	AAA			SB	Aaa			SB	AAA				33.83
Banks														
Bank of Montreal	SB	AA-	F1+	NO	A1	P-1	SB	A+	A-1	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths			O - 12 mths
Bank of Nova Scotia	SB	AA-	F1+	NO	A1	P-1	SB	A+	A-1	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths			O - 12 mths
Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce	NO	AA-	F1+	NO	A1	P-1	SB	A+	A-1	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths			O - 12 mths
National Bank of Canada	SB	A+	F1	NO	A1	P-1	SB	A	A-1	R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths			R - 6 mths

Counterparty	Fitch Ratings			Moody's Ratings			S&P Ratings			Suggested Duration	(Watch/ Outlook Adjusted)	CDS Price	CDS Status	(CDS Adjusted with manual override)	Monetary Limit	Duration
	Long Term	Short Term		Long Term	Short Term		Long Term	Short Term								
	Royal Bank of Canada	SB	AA	F1+	NO	A1	P-1	NO	AA-	A-1+	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths			O - 12 mths	
	Toronto-Dominion Bank	SB	AA-	F1+	NO	Aa2	P-1	SB	AA-	A-1+	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths			O - 12 mths	
Denmark		SB	AAA			SB	Aaa			SB	AAA			9.62		
Banks	Danske A/S	SB	A	F1	SB	Aa3	P-1	SB	A	A-1	R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths	25.51	●	R - 6 mths	
Finland		SB	AA+			SB	Aa1			SB	AA+			10.61		
Banks	OP Corporate Bank plc		WD	WD	SB	Aa3	P-1	SB	AA-	A-1+	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths			O - 12 mths	
France		SB	AA			SB	Aa2			SB	AA			12.10		
Banks	BNP Paribas	SB	A+	F1	SB	Aa3	P-1	SB	A	A-1	R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths	22.47	●	R - 6 mths	
	Credit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank	SB	A+	F1	SB	A1	P-1	PO	A	A-1	R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths	17.91	●	R - 6 mths	
	Credit Agricole S.A.	SB	A+	F1	SB	A1	P-1	PO	A	A-1	R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths	19.97	●	R - 6 mths	
	Credit Industrial et Commercial	SB	A+	F1	SB	Aa3	P-1	SB	A	A-1	R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths			R - 6 mths	
	Societe Generale	SB	A	F1	SB	A2	P-1	SB	A	A-1	R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths	23.45	●	R - 6 mths	
Germany		SB	AAA			SB	Aaa			SB	AAA			6.63		
Banks	BayernLB	SB	A-	F1	SB	Aa3	P-1		NR	NR	R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths			R - 6 mths	
	Commerzbank AG	SB	BBB+	F2	PO	A2	P-1	NO	A-	A-2	G - 100 days	G - 100 days	51.45	●	G - 100 days	

Counterparty	Fitch Ratings		Moody's Ratings		S&P Ratings		Suggested Duration	(Watch/ Outlook Adjusted)	CDS Price	CDS Status	(CDS Adjusted with manual override)	Monetary Limit	Duration	
	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term								
	SB	AAA		SB	Aaa		SB	AAA						
Banks	DBS Bank Ltd.	SB	AA-	F1+	SB	Aa1	P-1	SB	AA-	A-1+	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths		
	Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp. Ltd.	SB	AA-	F1+	SB	Aa1	P-1	SB	AA-	A-1+	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths		
	United Overseas Bank Ltd.	SB	AA-	F1+	SB	Aa1	P-1	SB	AA-	A-1+	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths		
Sweden		SB	AAA		SB	Aaa		SB	AAA			9.62		
Banks	Nordea Bank AB	SB	AA-	F1+	SB	Aa3	P-1	SB	AA-	A-1+	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths		
	Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken AB	SB	AA-	F1+	SB	Aa3	P-1	SB	A+	A-1	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths		
	Svenska Handelsbanken AB	SB	AA	F1+	SB	Aa2	P-1	SB	AA-	A-1+	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths		
	Swedbank AB	SB	AA-	F1+	SB	Aa3	P-1	SB	AA-	A-1+	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths		
Switzerland		SB	AAA		SB	Aaa		SB	AAA			19.00		
Banks	Credit Suisse AG	SB	A	F1	SB	A1	P-1	SB	A	A-1	R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths	44.00	● R - 6 mths
	UBS AG	SB	AA-	F1+	SB	Aa3	P-1	SB	A+	A-1	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths	18.45	● O - 12 mths
United Arab Emirates		SB	AA		SB	Aa2		SB	AA			53.16		
Banks	First Abu Dhabi Bank PJSC	SB	AA-	F1+	SB	Aa3	P-1	SB	AA-	A-1+	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths		O - 12 mths
United Kingdom		NO	AA		SB	Aa2		NO	AA			14.24		

Counterparty	Fitch Ratings			Moody's Ratings			S&P Ratings			Suggested Duration	(Watch/ Outlook Adjusted)	CDS Price	CDS Status	(CDS Adjusted with manual override)	Monetary Limit	Duration
	Long Term	Short Term		Long Term	Short Term		Long Term	Short Term								
AAA rated and Government backed securities	Collateralised LA Deposit*										Y - 60 mths	Y - 60 mths			Not Applicable	
	Debt Management Office										Y - 60 mths	Y - 60 mths			Not Applicable	
	Multilateral Development Banks										Y - 60 mths	Y - 60 mths			Not Applicable	
	Supranationals										Y - 60 mths	Y - 60 mths			Not Applicable	
	UK Gilts										Y - 60 mths	Y - 60 mths			Not Applicable	
Banks	Abbey National Treasury Services PLC	PW	A	F1	SB	Aa3	P-1				R - 6 mths	O - 12 mths			O - 12 mths	
	Bank of Scotland PLC	SB	A+	F1	SB	Aa3	P-1	PO	A	A-1	R - 6 mths	O - 12 mths	40.60	●	O - 12 mths	
	Barclays Bank PLC	PW	A	F1	NO	A1	P-1	SB	A	A-1	R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths	41.98	●	R - 6 mths	
	Close Brothers Ltd	SB	A	F1	SB	Aa3	P-1				R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths			R - 6 mths	
	Clydesdale Bank PLC	SB	BBB+	F2	PO	Baa1	P-2	SB	BBB+	A-2	N/C - 0 mths	N/C - 0 mths			N/C - 0 mths	
	Co-operative Bank PLC (The)	SB	B-	B	PO	Caa2	NP				N/C - 0 mths	N/C - 0 mths			N/C - 0 mths	
	Goldman Sachs International Bank	SB	A	F1	SB	A1	P-1	SB	A+	A-1	R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths	50.41	●	R - 6 mths	
	HSBC Bank PLC	SB	AA-	F1+	NO	Aa3	P-1	SB	AA-	A-1+	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths	18.45	●	O - 12 mths	
	Lloyds Bank Plc	SB	A+	F1	SB	Aa3	P-1	PO	A	A-1	R - 6 mths	O - 12 mths	34.50	●	O - 12 mths	
	Santander UK PLC	PW	A	F1	SB	Aa3	P-1	SB	A	A-1	R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths			R - 6 mths	
	Standard Chartered Bank	SB	A+	F1	SB	A1	P-1	SB	A	A-1	R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths	38.49	●	R - 6 mths	
	Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation Europe Ltd	SB	A	F1	SB	A1	P-1	SB	A	A-1	R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths	48.21	●	R - 6 mths	

Counterparty	Fitch Ratings			Moody's Ratings			S&P Ratings			Suggested Duration	(Watch/ Outlook Adjusted)	CDS Price	CDS Status	(CDS Adjusted with manual override)	Monetary Limit	Duration
	Long Term	Short Term		Long Term	Short Term		Long Term	Short Term								
Building Society	UBS Ltd.	SB	AA-	F1+	SB	A1	P-1	SB	A+	A-1	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths	18.45	●	O - 12 mths	
	Coventry Building Society	SB	A	F1	SB	A2	P-1				R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths			R - 6 mths	
	Leeds Building Society	SB	A-	F1	SB	A3	P-2				G - 100 days	G - 100 days			G - 100 days	
	Nationwide Building Society	NO	A+	F1	SB	Aa3	P-1	SB	A	A-1	R - 6 mths	R - 6 mths			R - 6 mths	
	Nottingham Building Society				SB	Baa1	P-2				N/C - 0 mths	N/C - 0 mths			N/C - 0 mths	
	Principality Building Society	SB	BBB+	F2	SB	Baa2	P-2				N/C - 0 mths	N/C - 0 mths			N/C - 0 mths	
	Skipton Building Society	SB	A-	F1	SB	Baa1	P-2				G - 100 days	G - 100 days			G - 100 days	
	West Bromwich Building Society				SB	B1	NP				N/C - 0 mths	N/C - 0 mths			N/C - 0 mths	
	Yorkshire Building Society	SB	A-	F1	SB	A3	P-2				G - 100 days	G - 100 days			G - 100 days	
Nationalised and Part Nationalised Banks	National Westminster Bank PLC	PW	BBB+	F2	PO	A2	P-1	PO	BBB+	A-2	B - 12 mths	B - 12 mths			Not Applicable	
	Royal Bank of Scotland Group Plc	SB	BBB+	F2	SB	Baa3	P-3	SB	BBB-	A-3	B - 12 mths	B - 12 mths			Not Applicable	
	The Royal Bank of Scotland Plc	SB	BBB+	F2	NO	A2	P-1	SB	BBB+	A-2	B - 12 mths	B - 12 mths	47.44	●	Not Applicable	
United States Banks		SB	AAA		SB	Aaa		SB	AA+				14.27			
	Bank of America N.A.	SB	A+	F1	SB	Aa3	P-1	SB	A+	A-1	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths			O - 12 mths	
	Bank of New York Mellon, The	SB	AA	F1+	SB	Aa1	P-1	SB	AA-	A-1+	P - 24 mths	P - 24 mths	33.13	●	P - 24 mths	
	Citibank N.A.	SB	A+	F1	PO	A1	P-1	SB	A+	A-1	R - 6 mths	O - 12 mths	40.10	●	O - 12 mths	
	JPMorgan Chase Bank N.A.	SB	AA-	F1+	SB	Aa2	P-1	SB	A+	A-1	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths			O - 12 mths	

Counterparty	Fitch Ratings			Moody's Ratings			S&P Ratings			Suggested Duration	(Watch/ Outlook Adjusted)	CDS Price	CDS Status	(CDS Adjusted with manual override)	Monetary Limit	Duration
	Long Term	Short Term		Long Term	Short Term		Long Term	Short Term								
Wells Fargo Bank, NA	SB	AA-	F1+	SB	Aa1		P-1	NO	AA-	A-1+	O - 12 mths	O - 12 mths	40.94	●	O - 12 mths	

Advisory notes: (M) = Manually added counterparty. If a rating changes for this institution it will not alter its status on the counterparty list, or limits assigned to it.

Please note that the Link Asset Services suggested methodology applies a minimum sovereign criteria of "AA-". In instances where individual client criteria allows for the potential use of entities from lower rated sovereigns, suggested duration columns in these lists may show a "colour", but this will purely be based on the ratings / CDS of the individual entity. It will not take account of the sovereign rating, which alone may provide a reason for it not being included within the Link Asset Services suggested list of counterparties. Please note that CDS values are as at the close of business from the previous day.



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

REVIEW OF RESERVES AND WORKING BALANCES

Joint Report of the Interim Treasurer to the Fire Authority
and Chief Fire Officer

Date: 16 February 2018

Purpose of Report:

To seek the approval of the Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority to the minimum level of working balances sufficient to meet the needs of the Authority during the 2018/19 financial year and beyond.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Fire and Rescue Authority holds a level of working balances to meet specific risks and potential liabilities of a strategic, operational and financial nature.
- 1.2 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) publishes guidance on the matter of financial reserves and sets out a number of specific risk areas that financial officers need to consider when setting the levels of balances.
- 1.3 As in previous years, a risk based approach has been taken to determine a reasonable level of balances. In accordance with this risk based approach, the level of balances required for 2018/19 is £4,300,650. The main reasons for the change since 2017/18 are explained in paragraphs 2.13 and 2.14.

2. REPORT

GENERAL RESERVES

- 2.1 The requirement for financial reserves is acknowledged in statute. Sections 32 and 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 require billing and precepting authorities in England and Wales to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.
- 2.2 There are also a range of safeguards in place that help to prevent local authorities over-committing themselves financially. These include:
 - i) The balanced budget requirement (sections 31a and 42a of the Local Government Finance Act 1992).
 - ii) The Treasurers' duty to report on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves (under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003) when the authority is considering its budget requirement.
 - iii) The legislative requirement for each local authority to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and that the chief finance officer / proper officer has responsibility for the administration of those affairs (section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972).
 - iv) The requirements of the Prudential Code.
 - v) External auditors will confirm that there are no material uncertainties about an Authority's ability to continue operating, given its financial position.

- 2.3 Whilst it is primarily the responsibility of the local authority and its chief financial officer to maintain a sound financial position, external auditors will, as part of their wider responsibilities, consider whether audited bodies have established adequate arrangements to ensure that their financial position is soundly based. However, it is not the responsibility of auditors to prescribe the optimum or minimum level of reserves for individual authorities or authorities in general.
- 2.4 CIPFA does not prescribe a formula for calculating a minimum level of reserves. Local authorities, on the advice of their chief financial officers, should make their own judgements on such matters taking into account all the relevant local circumstances. Such circumstances vary. A well-managed authority, for example, with a prudent approach to budgeting should be able to operate with a level of general reserves appropriate for the risks (both internal and external) to which it is exposed. In assessing the appropriate level of reserves, a well-managed authority will ensure that the reserves are not only adequate but are also necessary. There is a broad range within which authorities might reasonably operate depending on their particular circumstances.
- 2.5 CIPFA sets out that reserves can be held for three main purposes:
- 2.5.1 A working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cash flows and avoid unnecessary temporary borrowing – this forms part of general reserves;
 - 2.5.2 A contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events or emergencies - this also forms part of general reserves;
 - 2.5.3 A means of building up funds, often referred to as earmarked reserves, to meet known or predicted requirements; earmarked reserves are accounted for separately but legally remain part of the General Fund.
- 2.6 The annual review of the risk assessment applicable to reserves and balances has recently been carried out by the Authority's Risk Manager and Head of Finance. Further scrutiny was provided by the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee as part of the budget process. The resulting risk assessment is provided at Appendix A. This enables Members to see the key risks to which the Service is exposed and their estimated possible financial impacts.
- 2.7 There are three main categories of risk shown in the assessment: the risk of legal action being taken against the Authority, resulting in a financial loss; the risk of financial loss arising specifically from financial activities, and operational risks which could lead to financial loss. Where risks have been identified, control measures are in place to minimise either the likelihood or the impact of the risk and these are also shown in Appendix A.
- 2.8 The approach has examined each of the risk exposures and considered both the possible financial impact on the Service and the likelihood of occurrence. A risk factor has been allocated to each risk reflecting the likely frequency of

occurrence of the risk based on historic experience and professional judgment. It should be noted that the underlying assumption is that not all of these risk events will occur simultaneously and, to reflect this, the potential value of each financial impact is multiplied by its risk factor.

- 2.9 The approach also considers the extent to which financial risks can be transferred by way of insurances, thus creating a balance between insured and self-financed risk. Where insurances are in place, the risk value reflects the level of deductible within the insurance policy.
- 2.10 Residual risk is the extent to which the Authority remains exposed to risks which are neither insured nor provided for within revenue budgets or balances. The level of acceptable residual risk equates to the “risk appetite” of the Service and the estimated minimum level of balances reflects this risk appetite.
- 2.11 The risk assessment review identified some changes in risks, mainly in terms of the increase (or sometimes decrease) in the potential costs of existing risks. The frequency of risk occurrence has also been reviewed in the light of another year of experience.
- 2.12 The updated risk assessment shows that an appropriate level of general reserves and working balances is £4.3m. This risk value has decreased since last year by £0.1m. This reflects some new risks and significant changes in some existing risks.
- 2.13 The new risks that have been identified are:
- 2.13.1 The risk of pay awards being agreed at a higher rate than the 2% budgeted for. This affects both firefighters and support staff. An additional 2% has been included in the risk value with a risk factor of 0.5. This will add an additional £320k to the minimum level of the general reserve.
- 2.13.2 In recent years, several errors have been identified in the historic calculation or accounting treatment of firefighter’s pensions. This is largely due to the number of schemes and highly complex nature of the firefighter pension schemes. These errors have resulted in some significant additional costs to the authority. In previous years, these costs have been met either from revenue or from an earmarked reserve. With revenue budgets now much tighter and the earmarked reserve being fully utilised, it is necessary to meet potential future costs from the general reserve. Whilst it is hoped that with much improved administration of the scheme and better advice from the Local Government Association the risk of future errors being identified should reduce, potential costs could still be incurred. A £500k risk has been added with a risk factor of 0.5. This will add £250k to the minimum reserve requirements.
- 2.14 The risks which have significantly changed are:

- 2.14.1 The risk value of discrimination cases has reduced from £500k to £250k as this is the maximum considered likely. The Authority has an extensive set of procedures in place to minimise this risk.
- 2.14.2 The risk value of a breach of security fine has been increased from £80k to £150k to reflect the increased in the value of fines that can be issued under the new General Data Protection Regulation - GDPR.
- 2.14.3 The risk value for the failure of a counterparty to purchase a fixed asset for sale has been reduced from £2.5m to £575k. This reflects the authority's position that only £575k of capital receipts are anticipated as part of the capital programme during the next 3 years.
- 2.15 There are a number of other risks where minor amendments have been made to reflect changes in either risk value or in expected likelihood or impact in the light of another year's experience.
- 2.16 As set out in paragraph 2.4, the risk assessment which determines what the minimum level of reserves should be is carried out using the professional judgement of the Officers involved in the process. As well as the Risk Manager and the Head of Finance, the process involves consulting other Managers with particular areas of expertise in order to determine any new risks and to identify appropriate levels of risk value and risk frequency. This detailed review of risks inevitably results in fluctuations in the resulting minimum level.
- 2.17 Previous year's minimum levels of General Reserves have remained between £3.8m and £4.4m as detailed below:

Year	Minimum General Fund Reserve level £'m
2018/19	4.3
2017/18	4.4
2016/17	3.8
2015/16	4.0
2014/15	4.2

- 2.18 The Finance and Resources Committee regularly receives risk management reports, which show that corporate risks are regularly reviewed by Officers and that controls are in place to manage those risks. Even so paragraphs 2.13 and 2.14 above demonstrate that risk values can and do change, and the strategic risk register includes external risks which could impact on the Authority in the future.
- 2.19 The projected level of general fund reserves at 31 March 2018 is of the order of £7.3m. The budget report also this agenda shows that significant pressure remains to achieve budget reductions over the next three years and that a contribution from reserves of £1.4m will be required to balance the budget in 2018/19, taking general fund reserves to £5.8m, which is only £1.5m above the minimum level advised in this report.

2.20 It is appropriate to advise Members in this report that the level of balances held by the Authority will be sufficient during 2018/19 to cover the risk based liabilities which may arise and the Interim Treasurer will report on this as part of her duties under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003. However, moving forward the strategy for meeting the budget deficit must be achieved in order that this assurance can be given in future years.

EARMARKED RESERVES

2.21 In addition to general reserves the Authority holds a number of earmarked reserves which are funds put aside to meet future items of expenditure. They may also have arisen from grants or donations which have been received in anticipation of activities to be undertaken at a future date and therefore held on the balance sheet as earmarked reserves.

2.22 A full review of earmarked reserves was undertaken as part of the 2018/19 budget process. As part of the Authority's final accounts closedown process, all earmarked reserves will once again be reviewed by budget managers and Finance staff and the final earmarked reserves will be reported to Members within the Authority's Statement of Accounts 2017/18.

2.23 The projected level of available earmarked reserves after taking account of those already committed is £2.1m. Earmarked reserves and their forecast balances as at 31 March 2017 are shown in Appendix B.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The maintenance of adequate working balances is a legal requirement under S27 Local Government Act 2003, and the Authority's Treasurer is charged with determining the adequacy of those balances or, as they are described in the Act, the "Controlled Reserve".

3.2 The risk assessment demonstrates that the level of balances should be in the order of £4.3m.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

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

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An initial equality impact assessment has not been prepared in relation to this matter.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The legal implications and requirements are set out in full within the report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The risk management implications are set out in full in the report and in Appendix A.

9. COLLABORATION

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Note the results of the review of risks shown at Appendix A.
- 10.2 Approve the proposed minimum level of working balances of £4.3m for 2018/19.

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

None.

Theresa Channell
INTERIM TREASURER TO THE FIRE AUTHORITY

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Risk Number	Risk Description	Risk Effect	Control Measures	Insurable	Risk Value £	Risk Factor Reflecting Frequency	Reserve Required £	Revenue Budget £
1	Discrimination cases	Reputational damage; Legal costs, employment tribunal costs unbudgeted	Professional HR advice, policies, procedures, management training, legal advice	N	250,000	0.25	62,500	0
2	Unfair Dismissal cases	Reputational damage; Legal costs, employment tribunal costs unbudgeted	Professional HR advice, policies, procedures, management training, legal advice	N	16,000	0.2	3,200	0
Page 54	Settlement Agreements / Termination settlements	Reputational damage; Legal costs, employment tribunal costs unbudgeted	Professional HR advice, policies, procedures, management training, legal advice	N	50,000	0.5	25,000	0
4	Case for damages brought against the Authority	Reputational damage; Legal costs, Damages unbudgeted	Policies, procedures, management training, legal advice, procurement advice	N	1,000,000	0.2	200,000	0
5	Appoint independent investigator at request of elected Members	Cost of paying investigators	Policies, procedures, management training, legal advice, procurement advice	N	30,000	0.25	7,500	0
6	Discretionary Compensation scheme		Professional HR advice, policies, procedures, management training, legal advice	N	60,000	0.3	18,000	0
7	Equal pay claims	Reputational damage; Legal costs, employment tribunal costs unbudgeted	Professional HR advice, policies, procedures, management training, legal advice, equal pay audit	N	70,000	0.1	7,000	0
8	Pay awards agreed at higher rate than budget	Additional costs		N	640,000	0.5	320,000	
9	Injury Compensation Scheme awards above level budgeted for	Additional costs	Policies and procedures, training etc to reduce likelihood of injury. Occupational Health devising new interventions to reduce risk.	N	7,000	1	7,000	0
10	Ill health retirements higher then number budgeted for	Additional costs	Professional HR advice, policies, procedures, management training, legal advice, (no earmarked reserve left)	N	183,000	0.3	54,900	0
11	Pension Ombudsman Rulings	Compensation award payment	Pension administration expertise bought in	N	5,000	0.5	2,500	0
12	Pension fund prior year accounting corrections	Additional costs	Systems now improved but some legacy issues still emerging.	N	500,000	0.5	250,000	0
13	Medical Appeals re FFPS	Cost of appeal process	IQMP policy and advice taken	N	8,000	1.5	12,000	0

Risk Number	Risk Description	Risk Effect	Control Measures	Insurable	Risk Value £	Risk Factor Reflecting Frequency	Reserve Required £	Revenue Budget £
14	Local/national industrial dispute	Potential loss of service; risk of non compliance with statutory duties and ensuing legal case / fines; selective industrial action may not result in sufficient underspend to cover additional costs. Potential ministerial intervention and ensuing reputational damage.	Maintain adequate contingency cover. Contingency arrangements well tested during 2013-2015 industrial action.	N	495,000	1	495,000	0
15	Non compliance with environmental legislation - support for legal proceedings	Cost of responding to enforcement action	Acquisition of permits / licences; planned drainage works; site risk profiles	N	70,000	0.25	17,500	0
16	Negligent fire safety work	Litigation	Training, procedures, effective SLA's with an appropriate allocation of liabilities	Y	10,000	0.1	1,000	0
17	Increase in numbers of vulnerable people due to economic climate	Loss of council tax precept income, additional cost of fire prevention activity	No controls in place	N	204,000	0.5	102,000	0
18	Change in legislation / regulations	Loss of use; cost of modifications and replacements	Continuous review process	N	100,000	0.1	10,000	0
19	Unforeseen general change in legislation / Major Incident Reviews	Increased costs of working due to doing more or doing things differently & costs of training	Awareness	N	100,000	0.2	20,000	0
20	Risk to health, safety & welfare of employees	Litigation; legal costs & staff absence	Operating procedures; training; written safety policy; risk assessments	Y	15,000	3	45,000	0
21	HSE Interventions	Cost of remedial measures; cost of fine; fees for HSE intervention, indirect costs of covering internal resources used to investigate the issue etc.	Operating procedures; training; written safety policy; risk assessments	N	315,000	0.1	31,500	0
22	Reignition or other negligence	Reputational, financial	Operating procedures	Y	10,500	1	10,500	0
23	Breach of security	Loss of confidential data; Information Commission fines	Security measures	N	150,000	0.125	18,750	0
24	Redundancies due to current and on-going financial constraints, if savings cannot be found from elsewhere	One-off cost of redundancy payment and potential pension strain is too high a cost to budget for within the revenue budget	Business case and payback period	N	500,000	1	500,000	0
25	Discovery of major property structural problem that restricts / prevents use of all or part of building(s)	Loss of use; cost of repair; impairment to operational effectiveness	Continuity plans, repair and refurbishment programme	N	600,000	0.1	60,000	0

Risk Number	Risk Description	Risk Effect	Control Measures	Insurable	Risk Value £	Risk Factor Reflecting Frequency	Reserve Required £	Revenue Budget £
26	Theft / fire / damage to assets excess payments exceed budgets			Y	5000	0.5	2,500	
27	Serious injury to public	Reputation, cost, staff time	Training and procedures	Y	10,500	0.1	1,050	0
28	Damage to vehicle	Loss of use; cost of repair; replacement vehicle hire; lease extensions	Road Risk Group - review of road risk; training; inclusion of vehicle safety options	Y	50,000	1	50,000	35,000
29	Appliance written off in an accident	Loss of use; insurance receipt may not cover cost of replacement	Road Risk Group - review of road risk; training; inclusion of vehicle safety options	Y	120,000	0.5	60,000	0
30	Multiple appliances written off in major incident (maximum 2 appliances)	Loss of use; insurance receipt may not cover cost of replacement; appliance degradation enacted; impact on service delivery; impact on appliance replacement programme	Training and procedures; appliance degradation procedure	Y	200,000	0.1	20,000	0
31	Major vehicle defect (affecting part of fleet)	Loss of use; cost of rectifying defect if beyond warranty	Mutual assistance, robust and routine fleet inspections	N	150,000	0.2	30,000	0
32	Unforeseen increase in fuel prices	Increased costs	None	N	70,000	1	70,000	0
33	Increased risk of overspending budgets due to elimination of contingency budgets and budget assumptions based on greater risk appetite	Overspend against revenue budget in year which will have effect of reducing general reserves by the amount of the overspend	Focus on realistic assumptions, rather than risky assumptions. Close monitoring of budget throughout year to allow corrective action to be taken	N	419,900	0.5	209,950	0
34	Major operational equipment defect	Loss of use; cost of modifications and replacements	Inspection routines	N	100,000	0.2	20,000	0
35	Major fraud	Financial loss	Internal control	Y	5,000	0.1	500	0
36	Higher than expected pay awards	Large hit on pay contingency	Maintain adequate general contingency	N	309,000	1	309,000	0
37	Significant change in interest rates	Increased costs / loss of income rates	Prudential code and treasury management indicators	N	120,000	0.2	24,000	0
38	Unforeseen price increases due to currency exchange fluctuation	Increased costs / potential for reduced competition	May not be possible to avoid through contract obligations	N	600,000	0.5	300,000	0
39	Unforeseen indirect impacts of changes to pension regulations	Potential additional NI costs, potential increased membership so employers' superannuation costs etc.	Monitor ongoing consultations etc and budget for likely impacts as soon as clear	N	140,000	0.5	70,000	0

Risk Number	Risk Description	Risk Effect	Control Measures	Insurable	Risk Value £	Risk Factor Reflecting Frequency	Reserve Required £	Revenue Budget £
40	Business failure of bank or investment counterparty	Loss of working capital or investment funds up to £2m	Treasury management strategy, risk analysis of investment options and counterparties	N	2,000,000	0.2	400,000	0
41	Failure of counterparty to purchase fixed asset for sale	Loss of capital receipt to be used to finance capital programme, or contribute towards required savings – financial loss	Legal advice for major contracts and due diligence including risk analysis of prospective purchasers	N	575,000	0.167	96,025	0
42	Unanticipated loss of short term income i.e. from precept, non domestic rates or government grant	Timings of budget process may not allow sufficient time to plan for such changes	Network of Chief Financial Officers keep abreast of developments.	N	420,750	0.5	210,375	0
43	Major CBRN / terrorist incident	Reduction in capability to respond	Multi-agency plans; New Dimensions equipment; BCM plans; Response degradation policy; Mutual Aid	N	82,000	0.1	8,200	0
44	Natural disasters	Reduction in capability to respond	Multi-agency plans; New Dimensions equipment; BCM plans; Response degradation policy; Mutual Aid	N	82,000	0.5	41,000	0
45	Multiple large incidents	Reduction in capability to respond	Multi-agency plans; New Dimensions equipment; BCM plans; Response degradation policy; Mutual Aid	N	82,000	0.3	24,600	0
46	Hot or dry summers	Increased retained call-outs	None	N	220,000	0.33	72,600	0
	TOTALS				11,149,650		4,300,650	35,000

Minimum level of General Reserves 2018/19

4,300,650

Earmarked Reserves

APPENDIX B

Reserve	Opening Balance 1/4/2017 £	Movement During 2017/18 £	Committed Future Years £	Estimated Balance 31/03/2018 £
FUNDED BY GRANTS				
Fire Investigation	-119,978	21,747	20,000	-78,231
Safe as Houses - Smoke Alarms	-21,661		7,290	-14,371
Community Safety - Innovation Fund	-200,594	0	108,205	-92,389
Resilience Crewing and Training	-451,740	94,257	66,600	-290,883
Thoresby Estate Charitable Trust	-3,011	205	0	-2,807
National Resilience	1			1
LPSA Reward Grant	-173,952	47,750	20,000	-106,202
Public Health England - Safe and Well	-10,000	10,515	5,000	5,515
				0
Sub total	-980,936	174,474	227,095	-579,367
CREATED FROM REVENUE				
Tri Service Control Phase 2	-362,938	95,260	36,000	-231,678
ICT Sharepoint Internet/Intranet	-97,086	65,927	0	-31,159
Fire Cadets Project	-22,648	0	0	-22,648
ESN RAP Work	-891,974	23,709	828,515	-39,750
Backlog Buildings Maintenance	-95,000	0	95,000	0
Pensions Ill Health	-309,322	309,322	0	0
On Fire Fund - Fire Safety	-86,749	7,719	0	-79,030
Capital Reserve	-1,114,276	200,000	0	-914,276
Operational Equipment	-10,000	0	0	-10,000
ICT Systems - Emergency Services Mobile Comms	-15,506			-15,506
Agresso Development	-63,359	510	20,000	-42,849
Organisation Transition - one off costs	-348,513	6,498	221,001	-121,014
Swan Project - Ashfield	-217			-217
Taxation Compliance	-10,000			-10,000
HEP B - Vaccinations	-22,000	994		-21,006
Communications Development - ESN	-251,863	211,784	47,561	7,482
Retained Policy Change	-212,000	0	212,000	0
Sub Total	-3,913,451	921,723	1,460,077	-1,531,652
				0
Total Earmarked Reserves	-4,894,387	1,096,197	1,687,172	-2,111,018
				0
General Reserve	-7,836,422	544,000	0	-7,292,422
				0
Total	-12,730,809	1,640,197	1,687,172	-9,403,440



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2018/19 TO 2020/21 AND OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TAX 2018/19

Report of the Chief Fire Officer and
Interim Treasurer to the Fire Authority

Date: 16 February 2018

Purpose of Report:

- To present the Fire Authority with proposals for Revenue and Capital budgets for 2018/19 to 2020/21 to allow Members to determine the level of Council Tax for 2018/19.
- To present a strategy for the flexible use of capital receipts and to set out fees and charges for 2018/19 for Members' approval.
- To seek Members' approval to the continued payment of Members Allowances for 2018/19 in accordance with the approved scheme.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting on 19 January 2018 the Finance and Resources Committee considered a report from the Chief Fire Officer setting out the latest budget position based on the provisional grant settlement and the indicative position with regard to Council Taxbase.
- 1.2 The Finance and Resources Committee was asked to consider three options for Council Tax and make recommendations to the full Fire Authority. This report sets out the implications of the option selected by the Finance and Resources Committee at its January meeting.
- 1.3 The budgetary position presented to the Finance and Resources Committee has been updated for the final figures for taxbase and surplus on Collection Fund, as well as other minor adjustments, and includes a statement by the Authority's Treasurer in relation to the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves and balances as required by S25 of the Local Government Act. Provisional figures for Revenue Support Grant and Business Rates Top-up Grant were received in December 2017 and these were updated early in February to provide final data.
- 1.4 The Fire Authority is required to set a precept before 1 March 2018 and notify this to the billing authorities.

2. REPORT

CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2018/19 TO 2020/21

- 2.1 The Authority maintains a sustainable Capital Programme that reflects and supports the ICT, Property and Fleet strategies. This programme seeks to replace appliances and vehicles when they are approaching the end of their useful life, maintains a rolling programme of ICT replacements and a property programme that will ensure that property remains fit for purpose, is appropriately located and can be contained within the internal capacity of the organisation to complete.
- 2.2 The programme is set out for the next three years and reflects proposed new expenditure. Actual expenditure in each year may also be increased by slippage approved by the Fire Authority to be carried forward from the prior year.
- 2.3 The proposed Capital Programme for 2018/19 to 2020/21 is as follows:

Capital Programme Item	2018/19 Proposed	2019/20 Proposed	2020/21 Proposed
	£	£	£
Appliance Replacement	0	0	2,417,000
Special Appliances	0	0	0
Appliance Equipment	0	0	0
Light Vehicle Replacement	196,500	205,500	126,000
Transport Total:	196,500	205,500	2,543,000
BA Sets	0	0	0
Conversion of Hose Reel Equipment	200,000	0	0
Lightweight Fire Coats	0	0	0
Personal Protective Equipment	0	650,000	0
CCTV - Vehicles	200,000	0	0
Equipment Total:	400,000	650,000	0
Refurbishment and Rebuilding Fire Stations			
Hucknall Fire Station	0	15,000	0
Newark Fire Station	707,000	65,000	0
Worksop Fire Station	240,000	2,265,000	520,000
Property Total:	947,000	2,345,000	520,000
ICT Capital Programme	140,000	140,000	140,000
Mobile Computing	20,000	20,000	20,000
Business Process Automation	0	40,000	0
Sharepoint Development	150,000	0	0
ICT Total:	310,000	200,000	160,000
HQ Core Switch Upgrade	30,000	0	0
Emergency Services Mobile Communications	40,700	0	0
Agresso Upgrade	30,000		
IT Systems Total:	100,700	0	0
Total Capital Programme:	1,954,200	3,400,500	3,223,000
Funding			
Grant	40,700	0	0
Capital Receipts	275,000	300,000	0
Revenue / Reserves	0	0	0
Borrowing	1,638,500	3,100,500	3,223,000
Total	1,954,200	3,400,500	3,223,000

- 2.4 The rescue pump renewals programme has been suspended whilst a review of appliance equipment is undertaken as part of the Sustainability Strategy 2020. The decision to extend pumping appliance life has changed the replacement programme for rescue pump appliances and there will be no further appliance acquisitions before 2019/20. The outcome of this work will determine the type and number of vehicles required for part of the overall long-term vehicle capital replacement plan.
- 2.5 The light vehicle programme has been reviewed in order to match vehicles with reduced requirements. The lives of vehicles have also been extended where possible.

- 2.6 The equipment programme includes the conversion of hose reel equipment as the current branches become uneconomical to repair.
- 2.7 The lightweight fire coats have been designed to protect personal protective equipment from an element of wear and tear, thereby extending its life. In 2020/21 personal protective equipment (PPE) is due to be replaced. Previous practice has been to purchase new PPE from the revenue budget but, as experience has shown that such equipment can be successfully refurbished to extend its life, it will now be treated as capital expenditure for the new issue of equipment with the cost to the revenue budget spread over the life of the equipment.
- 2.8 The property programme covers the construction of a new fire station at Worksop and this budget sets aside the resources to continue with the Authority's sustainable capital programme which will ensure that all property assets remain fit for purpose over time.
- 2.9 The ICT programme has been pared back and now contains budget to replace items by way of a rolling programme and provision for the general expansion of ICT usage across the organisation.
- 2.10 There is provision in the capital programme for SharePoint system to be implemented during 2018/19.
- 2.11 The Capital Programme is funded from Capital Receipts, grant funding, contributions from revenue, reserves and borrowing.
- 2.12 **Capital Receipts** – these are received from the sale of assets and can be used to fund either the revenue cost of reform projects, to fund capital expenditure or to reduce borrowing. As part of the finance settlement, the government expanded the flexible use of capital receipts to enable the revenue funding of transitional projects by a further 3 years.
- 2.13 For the financial year 2018/19 it is not proposed to fund any transitional projects using capital receipts. The capital receipts strategy for 2018/19 is attached at Appendix 1 for approval.
- 2.14 **Grant Funding** – There is limited grant funding available at present to support the capital programme.
- 2.15 **Revenue and Reserves** – Given the anticipated deficit position of the revenue budget and requirement to use reserves to transition into a break-even position, it is not proposed to use any revenue or reserves to fund the capital programme between 2018/19 and 2020/21.
- 2.16 **Borrowing** – The majority of the proposed capital programme set out in 2.3 will be funded from borrowing. The related costs are tested for affordability as part of

the Prudential Code report on this agenda. Estimated costs have been built into the revenue programme considered in this report.

REVENUE BUDGETS 2018/19 TO 2020/21

- 2.17 The Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Guidelines report at Fire Authority on 15 December 2017 provided the economic backdrop for the budget process.
- 2.18 Since the December report, more detailed budgets have been developed and were reported to the Finance and Resources Committee on 19 January. The main changes in budgets and / or assumptions are detailed below.
- 2.19 **Firefighter Pay Increase** A pay award of 2% has been assumed for all years to 2020/21. This is in line with the current offer that has been made. If an agreement is settled at a higher rate than 2%, there will be a further pressure on firefighter pay related budgets in total of £270k per 1% increase.
- 2.20 **Wholetime Pay** - The pay budget has been budgeted on full establishment (455). This is a different to the approach to last year which reflected best estimates of likely actual expenditure to take account of surplus posts held in the establishment, which have now been removed. The ridership is currently running at under-establishment, but 10 posts are being migrated from the retained duty system in March and recruitment is due to take place during 2018/19, resulting a period of time of over-establishment until firefighters are put into vacant posts. Expenditure is therefore expected to come in on budget. Budgeting at full establishment has resulted in an increase in budget of £200k.
- 2.21 **Overtime** – This budget has been reduced by £200k to reflect the period of over establishment which should reduce the need for overtime.
- 2.22 **Retained Pay** - The retained pay budget has been calculated on staff numbers as at September 2017 adjusted for anticipated recruitment and turnover, including 10 posts migrating to whole time.
- 2.23 Each retained watch has available 3 hours of drill time each week. Historically, some watches do not undertake a full 3 hours. In order to maintain competency it is proposed to make the 3 hours drill time compulsory from April 2018. In addition, it is proposed to provide an additional half hour per week for retained staff to undertake a programme of e-learning to enhance knowledge prior to the regular job related training. The cost of this is £245k.
- 2.24 **Contingency Crews** – The level of contingency crews has fallen significantly and it is proposed to target recruitment in this area to ensure sufficient resilience. The additional cost of recruitment and training are £37k. A review of the authority's contingency arrangements is being undertaken which may result in additional measures being identified. Any additional costs will be met from the General Reserve.
- 2.25 **Administrative and Support Pay** - These budgets include a vacancy factor of 1.5%. A pay increase of 2% currently under offer has been assumed. Lower

graded Local Government employees have been offered slightly higher than 2% to bring salaries in line with the National Living Wage. If the final settlement is above 2% there will be additional budgetary pressure of £50k per 1% increase which will need to met from reserves.

- 2.26 **Pensions and National Insurance (£392k)** - The budgetary provision for both superannuation and National Insurance was insufficient in 2017/18, which has resulted in a forecast overspend in these budgets. The 2018/19 budgets similarly need adjusting. The impact is anticipated to be £245k for superannuation and £147k for National Insurance. This includes an increase relating to the pay award.
- 2.27 **Business Rates (£230k)** - Following the 2017 revaluation exercise, many business rates were significantly increased. The authority has appealed against several large increases but has been unsuccessful. Budgets will need to be increased by £230k to cover the additional costs.
- 2.28 **Ill Health** - an additional budget of £48k has been included in the budget to fund ill health retirements that have incorrectly been funded from within the pension fund in the past. Additional funding of £60k has also been provided to cover the costs of the increasing number of ill health retirements.
- 2.29 **HMI Inspection** – the authority is due to be inspected by HMICFRS (Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services) in autumn 2018 as one of the second tranche of authorities under the new inspection regime. The inspection will require a considerable amount of preparation and in order to facilitate this a contribution of £50k to an earmarked reserve has been included in the budget.
- 2.30 **Collaboration** - The Shaping Our Future Team have continued to work on ensuring that the savings identified in the Sustainability Strategy can be met. This work is now merging with the collaboration agenda and may also pick up any issues coming out of the HMI inspection process and the proposed Fire and Rescue National Framework. Work is therefore expected to continue into the future. Temporary funding of £85k has been included to fund the team until March 2020.
- 2.31 **PPE** – The cost of additional PPE kit for the wholetime and Retained recruitment is £62k. This is partially offset by a reduction in the general PPE budget of £32k due to expenditure being delayed until 2019/20 when there is a capital project to replace all kit.
- 2.32 **Savings** – The savings that have been identified and built into the budget are as detailed in the following paragraphs.
- 2.33 **Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) (Saving of £376k)** - MRP is the amount charged to revenue for the repayment of debt required to fund prior years’ capital expenditure. The revenue impact of the capital programme included in section 2.3 has been built into the MRP.

- 2.34 The authority has worked hard to maximise the life of its assets and has significantly extended the life of specialist vehicles and fire appliances life. This has been made possible through the procurement of better quality vehicles. The MRP is therefore spread over an increased number of years, thus reducing the cost. After taking account of this and some delayed expenditure on the capital programme, savings in the region of £350k are anticipated in the MRP budget.
- 2.35 **Procurement** – The Authority’s Sustainability Strategy included target savings from procurement of £350k by 2020. To date, annual procurement savings in the region of £219k have been identified. For 2018/19, further savings totalling £91k have been included in the budget – these relate to purchasing and renewing contracts for photocopying and ICT contracts (£60k) Blue light fittings (£23k), Hire of fleet vehicles, medical and equipment contracts.
- 2.36 **Transport** Reduced fuel costs (£26k) and vehicle tax (£28k) have been identified due to the reduced number of vehicles and mileage.
- 2.37 **Budget Manager Reductions** – Miscellaneous reductions in the region of £100k have been identified by budget managers as part of the budget process.
- 2.38 Detailed budgets have been prepared for the three years 2018/19 to 2020/21, which can be found in Appendix 2.
- 2.39 The budget requirement for 2018/19 has been increased by £237k following the report to the Finance and Resources Committee in January. This is largely due to a significant reduction in collection fund surpluses of £189k.

FINANCING THE BUDGET

- 2.40 The Authority primarily receives income from Revenue Support Grant, Business Rates and Council Tax. The government announced the finance settlement on 6 February 2018 covering 2018/19 and 2019/20. The settlement had altered slightly from the provisional settlement in December 2017 due some late changes to the data on which the settlement is based.
- 2.41 The precepting authorities also submitted their estimates of 2018/19 Business Rate income on 31 January. The Fire Authority receives 1% of this income. Total business rate income is higher than originally anticipated and estimates have been updated to reflect this.
- 2.42 The budget includes £298k Section 31 grant received to compensate for indexing changes applied to Business Rates announced in the Autumn Statement. This grant has been estimated at this stage and will not be confirmed until the summer and could be subject to change. Any reduction in grant will need to be met from the general reserve.
- 2.43 The Local Government Finance Settlement only covers 2018/19 and 2019/20. A new settlement period will start in 2020/21 which may result in some significant changes. The local government share in the Business Rate Retention scheme will also increase from 50% to 75% in 2020/21 which adds further uncertainty. It is still unclear as to whether Fire will continue to be funded from business rates

as it is now, or whether this will be replaced by Home Office grant instead. In the absence of further information, 2020/21 income projections have been predicted to stay flat at this point in time but this will need to be reviewed when more information becomes available.

- 2.44 The final settlement external funding figures for 2018/19 and 2019/20 and estimated figures for 2020/21 are shown below:

	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Revenue Support Grant	6,978,641	5,961,472	5,335,308	3,524,647
Business Rates	3,469,609	3,585,468	3,621,323	5,431,984
Top Up Grant	6,659,508	6,999,939	7,155,193	7,155,193
Total External Funding	17,107,758	16,546,879	16,111,824	16,111,824

The reduction in external funding between 2016/2017 and 2020/21 amounts to just over 14%.

- 2.45 The government announced, within the finance settlement, that the council tax increase threshold, above which a referendum would be triggered, would increase from 2% to 3% for 2018/19 and 2019/20. No council tax freeze grant is being offered to authorities who maintain council tax next year at current levels.
- 2.46 The following table brings together the budget requirement and the finance settlement figures and presents the position for the Authority if there was no change to the level of council tax in each of the three years:

	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Total External Funding	17,107,758	16,546,879	16,111,824	16,111,824
Budget Requirement	40,804,872	42,227,350	42,748,415	43,657,338
Balance to be met locally	23,697,114	25,680,471	26,636,591	27,545,514
Strategic Use of Reserves	525,518			
Council Tax Yield*	23,171,596	23,541,910	23,859,726	24,181,832
Budget Shortfall	0	2,138,561	2,776,865	3,363,682

*Assumes a rise in tax base but no rise in Council Tax (2017/18 figures are actual)

The above figures show that a budget deficit of £2.1m will need to be eliminated in order for the Fire Authority to approve a balanced budget for 2018/19. Even when this has been achieved, there will be a requirement to find further savings of approximately £1.3m by 2020/21 as shown in the above table (savings of £3.4m in total).

- 2.47 A council tax increase of 1.95% would generate additional funding of £460k, and a 2.95% increase would realise a total of £694k in 2018/19.
- 2.48 The Finance and Resources Committee in January recommended a council tax increase of 2.95% to the Fire Authority. The two advantages of implementing this council tax increase in 2018/19 2018 are that it adds funding permanently into

the base budget and secondly it reduces the budget deficit by £694k in 2018/19. This would still leave the Authority with budget savings of £1.444m to find in order to approve a balanced budget as required by law.

- 2.49 The deficit position will be affected by outcome of the decision by Members at this meeting regarding Mixed Crewing. However, even if implemented, it is unlikely that savings will be achieved during 2018/19. It is recommended that the £1.444m deficit in 2018/19 be financed from general reserves. This would require the Chief Fire Officer to bring back to the Authority proposals to deal with both the on-going deficit forecast for future years.
- 2.50 An increase of 2.95% in both 2017/2018 and 2018/19 along with a 1.95% increase in 2019/20, this being the maximum permitted without invoking a referendum, would have the following effect.

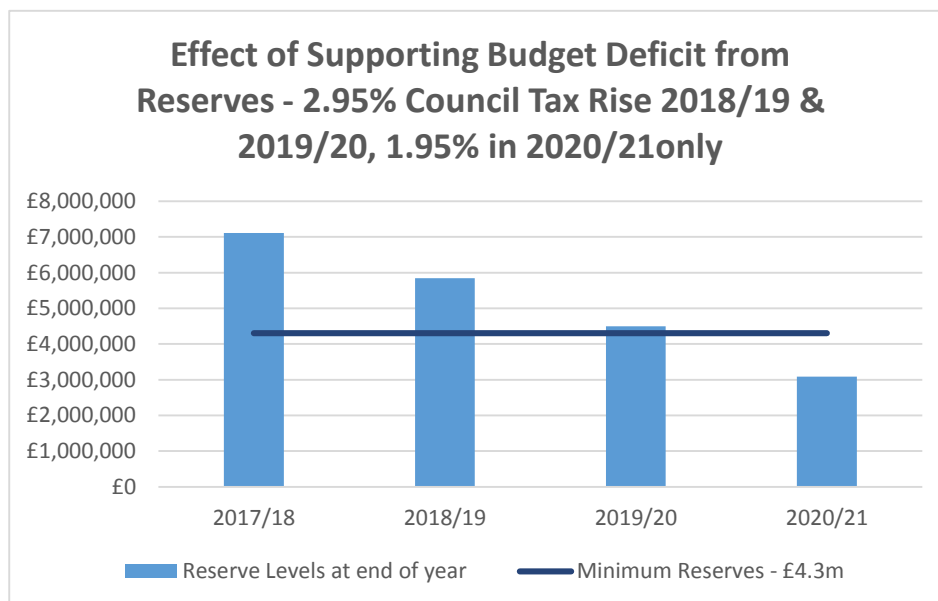
	2017/18 £	2018/19 £	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Total External Funding	17,107,758	16,546,879	16,111,824	16,111,824
Budget Requirement	40,804,872	42,227,350	42,748,415	43,657,338
Balance to be met locally	23,697,114	25,680,471	26,636,591	27,545,514
Strategic Use of Reserves	525,518	1,444,405	0	0
Council Tax Yield*	23,171,596	24,236,066	25,288,964	26,131,410
Budget Deficit	0	0	1,347,627	1,414,104
General Reserves at Year End if Shortfall not Addressed	7,292,422	5,848,017	4,500,390	3,086,286

- 2.51 The table shows that whilst reserves can be used during 2018/19 in order to allow the authority to transfer to a balanced budget position, if the proposed savings from Mixed Crewing and other sustainability strategy projects are not achieved, the impact on reserves will be unsustainable. If savings do not materialise, the general reserve will only be marginally above the £4.3m minimum level by the end of 2019/20 (see also 2.56). In order that the Fire Authority has a secure financial future savings in the region of £1.4m must be achieved during 2019/20.

RESERVES AND BALANCES

- 2.52 The Authority held reserves of £12.7m as at 1 April 2017, £4.9m of which was for earmarked projects or set aside grant funding. General Reserves account for the remaining £7.8m. A total of £1.3m is estimated to be required during 2017/18 to fund the shortfall in the revenue budget, specific revenue projects and the Capital Programme. Furthermore, £1.7m of the earmarked reserves have been committed for use in future years, leaving available balances of £9.4m.

- 2.53 Earmarked Reserves have been created in the past from underspends to fund areas of expenditure such as supporting the capital programme, ICT systems development and transitional work to enable change. With the Authority now in a deficit position, these reserves cannot be replenished, and once used, such projects will need to be funded from within the Revenue Budget, thus creating an additional pressure.
- 2.54 A risk assessment to determine the minimum level of general reserves to hold is undertaken each year, with a level of £4.3m being recommended for approval as part of the Review of Reserves and Working Balances report on this agenda.
- 2.55 To summarise, the continued use of reserves to fund one off project expenditure, to cover increased financial risks and the need to use reserves to meet the medium term budget deficit cannot be sustained over the long term. This needs to be taken into account when making decisions regarding Council Tax levels for 2018/19 and beyond.
- 2.56 A graph showing the impact of a 2.95% increase in 2018/19 and 2019/20 and a 1.95% increase in 2020/21 is shown below. The graph shows that reserves would fall below the £4.3m minimum level during 2020/21 if the deficit is not addressed.



PROPOSAL FOR COUNCIL TAX INCREASES 2018/2019

- 2.57 The recommendation of a 2.95% increase in Council Tax proposed by the Finance and Resources Committee is set out in tabular form in Appendix 3.
- 2.58 Council Tax for the Fire Authority is currently £75.29 at Band D and a 2.95% increase in this would raise it by £2.22 per year to £77.51. The effects of such an increase on other bands per year is as follows:

Band	Annual Council Tax Current £	Annual Council Tax 2.95% Increase £	Increase £
A	50.19	51.67	1.48
B	58.56	60.29	1.73
C	66.92	68.90	1.98
D	75.29	77.51	2.22
E	92.02	94.73	2.71
F	108.75	111.96	3.21
G	125.48	129.18	3.70
H	150.58	155.02	4.44

The majority of the homes in the City and County of Nottinghamshire fall into Bands A and B.

FEES AND CHARGES

2.59 At its meeting on 13 November 2015 the Policy and Strategy Committee approved a scale of fees and charges for Special Service Charges and for the use of Service facilities. That Committee also approved the increase of these fees and charges by annual inflation. Appendix 4 sets out the current scale of fees and charges as well as proposed fees and charges for 2017/2018, which have had an inflationary increase applied. It is recommended that the Authority approve these charges for implementation from 1 April 2018.

COMMENTS OF THE TREASURER

2.60 Under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Treasurer is required to report to the Authority on the following two matters:

- The robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of calculations; and
- The adequacy of reserves.

2.61 The Treasurer is satisfied that, on the basis of the financial risk assessments, the working balances are adequate and plans exist for using any surplus balances.

2.62 The Treasurer has been consulted fully concerning the build up and calculation of the budget, and is content that these have been prepared in an accurate and robust manner, such that the Authority will have adequate resources to discharge its responsibilities under various statutes and regulations.

2.63 A statement by the Authority Treasurer is included as Appendix 5 to this report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications are set out in full in the body of the report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources or learning and development implications arising directly from this report, although the achievement of budgetary savings in future years will undoubtedly have an impact.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because this report is not associated with a policy, function or service.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Authority has a statutory duty to notify its precept to Billing Authorities by 1 March 2018 and has no power to issue a supplementary precept.
- 7.2 Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires the Treasurer to report to Members and the External auditor if the Authority or one of its officers has made, or is about to make, a decision that involves unlawful expenditure. Not setting a balanced budget would be classed as being unlawful.
- 7.3 The Authority must also comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 and ensure that the financial management of the Authority is adequate and effective, and has a duty of Best Value to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Risks associated with budget setting are always significant. Budgets are by their very nature estimates of future activity and these estimates can sometimes be incorrect. Changes involving contraction of activities may not be made on the envisaged timescales, public consultation may vary policy and external issues such as national pay awards may not align with the assumptions.
- 8.2 Council tax base figures used for this report are only estimates at present and the grant settlement details are only provisional. It is possible that both or either of these could change.

- 8.3 There can be no control over external issues however the Authority has sufficient reserves to cope with any in year changes which alter these budget assumptions significantly.

9. COLLABORATION

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Consider the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Committee to the Fire Authority that there be a 2.95% Council Tax increase, with balance of £1,444,104 met by funding from reserves in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 10.2 Determine the 2018/19 precept level to be notified to the Billing Authorities based on the information set out in Section 2 and Appendix 3 as required by statute.
- 10.2 Approve the flexible use of capital receipts strategy as set out in Appendix 3, which is that capital receipts in 2018/19 will be used to either finance future capital expenditure or to repay borrowings and will not be used in this year to fund the revenue cost of reform projects.
- 10.3 Approve the fees and charges for 2018/19, as set out in Appendix 4.
- 10.4 Approve the payment of Members Allowances for 2018/19 in accordance with the approved scheme.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Theresa Channell
**INTERIM TREASURER TO THE FIRE
AUTHORITY**

FLEXIBLE USE OF CAPITAL RECEIPTS STRATEGY

Introduction

In the Spending Review 2015, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that to support local authorities to deliver more efficient and sustainable services, the government would allow local authorities to spend up to 100% of their capital receipts from the sale of fixed assets on the revenue cost of reform projects. This gives local authorities the power to treat as capital expenditure, expenditure which is incurred in generating on-going revenue savings in the delivery of public services either by way of reducing the cost of or reducing demand for services in future years. This impact of cost or demand reduction can be realised by any public sector delivery partners but must be properly incurred by authorities for the financial years that begin on 1 April 2016, 1 April 2017 and 1 April 2018. Capital receipts used in this way must have been received in these same three years. As part of the provisional funding settlement made on 19 December, this was extended to cover a further 3 years up until 2021/22.

This new power and its guidance is issued under Section 15(1) of the Local Government Act 2003, which requires local authorities to have regard to guidance that the Secretary of State may specify.

Application

The guidance specifies that authorities may not borrow to finance the revenue costs of service reform, nor may they use capital receipts accumulated from prior years. The key criteria to be used when deciding whether expenditure can be funded by the capital receipts flexibility is that it is forecast to generate on-going savings to an authority's or several authorities' and / or to another public sector body's net service expenditure.

Accountability and Transparency

The guidance specifies that authorities must disclose the individual projects that will be funded or part funded through capital receipts flexibility to the full Fire Authority. This requirement can be satisfied as part of the annual budget setting process or through the Medium Term Financial Strategy. It is recommended that the disclosure of projects to be funded in this way should be made prior to the start of each financial year, however if the strategy is updated part way through the year it must be approved by the Fire Authority and notified to central government. A revised strategy must also include the impact on Prudential Indicators. Both the initial strategy and any revised strategy must be made available online to the public.

The strategy must list each project to be funded through capital receipts flexibility, with details of the expected savings and service transformation. With effect from the 2017/18 strategy details must be included of projects approved in previous years and progress against achievement of the benefits outlines in the original strategy.

To date there have been no such projects funded through the use of capital receipts.

Capital Receipts Strategy for 2018/19

For the financial year 2018/19 it is not proposed to fund any reform projects through the capital receipts flexibility. There are currently sufficient funds held in reserves for this purpose and it is felt that capital receipts would be better used to finance capital expenditure. This will enable the Authority to minimise the use of borrowing which needs to be kept within the affordable limits as set out in the Prudential Code for Capital Finance.

If it is felt in the future that the use of capital receipts flexibility would be beneficial to the Authority then a revised strategy will be reported to the Fire Authority for approval.

CASH LIMIT				
	Revised Budget 2017/2018	Budget Requirement 2018/2019 £000's	Budget Requirement 2019/2020 £000's	Budget Requirement 2020/21 £000's
<u>Employees</u>				
Direct Employee Expenses	31178	32141	32484	33157
Indirect Employee Expenses	482	462	462	462
Pension	839	973	983	1032
	32499	33576	33929	34651
<u>Premises-Related Expenditure</u>				
Repairs Alterations and Maintenance of Bdgs	572	572	572	572
Energy Costs	312	344	344	344
Rents	36	4	4	4
Rates	710	942	937	937
Water	81	81	81	81
Fixture and Fittings	1	1	2	2
Cleaning and Domestic Supplies	316	316	324	324
Grounds Maintenance Costs	30	30	31	31
Premises Insurance	36	36	38	38
Refuse Collection	39	39	41	41
	2133	2365	2374	2374
<u>Transport-Related Expenditure</u>				
Direct Transport Cost	1025	1032	994	1011
Recharges	123	122	122	122
Public Transport	23	43	43	43
Transport Insurance	176	176	185	185
Car Allowances	350	374	357	357
	1697	1747	1701	1718
<u>Supplies & Services</u>				
Equipment Furniture and Materials	678	626	626	606
Catering	69	71	71	71
Clothes Uniforms and Laundry	272	304	284	242
Printing Stationery and General Office Exp	41	41	41	41
Services	551	545	560	561
Communications and Computing	1480	1506	1426	1426
Expenses	51	47	47	47
Grants and Subscriptions	40	35	35	35
Miscellaneous Expenses	230	232	233	234
	3412	3407	3323	3263
<u>Third Party Payments</u>				
Other Local Authorities	58	58	58	58
Private Contractors	0	0	0	0
	58	58	58	58

	Revised Budget 2017/2018	Budget Requirement 2018/2019 £000's	Budget Requirement 2019/2020 £000's	Budget Requirement 2020/21 £000's
<u>Support Services</u>				
Finance	124	126	124	124
Corporate Services	41	43	43	43
	165	169	167	167
<u>Depreciation and Impairment Losses</u>				
Depreciation	0	0	0	0
Amortisation of Intangible Fixed Assets	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
<u>Sales Fees & Charges</u>				
Customer and Client Receipts	-147	-210	-210	-210
	-147	-210	-210	-210
<u>Other Income</u>				
Government Grants	-707	-739	-839	-839
Other Grants/Reimbursements and Contribns	-745	-511	-511	-511
Interest	-66	-66	-66	-66
	-1518	-1316	-1416	-1416
<u>Capital Financing Costs</u>				
Interest Payments	924	924	1013	1013
Debt Management Expenses	1581	1506	1808	2037
	2505	2430	2821	3050
Total Budget	40,804	42,227	42,747	43,656

Proposal for Council Tax Increase of 2.95%

An increase in Council Tax of 2.95% would require the Authority to set a Band D Council Tax of £77.51 per annum in 2018/19.

Specifically in 2018/19 Council Tax would be set at the following levels:

Band A	51.67
Band B	60.29
Band C	68.90
Band D	77.51
Band E	94.73
Band F	111.96
Band G	129.18
Band H	155.02

The level of Council Tax at Band D is then multiplied by the taxbase to calculate the precept to be set for each of the District Councils and the City Council as follows:

	Taxbase	Percentage	Precept £
Ashfield	33,140.50	10.6%	2,568,720.12
Bassetlaw	34,231.95	10.9%	2,653,318.41
Broxtowe	33,448.29	10.7%	2,592,576.93
Gedling	36,637.56	11.7%	2,839,777.24
Mansfield	28,905.50	9.2%	2,240,465.27
Newark and Sherwood	38,320.19	12.3%	2,970,197.89
Rushcliffe	42,610.10	13.6%	3,302,708.81
Nottingham City	65,389.00	21.0%	5,068,301.33
Total	312,683.09	100.0%	24,236,066.00

The above figures are calculated after taking account of the declared surplus/deficit on collection for each of the billing authorities.

FEES AND CHARGES – SPECIAL SERVICES AND USE OF FACILITIES 2018/19

	2017/18 Charges	2018/19 Proposed Charges
Personnel: per hour, or part of an hour:		
Full Crew	£271.50	276.90
Station Manager and above	£60.60	61.80
Watch Manager	£49.70	50.70
Crew Manager	£47.30	48.20
Firefighter	£44.80	45.70
Appliances and Vehicles: per hour, or part of an hour:		
	£40.50	42.20
Loan of Salvage Sheet:		
Charge for fitting	£271.50	276.90
Charge for removing	£271.50	276.90
Charge for salvage sheet	£88.30	91.90
Copy of a Fire Report	£66.70	68.00
Hire of Meeting Room:		
Full day	£230.60	240.10
Half day	£119.00	123.90

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

STATEMENT BY AUTHORITY TREASURER

Under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Treasurer is specifically required to report to the Authority on the following two matters:

- The robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of calculations ; and
- The adequacy of reserves and working balances.

I have consulted with the Head of Finance and note that the required level of working balances is calculated using a risk assessment methodology. I am satisfied that, on the basis of those risk assessments, the proposed level of balances is adequate.

I note however that the current level of balances exceeds this recommended level but note the projected budget requirements for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 exceed the possible grant and council tax yields for those years.

Earmarked Reserves are held for specific purposes, and include amounts for Unapplied LPSA Reward Grant, The Community Safety Fund, Organisation Transition and Communications Development.

I have also been consulted fully concerning the build up and calculation of both the Revenue and Capital budgets and am content that these have been prepared in an accurate and robust manner such that the Authority will have adequate resources to discharge its responsibilities under various statutes and regulations.

**Theresa Channell CPFA
FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY TREASURER**



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 16 February 2018

Purpose of Report:

To present to Members the outcomes of the consultation on mixed and alternative crewing and propose changes to the operational service delivery model.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In response to reductions in grant funding and subsequent pressures on finances, the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) presented a report to the meeting of the Fire Authority in February 2016 entitled 'Sustainability Strategy for 2020' to consider and mitigate the long-term implications.
- 1.2 Part of the strategy was to consider changes to operational service delivery to maximise the availability of resources in line with risk and demand. Underlining this expectation was to avoid the reduction in the number of appliances and potential station closures, maintain the current crewing model of riding 'five and four' and at the same time generate efficiencies.
- 1.3 In pursuance of this aim, the CFO presented a report to the meeting of the Fire Authority on 22 September 2017 seeking approval from Members to consult the public on mixed and alternative crewing models.
- 1.4 The Authority agreed to consult on the proposals in line with their own consultation strategy. Consultation commenced on 25 September, for a period of 12 weeks, and closed on 17 December 2017. This report presents the outcomes of the consultation and proposes recommendations for changes to the service delivery model.
- 1.5 The Service completed a competitive procurement process and awarded a two-year contract to Opinion Research Services (ORS) for the supply of consultation services to support the Fire Authority around the Sustainability Strategy and the next integrated risk management plan (IRMP), currently being developed.
- 1.6 ORS will be in attendance at the Fire Authority meeting to present the findings of their report to Members and respond to questions.
- 1.7 Another consideration is that recent national reports on the fire and rescue service have alluded to the greater utilisation of retained staff, the necessity to create flexible crewing models to support a more diverse workforce, and the need to continually drive improvement. These will be areas of interest in the forthcoming inspection process.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 On advice from ORS the consultation has been wide ranging and used multiple opportunities for engagement. This has included printed and social media campaigns, communications with partners, direct correspondence with Councillors and MPs, an online questionnaire, public meetings, station and departmental visits and targeted forums.
- 2.2 The consultation process has resulted in 2,665 questionnaires completed, 89 attendees at focus groups, 11 individual responses being received, one standardised submission totalling 4,256 and a petition containing 2,375

signatures. In terms of engagement with members of the public this has been the most comprehensive consultation process to date, with the Service having undertaken several analyses to identify low or zero response areas, then subsequently developing more targeted consultation approaches.

- 2.3 The report on the consultation outcomes which has been produced by ORS is appended to this report in full (see Appendix A). In summary, it details the dates and activities undertaken and presents the sentiments and judgements of respondents and forum/focus group participants. It also includes some verbatim comments in an attempt to capture the view of respondents.

ALTERNATIVE CREWING

- 2.4 The consultation sought views on alternative crewing at all retained (RDS) stations enabling crews of less than four to attend smaller, lower risk incidents, as an alternative to crews responding from further afield.
- 2.5 The alternative crewing concept proved to be relatively uncontroversial. Responses to the questionnaires showed that 41% agreed with the proposal, while 53% disagreed. However, the focus groups and the written submissions almost unanimously supported the proposal. The standardised submission concluded that 94% strongly disagreed with all the proposals including alternative crewing.
- 2.6 Respondents recognised the difficulties of RDS availability during weekday traditional working hours, and supported the proposal to respond quicker due to the ability of the Service to manage risk. There was also recognition that this may help with motivation and retention of RDS staff if they are used more frequently in their local area.
- 2.7 There were some concerns raised by the proposal, one of which was that crews of two or three firefighters would become the norm. The CFO believes this concern can be mitigated by the ongoing work to improve recruitment and retention of RDS staff and enhanced performance management systems at the local level. There is also a commitment that crews of less than four will not be transposed to the wholetime duty system (WDS).
- 2.8 A further concern was that firefighters may be put under pressure to take risks without the capacity to mitigate the impact. This is addressed by the ability for Control Room staff to mobilise additional resources based on information gained, and through the development of robust risk assessments, procedures and tactics.
- 2.9 Furthermore, every large-scale incident commences with the attendance of initial crews who are required to identify risks and request additional resources if required. Incident commanders are well trained to deal with this dynamic situation whilst awaiting the arrival of oncoming resources.
- 2.10 It remains the view of the CFO that alternative crewing has the potential to positively impact on initial attendance times, use resources more efficiently and support the recruitment and retention of RDS staff. The concerns

identified are acknowledged but can be effectively managed by organisational policy and procedures.

MIXED CREWING

- 2.11 Since 2010 previous changes to the organisation have delivered savings in the region of £13m per annum. This has resulted in significant changes to managerial structures, support functions and the removal of six appliances. The Authority has previously indicated that they do not want to close fire stations, reduce the number of appliances or move away from the current crewing numbers on wholetime appliances.
- 2.12 Within these parameters, mixed crewing is designed to address a number of issues, namely, the 40% reduction in demand on operational resources over a sustained period of time; the difficulty in recruiting RDS firefighters to provide day-time cover, the changing demand between day and night-time activity; the need to support firefighters working to age 60, and a reduction in funding to the year 2020.
- 2.13 The consultation sought views on the introduction of mixed crewing at Ashfield, Retford and Worksop with the expectation that implementation at two of the three would deliver the necessary financial savings for the Fire Authority.
- 2.14 Responses to the questionnaires showed that 63% strongly disagreed with the proposals, while 22%-25% agreed, the variance in agreement being applicable to the different locations being considered (Retford 25%, Ashfield 23%, Worksop 22%).
- 2.15 The focus groups showed noticeable support for the principle of mixed crewing. Overall, across all the groups there was most support for implementing the change in Retford fire station and least support for doing so in Worksop; but opinion was divided. The standardised submission concluded that 94% strongly disagreed with all the proposals.
- 2.16 There is no doubt that this proposal has raised concerns through the consultation process, most notably that attendance times would increase significantly; that RDS availability is not reliable and that staff are not as well trained.
- 2.17 In terms of attendance times, this must be considered in the context of county wide management of risk. It is accepted that changing an appliance from being WDS to RDS crewed will increase attendance times by an average of five minutes, however this is for a small number of incidents, and will only affect one of the appliances attending. For context, at least two appliances are mobilised to property fires, and at least three are sent if there is a life risk.
- 2.18 There is also a perception that appliances are located at stations waiting to be called out, and will only respond in their local area. This is not the case as Control Room procedures ensure that the most appropriate and quickest

appliance is mobilised, even if that means it is provided from another authority.

- 2.19 In terms of availability of RDS appliances, this is an issue for the Service, but is predominantly during the weekday day-time periods. RDS availability is strong at night which reflects the changing demographics of society and the reduction in shift-workers generally. The CFO believes that recruitment of RDS staff to provide night-time cover will be significantly easier than securing cover during the daytime. Furthermore, some of the savings generated from the proposed implementation of mixed crewing will be re-invested in RDS sections across the county to increase their day-time capacity and resilience.
- 2.20 In response to the question of competence of RDS staff, they undergo the same robust selection, progression and training processes as their WDS colleagues. There are some minor differences in the scope of the equipment they use due to the very infrequent use of such specialist equipment. Where required, additional training will be delivered in these areas based on local risk.
- 2.21 What must also be considered is that of the 253 RDS staff currently employed, 59 are also WDS staff who hold 'dual contracts' with the Authority and a small number of others work for various local authority, airport or private fire and rescue services.
- 2.22 More than half of the appliances in the county are crewed by RDS firefighters, and there is no evidence to underpin the perception that response times or capability of crews is an issue in those areas.
- 2.23 There has also been concern raised over the proposed WDS shift time of 8am to 6pm. Although overall demand at the stations is low, the peak activity period does extend until approximately 9pm. This is acknowledged, however what must also be considered is the availability of RDS staff in the morning should the shift start later, the actual number of incidents that occur after 6pm, the impact of a permanent afternoon/evening shift on WDS staff and the ability to effectively manage transfer of resourcing between shift based and mixed crewing stations as and when required. This will be considered during the implementation stage as each RDS section is unique and the solution will need to be tailored locally.
- 2.24 The concept of mixed crewing (utilising WDS staff during the day and RDS staff at night) is not new, and has been successful within a number of fire and rescue services across the country for many years. Therefore, the CFO believes that mixed crewing could be implemented at all three sites proposed for consultation. This view is based on a number of factors including, the more effective and efficient resourcing of risk and demand; the need to consider alternative working arrangements for ageing firefighters; the need to invest in the resilience of RDS sections; and the requirement to respond to reductions in financial resources.
- 2.25 Although marginal, the hierarchy of responses through the consultation also align with the view of the CFO, in that the preference for change would be at

Retford and Ashfield fire stations and is therefore reflected in the recommendations of this report.

NEXT STEPS

- 2.26 If agreed, no redundancies will emerge through these proposals as any reductions required will be achieved through the normal turnover of staff.
- 2.27 Implementation of the proposals will commence immediately and will involve the recruitment and training of additional retained firefighters. Consultation with the wholetime workforce and their representatives regarding the movement of staff and the creation of the mixed crewing system will also be undertaken.
- 2.28 Alternative crewing will be in place within a few months, however the implementation of mixed crewing will be more complex and phased in over the next 6 to 12 months, with an expectation of being in place fully by April 2019.
- 2.29 At this stage it is not possible to accurately predict the final changes to the permanent establishment of retained and wholetime firefighters, however this will be considered during the implementation phase and proposed to the Authority for approval in-line with normal governance arrangements.
- 2.30 The proposed changes will reduce wholetime ridership costs by approximately £1m, however some finances will need to be re-invested to support the enhancement and resilience of retained sections and it is therefore anticipated that actual savings will be in the region of £800k per annum.
- 2.31 It is also recommended that periodic reviews are undertaken on the impact of Alternative and Mixed Crewing models and future reports are presented to the Fire Authority on the outcomes.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Even when utilising the local flexibility to raise Council Tax, the Authority this has a financial shortfall of £1.4m within the revenue budget that needs to be addressed. The proposals within this report will provide savings of approximately £800k when fully implemented.
- 3.2 Implementation of the proposals will commence immediately, however it is anticipated that it will be April 2019 before the £800k of savings will be fully realised. Reports will be presented throughout the next 12 months to provide updates on progress to Members and a review of the outcomes.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are significant human resources implications arising from any decision to change crewing arrangements. This will include the recruitment and training of additional RDS firefighters and changes to the working patterns of other staff.
- 4.2 Service policies will be followed to implement any agreed outcomes, which will include thorough consultation with individual employees and their representatives.
- 4.3 The proposed changes will require adjustments to the permanent establishment of both wholetime and retained firefighters. This will be fully identified through the implementation process and reported to the Fire Authority in due course for approval, in-line with normal governance arrangements.
- 4.4 It is important to note that no redundancies will result from these proposals as reductions within the wholetime establishment will be achieved through the normal turnover of staff.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

Equality impact assessments have been completed for both mixed and alternative crewing models and are attached at Appendix B.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The duty to consult the public is contained within the National Framework which is issued under Part 3, Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The consultation process that has been undertaken is considered robust and has followed the Authority's consultation framework.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The update and analysis of the risk profile and the operational activity levels are part of the Service's risk management process. The proposed changes to crewing arrangements is based on a clear evidential framework and better aligns the available operational resources to demand and risk.

- 8.2 The Authority also has the responsibility to produce a balanced budget and ensure the financial future of the organisation is sustainable. The changes proposed in this report will assist in addressing the £1.4m deficit in the revenue budget.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

The Service will continue to utilise the most appropriate and quickest operational asset to attend and resolve operational incidents, even where that involves the use of assets from neighbouring services.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Approve the implementation of alternative crewing at all retained sections within the Service;
- 10.2 Approve the implementation of the mixed crewing model at both Ashfield and Retford fire stations;
- 10.3 Request that the Chief Fire Officer provide a future report on the amendments required to the permanent establishment of both retained and wholetime firefighter posts; and,
- 10.4 Request that periodic reviews are undertaken on the impact of alternative and mixed crewing, and that outcome reports are subsequently presented to the Fire Authority for consideration.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service

Shaping Our Future 2017 Consultation Findings



Opinion Research Services

January 2018

As with all our studies, findings from this research are subject to Opinion Research Services' Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract.

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Acknowledgements

Opinion Research Services (ORS) is pleased to have worked with Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) on the consultation programme reported here.

ORS was commissioned to conduct public consultation, and also to review all the outcomes from the wider consultation programme conducted by NFRS in connection with its *Shaping Our Future 2017* consultation. We hope our report will inform the future planning of the service.

We are grateful to all of those who completed the questionnaire or submitted a written submission, petition or online comment – and to those who took part in the focus groups. The latter were patient in listening to background information before entering positively into open discussions about challenging topics, with some controversial aspects in some cases. They engaged with the Service, with the issues under consideration and with each other in discussing their ideas readily.

We thank NFRS for commissioning the project and we particularly thank the officers with whom we have worked with for their collaboration and for attending the focus groups and meetings to answer people's many questions. Such meetings benefit considerably from such readiness to answer participants' questions fully and frankly, as in this case.

At all stages of the project, ORS's status as an independent organisation facilitating the consultation as fairly as possible was recognised and respected; this is an independent report and has not been influenced or shaped by NFRS or any other party. We are grateful for the trust, and we hope this report will contribute usefully to thinking about NFRS's development in difficult times.

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Executive Summary and Conclusions

The Commission

1. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) and Nottinghamshire Fire Authority (NFA) are considering options for the future of fire and rescue services across the county in the context of steadily reducing risk (when measured in terms of the number of incidents) and financial constraints. The proposals under consideration were:

Introduce a Mixed Crewing¹ system at two of either Ashfield, Retford or Worksop Fire Stations; and

Introduce an Alternative Crewing² System at all NFRS on-call stations.

2. On the basis of our experience of the fire and rescue service and many statutory consultations, ORS was commissioned to undertake a programme of key consultation activities, and provide this interpretative report of findings.

Extensive Consultation

3. NFRS's consultation ran for 12 weeks from September 25th to December 17th 2017 and included the following elements:

Independent Research (conducted by ORS)

Advising on the nature and scope of the consultation;

Implementing and analysing responses to an online and paper version of an open consultation questionnaire;

Recruiting, facilitating and reporting eight deliberative focus groups with members of the public (in Worksop, Retford, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Newark, Ollerton, Carlton, Beeston and West Bridgford);

Facilitating and reporting two staff focus groups;

Designing informative and interactive presentation material suitable for use at the focus groups;

¹ Fire stations crewed utilising wholtime firefighters at periods of highest demand – in the day - and retained firefighters at periods of lowest demand – at night.

² Mobilising retained fire engines with crews of less than four firefighters, to attend smaller, lower risk incident types e.g. small bin or rubbish fires.

Analysis of written submissions and petitions received by NFRS - as well as other NFRS consultation activity; and

Producing an overall report of all consultation findings and guidance on the interpretation of the material.

NFRS Consultation

Providing details of the consultation proposals on the NFRS website: for example, via a 'website story' that was viewed 2,911 times in total; and a video by the Chief Fire Officer (henceforth CFO) that was viewed 277 times internally by staff;

Publicising the consultation in the local media (broadcast and print) and via: partner organisations; press releases, briefings and interviews; and social media;

Providing and distributing consultation documents to/at fire stations, community events and staff development days;

Providing information on the consultation and proposals to parish councils and local community organisations;

Meetings with Ashfield District Council and the Labour Group in Ashfield;

Responding to internal and external requests for further information or consultation documents³;

72 internal watch/team visits – and a meeting with middle managers; and

Development and distribution of: staff newsletters; staff bulletins; and a staff video.

4. NFRS was conscientious in its efforts to ensure engagement with a wide range of people across the whole of Nottinghamshire and the City of Nottingham. In addition to Facebook advertising targeted at specific demographics, the Service also undertook several analyses to identify low or zero response areas where they subsequently developed more targeted consultation strategies (document drops in certain areas of the City that had not thus far responded to the consultation for example).

³ For example, an internal request was made for another 10,000 documents: this was refused on the grounds that the consultation document was produced for use by ORS and the consultation team in line with NFRS's consultation strategy and consultation framework, and that the Service had planned methods for distributing them. Furthermore, the requester was informed that producing another 10,000 documents would be cost-prohibitive in terms of printing, postage and processing. The requester was asked instead to direct people to the NFRS website, and if they did not have the means to fill it in online to contact NFRS to request a paper copy of the consultation document and questionnaire.

5. ORS was involved in the consultation programme throughout and, as well as conducting its own research and analysis, has been given access to submissions, petitions and other material received during the consultations.

Summary of Consultation Strands

Open Questionnaire

6. The open consultation questionnaire (with an accompanying Consultation Document) was available online and as a hard copy between 25th September and 17th December 2017. In total, 2,665 questionnaires were completed (2,054 online and 611 by post).
7. It should be noted that while open questionnaires are important consultation routes that are accessible to almost everyone, they are not 'surveys' of the public. Whereas surveys require proper sampling of a given population, open questionnaires are distributed unsystematically or adventitiously and are more likely to be completed by motivated people while also being subject to influence by local campaigns. As such, because the respondent profile (as outlined in the full report) is an imperfect reflection of the Nottinghamshire population, its results must be interpreted carefully. This does not mean that the open questionnaire findings should be discounted: they are analysed in detail in this report and must be taken into account as a demonstration of the strength of feeling of residents who were motivated to put forward their views (and in many cases concerns) about the proposed changes.

Focus Groups with Members of the Public

8. NFRS and NFA commissioned a programme of eight focus groups with randomly selected members of the public across Nottinghamshire to allow local residents an opportunity to offer their views on the *Shaping Our Future 2017* proposals. These focus groups involved a total of 89 people and participants were recruited by ORS through random digit telephone dialling, with quota controls to ensure the relatively proportional representation of different demographic and socio-economic groups. Care was taken to ensure that no groups were disadvantaged in the recruitment process and participants were recompensed for their time and expenses in attending.
9. NFRS and NFA commissioned the focus group programme in order to fairly 'test' the acceptability or otherwise of their proposals in thoughtful, considered and deliberative or 'jury-style' meetings. The meetings began with detailed presentations by ORS outlining the principles of the proposals and the implications of the changes in the relevant areas. There were lengthy question and answer periods, followed by the residents' detailed and deliberative discussions of the issues.

Focus Groups with NFRS Staff

10. The attendance levels were lower than desired at the two staff focus groups, for a total of only 11 staff attended the two sessions, even though NFRS had undertaken a conscientious programme of invitations. Full and frank discussions were had at both sessions, though.

Written Submissions

11. In total, 11 written submissions were received. To make them readily accessible, they have been reviewed in the relevant chapter, though the main themes have been included in this summary.

Standardised Submissions

12. A joint standardised submission was submitted to NFRS by John Mann MP and the FBU on 8th December 2017. Overall, the responses came in three different formats and there were 4,256 of them: 4,096 were complete, 65 were incomplete and 95 were blank. 4,013 responses (94%) strongly disagreed with all proposals; 49 strongly agreed and two tended to agree with all proposals; and there were 30 mixed responses.

Submissions via Social Media

13. Many questions and comments were raised via social media (mainly Facebook), most of which were objections to the Mixed Crewing proposal and to FRS reductions more generally.

Petitions

14. Petitions are an important form of democratic expression and deserve to be noted carefully. In assessing what weight to give them in the overall interpretation, NFRS and NRA should consider whether:

The points of view expressed reflect general public opinion?

Those signing were reasonably well-informed about the issues?

The petition statements were fair and factual or emotive and exaggerated?

The signatures were spontaneous and self-motivated or the result of active and persuasive campaigns?

15. None of these criteria should be used to disqualify a petition from consideration; but they indicate what relative weight might be given to them when compared with other forms of consultation. In this case, there was one online petition entitled *'Save Ashfield's Firefighters'* that attracted 2,375 signatures.

Consultation Proportionate and Fair

16. The key legal and good practice requirements for proper consultation are based on the so-called Gunning Principles, which state that consultation should: be conducted at a formative

stage, before decisions are taken; allow sufficient time for people to participate and respond; provide the public and stakeholders with sufficient background information to allow them to consider the issues and any proposals intelligently and critically; and be properly taken into consideration before decisions are finally taken.

17. Throughout the process, stakeholders were reassured that **no decisions** have yet been taken. Furthermore, the 12-week formal consultation period gave people **sufficient time** to participate - and through its consultation documents, website/other information and detailed presentations and meetings, NFRS and NFA sought to provide **sufficient information** for staff, stakeholders and residents to understand the proposals and to make informed judgements about them and the supporting evidence.
18. The final Gunning principle listed above is that consultation outcomes should be **properly taken into consideration** before authorities take their decisions. In this case, the draft ORS report will be available to Members almost two weeks prior to the February Fire Authority meeting, allowing sufficient time for consideration of its findings.
19. Properly understood, accountability means that public authorities should give an account of their plans and take into account public and stakeholder views: they should conduct fair and accessible consultation while reporting the outcomes openly and considering them fully. Consultations are not referenda, and the popularity or unpopularity of draft proposals should not displace professional and political judgement about what are the right or best decisions in the circumstances. The levels of, and reasons for, public support or opposition are important, but as considerations to be taken into account, not as decisive factors that necessarily determine authorities' decisions.
20. The key question is not, *Does the proposal have majority support?* but, *Are the reasons for the popularity or unpopularity of the proposals cogent?* Consultation is to inform authorities of issues and/or arguments and/or implications they might have overlooked; or to contribute to the re-evaluation of matters already known; or to reassess priorities and principles critically. However popular proposals might be, that does not itself mean they are feasible, safe, sustainable, reasonable and value-for-money; and unpopularity does not mean the reverse.

Consultation Findings

Mixed Crewing Proposal

Introduction

21. This section reviews the consultation outcomes on the Mixed Crewing proposals, including those from social media. In fact, the social media contributions concentrated overwhelmingly on Mixed Crewing rather than on Alternative Crewing, so this section is significantly longer than the corresponding section for Alternative Crewing. The key reason

for the difference is that Alternative Crewing was *relatively* uncontroversial whereas Mixed Crewing was a strongly contested proposal on social media.

Open Questionnaire

22. A quarter (25%) of respondents agreed with the proposal to replace a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine between 6pm and 8am at **Retford Fire Station**, but **71% disagreed, including 63% who strongly disagreed**.
23. Just under a quarter (23%) of respondents agreed with the proposal to replace a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine between 6pm and 8am at **Worksop Fire Station**, but **72% disagreed, including 63% who strongly disagreed**.
24. Over a fifth (22%) of respondents agreed with the proposal to replace a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine between 6pm and 8am at **Ashfield Fire Station** but **73% disagreed, including 63% who strongly disagreed**.
25. Therefore, the results of the open questionnaire were very consistent in terms of the proportions supporting and opposing the different options.

Open Questionnaire: Open Text Comments

26. Most of the open text comments were made in relation to the Mixed Crewing proposal, and were predominantly around:

Concerns that crewing reductions will result in increased danger and risk of injury or death to both firefighters and the public (38% of respondents);

The need to maintain current provision due to general disagreement with the proposals (34%);

The possibility of fires and accidents occurring at any time and the need for a 24/7 fire station to cater for this (17%);

The possibility for and consequences of slower response times (17%);

The need to save money not being placed above the ability to save lives (11%);

Respective training levels among wholetime and on-call staff (6%);

Greater pressure on and workloads for on-call staff (5%); and

The potential for night-time fires to be more dangerous as they have more time to spread and the potential to remain undiscovered for longer (5%).

27. It should also be noted that 6% of respondents said that they generally agreed with the proposals/think they are a good idea.

Focus Groups with Members of the Public

28. The focus group findings contrast markedly with the responses to the open questionnaire. After detailed discussions, across the eight focus groups with randomly selected members of the public there was **demonstrable support for the principle of Mixed Crewing**.
29. In fact, the majorities in favour of Mixed Crewing were sometimes overwhelming (unanimous in one case and almost unanimous in others); and in other cases those in favour typically outnumbered those against by three-to-one. Some of the supporters liked the proposal because it:
- Matches resources to demand or need
 - Provides value for money
 - Is safe and feasible
 - Makes good use of Retained Duty System (henceforth RDS) firefighters
 - Allows WDS firefighters to do a bigger proportion of community fire safety work (during day-time shifts)
30. Other supporters of Mixed Crewing did so primarily on financial grounds (as a ‘necessary evil’) – but while accepting that the measure was safe and feasible on the evidence.
31. Those opposing the proposal (or saying they were ‘don’t knows’) were concerned above all about public safety at night and about demonstrably slower response times; but they were also concerned about NFRS’s ability to recruit and retain sufficient RDS staff – and also about the skills levels and training of RDS staff compared with wholetime firefighters.
32. More generally, the public felt that, if implemented, the change to Mixed Crewing should be monitored and reviewed to ensure its continued safety.
33. An important issue raised in many of the focus groups was that the proposed **6pm shift changeover time was inappropriate and wasteful** in the context of the demand curve for FRS responses – in which fire stations are busiest between about 3pm and 9pm. Having heard this point made in several groups, NFRS should consider this alongside both RDS availability and operational incident activity.
34. Compared with the fairly general support for the principle of Mixed Crewing, there were clear **divisions of opinion on which two of the three possible stations should be selected**.
35. The table on the next page shows the spread of opinion across all the groups. The green ticks indicate the stations (listed across the top) that were most supported for the implementation of the change in each of the discussion groups (which are listed on the left-hand side).

STATION OPTIONS				
	WORKSOP	RETFORD	ASHFIELD	MIXED
Worksop		✓		✓ (Worksop OR Ashfield)
Retford	✓		✓	
Ashfield	✓	✓		
Ollerton		✓		✓ (slightly more support for Worksop)
Carlton	✓	✓		
Beeston		✓	✓	
West Bridgford			✓	✓ (slightly more support for Worksop)
Newark			✓	✓ (Slightly more support for Retford)

36. Overall, across all the groups there was most support for implementing the change in Retford fire station and least support for doing so in Worksop; but opinion was very divided.
37. Part of the reason for the divisions of opinion was the ‘Not-in-my-backyard’ attitude, which meant that people could support the principle relatively enthusiastically on public policy grounds, but still object to its implementation in their own areas. So Retford proposed Worksop and Ashfield; Worksop proposed Retford; and Ashfield proposed Worksop and Retford! To some extent, at least, people disregarded the data on fire calls and mobilisations in favour of their own local stations.
38. Some important considerations mentioned in the discussions were:
- It is probably undesirable to appear to ‘demote’ two stations by introducing Mixed Crewing in the same local authority area
 - Worksop is more ‘industrial’ and bigger than the others
 - Ashfield has more back-up support (from Mansfield) than the others
 - Retford has available support from Harworth.

Focus Groups with Staff

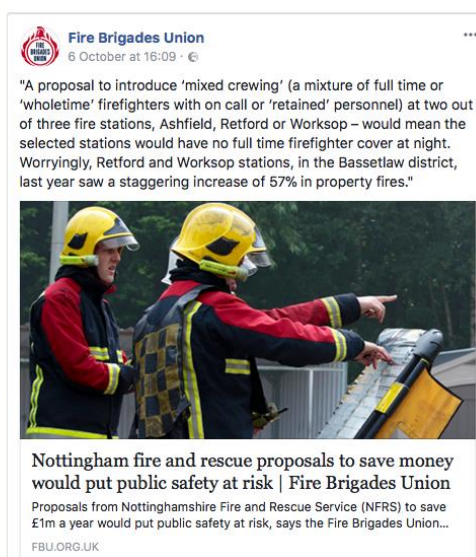
39. Two staff forums or focus groups were arranged by NFRS, but despite the organisation's best efforts a total of only 11 firefighters attended – five in the northern group meeting and six in the southern one. It is not possible to know how representative these 11 RDS and WDS firefighters were of the whole organisation, but their comments deserve careful notice.
40. Overall, the focus groups with staff also contrasted with the findings of the open questionnaire and tended towards support, like the opinions in the public focus groups.
41. Despite some scepticism about the incident reduction data on which NFRS relies, and also about the financial factors behind the policies, the southern discussion group strongly supported Mixed Crewing in principle, by a majority of five-to-one. In contrast, the northern group was less positive and opposed the proposal by four-to-one.
42. Those in favour of Mixed Crewing in the south emphasised the opportunities it could give to WDS firefighters who wish to work days only, and they suggested there might be transfer applications to do that. Those opposing the proposal in the north stressed the potential for RDS recruitment and retention difficulties, and also questioned whether on-call firefighters would accept multiple night-time calls-out.
43. Overall, then, **on the principle of Mixed Crewing, there was a division of opinion in the two small staff groups, but with a small majority in favour.** Both groups, though, thought that RDS recruitment could be improved if there were more flexible contracts; and they also thought that WDS firefighters should be allowed to have dual contracts in order to provide cover on the stations at night.
44. In terms of where Mixed Crewing should be implemented, both groups thought that **Ashfield and Retford are the most appropriate stations.**

Written and Other Communications (including Social Media)

45. Only 11 written submissions were received and **most were opposed** to the introduction of Mixed Crewing.
46. Seven submissions (from John Mann MP; Ollerton & Boughton Town Council; Rampton Parish Council; Headon-cum-Upton, Grove and Stokeham Parish Council; Selston Parish Council; Mr Ray Young [Selston Parish Council and Chairman of Ashfield and Sherwood UKIP Branch]; and an individual resident) objected to the Mixed Crewing proposal, mainly because of longer night-time response times; the potential threats to public safety; and the possible difficulties with on-call availability, recruitment and retention.
47. Rampton and Headon-cum-Upton, Grove and Stokeham Parish Councils rejected NFRS's argument that that between 6pm and 8pm is its period of lowest demand and suggest that if the Service must introduce Mixed Crewing, it should not do so from 6pm but between 12:30am and 8:30am – the 'true low demand period'. (The shift changeover time was also a matter of concern in the public focus groups.) It is unclear as to whether the Councils would

continue to oppose Mixed Crewing on this basis, but it would be safe to assume that an amended changeover time would mitigate against at least some of their anxieties in relation to longer response times and public safety.

- 48. NFRS undertook a conscientious **Facebook** campaign to publicise its ideas and proposals via ten rounds of Facebook adverts to large targeted audiences – and it appears that a video by the CFO was ‘viewed’ 29,000 times. NFRS also used Twitter, which reached 32,800 people and You Tube, on which the CFO’s video was viewed 4,200 times.
- 49. In general, the **social media debate** (mainly on Facebook) focused almost exclusively on Mixed Crewing. For example, there was a wide range of Facebook posts opposing the NFRS proposals – most notably from the FBU, John Mann, MP, Gloria De Piero, MP, Save Our Firefighters, and Keep Retford Fire Station. An example FBU post was:



- 50. Posts like this (which refers to an alleged 57% increase in property fires) generated a **significant number of comments**. Some were general objections to FRS (and other emergency service) reductions, whereas the vast majority objected to FRS reductions generally and to Mixed Crewing specifically. The most common concerns were around the on-call system and its inherently lengthier response times; and it was frequently claimed that retained crews may not be as highly trained as wholetime crews; are often ‘off-the run’; and are difficult to recruit and retain; and, in some cases, take longer than five minutes to turn-out.
- 51. There was, though, some Facebook support for the proposals as the ‘lesser of two evils’ (better than removing stations or appliances in their entirety) and recognition that NFRS must look at alternative forms of fire cover given the financial constraints within which it is operating. There was some support for on-call fire cover as an efficient and economic system that is increasingly important one in times of financial austerity.

Petitions

52. As far as we know, only one petition was organised during the consultation. The online petition entitled 'Save Ashfield's Firefighters' attracted 2,375 signatures and was organised by Ashfield Independents. The following by Cllr Jason Zadrozny formed part of the information sheet for the petition and was likely seen as being authoritative due to his position on the Fire Authority:

Councillor Jason Zadrozny, a member of the Fire Authority said, "Any decision to reduce the service at Ashfield Fire Station could cost lives. It's that serious! Reducing the service would add in at least 5 minutes to attend any incident - the crucial life saving time as far as I'm concerned. Ashfield Independents are today launching a campaign to retain all services at Ashfield Fire Station. I would encourage everybody to get involved in the consultation and send a clear message that there must be no cuts!"

53. Not surprisingly, perhaps, this campaigning petition also attracted a significant number of comments. In addition to many objections to emergency service reductions, the most common were that: the proposed crewing changes could cost lives as a result of longer response times; the need to make savings is being put above people's safety; Ashfield is a busy station and thus warrants a 24/7 crew; the station is strategically placed to respond to incidents in Ashfield, Sutton and on the M1 and A38 (and to support Mansfield Fire Station); Ashfield has a growing population that needs more than 12 firefighters to adequately serve it; the remaining crew members could become over-stressed; and the on-call system can be unreliable regarding availability.
54. The petition is clearly important in indicating public anxiety about aspects of the proposed changes and NFRS will treat it seriously. Nonetheless, it should be noted that petitions can exaggerate general public sentiments if organised by motivated opponents using emotive language; and in this case the local campaign had the authority of a NFA member behind it. So petitions should never be disregarded or discredited, for they show local feelings; but they should be interpreted in context.

Standardised Submissions

55. A joint standardised submission (in three different formats) was submitted to NFRS by John Mann MP and the FBU on 8th December 2017. Overall, there were 4,096 complete responses. Of these, 94% strongly disagreed with all the proposals; only 49 strongly agreed and two tended to agree with all proposals.
56. Comments on the forms focused mainly on the need to retain a wholetime service at all the stations potentially affected, the possible risk to life as a result of longer response times, and the need for public safety to be put before financial savings. There was also a misconception among some respondents that fire stations are to close.

Alternative Crewing Proposal

Introduction

57. Because Alternative Crewing was *relatively* uncontroversial (whereas Mixed Crewing divided opinion markedly), this section is relatively brief (compared with the last), particularly because the social media contributions concentrated overwhelmingly on Mixed Crewing.

Open Questionnaire

58. **Two fifths (41%) of respondents agreed with the Alternative Crewing proposal while over half (53%) disagreed**, including 44% who strongly disagreed. Therefore, the support for Alternative Crewing in the open questionnaire was nearly twice as high as for Mixed Crewing.

Focus Groups with Members of the Public

59. The members of the public in the eight focus groups found the prospect of Alternative Crewing to be uncontroversial. In fact, that is an understatement since **the principle of crewing with less than four in appropriate circumstances was endorsed almost unanimously across all eight meetings**. People's main reasons for supporting the proposal were based on the:

Importance of getting fire engines quickly to emergencies from the nearest fire stations

Difficulties with RDS availability during working hours on weekdays

'Wastage' involved when two or three RDS firefighters are unable to turn out to an emergency (even in a support role) if the full crew compliment is not available

Fire Service's ability to manage the risks involved with clear health and safety rules and protocols for staff.

60. The (small) minority opposing the proposal were concerned above all that crews of two and three should not become the norm, and that firefighters might be put under pressure to take unwise risks by tackling a fire with too few crew and resources.

Focus Groups with Staff

61. The southern group of six firefighters clearly supported Alternative Crewing, by a majority of four-to-one, but in the norther group (of five) a majority of three were opposed. Overall, then, a **small majority of all the participants favoured Alternative Crewing**.
62. The dominant reasons for supporting the proposal were that response times will improve to many lesser incidents and better use will be made of available resources. Some felt that the public would be indignant if they knew that nearby fire engines with two or three crew members available were not responding in favour of engines coming from further away.

63. The dominant reason for opposing the proposal was that public and firefighter safety would be jeopardised: the latter might be sent to incidents that turned out to be too dangerous for a smaller team, while the public at the emergency scene might then pressurise the firefighters to ‘do something’ regardless of the dangers.

Written and Other Communications (including Social Media)

64. Two submissions (from Flintham and Wysall Parish Council and Shelford Parish Council also writing on behalf of Costock, Whatton and Plumtree Parish Councils) supported Alternative Crewing as a sensible move that will improve efficiency and reduce costs;
65. Two submissions (from Selston Parish Council and Mr Ray Young) objected to the proposal on the grounds that ‘smaller’ incidents could escalate, placing both firefighters and the public in danger. Furthermore, Ollerton & Boughton Town Council seeks reassurance that Alternative Crewing will not be used to attend house fires and RTCs in future.

Standardised Submissions

66. A joint standardised submission (in three different formats) was submitted to NFRS by John Mann MP and the FBU on 8th December 2017. Overall, there were 4,096 complete responses. Of these, 94% strongly disagreed with all the proposals; only 49 strongly agreed and two tended to agree with all proposals. While the submissions mentioned all the proposals, the comments on the forms focused mainly on Mixed Crewing and the need to retain a wholtime service at all the stations potentially affected.

Conclusions

Introduction

67. It is not the role of ORS to make policy recommendations or to go beyond the fact-based interpretation above. Ultimately, an overall assessment of the consultation will depend upon the Authority itself: its members will consider all the consultation elements in the context of all the other evidence available in order to assess the merits of the various opinions as the basis for public policy. The challenge for the Authority is to maintain public and professional confidence in the safety and resilience of NFRS services while also demonstrating that it can successfully deliver appropriate changes to balance its budget. We trust that this report and the following conclusions will make at least some contribution to that endeavour.

Range of Opinions and Assessment Criteria

68. The executive summary above has demonstrated a contrast between (on the one hand) the open questionnaire, petition, most of the submissions/written communications, and the views expressed on social media (that were generally very strongly opposed to the Mixed Crewing proposal) and (on the other hand) the public focus groups, the staff focus groups,

and some submissions that generally accepted the case for change. In this context, the Authority has to balance the outcomes of the different consultation methods.

- 69. When interpreting the findings, a key principle is that consultation is not a referendum: it is not a ‘numbers game’ in which the loudest or majority opinions should automatically prevail. The key issue is not whether most people agree or disagree with the proposals, but, *Are the reasons for their popularity or unpopularity cogent?* However popular or unpopular proposals might be, the Authority will want to consider if they are evidence-based, feasible, safe, sustainable, reasonable and value-for-money. The reasons for people’s views are well documented throughout this report so that the NFA may consider them when making its judgements.
- 70. As well as examining all the evidence and the cogency of opinions, NFA has to consider what weight to attach to each of the consultation elements. ORS suggests that in making its assessments the Authority should have regard to: whether views expressed reflected general public opinion; whether respondents were relatively well or poorly informed about the evidence; whether opinions were ‘thoughtful’ (based on personal deliberation) or the result of organised campaigns marshalling collective sentiments; whether the views expressed were cogent and evidence-based; and how many people were supportive or opposed.

RANGE OF OPINIONS		
	CONSULTATION ELEMENTS MAINLY IN FAVOUR/ACCEPTING of PROPOSALS	CONSULTATION ELEMENTS MAINLY AGAINST THE PROPOSALS
MIXED CREWING	Public focus groups Staff focus groups (majority)	Open questionnaire Staff focus groups (minority) Most of 11 submissions Most social media contributors Petitions and standardised submissions
ALTERNATIVE CREWING	Open questionnaire (large minority) Public focus groups Staff focus groups (majority) Some of 11 submissions	Open questionnaire (absolute majority) Staff focus groups (minority) Some social media contributors Standardised submissions

- 71. With some (allowable) over-simplification, it is possible to summarise the table above by saying that the quantitative elements (open questionnaire, petition and etc.) are opposed to the proposals (especially Mixed Crewing) whereas the deliberative elements (the public and to a large extent staff focus groups) are more supportive.

72. However, as we have said, numbers alone should not determine decisions, for the Fire Authority will consider all the evidence available alongside the consultation outcomes; and in considering the consultation outcomes it will compare the relative enthusiasm for the proposals in the eight public focus groups (and in one of the two staff groups) with the decided opposition evident in the other elements. In summary, the consultation does not 'prove' that the Fire Authority should go ahead with its draft proposals; but nor does the consultation work as a 'veto' on those proposals.

Project Overview

Opinion Research Services

73. Opinion Research Services (ORS) is a social research company that works mainly for the public sector to conduct important applied research in health, housing, local government, police and fire and rescue services across the UK. We have worked extensively with fire and rescue services (FRSs) across the UK since 1998. In 2004 we were appointed by the Fire Services Consultation Association (FSCA) as the sole approved provider of research and consultation services, under the terms of a National Framework Agreement. The contract was retendered in 2009 and ORS was reappointed once more as the sole approved provider.
74. While working with FRSs across the UK, ORS has specialised in designing, implementing and reporting employee, stakeholder and public consultation programmes for a wide range of integrated risk management plans (IRMPs) - in many cases covering controversial and sensitive issues. In addition, ORS has extensive experience of statutory consultations about education, health and housing, and many other issues, including budgetary consultations.

The Commission

75. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) and Nottinghamshire Fire Authority (NFA) are considering options for the future of fire and rescue services across the county in the context of steadily reducing risk (when measured in terms of the number of incidents) and financial constraints. The proposals under consideration were:

Introduce a Mixed Crewing⁴ system at two of either Ashfield, Retford or Worksop Fire Stations; and

Introduce an Alternative Crewing⁵ System at all NFRS on-call stations.

76. NFRS's consultation ran for 12 weeks from September 25th to December 17th 2017 and included the following elements:

Independent Research (conducted by ORS)

Advising on the nature and scope of the consultation;

Implementing and analysing responses to an online and paper version of an open consultation questionnaire;

⁴ Fire stations crewed utilising wholtime firefighters at periods of highest demand – in the day - and retained firefighters at periods of lowest demand – at night.

⁵ Mobilising retained fire engines with crews of less than four firefighters, to attend smaller, lower risk incident types e.g. small bin or rubbish fires.

Recruiting, facilitating and reporting eight deliberative focus groups with members of the public (in Worksop, Retford, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, Newark, Ollerton, Carlton, Beeston and West Bridgford);

Facilitating and reporting two staff focus groups;

Designing informative and interactive presentation material suitable for use at the focus groups;

Analysis of written submissions and petitions received by NFRS - as well as other NFRS consultation activity; and

Producing an overall report of all consultation findings and guidance on the interpretation of the material.

NFRS Consultation

Providing details of the consultation proposals on the NFRS website: for example, via a 'website story' that was viewed **2,911** times in total; and a video by the Chief Fire Officer (henceforth CFO) that was viewed **277** times internally by staff;

Publicising the consultation in the local media (broadcast and print) and via: partner organisations; press releases, briefings and interviews; and social media;

Providing and distributing consultation documents to/at fire stations, community events and staff development days;

Providing information on the consultation and proposals to parish councils and local community organisations;

Meetings with Ashfield District Council and the Labour Group in Ashfield;

Responding to internal and external requests for further information or consultation documents⁶;

72 internal watch/team visits – and a meeting with middle managers; and

Distribution of staff newsletters and bulletins and a staff video.

77. It should also be noted that NFRS was conscientious in its efforts to ensure engagement with a wide range of people across the whole of Nottinghamshire and the City of Nottingham. In addition to Facebook advertising targeted at specific demographics, the

⁶ For example, an internal request was made for another 10,000 documents: this was refused on the grounds that the consultation document was produced for use by ORS and the consultation team in line with NFRS's consultation strategy and consultation framework, and that the Service had planned methods for distributing them. Furthermore, the requester was informed that producing another 10,000 documents would be cost-prohibitive in terms of printing, postage and processing. The requester was asked instead to direct people to the NFRS website, and if they did not have the means to fill it in online to contact NFRS to request a paper copy of the consultation document and questionnaire.

Service also undertook several analyses to identify low or zero response areas where they subsequently developed more targeted consultation strategies (document drops in certain areas of the City that had not thus far responded to the consultation for example).

- 78. ORS was involved in the consultation programme throughout and, as well as conducting its own research and analysis, has been given access to submissions, petitions and other material received during the consultations.

Consultation Methods

Open Questionnaire

- 79. The open consultation questionnaire (with an accompanying Consultation Document) was available online and as a hard copy between 25th September and 17th December 2017. 2,665 questionnaires were completed; 2,054 were submitted online and 611 by post.
- 80. The profile characteristics of respondents to the survey show that the majority of respondents were aged 55 or over, the gender split was almost equal and most (94%) were White. The highest proportion of respondents had heard about the consultation through social media (37%).

Focus Groups with Members of the Public

The Focus Groups

- 81. The meetings reported here used a ‘deliberative’ approach to encourage members of the public from across Nottinghamshire to reflect in depth about the fire and rescue service, while both receiving and questioning background information and discussing their ideas in detail. The meetings lasted for just over two hours and in total there were 89 attendees. The programme of focus group meetings is shown below.

FOCUS GROUP LOCATIONS	DATE	NUMBER OF ATTENDEES
Workshop	17 th October 2017	9
Retford	17 th October 2017	11
Ashfield	18 th October 2017	12
Ollerton	18 th October 2017	8
Carlton	31 st October 2017	12
Beeston	31 st October 2017	9
West Bridgford	1 st November 2017	14
Newark	1 st November 2017	14
TOTAL ATTENDEES		89

82. Participants were recruited by random-digit telephone dialling from ORS's Social Research Call Centre. Having been initially contacted by phone, all participants were then written to - to confirm the invitation and the arrangements; and those who agreed to come then received telephone or written reminders shortly before each meeting. Such recruitment by telephone is an effective way of ensuring that the participants are independent and broadly representative of the wider community. Participant numbers were within the desired range for a focus group in all areas.
83. Overall, the public participants were a broad cross-section of residents from the local areas and, as standard good practice, were recompensed for their time and efforts in travelling and taking part. In recruitment, care was taken to ensure that no potential participants were disqualified or disadvantaged by disabilities or any other factors, and the venues at which the forums met were readily accessible. People's special needs were taken into account in the recruitment and at the venues. The random telephone recruitment process was monitored to ensure social diversity in terms of a wide range of criteria – including, for example: gender; age; ethnicity; social grade; and disability/limiting long-term illness (LLTI).
84. Although, like all other forms of qualitative consultation, deliberative focus groups cannot be certified as statistically representative samples of public opinion, the meetings reported here gave diverse members of the public the opportunity to participate actively. Because the meetings were inclusive, the outcomes (as reported below) are broadly indicative of how informed opinion would incline on the basis of similar discussions.

Background Information

85. The focus groups began, for the sake of context, with a concise review of NFRS's resources, incident levels (both overall and by station ground), strategic roles and finances, before *Shaping Our Future* proposals were considered in some detail. Discussion was stimulated via a presentation devised by ORS and NFRS to inform and stimulate discussion of the issues - and participants were encouraged to ask any questions they wished throughout the discussions.

Focus Groups with Staff

86. Attendance numbers were a little lower than desired at the staff forums (only 11 staff attended across the two sessions) – though NFRS undertook a conscientious programme of invitations. Full and frank discussions were had at both sessions.

Written Submissions

87. During the formal consultation process, 11 written submissions were received. The table overleaf shows the breakdown of contributors by type.

Type of Correspondent	Number of respondents
Town and Parish Councils	8
MP	1 (2 separate submissions)
Residents	2
Total	11

88. ORS has read all the written submissions and summarised them in the full report.

Standardised Submissions

89. A joint standardised submission was submitted to NFRS by John Mann MP and the FBU on 8th December 2017. The responses came in three different formats and overall there were 4,256 responses: 4,096 were complete, 65 were incomplete and 95 were blank. 4,013 responses (94%) strongly disagreed with all proposals; 49 strongly agreed and two tended to agree with all proposals; and there were 30 mixed responses.

Submissions via Social Media

90. Social media was regularly updated to encourage consultation feedback and to encourage members of the public and staff to complete the *Shaping Our Future 2017* questionnaire. Many questions and comments were raised (mainly Facebook), most of which were objections to the Mixed Crewing proposal. These have been summarised in the relevant chapter of this report

Petition

91. An online petition entitled 'Save Ashfield's Firefighters' attracted 2,375 signatures.

Consultation Programme Proportional and Fair

92. The consultation programme was very conscientious, in the sense of being open, accessible and fair to members of the public, stakeholders and staff across Nottinghamshire: the consultation was proportional to the importance of the issues and conforms with good practice in its scale and the balance of elements included.

93. The key good practice requirements for proper consultation programmes are that they should:

Be conducted at a formative stage, before decisions are taken;

Allow sufficient time for people to participate and respond;

Provide the public and stakeholders with enough background information to allow them to consider the issues and any proposals intelligently and critically;
and

Be properly taken into consideration before decisions are finally taken.

Taken together, these four elements do much to ensure the 'accountability' of public authorities, particularly the fourth; but this does not mean that consultations are referenda.

94. **Properly understood, accountability means that public authorities should give an account of their plans and take into account public views: they should conduct fair and accessible consultation while reporting the outcomes openly and considering them fully.** This does not mean that the majority views expressed in consultations should automatically decide public policy, for consultations are not referenda, and the popularity or unpopularity of draft proposals should not displace professional and political judgement about what is the right or best decision in the circumstances. The levels of, and reasons for, public support or opposition are very important, but as considerations to be taken into account, not as decisive factors that necessarily determine decisions.
95. For the public bodies considering the outcomes of consultation, the key question is not *Which proposal has most support?* but, *Are the reasons for the popularity or unpopularity of the proposals cogent?* In this context, both NFRS/NFA and ORS were clear that this important consultation programme should include both 'open' and deliberative elements in order to both: provide many people with the opportunity to take part via the open questionnaire and written submission/petition routes; and promote informed engagement via the deliberative focus groups. There is thus no doubt that the consultation programme conforms to good practice by including both quantitative and qualitative methods through which people could participate and as a means for NFA and NFRS to understand the reasons for people's opinions.
96. As well as providing the public, stakeholders and staff with sufficient information to consider the proposals intelligently, NFRS and NFA have also conducted their consultation in a timely manner and are taking account of the outcomes before making a decision. Both the scale and nature of the programme compare very favourably with similar consultations undertaken by other fire and rescue services and public bodies.

The Report

97. This report reviews the sentiments and judgements of respondents and participants about the aforementioned proposals. Verbatim quotations are used, in indented italics, not because we agree or disagree with them - but for their vividness in capturing recurrent points of view. ORS does not endorse the opinions in question, but seeks only to portray them accurately and clearly. The report is an interpretative summary of the issues raised by participants.

Open Consultation Questionnaire

Introduction

98. The open consultation questionnaire (with an accompanying consultation document) was available online and as a hard copy for 12 weeks between 25th September and 17th December 2017. 2,665 questionnaires were completed; 2,054 were submitted online and 611 by post.
99. NFRS printed and distributed 4,000 consultation documents (with questionnaires, freepost envelopes and posters) to libraries, public buildings, fire stations, businesses, voluntary groups, partners and all emergency services. Further copies were also available on request and an online version was set up by ORS and was available on the NFRS website.

Interpretation of the Data

100. Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of “don’t know” categories, or multiple answers. Graphics are used in this report to make it as user friendly as possible. The pie charts show the proportions (percentages) of residents making relevant responses. Where possible, the colours of the charts have been standardised with a ‘traffic light’ system in which:
- Green shades represent positive responses
 - Beige and purple/blue shades represent neither positive nor negative responses
 - Red shades represent negative responses
 - The bolder shades are used to highlight responses at the ‘extremes’, for example, very satisfied or very dissatisfied.

Need for Interpretation

101. Open questionnaires are important consultation routes that are accessible to almost everyone, but they are not ‘surveys’ of the public. Whereas surveys require proper sampling of a given population, open questionnaires are distributed unsystematically or adventitiously and are more likely to be completed by motivated people while also being subject to influence by local campaigns. As such, because the respondent profile is an imperfect reflection of the Nottinghamshire population, its results must be interpreted carefully.
102. Crucially though, this does not mean that the open questionnaire findings should be discounted: they are analysed in detail in this report and must be taken into account as a

demonstration of the strength of feeling of residents who were motivated to put forward their views (and in many cases concerns) about the proposed changes.

Respondent Profiles

103. The charts below outline the profile characteristics of respondents to the survey. They show that the majority of respondents were aged 55 or over (38%), the gender split was almost equal (51% male; 49% female) and most (94%) were White. The highest proportion of respondents had heard about the consultation through social media (37%).

Figure 1: Are you completing this questionnaire as an individual or as the representative of a company or organisation?
Base: All Respondents (2475)

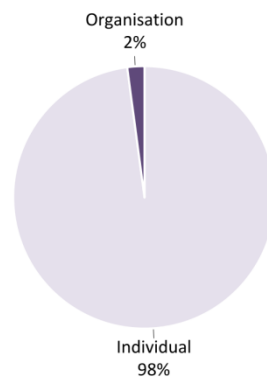


Figure 2: What best describes your gender? Base: All Respondents (2378)

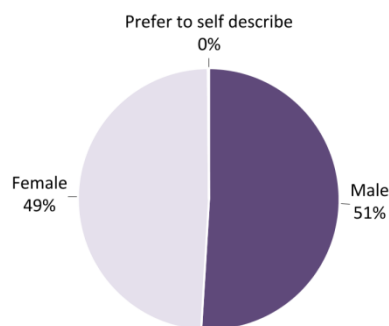


Figure 3: Do you identify as Trans? Base: All Respondents (2158)

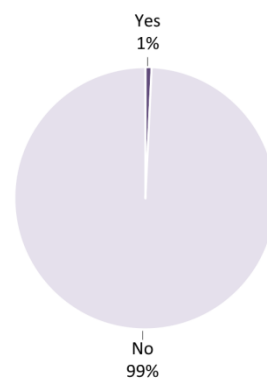


Figure 4: What was your age on your last birthday? Base: All Respondents (2455)

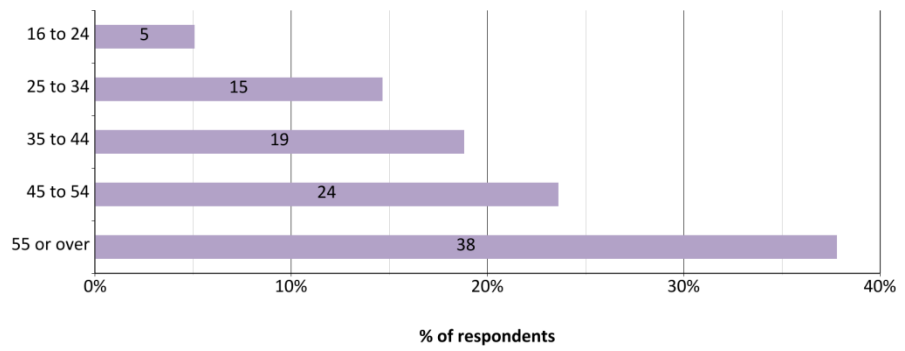


Figure 1: Do you have any long-standing illness or disability? Long-standing means anything that has troubled you over a period of time or that is likely to affect you over a period of time? Base: All Respondents (2264)

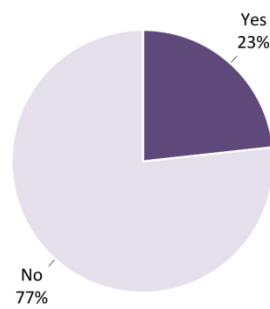


Figure 5: What is your ethnic group? Base: All Respondents (2454)

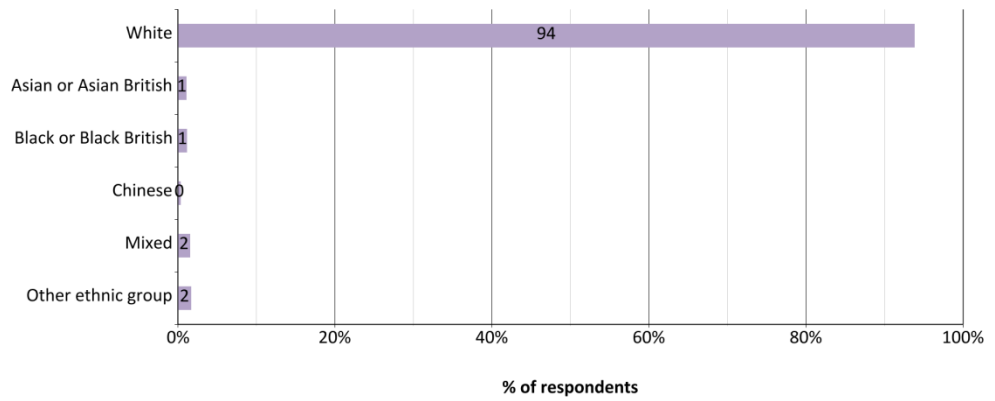


Figure 6: What is your religion/belief? Base: All Respondents (2173)

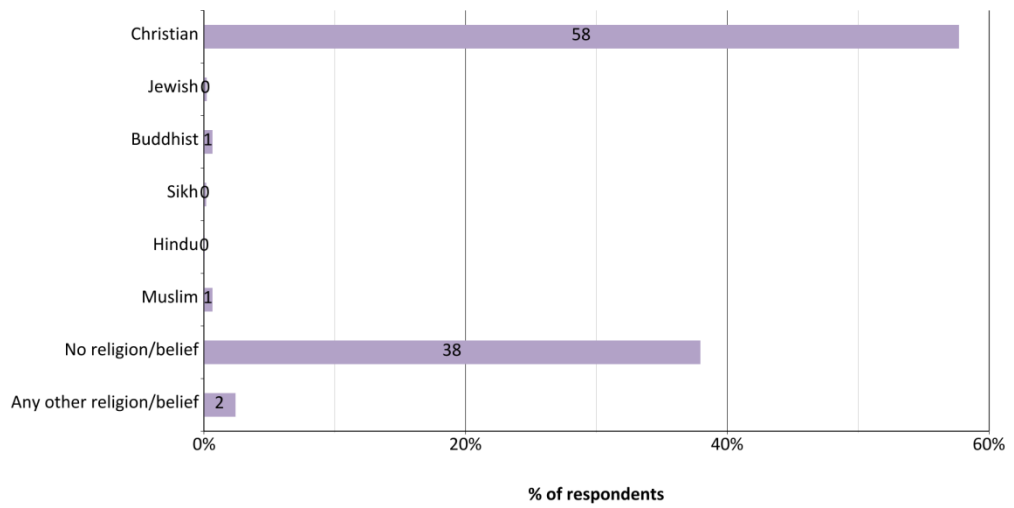


Figure 7: Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself? Base: All Respondents (2192)

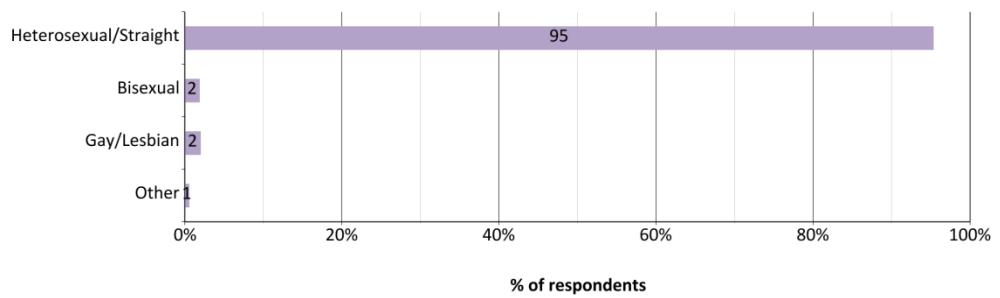
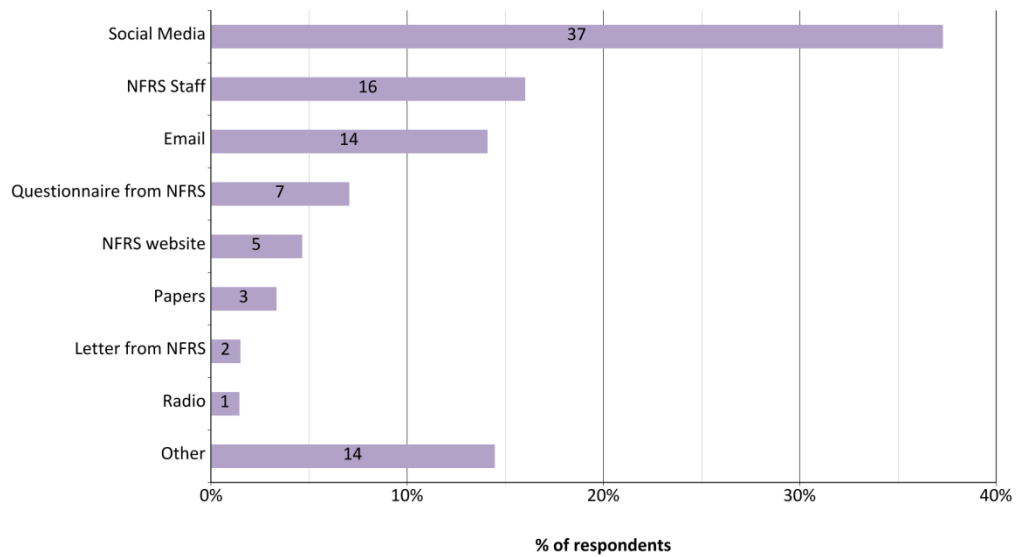


Figure 8: How did you hear about this consultation? Base: All Respondents (2445)



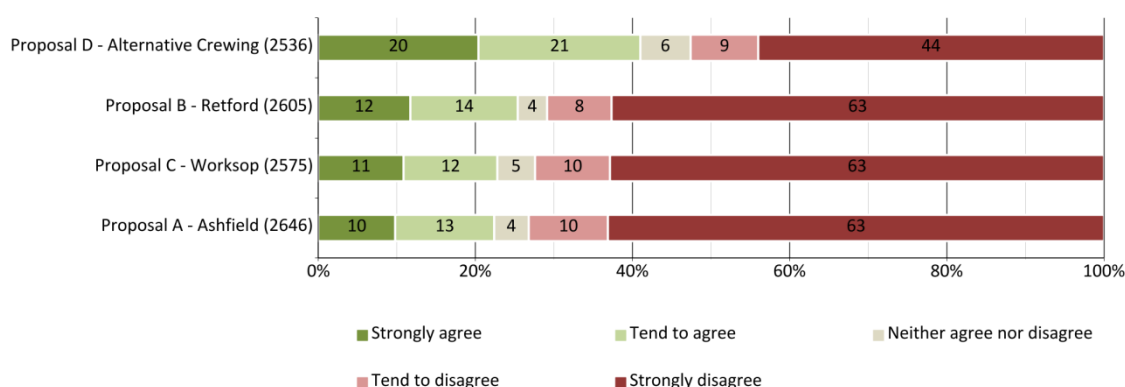
Duplicate and Co-ordinated Responses

104. Online questionnaires have to be open and accessible to all while minimising the possibility of multiple completions (by the same people) that distort the analysis. Therefore, while making it easy to complete the survey online, ORS monitors the IP addresses through which surveys are completed. After careful study of these responses, in which we looked at cookies and date stamps, as well as the nature of the answers; no responses were considered to be identical responses or appeared to be attempting to skew the results.

Main Findings

- 105. Results showed that the proposal with the highest proportion of agreement was Proposal D - to send the nearest appliance, with crews of less than four to lower risk / smaller incident types. Around two fifths (41%) of respondents agreed with this proposal while over half (53%) disagreed, including 44% who strongly disagreed.
- 106. The proposal which gained the second highest agreement was Proposal B - to replace a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine between 6pm and 8am at Retford Fire Station. However only a quarter (25%) of respondents agreed with this proposal while around 7 in 10 (71%) disagreed, including over three-fifths (63%) who strongly disagreed.
- 107. Just under a quarter (23%) of respondents agreed with Proposal C - to replace a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine between 6pm and 8am at Worksop Fire Station. Over 7 in 10 (72%) of respondents disagreed with this proposal, including over three-fifths (63%) who strongly disagreed.
- 108. The proposal which gained the least amount of support was Proposal A - to replace a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine between 6pm and 8am at Ashfield Fire Station. Around a fifth (22%) of respondents agreed with this proposal while around three quarters (73%) disagreed, including over three-fifths (63%) who strongly disagreed.

Figure 9: Ranking the overall findings.

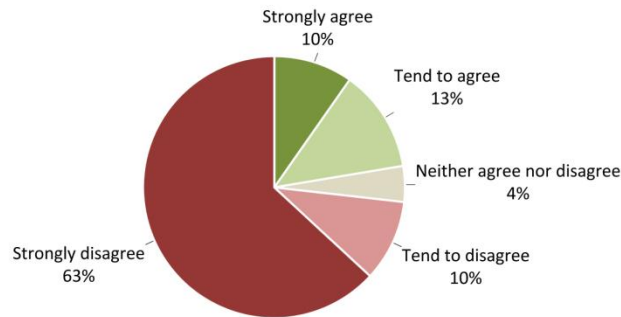


109. The following charts show the results for each proposal.

Proposal A: Ashfield

Figure 10: Extent to which respondents agree or disagree with the proposal to replace a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine between 6pm and 8am at Ashfield Fire Station. Base: All respondents (2646)

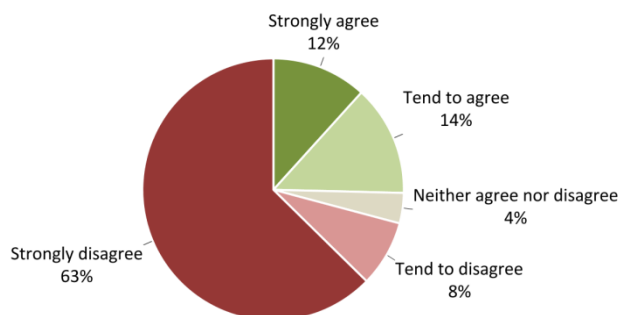
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal of replacing a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine, between 6pm to 8am, at Ashfield Fire Station?



Proposal B: Retford

Figure 11: Extent to which respondents agree or disagree with the proposal to replace a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine between 6pm and 8am at Retford Fire Station. Base: All respondents (2605)

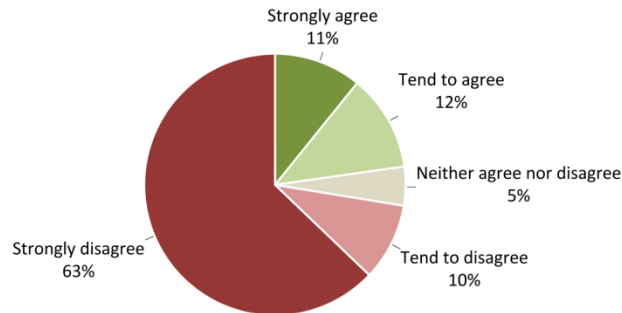
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal of replacing a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine, between 6pm to 8am, at Retford Fire Station?



Proposal C: Worksop

Figure 12: Extent to which respondents agree or disagree with the proposal to replace a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine between 6pm and 8am at Worksop Fire Station. Base: All respondents: (2572)

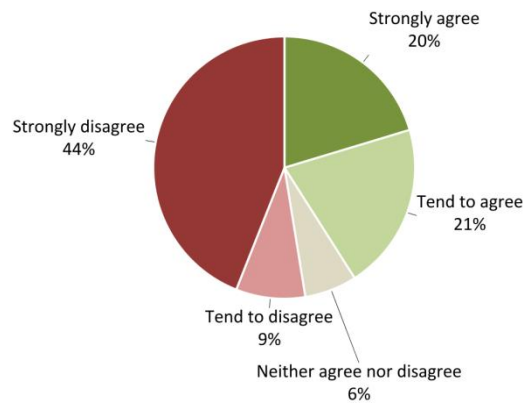
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal of replacing a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine, between 6pm to 8am, at Worksop Fire Station?



Proposal D: Alternative Crewing

Figure 13: Extent to which respondents agree or disagree with the proposal to send the nearest appliance, with crews of less than four, to lower risk/smaller incident types. Base: All respondents (2536)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to send the nearest appliance, with crews of less than four, to lower risk/smaller incident types?



Additional Comments

110. Respondents were asked to provide any additional comments they wished to make on NFRS's proposals. The main themes that emerged, with some illustrative comments, are outlined below.

Figure 14: Further comments. Base: 637

Coded comment	% of respondents	Base
Reduction in crewing will result in an increased danger/risk of injury or death to both firefighters and public	38%	243
Generally disagree with the proposals/don't think they are a good idea/maintain current provision	34%	218
Fires/accidents can occur at any time/a fully equipped/fully manned station needs to be operational 24/7	17%	110
Proposals shouldn't be about money/the emergency services were created to save lives, not money/money should not be put over people's lives	11%	71
Proposals will lead to slower response times generally	10%	66
Proposals will result in longer response times due to retained staff having to travel to the station when the alarm is raised	7%	43
Retained staff do not have the same level of training i.e. can't tackle an internal fire, use breathing apparatus etc.	6%	39
Generally agree with the proposals/think they are a good idea	6%	38
Retained staff will be under greater pressure and work-load/therefore greater danger, due to fewer numbers and less experience	5%	33
People are more vulnerable at night/fires have more time to spread/remain undiscovered for longer	5%	31
Proposals will increase the area coverage of remaining FRS crews/resulting in slower response times to fires/RTC's etc.	4%	27
Savings need to be made in alternative ways	4%	27
Disagree with proposal B/Retford needs to maintain current provision	4%	26
Reduce senior management/wages/bureaucracy/office staff - non-essential lifesaving staff	4%	23
Need better recruitment process for retained staff	4%	23
Disagree with proposal A/Ashfield needs to maintain current provision	3%	20
Already pay high council tax/service should still be provided as pay council tax	3%	20
Reducing FRS capability to respond to incidents in an area with increasing population/building/traffic density etc. is reckless and dangerous	3%	19
Agree that savings need to be made/the FRS are the quietest of the emergency services/especially at night	3%	18
Need more information/not enough information available	3%	18
Disagree with proposal C/Worksop needs to maintain current provision	3%	16
Disagree with proposal D/don't want nearest appliance with crew of less than four to attend lower risk/smaller incidents	3%	16
Cuts will increase workload and pressure on existing staff/some stations already struggle to cover the crewing of the night time retained service	3%	16
Need more firefighters not less	2%	13

Agree with proposal D/crews of 4 or less should be fine to cover small/minor incidents	2%	12
Happy to pay more council tax/increase council tax to maintain service	2%	12
Proposals will lead to reduced service in the north of Nottinghamshire/the north will be isolated	2%	11
Firefighters do an excellent job	1%	9
Proposals will result in worse pay/conditions for firefighters	1%	8
Alternative proposal	1%	8
Proposals mean response times will vary area to area/emergency service postcode lottery is not acceptable when injury or loss of life is possible	1%	7
Other criticism of consultation	1%	7
Smaller crews (4 or less) should use smaller, appropriately equipped, rapid response vehicles/not large appliances (5+ crew)	<1%	3
Agree with proposals if reduction was no less than crews of 3	<1%	3
Agree with proposal A/happy for Ashfield to have retained fire engine between 6pm to 8am	<1%	2
Agree with proposal B/happy for Retford to have retained fire engine between 6pm to 8am	<1%	2
Agree with proposal C/happy for Worksop to have retained fire engine between 6pm to 8am	<1%	1
This is just a tick box exercise/decisions have already been made	<1%	1
Interesting comment	<1%	1
Other	16%	102

111. Around two-fifths (38%) of respondents were concerned that crewing reductions will result in increased danger and risk of injury or death to both firefighters and public:

Any reduction in crew levels and response time attending incidents would place added dangers to the firefighters and the public. Time is the main factor in fighting fires and evacuating members of the public. An appliance with a reduced crew does not enable correct safety standards to be carried out. The crew would have to wait for another crew to arrive before enabling them to do their job. Fire and rescue services are not a profit making business' they are there to offer help in an emergency. The public and the crews deserve a quick response with enough members to carry out their job in safe and efficient manner

At a time when, ambulances are being reduced, A&E's at busting point, and police under similar pressures, reducing fire crews is increasing the public's risk, especially so close to A1, where there are many fatal RTC's still happening

This is a very dangerous proposal that could cause firefighter and public deaths.

112. Around a third (34%) generally disagreed with the proposals and wished to maintain current provision:

For the safety of the inhabitants of Retford & environment I feel it's essential to maintain the current level of fire & rescue availability

As a tax payer in Nottinghamshire I strongly disagree with the proposals. Time is of the essence at fire related incidents. To remove whole time fire cover at night is a total disgrace and should never be allowed to happen. There has to be alternative ways to save money? Manning retained with three is dangerous and totally unacceptable

I strongly disagree with the proposals, the turnout time would double and the fire would have intensified while waiting for the crew to respond resulting in more fire deaths.

113. Just less than a fifth (17%) said that incidents can occur at any time and that a 24/7 fire station is required to cater for this:

I think retaining a 24/7 full time service within our areas is paramount to public safety and protection. While it may be evident that there is a lower need overnight for fire services, the nature of your work is unpredictable and ensuring a full time service is the only way to do that effectively

In my experience more calls may happen during the day, however more deaths have occurred during the night. All large fires start as small fires, getting a full crew there initially often helps.

114. Around 1 in 10 (11%) respondents said that the need to save money should not be placed above the ability to save lives:

Any fire service is an insurance. We have to pay for it or live with the consequences. How can anyone decide what is low risk and what is not? A fridge catching fire turned out to be a disaster. Lives are more important than money - surely?

Money should not be an issue when it comes to minimising risk and ensuring the safety of the public.

115. Around 1 in 10 (10%) respondents said that proposals will lead to slower response times generally:

Any reduction in turnout times is gambling with the safety of people in the community. Crews turning out with less than the minimum is endangering the safety of the crew

I believe just having retained fire fighters overnight is an accident waiting to happen, it will increase response time increasing the risk for injury or death to both the public and fire service, I would much rather have an increase in my fire service council tax bill than lose manned overnight stations.

116. 7% of respondents said that the proposals will result in longer response times due to retained staff having to travel to the station when the alarm is raised:

Changing to retained cover at night will compromise safety, due to longer response times due to retained travel times, bad weather, lack of sufficient retained staff to man two appliances. Lack of skills/experience on retained crews as full time crews attend more incidences

Living out in the villages in North Nottingham means that everything takes so much longer therefore waiting for retained fire fighters is so much longer.

117. 6% of respondents said that on-call staff do not have the same level of training as wholetime staff:

Retained crew do not have the experience or regular training as whole time do. Yes, they are trained, but it's nowhere near the training whole time crew receive

There is no way a retained crew can compare with the skills, training and competence of wholetime professional crew.

118. 6% of respondents said that they generally agree with the proposals:

Given the difficulties over budget, they seem sensible. It would be a good idea to review arrangements after 6 months and 18 months

I think this is an excellent proposal and can't think of any reason why the public would not support this, operationally there are obvious questions that might arise, but I think the evidence would suggest much better use of our RDs system and encourage greater/easier recruitment and maybe force a change in the contractual agreement when employing RDs that looks at targeting specific times during the day for cover.

119. 5% of respondents said that on-call staff will be under greater pressure due to increased workloads - and due to having fewer crew members at certain incidents (under Alternative Crewing):

I am led to believe that those on the retained duty system are already under pressure to perform with minimal training hours, and yet Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue would have them attend fires with fewer staff than those full time employees and therefore subjecting them to increased pressure to perform with fewer personnel. I want a full team available in my area, not a skeleton crew

Retained going out with less than 4 puts them at risk if they turn up and it's not a lower risk incident. This puts a morale pressure on them if they turn up to a house fire which spread from a rubbish bin. They will be waiting even longer for back up due to the cuts to wholetime crews at night.

120. 5% of respondents said that people are more vulnerable at night as fires have more time to spread and can remain undiscovered for longer:

Wholetime pumps should not be replaced by RDs pumps at night. You will be placing at least a 5min delay on the attendance times during the night, which is not acceptable as most domestic property fires happen at night

I do not agree with the removal of wholetime fire engines between 6pm and 8pm purely for the reason that house fires which occur while occupants are asleep are more likely to escalate quicker and become more severe meaning life is more likely to be at risk. Fires which occur at night need quicker attendance than a retained fire fighter could respond to due to the risk of loss of life. Any measure that increases your response time should not be considered.

121. Eight respondents gave alternative proposals. Some examples include:

I would suggest that having retained firemen covering the period from midnight to 10 am would be much more acceptable

The fire station on Watnall Road should be retained. Costing could be helped by setting up a minor injuries NHS drop in there. One fireman and a nurse could run it. Many people who now go to A&E used to pop down there when it was an ambulance station and get a cut bandaged, a child checked over when ill. Now these people go to A&E often calling an ambulance. Some joined up working would keep this fire station open and reduce call out times but give a very much needed facility in West Hucknall as there is no health provision in a huge area here

The solution is to make profitable use of crews time while they are at a fire station awaiting calls. They could do this by taking on routine administrative tasks for commercial concerns

Train fire crews to also be paramedics and look at combining ambulance and fire services, especially administration and possibly management to reduce costs. Review type of attendance needed for vehicle crashes, as you are reviewing need for need for full crew at some incidences does it need a full crew and full fire tender?

122. 19 respondents from organisations also gave comments. Some examples include:

Agree to the idea but also disagree. Not all jobs are the same. What if a bin fire actually turns out to be a skip on the side of a house and we are now looking at a house fire with persons reported. Would we commit crews?

I understand that the fire service needs to save money but reducing whole time personnel and having a longer turn out time for a fire engine turning up to an incident has to be a last resort?

To reduce the time it takes the fire engine to turn out of the door is irresponsible. Surely the money could be saved elsewhere.

Focus Group Findings

Focus Groups with Members of the Public

Introduction

123. A total of 89 randomly selected members of the public from across Nottinghamshire attended eight 2.5 hour focus groups to discuss NFRS’s ‘Shaping Our Future 2017’ consultation proposals. The schedule of meetings was as follows:

FOCUS GROUP LOCATIONS	DATE	NUMBER OF ATTENDEES
Worksop	17 th October 2017	9
Retford	17 th October 2017	11
Ashfield	18 th October 2017	12
Ollerton	18 th October 2017	8
Carlton	31 st October 2017	12
Beeston	31 st October 2017	9
West Bridgford	1 st November 2017	14
Newark	1 st November 2017	14
TOTAL ATTENDEES		89

124. The focus groups were independently facilitated by ORS and also attended by officers from NFRS to allow participants to ask specific questions about the Service. The group considered all the evidence included in the Service’s Consultation Document, while having a more detailed review of the fire and rescue service and its resources and roles. The meetings were thorough and truly deliberative in listening and responding openly to a wide range of evidence and issues.

Main Findings

Mixed Crewing

General Principle

125. There was some support across all groups for implementing Mixed Crewing. Specifically, those in support felt the system would align resources with (reduced) demand and reasoned that an increase to night-time response times is preferable to losing an appliance or fire station. They also recognised some of the potential advantages of wholetime firefighters

working day shifts only, such as having more time available to undertake community safety work:

My initial thought was to disagree but you can't argue against the figures and not losing any appliances (Ashfield)

I agree about making the best of constraints and resources. This is an approachable and reasonable way of going about it. I think it's a good proposal (Ashfield)

It's the first time I've heard of this Mixed Crewing but if they (Wholetime and Retained firefighters) both get the same training it makes sense (Beeston)

Full-time officers are more productive on the day shift when they can do community safety; but at night they can't do those sorts of things (Ollerton)

I think it's a good idea (Newark)

Response times might take longer but traffic could also slow you down anyway. (Newark)

126. Furthermore, some supporters explained that although they had initial doubts about some aspects of the proposal, these had been mitigated to some extent by the answers given by NFRS officers to the clarification questions asked at the sessions:

We were worried about the preventative service being impacted by this proposal but we have been reassured that this would continue (Worksop)

The people here tonight have reassured us that we are safe and they will get there as soon as they can. I know that no matter what we will have coverage. (Ashfield)

127. Many others (particularly in the potentially affected areas) ultimately accepted the proposal, though they tended to do so reluctantly, describing it as a 'necessary evil' in the current political and financial climate. Indeed, in the context of frustration about 'government cuts' and their impact on services like NFRS, the Mixed Crewing system was thought to be 'the least worst option' in response to having to make necessary savings:

The alternative is cuts in a serious way, the impact of which would be much greater. Therefore I think that this proposal for the next four years would be better than losing stations and appliances (Worksop)

I think it's a necessary evil. As long as the stats are looked at year-on-year and are addressed accordingly... (Beeston)

I understand the budgetary requirements and that it needs to be done (Newark)

I can understand why this is being put forward and it is the best of bad bunch. I do feel it's sad it's even being put up for consideration; I see it as a necessary evil. (Newark)

128. Despite the support or acceptance outlined above however, the following significant concerns were raised by many about the practicalities and consequences of implementing a Mixed Crewing system:

Public safety may be adversely impacted by longer night-time response times

Is there a difference in response times between wholetime and retained crewing? Does it have a huge impact on incidents and outcome? (Worksop)

There was a house set on fire near me at 4:30am and at least three engines turned up but if you do this proposal would the same level of response have happened? I'm just playing devil's advocate. If they'd have had to wait four minutes longer it could have been a lot worse. Fire cover is a postcode lottery isn't it? (Ashfield)

12 years ago I did have a house fire and the engines with full-time firefighters got there within in five minutes. They said my house was minutes away from being completely burnt down, which is why I am slightly concerned about the use of retained (Newark)

What about the impact on casualties and injuries? (Ollerton)

These figures don't give the impact on deaths and injuries; surely the risk of that is higher at night? (West Bridgford)

My worry is during the day if there is an incident I will notice and get everyone out. In the night I won't know straight away and it might be too late...will there be delay in someone getting to us? (Newark)

On-call recruitment and retention difficulties may result in insufficient firefighters to provide night-time cover

What happens if the RDS crews cannot attend incidents? (Carlton)

I've never heard of retained before and never seen it advertised...are you going to have enough of these people available to do it? It is sustainable? (Beeston)

Do you have enough retained staff living so close to the stations (i.e. within five minutes)? (Beeston)

Will it be possible to recruit the additional Retained firefighters? (Retford)

On-call firefighters may not be as well-trained or experienced in a wide range of incidents as wholetime firefighters (though it was acknowledged that the proposal may result in raised competency levels among on-call firefighters as they are exposed to more incidents) - and the night-time change may put undue pressure on them

Are the retained staff properly trained? (Worksop)

What is the relative competence of RDS and WDS firefighters? (Ollerton)

Do RDS firefighters have the same experience as full-time firefighters if they do less hours overall? (Carlton)

What about experience? Are retained going to have less experience? Will they be provided with the same training as wholetime? (Beeston)

How do retained stills compare to wholetime? Is there a lack of skill or leadership? A retained firefighter might have had a call out in 10 days. My friend is a retained firefighter and there is quite a lot of things he hasn't had experience with...I think in time this proposal could be a good thing because retained firefighters will gain more of this experience by being called out more, but I worry about the introductory period (Worksop)

The proposal may represent the 'thin end of the wedge' in terms of the need for further reductions in future

It would be ok for right now, but what about 12 months down the line? What if this starts off a spiral effect of more and more cuts to the frontline service? (Worksop)

Where could this end? Could there be many more cuts? (Ollerton)

I think it's worrying that this might go ahead but then down the line they make further cuts... (Newark)

129. More generally, there were questions around: how the three stations under consideration had been selected; whether firefighters and their unions agree with the proposal; whether, if implemented, the proposed changes would be trialled in the first instance; how NFRS's remaining required savings will be made; whether the cost of running the affected on-call appliances will increase; and whether any changes, if implemented, will be subject to proper review in future.

130. In relation to the concerns raised, after thorough explanation and discussion of the issues, a reasonable proportion of those expressing them said they felt less anxious about the Mixed Crewing proposal. However, a minority (again mainly in the potentially affected areas) remained opposed to what they viewed as a response to needing to make savings, and said that financial constraints and incident figures should not be a consideration in relation to the emergency services and public safety:

I can't really think of any advantages to it (Worksop)

I don't agree with the principle anyway...how much do we value these services? (Ashfield)

Can't government see what they're doing by all these cuts?! (Worksop)

It's just all cuts, cuts, cuts. (Worksop)

The Options

131. Although most participants either supported or, more commonly, accepted the idea of introducing Mixed Crewing, opinion around which two of three stations (Ashfield, Retford or Worksop) it should potentially be introduced at varied between the eight groups and indeed between individuals in each area. Unsurprisingly and understandably, the *majority* of participants from the potentially affected areas opted for their local station to retain its current crewing system (though it is worth noting that this was *not* the case for around half of the Worksop group, who could accept the change being implemented at their local station). In fact, the theme that *it is acceptable to do it there, but not here* was a recurring one across all the groups.
132. As for opinion among those whose local stations would *not* be affected by any changes, there was majority support for Mixed Crewing at Ashfield at the Beeston, West Bridgford and Newark groups, and while Beeston preferred Retford as the second station, views in the other two groups were more evenly split. The general consensus at Ollerton and Carlton was that Mixed Crewing should be introduced at Retford and Worksop.
133. The table below shows the relative support for each option.

STATION OPTIONS				
	WORKSOP	RETFORD	ASHFIELD	MIXED
Worksop		✓		✓ (Worksop OR Ashfield)
Retford	✓		✓	
Ashfield	✓	✓		
Ollerton		✓		✓ (slightly more support for Worksop)
Carlton	✓	✓		
Beeston		✓	✓	
West Bridgford			✓	✓ (slightly more support for Worksop)
Newark			✓	✓ (Slightly more support for Retford)

Ashfield

134. Despite the Ashfield group being supportive of the proposal in general, participants objected to Mixed Crewing at their local station because its crews respond to more incidents and it covers a larger population than **Retford and Worksop**:

We've got loads more incidents in Ashfield! We are also going to be affected more by response times so why are we even in the mix for this? (Ashfield)

How many households do you cover in Ashfield compared to Retford? Surely population correlates to risk? (Ashfield)

Purely on mathematics it shouldn't be Ashfield (Ashfield)

Obviously there is an element of wanting to protect our own backyard but we're looking at 1.1% more incidents being affected here compared to 0.4 and 0.5. (Ashfield)

135. That said, a few said that they could accept an increase in response times if Mixed Crewing was introduced at Ashfield. They reasoned that the 1.1% of incidents that would be affected by the change is still a relatively small proportion and that what is proposed would be preferable to more significant frontline cuts:

I think if we're all going to get covered in nine minutes then I accept it. I trust the Fire and Rescue Service to make a good moral judgement (Ashfield)

I accept the four minutes; I think response time depends on time of day anyway. 40% of incidents are false alarms and if four minutes saves the money I would rather this than losing an appliance. (Ashfield)

Worksop

136. Around half of Worksop participants reasoned that Mixed Crewing should be implemented at the stations covering the least populated areas as they are at less risk and therefore will not be as affected by increased response times. In this context, they suggested that Ashfield should retain its current crewing system and that Mixed Crewing should be introduced at **Retford and Worksop**.
137. Though the other half agreed that **Retford** should move to Mixed Crewing because it '*seems to be at lower risk*', they argued that it would make '*more sense*' for **Ashfield** to do so too because it is in closer proximity to neighbouring 'back-up' stations than Worksop. There was also concern about the new number of new houses being built in and around Worksop (in Harworth for example).

Retford

138. Despite some recognition that Retford is a lower risk area than Worksop, it may not be surprising that in Retford twice as many residents favoured introducing Mixed Crewing in Ashfield and Worksop than at Retford.
139. Despite this, and while there was considerable scrutiny across the whole group of the likely impact of the proposal on response times locally, there was also a recognition among some that the proposal for Mixed Crewing might be legitimate and reasonable in Retford in the context of actual risk levels - for example:

It doesn't make sense to protect Retford at the expense of Ashfield and Worksop (Retford)

Worksop has more industry and risk than Retford, and Retford is smaller, so the Worksop station is more important (Retford)

Retford could rely on Worksop and Ashfield could rely on Mansfield [for back-up support] so it is feasible. (Retford)

140. One participant questioned why, if it is considered safe and feasible to introduce Mixed Crewing at each of the three stations, NFRS is proposing to do so at only two - and another was of the view that the crewing system at the third would eventually be changed anyway:

Why are you only considering two of the three stations if it is safe and feasible in all of them?

You will probably have to change the third station in the following year, anyway!

However, many others noted that all three of the stations being considered are in the north of Nottinghamshire, so they could see that it might be excessive for all of them to be changed at once.

Ollerton and Carlton

141. Most of those at the Ollerton group felt that **Retford** should be one of the Mixed Crewed stations, but the 'vote' was very close between the other two. The majority at Carlton felt it should be implemented at **Retford and Worksop**.

Beeston

142. The majority of Beeston participants ultimately agreed that Mixed Crewing should be implemented at **Ashfield and Retford** fire stations. They argued that Worksop station covers a larger area than Retford and is '*industrialised with lots of business*', while Ashfield is in closer proximity to other stations for support:

I would go with Ashfield & Retford; Worksop is a bigger area (Beeston)

Based upon current stats I would also go for Ashfield and Retford (Beeston)

It has obviously been very well thought out and I agree it should be Ashfield and Retford. (Beeston)

143. Interestingly, some participants said they would have initially supported change at Worksop rather than Ashfield fire station simply because the latter attends a larger number of incidents, but explained that they had changed their view after hearing others' arguments as outlined above:

I was towards Worksop and Retford too but now I'm thinking Ashfield and Retford too! (Beeston)

West Bridgford

144. Most of the West Bridgford group supported the introduction of Mixed Crewing at **Ashfield**, mainly because it is better located to receive cover and support from other stations both within Nottinghamshire and in Derbyshire. Views on which should be the second station were more mixed, with only one more participant choosing Worksop than Retford. Interestingly, one participant felt that the proposals are so 'reasonable' that they asked 'why not implement the change at all three stations?'

Newark

145. Similarly to West Bridgford and Beeston, nearly all Newark participants felt that a Mixed Crewing system should be introduced at **Ashfield** because of its close proximity to Derbyshire and other Nottinghamshire fire stations such as Mansfield. However, participants were more undecided as to whether Retford or Worksop should be the second station: while some felt they did not have enough knowledge of the two areas to make a judgement, others claimed that implementing the change at either station would leave the north of the county without sufficient night-time back-up because neither has the neighbouring support that Ashfield has:

Worksop and Retford don't have much else nearby, but Ashfield does have Mansfield (Newark)

I don't know the geography well but although Ashfield is the busiest they have the advantage of Mansfield whereas Worksop & Retford don't have as much support. Therefore I would choose Ashfield for definite but couldn't choose the second really (Newark)

I agree about Ashfield. The response time getting to the other two is a bit more of a worry...I am concerned about response times and the distance away from back-up; where will they get the support from? (Newark)

146. That said, most felt that if they had to make a decision they would prefer Mixed Crewing at Retford than Worksop because it attends fewer incidents and can be backed-up by Harworth if needed:

I agree with Ashfield but choosing both Worksop and Retford would leave north of county without cover. So I would choose Ashfield and then maybe Retford just based on the stats we've been given (Newark)

If it has to be done I would choose Ashfield because of the geography and Retford. I know Retford quite well and I know it looks like Harworth is far away but it isn't really. Also going on stats it also has the lower call outs. It's not like people will be left on their own after 6pm anyway; I know the cover will still be there. (Newark)

Other Issues and Further Suggestions

147. One very important point that emerged across several discussions was that the proposed 6pm shift changeover time is not really appropriate in the context of the '24-hour demand profile' which shows that most calls arise between about 3pm and 9pm. For example, one Retford resident said:

Six pm is not really the best time to change shifts; when you are at your busiest! (Retford)

This quotation reflects a recurrent theme as members of the public reflected about the proposals in detail. In fact, in Retford 10 of the 11 residents felt that the proposed 6pm changeover time should be reconsidered by NFRS.

148. In addition, the importance of continually monitoring any crewing system changes carefully was stressed - and some reasoned that a degree of overnight wholetime cover should be maintained during the transitional period to ensure the changes are made in a safe and efficient fashion.

Alternative Crewing

149. The prospect of mobilising RDS fire engines with crews of fewer than four was very generally considered to be relatively uncontroversial. Indeed, there was almost unanimous support for the principle of Alternative Crewing (in which [depending on the precise circumstances] fewer than four firefighters might ride the fire engine either as the first response engine or in support of others) across all eight groups⁷:

I think its fine and reasonable...one of the best solutions they have (Worksop)

This proposal is common sense (Beeston)

It's a no brainer (Ashfield)

It's a good idea. (Newark)

⁷ Participants were informed that three RDS firefighters would not become the 'new norm'; the target for most incidents would be four, but fewer would be acceptable" for less serious incidents.

150. All groups readily understood the problems of maintaining sufficient on-call cover across all relevant stations on working weekdays, and they were interested in any options to correct this problem (which they acknowledged is unknown to most members of the public, even in on-call areas). Furthermore, it was acknowledged that the current policy of not allowing an appliance with less than four crew members to attend incidents is an historical one that needs updating.

151. Overall, participants considered that it 'makes sense' and is a better use of resources to allow smaller crews to attend smaller, lower risk incidents - and that the proposed new system could offer a safer service by allowing on-call firefighters to attend more incidents more quickly. Some typical comments were:

It's common sense that if it is a smaller fire the smaller crew should attend (Ashfield)

It doesn't make sense to have three people give up their time and then find the pump is off the run (Beeston)

I think it's a more effective use of resources and gives firefighters more opportunity to become more active in their role (Worksop)

This for general safety of the public (Beeston)

I agree if it means they can get there quicker (Ashfield)

We'd rather see three firefighters than none at all! (Beeston)

I would prefer to have a crew of three than just have to deal with a fire myself so I don't see a problem with this (Carlton)

If you've had an incident and the crew turn up, at least they're starting the process while waiting for back up and stopping members of the public from being heroes and putting themselves at risk; if there is a crew there they will stop them and take control of the situation. If something happens in Southwell and a crew of three come out you know that Newark and Carlton are on the way (Newark)

If the pump is there at an incident with less crew they can make an assessment and call for more back up if they need it (Beeston)

It can only be an advantage can't it? Get the wheels in motion quicker while waiting for a bigger crew. (Newark)

152. That said, the practicalities of ensuring smaller crews are not put at additional risk were questioned and discussed. Specifically, it was stressed that crews of three should not be sent to obviously large-scale or serious incidents - and reassurance was sought that accurate and timely assessments would be made by both emergency call handlers and on-scene firefighters to ensure adequate back-up is sent promptly if a small incident should escalate into something larger. Some typical comments were:

*Will that affect the safety of the firefighters going out to serious incidents?
(Worksop)*

Would you feel safe doing this with three crew members? (Retford)

*How would you deal with a house fire with three? You might need more crew than
(West Bridgford)*

*What if they get there and it's a bigger incident than what was first realised?
(Ashfield)*

The only down side is that some crews of three could take too many risks... (Carlton)

*Is there a chance of them being sent out to a 'lower scale incident' which turns out to
be larger scale and there's not enough crew and equipment? (Newark)*

*There will need to be stringent risk assessment process to make sure the crews know
how to assess the situation and raise alarm for more crew if needed. (Newark)*

153. Moreover, whether 'crews of less than four' could refer to as few as two firefighters attending an incident (which some considered unacceptable) was also questioned, while there was again concern that the proposal may represent the 'thin end of the wedge' in terms of future crewing reductions:

*Do you mean "less than four" (e.g. even two) or do you mean "three"? (West
Bridgford)*

It wouldn't go down to two would you? It would only go to three? (Newark)

154. More general comments, questions and suggestions in relation to the proposal were also raised. In particular, there was support for the use of smaller vehicles if Alternative Crewing is introduced: it was reasoned that they are cheaper to run and more accessible - and that fire engines are rarely needed for lower risk incidents:

*Do you use different types of fire engines or smaller vehicles? That would be more
efficient! (Retford)*

Focus Groups with Staff

Introduction

155. Two staff forums or focus groups were arranged by NFRS, but despite the organisation's best efforts a total of only 11 firefighters attended - five in the northern group meeting and six in the southern one. It is not possible to know how representative these 11 RDS and WDS firefighters were of the whole organisation, but their comments deserve careful notice.
156. The groups lasted around two hours and considered all relevant evidence. The meetings were thorough and truly deliberative in listening to and responding openly to a range of

evidence and topics - and participants' views on the main issues under consideration are reported below.

Main Findings

Initial questions and comments

157. There was some scepticism in the North group around NFRS's stated incident reductions and public safety improvements: participants argued that although there are fewer fire deaths nowadays, there have been more RTC fatalities. Moreover, there was concern that fire cover is reducing year on year and that money is becoming a priority over safety. The North group also discussed the need to increase council tax to generate more money for the Fire and Rescue Service.

Mixed Crewing

The general principle

158. The southern discussion group strongly supported Mixed Crewing in principle, by a majority of five-to-one. In contrast, the northern group was less positive and opposed the proposal by four-to-one.
159. Those in favour of Mixed Crewing in the south emphasised the opportunities it could give to WDS firefighters who wish to work days only, and they suggested there might be transfer applications to do that. Those opposing the proposal in the north stressed the potential for RDS recruitment and retention difficulties, and also questioned whether on-call firefighters would accept multiple night-time calls-out.
160. Only one participant (in the South group) considered the proposal to be unacceptable - and another in the North group explained that they could not make a judgement because '*the right structure*' needs to be in place to achieve success. This, in their view, is currently not the case.
161. That said, there were concerns and reservations about implementing the new system. For example, the difficulties involved in recruiting and retaining on-call firefighters was discussed, with many participants raising this as an ongoing issue and questioning how many more on-call staff would be needed and how NFRS will increase staff numbers. Indeed, it was suggested that without a robust recruitment plan in place, Mixed Crewing is doomed to failure:

Have you started the recruitment process? How many additional RDS would you need? (South)

Where will the extra retained be recruited from? My station has an eight minute turnout time already in order to recruit staff over a wider area (South)

You need to have a substantial pool of people in order to crew the pumps during the August holiday period when families want to go away (South)

Retention is difficult due to the commitment of time that's required; in terms of when people can't go out and so on and the fact that we go to many fewer jobs (South)

We'll have to recruit for night-time cover if we're going to make this work. We have no problems at night at the moment so we have to change the way we think about this and it will take time to prepare for it. (North)

162. The South group discussed ways in which NFRS could increase its on-call establishment, for example:

Encouraging wholetime firefighters to have 'dual contracts' to provide on-call cover at night;

Examining population data to ascertain which areas will be 'easiest' to recruit from; and

Focusing on recruiting on-call firefighters for specific times of the week.

163. Participants also argued that NFRS could improve on-call staff retention by '*giving us more calls*' and paying them based on how many hours they are available for because '*the current rate is very small per hour for those on-call for a long time.*'

164. The North group was concerned about relying solely on an on-call night-time crew in the affected areas: participants felt response times would be too long and there would be '*less resilience*' without a wholetime pump. Furthermore, a few also questioned how on-call staff would feel about potentially being called out '*several times*' a night, which they argued could happen given the increase in RTCs; while another said that:

There are times when the support pump does not get there in ten minutes so if the wholetime pump did not get there so rapidly there would be a long delay from the other pumps; that could happen if you had two RDS pumps. (North)

165. Some staff from the South of the county also raised questions around the potential impact the proposal could have on how pumps are '*moved around*' the county to provide stand-by cover:

If you take you take extra wholetime pumps out of the run, then we'll have very little to move around! Control are already worrying about this. (South)

The options

166. In the South group there were questions around why three stations in the county's 'northern cluster' had been 'targeted' and why Newark was not included as an option.

167. After much discussion, the general consensus in the south was that Mixed Crewing should be introduced at **Ashfield and Retford**. In terms of rationale, there was worry about its introduction at both Retford and Worksop because this would *'result in a large area not having sufficient cover'*. That said, although one of the main reasons for choosing Ashfield as one of the stations was its close proximity to other stations, there was concern about the impact on stations such as Mansfield:

Retford and Workshop have big travel distances up in the north; it's a massive area to cover (South)

Worksop and Retford would have to cover a big area with RDS at night if both were chosen (South)

If Ashfield was included then there would be more calls going to Mansfield wholetime pump. (South)

168. Staff in the North Group were reluctant to make a choice as to which stations should be converted to Mixed Crewing, but they ultimately agreed with those in the South that the system should not be implemented at both Retford and Worksop because of the large area covered:

The impact of slower response is bigger in the Bassetlaw area because of its size. (North)

169. Overall, then, on the principle of Mixed Crewing, there was a division of opinion in the two small staff groups, but with a small majority in favour.

Alternative Crewing

170. All but one of the staff members in the South group supported the Alternative Crewing proposal. Most reasoned that it makes sense to send smaller crews to incidents such as bin fires – and they acknowledged that response times would improve, in turn improving public safety and allowing incidents to be assessed more quickly at the scene. Staff also felt that: it is preferable for fewer firefighters to be at the scene more quickly than to be waiting longer for a crew of four plus; and that the proposal will help increase retention and efficiencies within the on-call system:

This is absolutely a good thing! (South)

You can't argue with this! (South)

I'd prefer to have three firefighters there as a presence even if they could not fully commit to all the roles without further back up (South)

You could send three to RTCs in order to give first aid and stabilise casualties; and they could put out a car fire, too (South)

Could they extend to three attending a more serious incident to do the initial risk assessment; there is a lot that can be done before the other pump(s) arrive(s) (South)

And it's good to have them working on a full fire engine so they have all the kit necessary. (South)

171. However, the group had several reservations and sought reassurance around some of the practicalities of implementing Alternative Crewing, mainly whether control staff would be able to correctly assess whether an incident is low-risk enough to justify sending out a crew of less than four. Indeed, there was concern that smaller crews could be sent to more serious incidents and in turn feel 'pressurised' to deal with them without appropriate support. It was also stressed that a crew of four should still be the 'minimum target crew', with preparedness to deploy with three:

A lot depends on Control's call challenge; they have to establish where the bin fire is to know how serious it is (South)

There can be a lot of pressure on Control to get the assessment right; there can be a mistake and long delay before the next pump arrives in some areas (South)

Control would have to get the assessments right for RTCs to ensure that sufficient cover was also coming as well as a crew of three (South)

But I wouldn't want them to go to a house fire and be faced by pressure to commit when they shouldn't. (South)

172. Participating staff in the north of the county were less supportive of Alternative Crewing: three of the five participants disagreed with the proposal and the remainder were undecided. The main objection was again that firefighters could be put at risk if seemingly small incidents escalate into something more serious – and they feel compelled to tackle them without sufficient back-up:

With crews of three we would have quicker responses but they would not be safe if they can't do much at more serious incidents (North)

It would put moral pressure on the three who did turn up; the public would expect the crew to do something (North)

There's a risk of that even if they go only to the apparently 'minor' incidents (North)

I like it in some respects; but I don't want to see a group of three turning up first to any primary fire or RTC because of the danger and pressure on the crew. Back up has to be there!! (North)

173. NFRS was also accused of misleading the public by one staff member, who claimed that: 'we've been told that a crew of three could be sent as the third pump to a house fire but that's more than the proposal being told to the public. What if they are the first to arrive?!'

174. Finally, it was suggested that there would be too many limitations on what a crew of three could do:

Crews of three can do very little at RTCs and house fires; we've tried it on station drills but it just doesn't work (North Group)

Written and Other Communications

Written Submissions

175. During the formal consultation process, 11 formal written submissions were received. The table below shows the breakdown of contributors by type.

Type of Correspondent	Number of Respondents
Town and Parish Councils	8
MP	1 (2 separate submissions)
Residents	2
Total	11

176. ORS has read all the written submissions and summarised them in this chapter; none have been disregarded even if they are not expressed in a ‘formal’ way. It is a painstaking but necessary process to identify the main issues raised by respondents. Detailed written submissions do not lend themselves to easy summary and so readers are encouraged to consult ORS’s full report below for a more detailed account of the views expressed. However, the following overview gives a sense of the types of issues raised.

Mixed Crewing

Seven submissions (from John Mann MP; Ollerton & Boughton Town Council; Rampton Parish Council; Headon-cum-Upton, Grove and Stokeham Parish Council; Selston Parish Council; Mr Ray Young [Selston Parish Council and Chairman of Ashfield and Sherwood UKIP Branch]; and an individual resident) objected to NFRS’s Mixed Crewing proposal, chiefly on the grounds of: longer night-time response times and potential threats to public safety; and possibly difficult on-call availability, recruitment and retention.

Rampton and Headon-cum-Upton, Grove and Stokeham Parish Councils rejected NFRS’s argument that that between 6pm and 8pm is its period of lowest demand and suggest that if the Service must introduce Mixed Crewing, it should not do so from 6pm but between 12:30am and 8:30am – the ‘*true low demand period*’. It is unclear as to whether the Councils would continue to oppose Mixed Crewing on this basis, but it would be safe to assume that an amended changeover time would mitigate against at least some of their anxieties in relation to longer response times and public safety.

Alternative Crewing

Two submissions (from Flintham and Wysall Parish Council and Shelford Parish Council also writing on behalf of Costock, Whatton and Plumtree Parish Councils) supported Alternative Crewing as a sensitive move that will improve efficiency and reduce costs;

Two submissions (from Selston Parish Council and Mr Ray Young) object to Alternative Crewing on the grounds that 'smaller' incidents could escalate, placing both firefighters and the public in danger. Furthermore, Ollerton & Boughton Town Council seeks reassurance that the Alternative Crewing system will not be used to attend house fires and RTCs in future.

Other issues

Three submissions (two from John Mann MP and one from Mr Ray Young) raised one other issue: both respondents objected to the £40 'incentive payment' given to focus group attendees to cover their time and expenses, describing it as 'bribery'.

Opposition to Mixed Crewing Proposal

John Mann MP

177. Mr Mann states that he has met with local residents who are concerned that the proposals will increase call out times and that this will place lives at risk. He says they believe that any proposals that have any detrimental impact on response times is dangerous and will be a deterioration in service levels. He also:

Challenges the assertion that callout times will increase by only four minutes under the proposals and requests further practical evidence of this assertion;

Questions whether any analysis has been made of the localities surrounding Retford and Worksop Fire Stations to establish *where* [retained firefighters] *will live alongside their travel routes to the station*; and

Questions how the Fire Authority intends to recruit people when vacancies for retained firefighters have been a recurrent problem in recent years - and requests that NFRS and NFA establishes a *clear and deep understanding of why this is happening* prior to implementing any proposals.

Ollerton & Boughton Town Council

178. The Town Council is concerned that:

The nearest whole-time fire engine will not be available during the night, potentially endangering the lives of local people; and that

The Retained Duty System cannot guarantee the same level of availability.

Rampton Parish Council and Headon-cum-Upton, Grove and Stokeham Parish Council (two identical but separate submissions)

179. The Parish Councils strongly object to the proposals because:

Their parishes are between four and six miles away from Retford and Tuxford Fire Stations, and crews are delayed in reaching the areas due to the *small winding roads of this rural location*;

The busy train line crossing at Grove Road (Retford) causes further delays; and

They do not want response times to increase further through the use of on-call firefighters at Retford.

180. The Parish Councils reject NFRS's argument that that between 6pm and 8pm is its period of lowest demand (and in fact enclosed a graph from NFRS's Operational Activity Report 2016 that demonstrates that 6pm is *the peak demand time*). They thus suggest that if the Service must introduce a Mixed Crewing system, it should not introduce it from 6pm but between 12:30am and 8:30am – the *true low demand period*.

181. The Parish Councils say that NFRS should be fighting the Government to allow it to increase its council tax precept to maintain a 24 hour Wholetime Duty System - and that they hope NFRS will reconsider its proposals and keep the Wholetime Duty System at all Nottinghamshire Fire Stations⁸.

Selston Parish Council

182. Selston Parish Council says that the proposed Mixed Crewing system at Ashfield would mean that it could be eight minutes before the first crew is mobilised, and that if the travelling time to the outlying villages of Selston Parish are considered it could be 15 minutes before the first crew is in attendance at an emergency. The Parish Council feels that *six minutes could be the difference, literally, between life and death for our residents*.

Mr Ray Young, Selston Parish Council and Chairman of Ashfield and Sherwood UKIP Branch

183. Mr Young asks the following questions in a letter to NFRS CFO John Buckley as follows⁹:

Are you prepared to put your name to the removal of wholetime fire crews at two of your stations thereby lengthening the attendance times to emergencies between the time of 6.00pm and 8.00am and take the gamble with residents' lives?

Does the fact that you are looking at reducing front line cover mean you have whittled away at everything else?

⁸ It should be noted that only half of NFRS's 24 stations operate the Wholetime Duty System.

⁹ Mr Young has received a full response to all questions from CFO Buckley.

Can you guarantee two Retained crews from Worksop being mobilised to an emergency within 8 minutes of the call coming in at night under the new proposals?

How long would it take the first appliance mobilised from Ashfield at 1.00am to be in attendance at Jacksdale under the present system and how long under the new proposals?

How long for the second Retained crew to be in attendance?

If the call was "persons reported" could the Retained crews be in attendance any quicker?

Where do you propose recruiting the extra Retained Fire crews from and how long and how much will it cost to get them fully trained? Has this been factored in to the equations?

How could you guarantee that an appliance mobilised to a small, low risk incident with only 3 crew would not arrive to a bigger, more serious incident? If they did what could they do without putting their lives at risk and how long before they get back up?

Resident

184. The resident says that *when we need a fire engine we need it now*: they do not consider it prudent to remove or reduce local firefighting in any way, especially in the countryside and small towns where *it will take longer for the fire engine to arrive as it will have further to go, and the drivers will not be as well acquainted with the local area*. They consider that the proposal may save money *but is a disservice to the local communities in many ways*.

Support for Alternative Crewing Proposal

Flintham and Wysall Parish Council and Shelford Parish Council (two identical but separate submissions)

185. Flintham and Wysall Parish Council and Shelford Parish Council (also writing on behalf of Costock, Whatton and Plumtree Parish Councils) is supportive of reducing crewing numbers where necessary to three firefighters instead of the current four. The Council considers this to be a sensitive move that will improve the efficiency of the service and reduce costs.

Opposition to/Concerns about Alternative Crewing Proposal

Ollerton & Boughton Town Council

186. The Council seeks reassurance that the Alternative Crewing system will not be used to attend house fires and RTCs in future.

Selston Parish Council

187. Selston Parish Council feels that classifying some incidents as 'low risk' ignores the fact that fires can spread rapidly. It is therefore concerned for the safety of fire crews and residents.

Mr Ray Young, Selston Parish Council and Chairman of Ashfield and Sherwood UKIP Branch

188. Mr Young asks: *how could you guarantee that an appliance mobilised to a small, low risk incident with only 3 crew would not arrive to a bigger, more serious incident? If they did what could they do without putting their lives at risk and how long before they get back up?*

Other Issues

Mr Ray Young, Selston Parish Council and Chairman of Ashfield and Sherwood UKIP Branch

189. Mr Young asks: *it has come to my attention that you have recruited the services of an independent, professional consultation company to run the focus groups and present balanced information to present balanced data. It has also come to my attention that individuals attending these groups were paid £40.00 for their unbiased opinion. Some would say that could be bribery or it could be seen as a waste of public money, how much of the first £1million savings has it cost for this professional advice?*

John Mann MP

190. John Mann, MP, also objected to the incentives paid to focus group participants and asked if the Fire Authority had authorised them.

Editorial Note

191. The use of reasonable incentives to recompense participants for their time and expenses in attending the evening meetings is *standard market and social research good practice*. Apart from the question of fairness (to those who spend up to 3.5 to 4 hours travelling to and from the meetings, and taking part in lengthy discussions) incentives are necessary to get a representative group of randomly selected participants to attend the meetings. Of course, people are recompensed regardless of the views they express.

Submissions via Social Media

192. Whilst an awareness of live discussions occurring on social media is nowadays an important aspect of any consultation, it should not be considered as the main method of feedback, since respondents providing views over social media are often predisposed to particular viewpoints but often without any information that contextualises their opinions. Furthermore it is never clear whether the comments are a person's final views which they would want included in the analysis/decision making, or just interim thoughts and discussions that inevitably develop as people debate the issues in an online forum.

Nonetheless, important issues were raised via Facebook especially, all of which have been collated below.

Internal NFRS Sources

193. The table that follows outlines NFRS’s Facebook activity - as well as the number of people reached through this medium. The advertising in particular demonstrates the Service’s iterative process in targeting the population demographics and geographical areas that had not sufficiently engaged with the consultation process (identified through analysis of reach).

Facebook	
Week 1 25/9	Two posts and link to CFO (external) video - CFO Video viewed 4,901 times Total reach ¹⁰ of 61,178 Likes/comments/shares 521
Week 2 2/10	Two posts and link to CFO (external) video Total reach of 61,535 Likes/comments/shares 531 CFO Video viewed 5,243 times (cumulative) Retford Fire Station Facebook Post Total reach of 2,347 Likes/comments/shares 28
Week 3 9/10	Facebook Advertising First advertisement (broad demographic/geographic) commenced. Sent to target people within a radius of 25 miles of Nottingham, aged 18+. Total reach of 17,000
Week 4 16/10	CFO Video viewed 5,500 times (cumulative) Reach of video is 16,673 (cumulative) Facebook Advertising Second advertisement (broad demographic/geographic) commenced. Sent to target people within a radius of 25 miles of Nottingham, aged 18+. Total reach of 10,599
Week 5 23/10	CFO Video viewed 9,600 times (cumulative) Facebook Advertising Third advertising (broad demographic/geographic) commenced Ran four targeted Facebook adverts (Ashfield, Retford, Worksop and Newark), each within a 10 mile radius around the town. The advertisement was linked to CFO video. Reach: Ashfield = 2696 ; Retford = 2150 ; Worksop = 2142 ; Newark reach = 1558 . The Ashfield, Retford and Worksop advertisement reached mostly men. Previous advertisements reached a more ‘balanced’ demographic.
Week 6 30/10	CFO Video viewed 12,000 times (cumulative) Facebook Advertising Fourth advertisement (set to target people aged 18+ in the South of the county) commenced. Advertisement was linked to CFO video. Advertisement reached 5,725 people (around equal amounts of men and women in the 55+ bracket, but heavily skewed in favour of a male audience below this age bracket).
Week 7 6/11	CFO Video viewed 13,000 times (cumulative) Facebook Advertising Fifth advertisement (set to target people aged 18-30 within Nottingham). Advertisement was linked to CFO video. Advertisement reached 6,221 people. Advertisement reach still heavily skewed towards men.

¹⁰ The number of people that have seen the posts, according to Facebook.

Week 8 13/11	<p>CFO Video viewed 18,000 times (cumulative)</p> <p>Facebook Advertising</p> <p>Sixth advertisement (set to target women aged 18+ within Notts). Advertisement was linked to CFO video. Advertisement reached 7,520 people.</p>
Week 9 20/11	<p>CFO Video viewed 21,000 times (cumulative)</p> <p>Facebook Advertising</p> <p>Seventh advertisement (set to target 18-25s within Nottinghamshire). Advertisement was linked to CFO video. Advertisement reached 7,593 people.</p>
Week 10 27/11	<p>CFO Video viewed 23,000 times (cumulative)</p> <p>Facebook Advertising</p> <p>Eighth advertisement (set to target those aged 18+ within postcodes that had not engaged with the consultation process. Advertisement was linked to CFO video. Almost 50/50 gender split and fairly even spread of age. Advertisement reached 6,032 people.</p>
Week 11	<p>CFO Video viewed 26,000 times (cumulative)</p> <p>Facebook Advertising</p> <p>Ninth advertisement (set to target specific sections of Nottingham that had not engaged with the consultation process). Advertisement was linked to CFO video. Almost 50/50 gender split, with the majority of men being 35-45 and women aged 45+. Advertisement reached 7,624 people.</p> <p>Normal Facebook post reminding people there were only two weeks remaining until the end of consultation. The post reached 2,027 people.</p> <p>Video with GM, Mick Sharman, explaining proposals a little more. Viewed 1,400 times.</p>
Week 12 11/12	<p>CFO Video viewed 29,000 times (cumulative)</p> <p>Facebook Advertising</p> <p>Tenth advertisement (set to target specific sections of Nottingham that had not engaged with the consultation process). Advertisement was linked to CFO video. Almost 50/50 gender and fairly even spread of age. Advertisement reached 7,171 people</p>

194. Below is a breakdown of the overall Facebook reach, including age and gender.



195. Most Facebook comments in response to NFRS’s posts objected to FRS reductions generally and to Mixed Crewing more specifically:

They should leave the emergency alone hospitals police firemen doctors they all deserve more pay.

Cannot understand WHY a life saving service is reducing skilled staff? Surely the tragic event with Grenfell should highlight that more staff are needed not less!! Unbelievable!!! Safety is fundamental and should not be compromised.

The fire service is an insurance policy, they should be there when needed and like any other public service it costs what it costs...it’s about time the British public said enough is enough, we are not going to stand for our health and safety to be put into jeopardy any longer.

The time must come when someone with balls says enough is enough. How can you have an emergency service that keeps getting cut back.

This government is undermining all emergency services.

Lives come first, not money.

Utterly ridiculous. This is not only putting public lives at risk but Fire fighters as well. This government is full of platitudes after disasters like Grenfell. It's time they put their money where there mouth is and properly show their appreciation for all our fantastic emergency services.

My council tax bill for the police and fire service has risen year after year and you're having your budget cut. Who is doing what with our money?

You shouldn't even be in a position whereby you have to ask this question...boils my blood!

The fire service should get more money not have it stripped away.

I wish CFO's would get together and oppose this constant financial strangulation of such a great service. I'm sure they'd much rather lead a Fire service where they could invest and develop rather than slash and burn. Come on. Fight the government gangsters and say 'No!'...

196. The most common concerns were around the on-call system and its inherently lengthier response times; and it was frequently claimed that retained crews: may not be as highly trained as wholetime crews; are often 'off-the run'; and are difficult to recruit and retain; and, in some cases, take longer than five minutes to turn-out:

Retained firefighters are great at supplementing the fire service but should not be a replacement for a full-time crew. 5 minutes extra to respond may not sound like a long time but when there is an emergency and you are waiting for them to arrive it seems a lifetime and a very scary one at that.

On call/retained take at least 5 minutes to turn out where whole time turn out within 30 seconds and when seconds saves or costs lives I know what I prefer. On a night people tend to be asleep so often this is a more serious fire. Truth it's not a better service but a cost cutting exercise.

Not acceptable to increase response times. Seconds and minutes can mean the difference between life and death. What other options have been looked at to deliver savings? There must be other options that could deliver sustainable savings rather than only consulting on one that would potentially have the most direct impact on the people your service is designed to protect and save. Think again.

According to gov't statistics .. over the last few years the number of fire incidents peak in the late evening, also a higher proportion of fire related deaths occur between midnight and 5 am, This is the time you're intending to increase attendance times by 3 minutes and 54 seconds. Surely you can see that this will lead to larger fires with a corresponding increase in injuries and death?

Training is one issue, retained don't do line rescue, chemical protection. 2 hour drill sessions are way short of what Wtd put in per week. The system has been around a long time but it is a failing system with numerous retained pumps off the run on a daily basis. A visit to fire control will confirm that fact. Far too many times people don't respond to fire calls due to failed system alerts and human error. You cannot run this type of system as first call. Rtd appliances should be backup to whole time only unless they are standalone Rtd stations.

A fire doubles in size every 30 seconds. Even Mr Buckley admits retained take nearly 4 minutes longer to turn out! Getting rid of whole time crews can only result in larger fires!

Retained take longer to turnout...and retained appliances are often unavailable due to insufficient crew. These are facts and the public need to know to allow them to make an informed decision!

At Worksop the average time for the pump to be mobile is around 10 mins then it has to travel to the incident which could be anything up to 10 to 15 minutes just in our area.

It's all about saving money...life's will be lost...no way are the retained as good as the wholetime.

Recruitment and retention of retained personnel has always been an issue. Do all stations currently being looked at for day-manning have their full compliment of retained staff and if so will this need to be increased to accommodate the day-manning plans?

These proposals are frightening! Living in Worksop and the thought that waiting for a fire engine manned by retained staff that live at the far end of the town in the middle of the night does not bare thinking about! I would like to know how these engines are going to be manned by retained staff and respond in the middle of the night if the minimum crew required all respond from the far end of town. 10 years ago you wouldn't have even been able to apply to be a retained fire fighter living that far away from the fire station so I'm puzzled as to why now this is allowed! It's obviously because the goal posts have been moved but in reality the new proposals are just not achievable if all the facts are looked into and where the crew live! God help anyone in a house fire in the middle of the night if these proposals go ahead that's all I can say! It's a sad time when a service like this has to make cuts like this!

197. There was, though, some support for the current proposals as the ‘lesser of two evils’ (that is, as a preferred alternative to removing stations or appliances in their entirety) – as well as recognition that NFRS must look at alternative forms of fire cover given the financial constraints within which it is operating. One contributor also shared the view that all organisations must ‘*change with the times*’ and that they trusted in NFRS to make viable changes:

To be fair [the CFO] could save more money and reduce the number of pumps and crews. He could down grade some wholetime retained stations i.e. remove the wholetime or remove retained he could close stations altogether but he isn't. He's merely changing some shift patterns to save the amount of money he has to save with the least amount of impact on the public. There will still be 30 appliances available 24 hours a day as there are now. There will still be the 24 stations either on call or staffed 24 hours a day. Yes response times may be 5 minutes slower but 5 minutes slower is better than no response at all through a complete removal of an appliance or station. Trust me where I work I've seen the consequence of the removal of an appliance at night. I am by no means condoning cuts as its bonkers...however I am a realist. His hands are tied and at least he's trying to avoid redundancies and frontline cuts. This unfortunately is the lesser of two evils.

The service needs to reassess we all wish the funding was there but if adequate fire and rescue cover can be achieved on a lower budget that has to be explored or else where does the money come from? Lots of people will make noise and support increased public spending but when it comes down to it will shout a lot louder if their taxes rise...if there is a more cost effective equally safe alternative then that option is going to be implemented.

If the management of Notts FRS consider changes viable I would back them. Every organisation has to change with the times even though there will be some, including most trade unions, who wish for nothing to change.

198. It should also be noted that within the debate about the wholetime versus on-call fire cover systems, there was support for the latter as an efficient and economic system of fire cover – and an increasingly important one in times of financial austerity:

In a crowded city full time crews yes I get that but get out where the population is less dense and retained crews I believe can be more effective and obviously more cost-effective...as I see it for your more rural communities the retained firefighters are more effective because they live within the communities they cover they have other employment which means they can bring other skills to the job...local knowledge goes a long way too knowing the people and the area you serve...

I'll admit having full time crews for police fire ambulance for every community would be fantastic but I also understand that it's not practically achievable the funds simply don't exist and if retained fire fighters caused increased risk to the public that would be reviewed and addressed to eliminate the risk...both systems work depending on geographic location and if it's deemed manageable in an area to switch to retained where is the problem?

A good proportion of service is covered by the retained duty system. The system has been working for years. Many communities across Nottinghamshire and the rest of the country have only ever been covered by this system. It's not a new idea, it's an idea that many countries across the world have been using for years. Of course, I would love a hospital, police station and fire station within touching distance at all times, I don't however like most of the tax payers want to pay for it either. It's so sad to read comments putting down and undermining the retained crews, these people are giving up so much for so little and happy to do so.

199. One Facebook user (an on-call firefighter of many years) also sought to correct what they saw as the 'inaccuracies' quoted in relation to the on-call system:

My concern is that views expressed about the retained duty system are not accurate and are undermining the people that currently operate under that system. Painting pictures of poor training and slow response times is not the true picture. Geographically 90% of the UK is covered by the retained duty system. If we were to believe some stories about how ineffective the RDS is, I think it would have raised its head by now. The majority of the population in this country have only ever been served by this system and are happy. I have sadly seen these inaccurate stories used over and over again for years.

200. Finally, one exchange doubted that the consultation findings would have any influence over the decision-making process, with a few users describing the proposals as something of a 'done deal':

If the vast majority of Joe Public in Notts reject these proposals ... What happens then? Will the proposals be canned or will the public be ignored?

Probably be ignored...

Having seen the results of other "consultation" I am concerned as to whether the results will have any influence whatsoever!

As you know they go through all the smoke and mirrors tricks with consultations etc. Then do exactly as they please. Surely it would be better to save all the money that a consultation involves and just go ahead as they will do that whatever the outcome of a consultation.

No matter what the public say you will do what you want. Human life is cheap.

Twitter

201. On Twitter, NFRS posted seven tweets, including the one pinned to the top of its twitter page (examples can be seen overleaf). The combined reach for all posts was **32,843**.

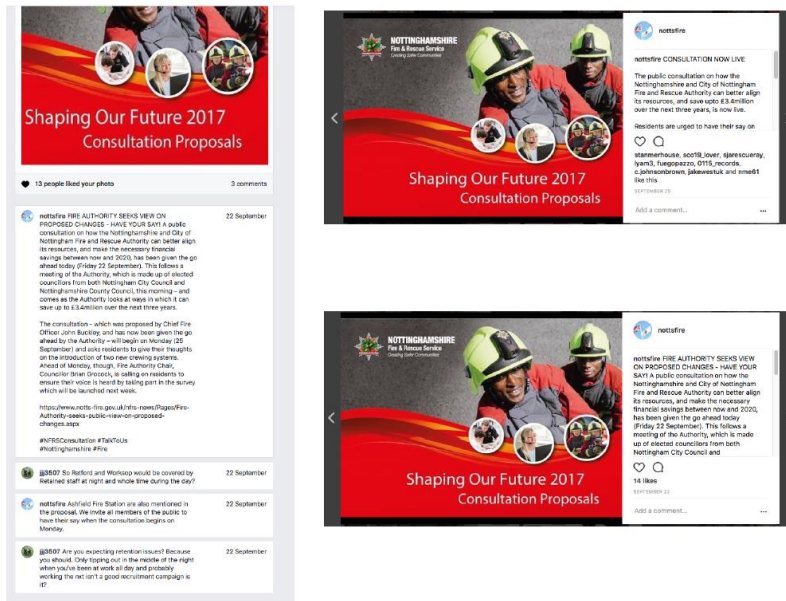


You Tube

202. On YouTube, the CFO's video (a screenshot of which can be seen below) was viewed **414** times. 56% of people viewed the video from an embedded source, such as the 'Spotlight' on the Service website. 52% of the views were from computers, with the rest being from mobile phones, games consoles, etc.



Instagram



203. The above posts were placed on NFRS’s Instagram page. Only two comments were made by members of the public; the first was a clarification question and the second expressed concern about on-call firefighter retention:

Are you expecting retention issues? Because you should. Only tipping out in the middle of the night when you’ve been at work all day and probably working the next isn’t a good recruitment campaign is it?!

External Sources

204. The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) shared several posts on its Facebook page, for example:





Nottinghamshire Fire Brigades Union

21 October at 09:18 · 🌐

<https://www.facebook.com/keepretford/posts/114712129289806>



Fire Service cuts will put Worksop lives “at risk”, warn Union

The safety of Worksop residents will be “put at risk” if plans to cut cover at Worksop and Retford fire station in a bid to save £1m go ahead, the Fire Brigade Union has warned.

WORKSOPGUARDIAN.CO.UK



Nottinghamshire Fire Brigades Union added 3 new photos.

21 October at 14:18 · 🌐

Members of the FBU standing shoulder to shoulder with Labour Cllr's and John Mann MP, opposing cuts to front line firefighters. 🙌



Nottinghamshire Fire Brigades Union added 4 new photos.

11 November at 12:23 · 🌐

Another day out campaigning to stop the cuts to Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue.

FBU members standing side by side with Labour.



Nottinghamshire Fire Brigades Union

4 hrs · 🌐

We've responded to the public consultation, have you?
It's important that our members make sure the Service management team fully understand your views about the proposal to our fire cover. It doesn't take long and you can do it right here, right now.
www.notts-fire.gov.uk/.../service-perform.../public-consultation

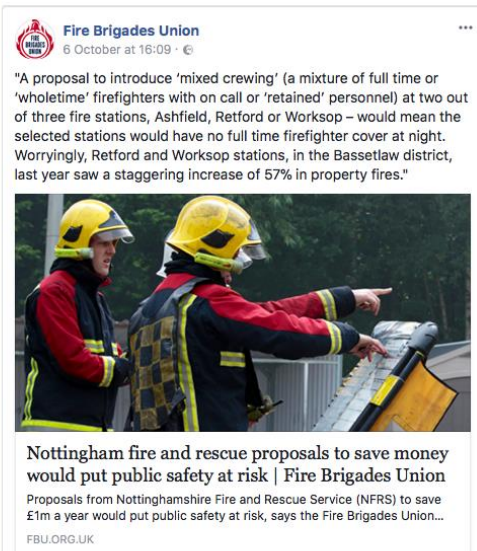
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Opinion Research Services Limited

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Shaping Our Future 2017

Thank you!

Your survey responses have been recorded.



205. The latter two posts generated a significant number of comments. Some were again general objections to FRS (and other emergency service) reductions whereas others objected to the introduction of mixed crewing at Ashfield Fire Station:

Surely it isn't too much to want effective and safe emergency services for everyone. What has this austerity gained for ordinary people? Is there anyone out there listening?

To stretch our vital services even more is so wrong...

When will the people of this country realise that this government's top priority is money not people.

Yes that's a really good idea with the A1 on our doorstep.

Ashfield is one of the most populated areas in the country so warrants fully staffed fire appliances by both whole time and RDS 24/7. The mixed and alternative crewing proposal set out today to the fire authority is unacceptable putting life's at risk. Alternative ways must be sort to save the money.

206. There was, though, some support for the Mixed Crewing model from those who work or have worked it elsewhere:

Worked day crewing for a while and had mixed crew of W/T and retained every evening, it was never a problem...

Lichfield had that system for as long as I can remember - two pumps, one day-crewed by WT, the other day-crewed by RDS, at night both crewed by on-call WT and RDS. It seemed to work... Our shiny new fire station now has one pump, which I'm told is day-crewed by WT and night-crewed solely by RDS.

This is nothing new, this model has been used in West Lothian by the then Lothian and Borders fire and rescue service. The mixed crewing was used at 3 different locations. These have since been reversed back to retained only stations. But the model was used for a few years.

207. Most other comments were again around the wholetime versus on-call debate, with contributors commenting on the latter's lengthier response times and claiming that: the training offered to on-call crews is not as comprehensive as that for wholetime crews; on-call crews lack experience when compared to their wholetime colleagues; and on-call crews are difficult to recruit and retain:

*Imagine if you were trapped inside a burning house. You dial 999. You have 2 options.
1) the crew coming to rescue you are ready to turn out from the Fire Station within 1 min, and arrive at your house within 5 mins of the 999 call.*

2) the crew coming to rescue you are at home. They are ready to turn out from the Fire Station within 6 mins (or may not even get a full crew so next station gets bleeped to turn out and the clock starts again). Assuming first station do get a full crew they will arrive at your house within 11 mins after the 999 call.

Choose an option.

Fact, wholetime firefighters undergo more training than RDS...

I wholly understand the need for part time fire stations. Nobody could justify whole time stations in rural counties. But to crew full time stations with half full time crews awaiting the arrival of part timers for first attendance is unthinkable. I worked in a brigade that had full time crews that were backed up by retained brothers and they were a very respected bunch of guys (women and men). But by the same token I went as Oic onto retained stations ground, where it was evident that experienced was lacking.

The problem there is we cannot recruit or retain RDS staff and I can't agree that it's the way forward because you need WT FF's in any type of Brigade/Service.

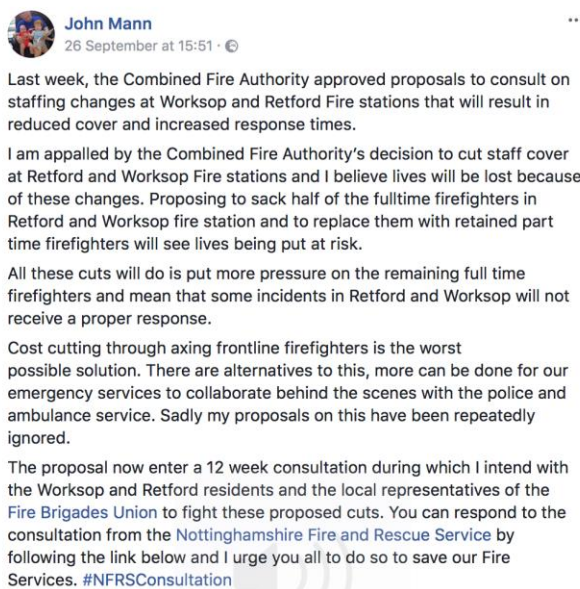
208. Furthermore, a few contributors criticised the wholetime versus on-call debate reported above, suggesting that both systems can and should work together to provide a cohesive service:

I think both roles work well together did in our brigade.

Come to Dumfries & Galloway where you will see how 16 RDS Stations and 1 WT Station work in harmony. Like every job in the UK you will find great personnel and some not so great personnel in both RDS and WT, but we all pull together when it matters most. To many of the RDS it is more than just a job, as it is for many WT, and we take every opportunity to develop our skills and learn new ones. Get a life and support the joint working of these two models. Times are tough just now for everybody, we all know that!! Put doon yer muskets and embrace and celebrate us working together in harmony!!!!

What we really need to do is stop the bickering, acknowledge the differences which make us stronger, and join together to fight the government that is seeking to destroy the Fire Service...we need all the work systems to function together as an effective Fire service.

209. **John Mann MP** shared the following posts on his Facebook page:



John Mann
26 September at 15:51 · 🌐

Last week, the Combined Fire Authority approved proposals to consult on staffing changes at Worksop and Retford Fire stations that will result in reduced cover and increased response times.

I am appalled by the Combined Fire Authority's decision to cut staff cover at Retford and Worksop Fire stations and I believe lives will be lost because of these changes. Proposing to sack half of the fulltime firefighters in Retford and Worksop fire station and to replace them with retained part time firefighters will see lives being put at risk.

All these cuts will do is put more pressure on the remaining full time firefighters and mean that some incidents in Retford and Worksop will not receive a proper response.

Cost cutting through axing frontline firefighters is the worst possible solution. There are alternatives to this, more can be done for our emergency services to collaborate behind the scenes with the police and ambulance service. Sadly my proposals on this have been repeatedly ignored.

The proposal now enter a 12 week consultation during which I intend with the Worksop and Retford residents and the local representatives of the Fire Brigades Union to fight these proposed cuts. You can respond to the consultation from the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service by following the link below and I urge you all to do so to save our Fire Services. #NFRSconsultation



John Mann for Bassetlaw
6 October · 🌐

Notts Fire and Rescue Service have announced cuts to service provision due to Government cuts. They want to change how Retford and Worksop Fire Stations are crewed with the introduction of retained crews at night instead of the current whole time crews.

This relies on people being available and able to immediately get into the fire station when an alarm call comes through. I believe that they will find difficulties in recruiting staff to take on these call-out roles and mos...
[See more](#)



NOTTINGHAM
Fire & Rescue Ser

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service - Shaping Our Future 2017
Potentially far-reaching and fundamental changes that have been and are being implemented across the emergency sector mean Nottinghamshire Fire and...

**John Mann for Bassetlaw**

27 October at 19:33 · 🌐

I was out with local firefighters this morning: There are cuts being proposed for Retford and Worksop fire stations which will slow down call out times. Lives will be put at risk.

You can have your say by clicking on the link and completing the consultation questionnaire. Please do this – its very important that you submit your views!

<https://www.ors.org.uk/.../in.../survey/index/sid/625754/lang/en>

**John Mann for Bassetlaw**

13 November at 16:17 · 🌐

Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service have written to confirm that they are paying out an attendance allowance of £40 to people who attend their invite only consultation events on the future of our fire service.

This is the first time that I have ever heard of the public sector paying people to participate in a consultation process.

This is astounding, it calls into question the independence of the consultation and I challenge the use of public money for such a purpose.

I have already heard this described as bribery by a member of the public and believe that the whole process has been undermined.

Nobody will trust the outcomes and I call upon the Notts Fire Service to stop wasting our money and rip this process up to start again.

**John Mann**

21 October · YouTube · 🌐

Follow

There was a fire on Ely Close, Worksop earlier this week. This morning I visited with Dominic, from the Fire Brigade Union where we discussed what could happen to response times should the proposed cuts go through in Worksop and Retford.

**Save Our Fireservice**

YOUTUBE.COM

**John Mann for Bassetlaw** shared John Mann's post.

7 December at 09:45 · 🌐

**John Mann**

7 December at 09:45 · 🌐

I will be live on Facebook tomorrow at 9:30am from the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue HQ after I've handed in over 3,500 responses to the consultation on the future of our Fire Services. Please tune in if you can.

210. Comments made on these posts were mainly opposed to FRS reductions in general, and more specifically concerned about lengthening response times and their potential impact on public safety.

The worst possible scenario ever, these people need to think again.

Essential services are just such. It affects us all, wealthy or not...would the government feel safe if their house was on fire whilst waiting for a fireman to wake up, get dressed, open the fire station doors...

I believe the current retained crew at Worksop have a slow response time. They have to negotiate Carlton Road lights and railway crossing. The traffic created by Morrisons and those traffic lights. The lights at Victoria Square. This all takes up precious minutes.

If my house catches fire at half two in the morning why should I have to wait five to ten minutes longer. I am more likely to be trapped upstairs.

What about fires in Carlton and Langold. They will wait even longer. They can't afford to wait for a five minute call-out. Your dead.

211. **Gloria Del Piero MP** posted the following on her Facebook page:



Gloria De Piero MP
20 November at 18:05 · 🌐

Firefighters Justin Ward and Paul Harley came in to see me about the fight to stop proposals to change the staffing of Ashfield fire station from a full-time crew to a retained crew at night.

I urge every single one of you to take the survey at <https://www.ors.org.uk/.../survey/index/sid/625754/lang/en> expressing the need for Ashfield Fire Station not to have changes made. It doesn't take long at all and the more responses the better.

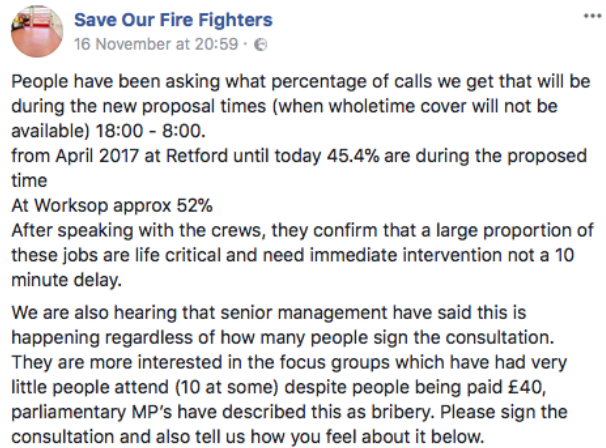
Like Comment Share

212. Comments on this post included:

Express for all stations not to have changes made.

It's no good just campaigning for Ashfield because if they stay on 24-hour standby then other stations will lose firefighters most probably cutting manning down to four on a pump instead of five, and these will be stations that have no retained cover at all – just a thought and a glimpse of the bigger picture. All cuts to emergency services are totally wrong.

213. **Save our Firefighters** shared several posts, including the following, during the consultation period.



Tweets 31 Following 45 Followers 15 Likes 11 [Follow](#)

saveourfirefighters @SOF247
Retford Fire Station is currently undergoing a consultation regarding the reduction of fire cover between the hours of 18:00 to 8:00 (14hrs).
Retford, England
Joined October 2017
[Tweet to saveourfirefighters](#)
5 Followers you know
5 Photos and videos

Tweets Tweets & replies Media

saveourfirefighters @SOF247 · Dec 2
Today's Christmas market is again seeing everyone against the proposals to reduce night time cover at Retford, Worksop and Ashfield. Pop down and say hello and sign to save your station.

1 2 2

Who to follow Refresh View all

- G M Police** @gmpolice Follow
- Followed by Ian Curryer and others
- Council House Nottm** @... Follow
- Followed by Wayne Bowcock and others
- Rob Barber** @Robbiebarb Follow

Find people you know

Trends for you Change

- #MyMentalHealthInWords**
@RoastHse is Tweeting about this
- #MondayMotivation**
@NottmCollege, @newartexchange and 6 more are Tweeting about this
- Bishop of London**
Former chief nurse Sarah Mullally has been appointed Bishop of London



214. Comments made on these posts included:

This is just appalling. Bad for the individual, bad for the community as a whole.

We won't lie down and accept plans to reduce Ashfield fire service. Moving to an 'on call' only night service will cost time + could cost lives.

I wish you all the luck in the world but sadly the management/Fire Authority don't give a monkeys!! Keep fighting...

For 9 days in November whole time cover will be removed from Retford fire station, leaving Worksop the only whole time pump covering Bassetlaw area.

And on top of this because we have no money we are taking pumps off the run from now on at several stations so that we can maintain crewing levels across the brigade as they can't afford to keep the pumps available through offering overtime...what puzzles me is that we are 50 firefighters short yet we have no money to maintain life-saving fire cover through overtime?

215. **Keep Retford Fire Station 24/7** shared many posts similar to the following during the consultation period.



**Keep Retford Fire Station 24/7**

19 October · 🌐



People of Retford, Worksop and Ashfield please Digest this news we have just been given.

Last Night. House Fire in Worksop. 1 Person Rescued. Originally called in as rubbish. This would have been a retained Fire Appliance turning out with only 3 firefighters on it under the current proposals. Worksop Retained were UNAVAILABLE. The job was attended by 3 whole time fire appliances, 2 of which are under threat. Worksops attendance within 5 minutes. Retford and Edwinstowe within 14mins.

Please sign the consultation today. Voice your opinion. It could save your life!

#keepretford247

www.opinionresearch.co.uk/nfrs

**Keep Retford Fire Station 24/7**

18 October at 21:48 · 🌐



Figure being quoted by Notts Fire and Rescue with regards to incidents at night are only Fire Deaths. They are not taking into account Road Traffic Collisions, and other calls. Remember if you are injured in your home or are unable to let the Ambulance service in, its a fire crew that gains access. As we all know, if your seriously hurt you need treatment straight away.

Please fill in the consultation today.

www.opinionresearch.co.uk/nfrs

216. The posts generated the following comments in opposition to NFRS's proposals:

This station has to run 24 hours. You never know when you might need them.

Strongly disagree with this frankly dangerous proposal.

Strongly disagree with this hairbrained proposal on so many levels.

217. **Retford Fire Station** placed the following information on its Facebook page:

Retford Fire Station
Published by Gerry Williscroft [?] · 26 September · 🌐

Retford Fire Station may be facing changes in the level of cover it provides to our local community but you have the opportunity to have your say on any changes that are brought in and to support or oppose them. Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service is asking for your input, as part of the required public consultation, on a series of potential measures that may be implemented as part of the current cost saving measures. please follow this link to have your say on the future of the Service we provide.

<http://www.opinionresearch.co.uk/nfrs>

The options, from Retford's perspective, are to keep the 24/7 immediate cover appliance backed up by an on-call appliance (as has been the case for some years) or to change to a 10/7 immediate cover appliance with only on-call Fire Fighters (on two appliances) responding between the hours of 6pm and 8am. The latter would save approximately £500k per year but it would increase response times to incidents within our area.

Please have your say now - your views will make a difference one way or the other.

Proposal Retford Fire Station

The station is currently crewed 24/7, using one wholtime appliance and one retained appliance.

Total Incidents Attended	2007 640	2016 544	96 fewer incidents
---------------------------------	-------------	-------------	------------------------------

Proposal: Introduce Mixed Crewing at Retford Fire Station

How:
The current fire cover of one wholtime fire engine and a retained fire engine would continue between 8am and 6pm, during the periods of highest demand. During periods of lowest demand, 6pm to 8am, the station would be crewed by two retained fire engines, supported, as it is currently, by other appliances from around the county. This would mean that the wholtime firefighters based at this station would work day shifts, with no requirement to work at night.

False Alarm Incidents	2007 184	2016 211	27 more incidents
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Fire Incidents	2007 262	2016 215	47 fewer incidents
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Why:
Moving to this system would save around £500k and align our resources to demand.

Implications:
Using our historical data and the risk map we have developed over many years, operating only retained fire crews at night means a 0.4% increase (26 incidents) in the number of calls not attended in 10 minutes by NFRS, but would save the Service £500k a year.

Special Service Incidents	2007 194	2016 118	76 fewer incidents
----------------------------------	-------------	-------------	------------------------------

218. A few comments were made on the post, chiefly around the consultation process itself and whether incomplete questionnaires and those submitted through non-official channels would be included within the overall results¹¹:

*They are probably incomplete because there are more questions about the person and their sexuality than there are about the loss of our full-time fire crews! Why should the fact that I have ignored these questions mean that my views on losing our station aren't counted?
Can you tell me where it says all questions have to be filled in for it to be counted?*

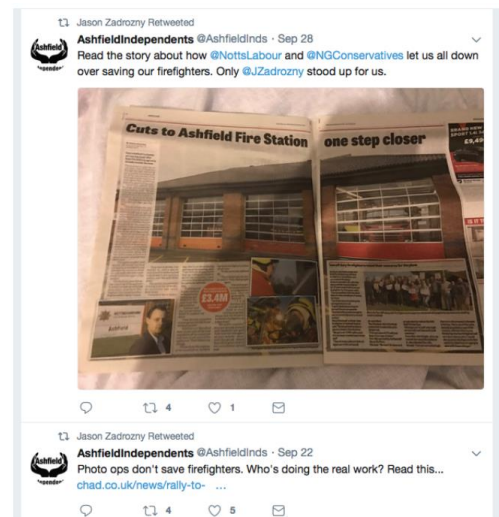
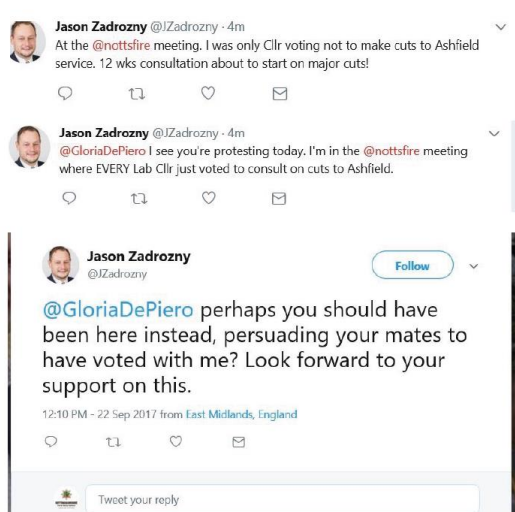
¹¹Reassurance was provided that incomplete questionnaires would be included providing at least one of the consultation questions had been answered - and the results from questionnaires received from both official and non-official channels have been reported.

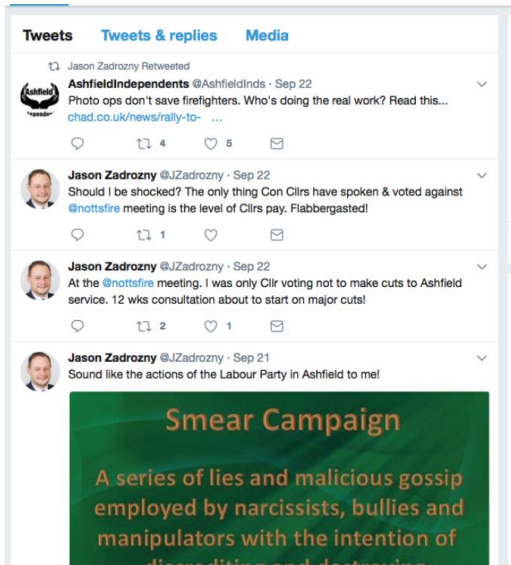
I also understand that unless the form is filled in digitally or an official NFRS Glossy Booklet it will not be accepted. Can organisations order bulk quantities of the consultation? Surely thousands have been printed, or is only the views of the rich that are important with their iPhones?

219. **Russ Dolby** mentioned the *Shaping Our Future 2017* consultation and proposals several times on Facebook, including in the following post which generated significant debate around: the potential for longer response times; the apparent ‘unreliability’ of the on-call system; the respective levels of training given to wholetime and on-call firefighters - and the apparent relative inexperience of the latter compared to the former.



220. Some comments made on external twitter sites can be seen below:





Meetings

- 221. NFRS officers met with the leader of Bassetlaw Council, who outlined his belief that the communities of Bassetlaw do not wish to see changes in fire cover and that the Service is not listening to alternative proposals from the Fire Brigades Union¹².

¹²The officers stated that the FBU had been offered meetings but had cancelled appointments, and that other than a proposal on 24/72 hour crewing (which makes a relatively small saving), there were no alternative proposals from the FBU on the table.

Petitions and Standardised Submissions

Petitions

Overview of Petitions

222. One petition was organised during the consultation, which is reviewed in this chapter. We apologise if there have been other petitions of which we have no knowledge, but we have cross-checked our records with those of NFRS and the one reviewed in the following paragraphs is the only one known about.

Summary of Petition

223. An online petition entitled 'Save Ashfield's Firefighters' attracted 2,375 signatures. The petition was organised by Ashfield Independents and included the following information:

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority are consulting on changing the way that Ashfield Fire Station is manned.

It is currently manned 24 hours a day and has 26 firefighters. Their proposal is to reduce this to 12 staff and there are plans to man it during the day but NOT at night when it would be covered by retained staff.

Councillor Jason Zadrozny, a member of the Fire Authority said, "Any decision to reduce the service at Ashfield Fire Station could cost lives. It's that serious! Reducing the service would add in at least 5 minutes to attend any incident - the crucial life saving time as far as I'm concerned. Ashfield Independents are today launching a campaign to retain all services at Ashfield Fire Station. I would encourage everybody to get involved in the consultation and send a clear message that there must be no cuts!"

The move is expected to save Fire Bosses £500,000 a year. The Fire Brigade Union has been consulted and is against any cuts.

Councillor Zadrozny said, "I know that money is tight but people's safety has to be the number one priority. With the Grenfell Tower disaster still fresh in our minds - announcing potential cuts at this time is particularly sensitive. We will oppose any cuts to the Fire Service with everything we have got. We will be launching an online petition and will be running the biggest campaign we have ever done. This is a campaign that could save lives! For the Fire Authority to even consider this is a disgrace. I hope people join our campaign to save our life saving services."

224. This petition also attracted a significant number of comments. In addition to many general objections to emergency service reductions, the most common specific issues raised were that: the proposed crewing changes could cost lives as a result of longer response times; the need to make savings is being put before people's safety; Ashfield is a busy station and thus warrants a 24/7 crew; Ashfield Fire Station is strategically placed to respond to incidents in both Ashfield and Sutton and on the M1 and A38 (and to support Mansfield Fire Station); Ashfield itself is a large and growing area that requires more than 12 firefighters to adequately serve it; remaining crew members could become over-stressed; and that the on-call system, by its very nature, can prove unreliable with respect to availability.
225. A selection of the most typical comments is included below.

We need a fully manned fire station or lives are going to be lost.

Anyone who has had the misfortune to require the assistance of the firefighters in an emergency knows only too well that every second counts. Having staff only respond from home at night will add over five extra minutes on to the time a fire appliance turns up. This is Not Acceptable.

That extra 5 minutes could actually be the difference between life and death!!

Going ahead with this ridiculous proposal will cost lives. Please rethink this and do not cut jobs and shifts. Our firefighters do a fantastic job so let's make sure we have enough of them to support the Ashfield area.

Firefighters are an essential resource and full cover must be retained at all times. Cuts are counterproductive, cost lives and cannot be entertained.

An extra 5 min response can be the difference between life and death or a small house fire engulfing the whole house. If we lose the present level of service we will not get it reinstated in the future it will be gone for good... If we want a good safe service then we have to pay for it not cut the budget

We need a 24hr manned station! Lives will be put at risk just to save money!!!!

The lives of the people of Ashfield are surely more important than any amount of money to be saved by these cuts to the Fire Service!

Don't trim a vital service just to save some money. Lives are more important.

Local services are essential. It's not about is that fire station near enough to deal with emergencies, people's safety and their very lives should not be calculated in to budgetary constraints.

The idea of the fire station being unmanned at night frightens me. The cuts are just too much. They need to stop when front line emergency services are affected like this.

The Fire Service saves lives! Period! But they can only do that if properly staffed, and this cost cutting exercise takes it way too far! It removes the ability to quickly respond at night, whilst severely and critically making day time shouts less effective, more likely to result in more deaths, and will stress the already hard-worked crews.

It's ridiculous that we are cutting such essential services. Especially at a station so close to the A38 and the M1.

Being close to junction 28 of the M1 is a vital requirement of our much reduced Fire Service. Please keep it.

Ashfield is strategically positioned covering Kirkby and Sutton with many incidents on the M1, also close to give support to Mansfield - SECONDS really do make the difference between life and death and most fatal fires occur during the night, the very time when they propose to cut full-time cover...

This is a busy fire station and needs to be manned 24 hours...

Ashfield is far too busy to rely on retained cover at night and in my opinion these cuts are a step too far which will put lives at risk!

Only 12 staff is ridiculous for an area of this size. I am surprised there are only 26 currently. To cut back these numbers would be sheer folly and cost lives.

We are getting more and more houses built we will need more fire cover not less!!

The fire and rescue service of Ashfield have a large area to cover. With differing buildings and major roads, woods and so on. They are essential emergency service and should be manned 24 hours a day 365 days a year. Fires and rescues are random and cause more devastation during night hours. Every second counts...

On-call Firefighters cover cannot be guaranteed 24/7 like a Wholetime Crew can, therefore when Wholetime cover is removed at night there will be times when the On-Call crew become unavailable and in all cases mobilising times will increase.

Petitions: Need for Interpretation

226. The petition summarised above is clearly important in indicating public anxiety about important aspects of the proposed changes - and NFRS will wish to treat it very seriously. Nonetheless, they should also note that petitions can exaggerate general public sentiments if organised by motivated opponents using emotive language; and in this case there has been considerable local campaigning about changes to services. So petitions should never be disregarded or discredited, for they show local feelings; but they should be interpreted in context.

Standardised Submissions

227. A joint standardised submission was submitted to NFRS by John Mann MP and the FBU on 8th December 2017. Overall, there were 4,256 responses: 4,096 were complete, 65 were incomplete and 95 were blank. 4,013 responses (94%) strongly disagreed with all proposals; 49 strongly agreed and two tended to agree with all proposals; and there were 30 mixed responses. The responses came in three different formats as illustrated below.

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service - Shaping Our Future 2017

Age Confirmation

Are you aged 16 or over? Choose one of the following answers

- Yes
- No

Proposal A: Introduce Mixed Crewing at Ashfield Fire Station

Between 6pm and 8am - the period of lowest demand for NFRS services - Ashfield Fire Station would be crewed using two retained fire engines, instead of the current one wholetime and one retained fire engine. Between 8am and 6pm, current fire cover (one wholetime and one retained fire engine) would be maintained. This would result in a 1.1% increase in the number of calls not attended by NFRS in 10 minutes (103 incidents per year), but would save around £500k and better align resources to demand.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to replace a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine between 6pm-8am at Ashfield Fire Station? Choose one of the following answers

- Strongly Agree
- Tend to Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Tend to Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Proposal B: Introduce Mixed Crewing at Retford Fire Station

Between 6pm and 8am - the period of lowest demand for NFRS services - Retford Fire Station would be crewed using two retained fire engines, instead of the current one wholetime and one retained fire engine. Between 8am and 6pm, current fire cover (one wholetime and one retained fire engine) would be maintained. This would result in a 0.4% increase in the number of calls not attended by NFRS in 10 minutes (35 incidents per year), but would save around £500k and better align resources to demand.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to replace a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine between 6pm-8am at Retford Fire Station? Choose one of the following answers

- Strongly Agree
- Tend to Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Tend to Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Proposal C: Introduce Mixed Crewing at Worksop Fire Station

Between 6pm and 8am - the period of lowest demand for NFRS services - Worksop Fire Station would be crewed using two retained fire engines, instead of the current one wholetime and one retained fire engine. Between 8am and 6pm, current fire cover (one wholetime and one retained fire engine) would be maintained. This would result in a 0.5% increase in the number of calls not attended by NFRS in 10 minutes (45 incidents per year), but would save around £500k and better align resources to demand.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to replace a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine between 6pm-8am at Worksop Fire Station? Choose one of the following answers

- Strongly Agree
- Tend to Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Tend to Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Proposal D: Introduce Alternative Crewing at all Retained Duty System Fire Stations

The diminishing number of retained, on-call firefighters available to NFRS during the day (because of ongoing recruitment and retention difficulties) means that, where a retained appliance has less than four crew members available, it is unable to respond to any type of incident, regardless of proximity or scale, or support other appliances. The Fire Authority is proposing to enable retained crews of less than four to attend smaller, lower risk incidents such as bin fires to: maximise on-call resources; improve response times; improve retention; and offer retained firefighters a more sustainable future.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to send the nearest appliance, with crews of less than four, to lower risk/smaller incident types? Choose one of the following answers

- Strongly Agree
- Tend to Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Tend to Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

228. 1,677 of these submissions were received: 1,618 were complete, 23 were incomplete and 36 were blank. 1,604 responses (96%) strongly disagreed with all proposals; a further two people tended to disagree with all proposals; and there were 12 mixed responses.

Our Proposals Questionnaire

Proposal A – Ashfield

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal of replacing a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine, between 6pm to 8am, at Ashfield Fire Station?

- Strongly Agree
- Tend to Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Tend to Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Proposal B – Retford

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal of replacing a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine, between 6pm to 8am, at Retford Fire Station?

- Strongly Agree
- Tend to Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Tend to Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Proposal C – Worksop

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal of replacing a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine, between 6pm to 8am, at Worksop Fire Station?

- Strongly Agree
- Tend to Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Tend to Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Proposal D – Alternative Crewing

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to send the nearest appliance, with crews of less than four, to lower risk / smaller incident types?

- Strongly Agree
- Tend to Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Tend to Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Additional comments

Not An Area to cut costs and resources

229. 767 of these submissions were received: 746 were complete, 12 were incomplete and nine were blank. 741 (97%) of responses strongly disagreed with all proposals; a further four strongly agreed with all proposals and there was one mixed response.

Our Proposals Questionnaire

Proposal A – Ashfield

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal of replacing a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine, between 6pm to 8am, at Ashfield Fire Station?

- Strongly Agree
- Tend to Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Tend to Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Proposal B – Retford

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal of replacing a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine, between 6pm to 8am, at Retford Fire Station?

- Strongly Agree
- Tend to Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Tend to Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Proposal C – Worksop

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal of replacing a wholetime fire engine with a retained fire engine, between 6pm to 8am, at Worksop Fire Station?

- Strongly Agree
- Tend to Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Tend to Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Proposal D – Alternative Crewing

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to send the nearest appliance, with crews of less than four, to lower risk / smaller incident types?

- Strongly Agree
- Tend to Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Tend to Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Additional comments

No these cuts will cost lives

230. 1,812 of these submissions were received: 1,732 were complete, 30 were incomplete and 50 were blank. 1,668 of responses (92%) strongly disagreed with all proposals; 45 strongly agreed and a further two tended to agree with all proposals; and there were 12 mixed responses.
231. Some comments were also made, mainly in relation to: the need to retain a wholetime service at all potentially affected stations; a possible risk to life as a result of longer response times; and the need for public safety to be put before financial savings. There was also a misconception among some respondents that fire stations are to close. Some typical comments were:

Full-time cover is needed in all locations.

These proposals are putting lives at risk!

Response times must be kept to an optimum to avoid deaths.

Safety comes above finances.

We do not need any more cuts this is a totally essential service!!

Save our station!!!

Keep our fire station!!!

Keep Retford fire station we need it!!

Overall Conclusions

Introduction

232. It is not the role of ORS to make policy recommendations or to go beyond the fact-based interpretation above. Ultimately, an overall interpretation of the consultation will depend upon the Authority itself: its members will consider all the consultation elements in the context of all the other evidence available to it – in order to assess the merits of the various opinions as the basis for public policy. The challenge for the Authority is to maintain public and professional confidence in the safety and resilience of NFRS services while also demonstrating that it can successfully deliver appropriate changes to balance its budget. We trust that this report and the following conclusions will make at least some contribution to that endeavour.

Range of Opinions and Assessment Criteria

233. The executive summary above has demonstrated a contrast between (on the one hand) the open questionnaire, petition, most of the submissions/written communications, and the views expressed on social media (that were generally very strongly opposed to the Mixed Crewing proposal) and (on the other hand) the public focus groups, the staff focus groups, and some submissions that generally accepted the case for change. In this context, the Authority has to balance the outcomes of the different consultation methods.
234. When interpreting the findings, a key principle is that consultation is not a referendum: it is not a 'numbers game' in which the loudest or majority opinions should automatically prevail. The key issue is not whether most people agree or disagree with the proposals, but, *Are the reasons for their popularity or unpopularity cogent?* However popular or unpopular proposals might be, the Authority will want to consider if they are evidence-based, feasible, safe, sustainable, reasonable and value-for-money. The reasons for people's views are well documented throughout this report so that the NFA may consider them when making its judgements.
235. As well as examining all the evidence and the cogency of opinions, NFA has to consider what weight to attach to each of the consultation elements. ORS suggests that in making its assessments the Authority should have regard to: whether views expressed reflected general public opinion; whether respondents were relatively well or poorly informed about the evidence; whether opinions were 'thoughtful' (based on personal deliberation) or the result of organised campaigns marshalling collective sentiments; whether the views expressed were cogent and evidence-based; and how many people were supportive or opposed.

RANGE OF OPINIONS AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA		
	CONSULTATION ELEMENTS MAINLY IN FAVOUR/ACCEPTING OF PROPOSALS	CONSULTATION ELEMENTS MAINLY AGAINST THE PROPOSALS
MIXED CREWING	Public focus groups Staff focus groups (majority)	Open questionnaire Staff focus groups (minority) Most of 11 submissions Most social media contributors Petitions and standardised submissions
ALTERNATIVE CREWING	Open questionnaire (large minority) Public focus groups Staff focus groups (majority) Some of 11 submissions	Open questionnaire (absolute majority) Staff focus groups (minority) Some social media contributors Standardised submissions

236. With some (allowable) over-simplification, it is possible to summarise the table above by saying that the quantitative elements (open questionnaire, petition and etc.) are opposed to the proposals (especially Mixed Crewing) whereas the deliberative elements (the public and to a large extent staff focus groups) are more supportive.



This project was carried out in compliance with ISO 20252:2012.

Initial Equality Impact Assessment

This questionnaire will enable you to decide whether or not the new or proposed policy or service needs to go through a full Equality Impact Assessment.

Title of policy, function, theme or service: Mixed Crewing									
Name of employee completing assessment: John Buckley						Department and section: Service Delivery			
<p>1. State the purpose and aims of the policy or service and who will be responsible for implementing it.</p> <p>The introduction of mixed crewing seeks to introduce an alternative method of crewing at wholetime stations which sees the retained duty system provide operational cover at the periods of lowest activity and when retained availability is strongest. The proposals identify three stations where WDS and RDS are currently both present, namely Retford, Worksop and Ashfield.</p>									
<p>2. Please indicate below if the affect of the policy, function, theme or service will be positive, negative, neutral or unknown.</p>									
	Age	Disability	Family status	Gender	Race	Sexual Orientation	Religion and Belief	Vulnerability	Rurality
Employees	Potentially Positive	N/A	Potentially positive for WDS – potentially negative for RDS	Potentially positive for WDS – potentially negative for RDS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Public	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Potentially negative

3. Please explain the impact you have identified.

There is a potentially positive impact from the proposals in terms of age because initial discussions with personnel, and engagement with the workforce, has indicated that older operational personnel have shown a greater interest in working a duty system that does not require night working and provides the opportunity to work shorter shifts.

The proposals may potentially have a positive effect on Family status for wholetime personnel, who work on the proposed shifts, due to working hours which may be more aligned to a family friendly provision. It is envisaged that personnel will volunteer to work on the duty system and therefore the addition of a different duty system will increase the flexibility of working options for personnel. There is a small possibility that personnel may be compulsory transferred on to the new duty system if there is a lack of volunteers, which may adversely impact on individual's family status.

The increased demand upon the Retained may have a negative impact on their family status however this will be mitigated by the proposal to increase the establishment at these stations, the option to use secondary voluntary arrangements, and the monitoring of these impacts by management.

Similar impacts to those highlighted for family status may affect gender due to women being the primary care providers in the majority of family settings.

The increased turn-out time for RDS appliances may adversely affect rural areas, however the impact of this has been assessed within the report and will be mitigated to some extent through dynamic mobilising of Control through the Systel mobilising system, and the ability to reinvest savings to improve the availability and resilience of RDS section across the county.

3a) Please explain any steps you have taken or may take to address the impact you have identified.

A proposed increase in RDS establishment at any affected RDS section will assist in mitigating any adverse impact from the identified increase in activity.

4. Identify the individuals and organisations that are likely to have an interest in, or be affected by the policy, function, theme or service. This should identify the persons/organisations who may need to be consulted about the policy or service and its impact.

The Combined Fire Authority, Local Politicians and community leaders, Managers within the organisation, the workforce and particularly those stations affected by the proposals, and workforce representatives.

Local communities.

5. Has consultation (with the public, managers, employees, TUs etc) on the policy, function, theme or service been undertaken?

Yes

5a. Please provide details for your answer including information regarding when consultation will take place if you have ticked yes.

Formal consultation has taken place with the public and staff. Workforce representatives have been engaged informally and had the full opportunity to respond to the formal consultation.

6. Has the Equality and Diversity Officer been contacted?

Yes

If Yes please outline below the outcomes/concerns highlighted in the discussion.

The E&D Officer highlighted a potentially negative impact for the delivery of Prevention initiatives at evenings and weekends, dependant on the model adopted, due to a lack of availability or desire to deliver this role through RDS. This will be mitigated through the reintroduction of Prevention activities for RDS stations (currently being introduced) and also the use of other neighbouring WDS Crews if urgent intervention was required.

If No please ensure that the Equality and Diversity Officer is contacted. Please record here the date the Equality and Diversity Officer was contacted regarding this initial equality impact assessment. Date:

7. Has monitoring been undertaken?		No
8. What does this monitoring show? N/A		
9. If you have answered no to question 7 can a monitoring system be established to check for impact on the protected characteristics?	Yes	
10. Please describe how monitoring can be undertaken and identify this monitoring system as an objective when completing the action plan below. Monitoring is proposed in terms of the expressions of interest and selection stages for these proposals. Additional monitoring is proposed for the workforce at these stations over a period of 6, 12 and 24 months to monitor impact of the new duty systems, including WDS and RDS personnel. Once implemented, formal reviews will be undertaken and presented to the Fire Authority for consideration.		
11. If a monitoring system cannot be established please explain why this is. N/A		
12. Did the Equality and Diversity Officer advise to proceed with a full EIA? Please provide full details of the decision. No Full EIA required at this time.		
13. Proceed to full Equality Impact Assessment?		No

Initial Equality Impact Assessment.

This questionnaire will enable you to decide whether or not the new or proposed policy or service needs to go through a full Equality Impact Assessment.

Title of policy, function, theme or service:		Alternative Crewing							
Name of employee completing assessment:		John Buckley				Department and section: Service Delivery			
1.	State the purpose and aims of the policy or service and who will be responsible for implementing it.								
	<p>The introduction of Alternative Crewing will enable a Retained Duty System (RDS) appliance to respond to an incident with a crew less than four. This will enable the nearest asset to be sent to small scale incidents as opposed to waiting longer for a minimum crew of four to respond from further afield.</p> <p>Responsibility for implementation is Service Delivery managers and Head of Service Delivery.</p>								
2.	Please indicate below if the affect of the policy, function, theme or service will be positive, negative, neutral or unknown.								
	Age	Disability	Family status	Gender	Race	Sexual Orientation	Religion and Belief	Vulnerability	Rurality
Employees	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral
Public	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Positive	Positive

3.	<p>Please explain the impact you have identified.</p> <p>There is the possibility that this proposal could have a positive impact on vulnerability within the community of an RDS station. Especially in rural areas or areas where the next appliance would take significantly longer to attend an incident with vulnerable people involved. The positive impact would be dependent on the particular circumstances of the incident, however the appliance would be available where it would not normally be under current arrangements.</p> <p>In terms of rurality, communities which are served by stand-alone RDS appliances, are reliant upon the appliance at that station being available. If this appliance is not available due to not having the appropriate staffing levels, then the attendance time to an incident within this community could be significantly increased, this is due to the need for an appliance to be mobilised from another station/location. Alternative crewing will provide greater opportunities for RDS appliances to remain available and therefore have a positive impact on attendance times.</p>
3a)	<p>Please explain any steps you have taken or may take to address the impact you have identified.</p> <p>N/A</p>

4.	<p>Identify the individuals and organisations that are likely to have an interest in, or be affected by the policy, function, Theme or service. <i>This should identify the persons/organisations that may need to be consulted about the policy or service and its impact.</i></p> <p>All retained personnel, Service Delivery managers, Representative Bodies, Finance, HR, L&D, H&S, Equipment Section, Control & Systel Team. Local communities and their political representatives.</p>
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5.	<p>Has consultation (with the public, managers, employees, TUs etc) on the policy, function, theme or service been undertaken?</p>	Yes			
5a.	<p>Please provide details for your answer including information regarding when consultation will take place if you have ticked yes.</p> <p>Formal consultation has taken place with the public and staff. Workforce representatives have been engaged informally and had the full opportunity to respond to the formal consultation.</p>				
6.	<p>Has the Equality and Diversity Officer been contacted?</p>	Yes			

6a.	If Yes please outline below the outcomes/concerns highlighted in the discussion. No concerns have been highlighted.
If No please ensure that the Equality and Diversity Officer is contacted. If Yes , Please record here the date the Equality and Diversity Officer was contacted regarding this initial equality impact assessment.	
Date: 16 February 2018	

7.	Has monitoring been undertaken?			No	
8.	What does this monitoring show? N/A				
9.	If you have answered no to question 7 can a monitoring system be established to check for impact on the protected characteristics?	Yes			
10.	Please describe how monitoring can be undertaken and identify this monitoring system as an objective when completing the action plan below. It is the intention of the Service to monitor the effectiveness of this crewing model over a 6, 12 & 24 month periods. Data will be reviewed regarding how many incidents have been attended and the outcomes. Recruitment and retention of RDS staff will also be monitored through data and meetings with RDS managers. Once implemented, formal reviews will be undertaken and presented to the Fire Authority for consideration.				
11.	If a monitoring system cannot be established please explain why this is. N/A				
12.	Did the Equality and Diversity Officer advise to proceed with a full EIA? Please provide full details of the decision. A full EIA is not required at this time.				
13.	Proceed to full Equality Impact Assessment?			No	

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 16 February 2018

Purpose of Report:

To update the Authority on the requirement to develop the next Integrated Risk Management Plan and propose that Members engage in the early formation of priorities through the Policy and Strategy Committee.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Each Fire and Rescue Authority is required to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) which identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect its communities, including those of a cross-border, multi-authority and/or national nature. The plan must also have regard to community risk registers produced by the Local Resilience Forum and any other local risk analyses as appropriate.
- 1.2 The principle of an IRMP is now well embedded since its introduction and inclusion in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and supporting National Framework Documents (NFD). The 2012 NFD stated every Fire and Rescue Service must produce an IRMP that covers at least three years, is publicly available, reflects consultation and utilises up to date risk information.
- 1.3 In 2010 the Fire Cover Review (FCR) introduced additional methods for assessing and communicating risk, at the same time Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) began to publish annual reports on operational activity on its website, allowing communities to better access and understand the demands upon its resources.
- 1.4 The Authority is required to prepare an IRMP that sets out the vision and service objectives for the organisation, reflecting effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce, representative bodies and partners.
- 1.5 Whilst the Service's current IRMP 2014/19 has over 12 months to run, considerable time is required to effectively plan, develop, consult upon and implement a new IRMP. This report formally commences that process and engages Members of the Authority from the outset.
- 1.6 Two further emerging activities are intrinsic to the organisation's next IRMP. Firstly, the latest National Framework Document is currently undergoing consultation and is expected to be implemented during 2018, and secondly, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) will deliver an inspection framework and commence service inspections from April 2018. NFRS's inspection is expected to take place in the later part of 2018 and any outcomes will need to be addressed going forward.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 Each Fire and Rescue Authority must take account of the NFD in the development of its IRMP which must:
 - Be easily accessible and publicly available;

- Reflect effective consultation throughout its development and at all review stages with the community, its workforce and representative bodies, and partners;
 - Cover at least a three-year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as it is necessary to ensure that fire and rescue authorities are able to deliver the requirements set out in this Framework; and
 - Reflect up to date risk analyses and the evaluation of service delivery outcomes.
- 2.2 The NFD does not prescribe how to consult, but it should be proportionate to the nature and content of the IRMP, including any changes in the delivery of services being proposed.
- 2.3 The IRMP should “reflect effective consultation throughout its development”, therefore, communities will be engaged before a draft plan is subject to formal consultation. This consultation is aimed at education and wider issues facing NFRS rather than the specifics of the Plan itself.
- 2.4 To ensure that Members are fully engaged from the outset it is proposed, in-line with the normal governance arrangements of the Authority, that the Policy and Strategy Committee is convened as a task and finish group to represent the views of the Authority in the early development of the IRMP. This will assist in demonstrating effective engagement throughout its development and at all review stages.
- 2.5 It is proposed the Service will undertake a full IRMP consultation process during 2018 after a stakeholder analysis has taken place. The priority throughout this process will be to demonstrate that effective communication is undertaken with key stakeholders and will be delivered using the Authority’s agreed and reviewed consultation framework.
- 2.6 NFRS will develop the IRMP which will be supplemented by an annual service plan that is a working document that links performance measures to priorities, and reinforces the strategic vision. The plan should be flexible enough to meet an ever-changing environment, yet balance some of the benefits from a longer-term plan.
- 2.7 This approach to planning reflects that used by local authorities and has been adopted as it fulfils the requirements of the National Framework Document and previous guidance published on IRMPs which states, “IRMPs will be strategic documents which although reviewed will essentially remain valid for a number of years and be accompanied by an annual action plan.”
- 2.8 NFRS has recently completed a competitive procurement process and has awarded a two-year contract to Opinion Research Services for the supply of consultation services to support the Fire Authority around the Sustainability Strategy and the next IRMP.

- 2.9 Experience in recent years has shown real added value from accessing the skills and experience of external bodies and where appropriate this will be considered during the IRMP process.
- 2.10 The technical and data methodology that underpins the organisations approach to IRMP is already subject to review, this will assure Members that the rationale for decision making is based upon sound foundations and compliments the professional advice provided by Officers.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Service continues to face financial pressure and the IRMP will be integral in demonstrating how it prioritises and directs its resources to the most vulnerable in communities, whilst at the same time maintaining an effective and resilient response function.
- 3.2 A budget of £45k has been established in 2018/19 for public consultation, as more information and experience is gained, formal proposals for resources will be developed and progressed through the normal governance arrangements where appropriate.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Whilst there are no direct implications contained within this report, as issues arise from the IRMP process these will be included in future update reports as necessary and business planning processes.
- 4.2 The preparatory work will be co-ordinated by Corporate Support, but will require substantial resources from across the whole organisation. The Strategic Leadership Team will ensure the demand is balanced across the Service to meet the required timescales.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken at this time as there are no changes to policy or delivery of services within this report.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

Extensive opportunity for partner agencies to engage in the consultation will be integral to the IRMP process. Such liaison is intended to have a positive impact within our communities and the Authority's duty within the Social Value Act 2012.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Members are aware it is a statutory duty to prepare an IRMP under the National Framework Document issued by the Secretary of State under the provisions of Part 3, Section 21 of the Fire Services Act 2004. This report seeks to reassure Members that this is being considered in its development of the IRMP.
- 7.2 The Police and Crime Act 2017 also provides a statutory focus to consider opportunities to collaborate. This area will be considered as part of the development of the IRMP with key stakeholders, further discharging the duties of the Authority.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Any Service who the Secretary of State deems to be failing under the provisions of the National Framework Document, may be subject to intervention by the Secretary of State. The production of the plan is therefore an integral part of the Authority's obligations under the Fire Service Act 2004.
- 8.2 As detailed in the statutory duties, failure to develop and implement an IRMP which lays out the Authority's intentions could leave the Service open to criticism both through formal means and through the wider stakeholder engagement.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

Statutory duties placed on fire and rescue services through the Police and Crime Act 2017 provides a renewed focus to consider collaboration opportunities with other emergency services. The IRMP is an opportunity to implement the Service's strategic intent and engage in collaborative activities to deliver efficiencies, effectiveness and/or improved outcomes for communities.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Note the requirements of this project and support the process to develop the next IRMP;
- 10.2 Request that the Policy and Strategy Committee is convened as a task and finish group to work with Officers in the early development of the next IRMP.
- 10.3 Agree to receive future reports as the IRMP development process continues.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

COMMITTEE OUTCOMES

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 16 February 2018

Purpose of Report:

To report to Members the business and actions of the Fire Authority committee meetings which took place between December 2017 and February 2018.

CONTACT OFFICER

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Chief Fire Officer

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1. BACKGROUND

As part of the revised governance arrangements the Authority has delegated key responsibilities to specific committees of the Authority. As part of those delegated responsibilities, the chairs of committees and the management leads report to the Authority on the business and actions as agreed at Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 1 June 2007.

2. REPORT

The minutes of the following meetings are attached at Appendix A for the information of all Fire Authority members:

Personnel Committee	15 December 2017
Community Safety Committee	12 January 2018
Finance and Resources Committee	19 January 2018
Human Resources Committee	26 January 2018
Policy and Strategy Committee	02 February 2018

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All financial implications were considered as part of the original reports submitted to the committees.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

All human resources and learning and development implications were considered as part of the original reports submitted to the committees.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because this report is not associated with a policy, function or service. Its purpose is to update the Fire Authority on the outcomes of committee business.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The Service's performance in relation to matters addressed through the committee structure is scrutinised through a range of audit processes. The Service needs to continue to perform well in these areas as external scrutiny through Comprehensive Performance Assessment and auditors' judgement is key to future Service delivery.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report, as the report seeks to provide Members with an update on the business and actions of Fire Authority committee meetings which have taken place in the last quarter.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



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

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Fire and Rescue Services HQ, Bestwood Lodge,
Arnold Nottingham NG5 8PD on 15 December 2017 from 9.28 am - 10.33 am**

Membership

Present

Councillor Michael Payne (Chair)

Councillor Mike Quigley MBE

Councillor Parry Tsimbirdis

Absent

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

Councillor Michael Payne was appointed Chair for the meeting.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

4 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2014 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

5 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

6 GRIEVANCE APPEAL

The Committee considered the submission from the Grievant and their representative, and sought clarity on some aspects of employment regulations from an HR advisor.

RESOLVED to dismiss the Grievance Appeal.



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

COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD on 12 January 2018 from 10.10 am - 11.41 am

Membership

Present

Councillor Eunice Campbell (Chair)
Councillor Andrew Brown
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora
Councillor Parry Tsimbirdis
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler
Councillor Jason Zadrozny

Absent

Councillor Brian Grocock

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Wayne Bowcock - Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

16 TEMPORARY CHAIR

As Councillor Campbell was delayed, Councillor Grocock who was substituting for her, was appointed temporary Chair.

17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Campbell sent apologies for lateness, during her absence, Councillor Grocock substituted.

18 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

19 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2017 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair presiding.

20 NOTTINGHAM TRAIN STATION FIRE

The Chair of the meeting was of the opinion that this item, although not included on the agenda, should be considered as a matter of urgency in accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, in view of the special circumstances that it is a significant on-going incident of which members need to be informed.

Wayne Bowcock, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, informed the Committee that a fire was reported at Nottingham Train Station at 6.30am this morning. The station was evacuated and closed and at the time of this report, there have not been any citizen or firefighter casualties.

Initially the fire started in the ladies toilets of the new building which links the train station with the tram stop and car park. Although initial firefighting was aggressive and fast, the fire rapidly spread to the Edwardian wooden concourse between platforms. At this time, the Art Nouveau section of the building has only been subject to smoke damage.

All trains have been suspended and East Midlands Trains are operating diversions and coach services. Tram services are not operating near to the station due to an unrelated incident elsewhere in the City.

At the height of the fire, 12 appliances were in attendance. The initial fire has been extinguished but firefighters are stripping back cladding and investigating ducts with thermal imaging equipment to ensure that the fire is fully extinguished and will not re-emerge elsewhere in the building.

Once the fire is confirmed fully extinguished, the smoke in the ticket hall will be removed by pressure ventilation and a full structural and electrical assessment, including the train lines and facilities, will be required and satisfied before the station can be reopened.

On responding to the fire, the National Co-Ordination Framework was implemented which includes informing the Home Office .

As a nationally reported incident, neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services were quick to offer support and there has been excellent partnership working between the Fire Service, Police, City Council and Highways to co-ordinate a response to the fire and the resulting disruption. A Tactical Co-ordination Meeting is to be held at 11am this morning at Fire HQ. Normally it would be held at a fire station close to the incident but due to the impact on access, it is easier for partners to travel to HQ.

Members will receive a further report to the next meeting.

21 SERVICE DELIVERY PERFORMANCE

In the absence of Area Manager Dan Quinn (who was involved in co-ordinating the response to the Nottingham Train Station fire), Wayne Bowcock, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which updates members on the activity and performance of the Service Delivery Directorate between 1 June 2017 and 30 September 2017.

The report provides full details but the following points were highlighted and responses given to member's questions:

- (i) there were 3 fire fatalities in this period;
- (ii) the Service attended 2862 incidents, which is 89 more than the same period the year before;
- (iii) retained duty availability averaged 78% but some stations achieved more than 90% with Worksop availability at 95.65%;
- (iv) there were 11 more road fatalities so the focus on road safety promotion and awareness has increased and a specific road safety campaign is operating from November to February; a period when RTC statistics tend to increase. This will include the use of media, social media and visits to schools;
- (v) the Service was involved in and hosted a range of seasonal and on-going safety and engagement events (listed in the report) and generally received a very good response. The Christmas meal for particularly vulnerable and isolated older people was held at Loxley House with support from the London Road NFRS crews and members of the Prince's Trust. Participants thoroughly enjoyed themselves and it provided a valuable connection to ensuring that all received a home safety check whereas they may otherwise have been difficult to identify;
- (vi) with regard to the retained duty system availability data in Appendix A to the report showing that 'no driver was available', a percentage of crew were required to be drivers, but the Service has since moved away from this system. Crew members can volunteer to drive and are trained when training places become available. Although there is dependence and limitations on availability of potential drivers at a local level, this system is being reconsidered but it is recognised that not everyone wants the added responsibility of driving a LGV vehicle on blue lights.

Members of the Committee commended the often creative range of engagement safety promotion undertaken by the Service.

Councillor Campbell requested that her thanks were recorded to everyone who helped at the older persons Christmas meal.

RESOLVED to note the report.

At this point in the meeting Councillor Eunice Campbell resumed the Chair and Councillor Grocock remained in attendance as an observer.

22 PREVENTION ACTIVITIES: INTELLIGENCE LED WORKING

Wayne Bowcock, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which updates members on how incident data is used to target specific vulnerable sections of the community and potentially dangerous behaviours with prevention education and activity.

The newly developed Incident Report System Query Tool (IRSQT) was devised by NFR Officers to identify incident patterns and trends. This information, which can be detailed to geographical areas, causes, and types of incident, then feeds into the Incident Reduction

Plan (IRP) to enable appropriate targeting of prevention activity to be undertaken, even aimed at individual profiles of the population, by local crews.

Members welcomed the IRSQT as a valuable asset to incident prevention.

RESOLVED to note the report.

23 NEW CROSS AND BROOMHILL PROJECT

Wayne Bowcock, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which updates members on the current collaborative prevention work being undertaken at the New Cross and Broomhill projects, following a request from Councillor Jason Zadrozny of Ashfield District Council.

The New Cross project was set up in 2014 by Ashfield District Council as a multi-agency collaborative prevention team to work with troubled families and complex persons in response to their multifaceted social problems which demanded a high resource input from a range of agencies.

The project has been regularly independently reviewed and reports that for every £1 spent, a saving of £12 is collectively realised across the combined partner agencies. This could result in the predicted saving of public money totalling of £3.4 million by 2019. Specifically for NFRS, a contribution of almost £1 will provide savings to the Service of £1, resulting in a cost neutral contribution, although the broader social benefits are significant.

Since its establishment and success of the pilot model, a second site has been established at Broomhill to tackle the same issues.

NFRS continues to meet its commitment of funding to the value of £40,000 per annum (agreed for 3 years), at New Cross and a NFRS District Prevention Officer has been seconded to the Broomhill Project for a period of three years, to be reviewed every 12 months.

The resource and financial contribution from other partners is detailed within the report.

Members are presented with three potential options in the report and requested to determine which should be selected with regard to the future engagement and funding by the Service in the New Cross and Broomhill projects.

It is noted that with regard to option one, to maintain the current support, £40,000 is earmarked as a reserve and accounted for the current budget.

Councillors commented as follows:

- (a) with consideration to the economy of scale, it would be better to continue this work, and so option 2, 'continue with the year 3 financial support and withdraw the secondee' which gives the broader benefit, is preferred with a further report in 12 months' time;
- (b) further information is required as to the fire incident reduction achievement following NFRS's involvement;

- (c) consideration should be given to the broader positive social impact of the project and not just in relation to NFRS;
- (d) these projects are not an appropriate use of funding, do not achieve the savings claimed and actually result in a cost. £40,000 may be ring fenced but it could be better spent elsewhere to promote and improve fire safety. There is no evidence that the projects have saved lives; they appear to focus on enabling people to be happy in their home, which is not fire safety related. It is increasingly likely that the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) will withdraw funding to the projects in the next financial year and this will result in the collapse of the projects;
- (e) with this new information, members need to better understand the current situation before committing funding;
- (f) other options need to be presented to identify how effective and sustainable fire prevention work can be supported;
- (g) it's important to ensure that all areas of the county can benefit from this funding and not just population pockets within the Ashfield District Council area;
- (h) further information is requested prior to any decision as the Service needs to be robust in how every penny is spent to ensure the best outcomes;
- (i) confirmation from the CCG needs to be sought regarding their commitment to future funding before a decision is made for NFRS's commitment to funding. If the CCG are intending to withdraw, then option three, 'to withdraw from the project at the end of the current financial year', should be selected. If the CCG agreed to commit to a further year's funding, then it is reasonable for NFRS to commit a further one year funding but the position needs to be reviewed in a year's time;
- (j) this has been an excellent example of partnership working and consideration should be given to the achievements of the projects so far;
- (k) assurance should be sought regarding the benefits to the wider Nottinghamshire community of these projects.

RESOLVED

- (1) for the Deputy Chief Fire Officer to confirm the position of the CCG with regard to its future funding of the New Cross and Broomhill Projects;**
- (2) once the CCG funding position is clarified, to delegate authority to the Chair, in consultation with the Lead Opposition Member, to determine which of the options presented within the report, or if amended, recommended by the Chief Fire Officer, should be acted upon;**
- (3) for the Committee to receive an update report to the next meeting.**

24 PRIMARY AUTHORITY SCHEME

Wayne Bowcock, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which updates members on the existing Primary Authority agreement between Boots UK and NFRS, and the potential expansion of the scheme to include two further organisations.

To date the Primary Authority Scheme has been working to the mutual benefit of Boots UK and NFRS. Whilst NFRS currently operates on a cost recovery basis by recharging Boots UK for the time and resources spent dealing with the organisation, Boots UK have the benefit of a single point of contact and a consistent approach to the fire safety advice and enforcement relating to all of its stores.

The arrangements to the Primary Authority Scheme were amended in October 2017 to enable easier access for small businesses to the scheme.

A further two large organisations within Nottingham /Nottinghamshire have approached NFRS to enquire as to be possibilities of becoming their primary authority. The implications of engaging with the additional large organisations are being considered.

It is noted that potential partnership working with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service is being considered with regard to providing a 'one-stop shop' to advise small businesses on fire with fire safety advice regarding risk assessments. This approach is supported by the Local Enterprise Partnership D2N2.

Councillors' questions were responded to as follows:

- (a) whilst there are no financial implications currently, if any do occur with regard to the expansion of the Services' operation of the Primary Authority Scheme, a report will be brought to the Committee. However it is intended that any additional work can be managed within existing resources on a cost recovery basis;
- (b) the scheme was initially established to provide a co-ordinated approach to fire safety for businesses, ensuring that they are required to comply with only one interpretation of fire legislation. It was not intended that the scheme would be profit-making as advising and enforcing fire safety legislation is considered a statutory duty for fire rescue services. However some Fire Services do operate slightly different cost recovery schemes;
- (c) the service provided through the Primary Authority Scheme is a statutory duty, so it is reasonable that the Service should operate on a not for profit basis;
- (d) if the position regarding statutory duty changes, then there may be profit-making potential but this would need to be through an arm's length organisation.

Some members of the Committee suggested that, when dealing with large organisations, consideration of a small profit margin should be considered.

RESOLVED to note the report.



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

FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Fire and Rescue Services HQ, Bestwood Lodge,
Arnold Nottingham NG5 8PD on 19 January 2018 from 10.01am - 11.08am**

Membership

Present

Absent

Councillor Malcolm Wood (Chair)

Councillor John Clarke

Councillor Brian Grocock

Councillor Francis Purdue-Horan

Councillor Mike Quigley MBE

Councillor Andrew Brown (observing)

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

John Buckley	- Chief Fire Officer
Craig Parkin	- Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Theresa Channell	- Interim Treasurer to the Authority
Becky Smeathers	- Head of Finance
Catherine Ziane-Pryor	- Governance Officer

21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

22 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

23 MINUTES

Subject to the inclusion of Councillor Mike Quigley's apologies for absence due to leave, the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2017 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

24 REVENUE AND CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT TO 30 NOVEMBER 2017

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance, presented the detailed report which informs the Committee of the financial performance of the Service between 3 March 2017 and 30 November 2017 with variances from the budget identified.

It is noted that under the current and newly reviewed circumstances, dependant on the Authority's decisions regarding budgets, by the end of the financial year it will be necessary to utilise reserves which will result in an earmarked reserve of £2.1m and a general reserve balance of £7.3m.

Comments from members and responses to their questions included:

- (a) reserves are finite and it is not advisable to use them to support the budget in the longer term so allocation should be approached with caution;
- (b) there is no legal level of reserves to be maintained and it is for each Authority to determine the level which is believed to be appropriate against potential risks. It is anticipated that the Service will hold £7.3 million of general reserves at the end of this financial year but predicted that reserves will need to be further drawn upon in future years;
- (c) the Authority is aware of the level of Central Government funding to be provided up to 2020, and needs to ensure that the shortfall can be met by planning for the future;
- (d) in previous years the Authority has underspent in some areas which has enabled reserves to be topped up. With the current funds available and savings required it is not anticipated that underspends will occur to be able to replenish reserves.

RESOLVED to note the report.

25 BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2018/19 TO 2020/21 AND OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TAX 2018/19

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance, introduced the report which presents the Committee with budget proposals for 2018/19 to 2020/21 and the implications for Council Tax.

The report provides details (with assumptions clearly identified) on the predicted capital and revenue costs and known income. Also included are the projected potential income options resulting from below the referendum threshold rises in Council Tax, which Central Government has raised to 3%. It is noted that a Council Tax freeze grant is no longer available.

Theresa Channell, Interim Treasurer to the Authority, commented that Finance Team colleagues have worked hard, and continue to do so, to ensure the robustness of the budget, outcomes and ensure sustainability. Reserves are finite and flexibility is reducing and will be removed as reserves reduce. The current level of protected reserves of £4.4m will not be sustainable beyond 2018/19 if the council tax increase of 1.95% is applied, but will be sustainable into 2019/20 if an increase of 2.95% is applied, as illustrated in Appendix

C to the report. It is noted that any council tax increase will of course impact on future years budgets.

Questions from members of the Committee were responded to as follows:

- (a) the required savings target identified through the sustainability strategy is £1.65m. Whilst on course to make such savings in the longer term, unpredicted issues arising, such as the higher than expected pay rise and the increase of pay awards, strengthens the case for a rise in Council Tax;
- (b) savings in the region of £800,000 may potentially be achievable through mixed crewing proposals.

Members comments included:

- (c) it is premature to make a decision on reserves until it can be confirmed what level of savings can be achieved;
- (d) a 2.95% Council Tax increase is not unreasonable given the quality of services provided;
- (e) to ensure that all relevant information is considered further, more detailed information, including savings via collaboration, is required before a decision on recommendations to the full Authority should be made;
- (f) not all citizens can afford a rise to the extent of 2.95% and cumulatively financial impact on citizens will be significant;
- (g) the need to increase Council Tax is required due to the reduction of Central Government funding of the Service;
- (h) contrary to public perception, austerity measures are yet to be fully implemented. Frontline public services need to change but it is difficult to make a decision in the name of sustainability when the future is uncertain.

RESOLVED to make recommendations to the full Fire Authority to:

- (a) increase Council Tax to a maximum of 2.95%;**
- (b) approve the use of reserves as identified in the report to achieve a balanced budget as required by law.**

It is noted that Councillor Mike Quigley and Councillor Francis Purdue- Horan abstained from voting.

26 PRUDENTIAL CODE MONITORING REPORT TO 30 NOVEMBER 2017

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance, presented the report which informs the Committee of the performance against prudential indicators for the quarter period ending 30 November 2017, with regard to capital accounting and treasury management.

It is noted that although earnings from interest were below that budgeted for, all prudential indicators remained within the parameters agreed by the Authority and there are no areas of concern.

RESOLVED to note the report.

27 ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2016/17

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance, presented the Annual Audit Letter 2016/17 provided by KPMG LLP, the Authorities External Auditors for that period. It is noted that a summary was presented to the full Fire Authority at the meeting on 18 December 2017.

The Annual Audit Letter states that the Service achieved good value for money and had appropriate arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources. KPMG LLP has issued an unqualified audit opinion which raises no significant concerns.

RESOLVED to note the report.

28 CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT

Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which informs the Committee of the Corporate Risk Management process and highlights the high and very high risks identified.

The following risks were highlighted and are detailed within the report with existing and additional responses outlined:

- (i) availability of resources with regard to maintaining business continuity. The Policy and Strategy Committee will be updated on this issue, but it is likely that further finances will be required;
- (ii) Emergency Services Network (ESN). A systems replacement has resulted in a 14 month delay on the initial schedule which is now expected to extend to 2 years. The transition funding from Central Government was received eight months late. There is however some progress on the devices used which will be government subsidised, but the Service currently partially subsidises the project. Once implemented the equipment will be as-good-as, if not better, than that already in use, but far more secure. The new system does not rely on radios but is cutting edge technology with rubberised mobile phone handsets connected to a commercial 4G network for which emergency responders will have priority usage. If a major incident occurs and overall demand increases, the system provides the option to shut out access for all non-emergency service users, ensuring the network remains effective for emergency services. It is still not clear to what extent fire authorities will be expected to fund the system, but if the final business case varies significantly from that agreed, it will be presented to members;
- (iii) GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) will replace the current Data Protection Act and come into force on 25 May 2018 , requiring complete compliance;

- (iv) Road risk. This has recently been highlighted when a fire appliance driver who was responding to an emergency, killed a pedestrian and was charged with death by careless driving. This has a huge impact, obviously not only on the person who has died and their family, but can result in massive compensation claims.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the report;**
- (2) for members of the Committee to be informed of any notable changes to the Risk Register during the period between meetings, particularly with regard to the Emergency Services Network;**
- (3) for the full risk register to be made available to members of the Committee.**

29 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) STRATEGY UPDATE

Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which provides an outline update on the ICT Strategy, including the progress made in improving cyber security within the Service.

It is noted that there is a focus on the following four connected work streams within a continually reviewed work programme which aims to maintain security (including from cyber-attacks) and ensure that robust systems are in place to support the work of the Service:

- (i) Unified Communications;
- (ii) Unified Collaboration;
- (iii) Connected Workforce;
- (iv) Emergency Services Network.

There has been a huge culture change in the Service since the strategic review and introduction of the ICT Strategy in 2013. Server operating systems are kept up-to-date and information is backed-up regularly. The age and abilities of equipment is monitored to ensure the required security of systems can be appropriately maintained and is able to support developing systems. An extranet is being developed which will further enable communication with secure and trusted partners to support collaboration.

Ensuring that security is maintained through workforce behaviour is an aspect where specific education has been applied to embed secure thinking into day to day working.

The expansion of the ICT Team has been necessary and specialists have been engaged on fixed term contracts to provide the necessary capacity to deliver services. Further posts have been required to support the achievement of the 'code of connection' required in preparation for the Emergency Service's Network (ESN). Although some grant funding (Section 31 grant) has been provided by the Home Office to support ESN work, the Service

has to absorb the remaining costs although it is hoped that further funding contributions will be provided as a result of the schedule slippage at Central Government level.

It is anticipated that further, modest funding in addition to the current budget will be required to support and ensure continued capability but the Committee will receive reports as and when required.

RESOLVED to note the report and agree to receive a further report to a future meeting to consider the outcomes of an assessment of risk and resources to proportionality manage identified risk.



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

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Fire and Rescue Services HQ, Bestwood Lodge,
Arnold Nottingham NG5 8PD on 26 January 2018 from 10.01am - 11.19am**

Membership

Present

Councillor John Clarke (Chair)
Councillor Vaughan Hopewell
Councillor John Longdon
Councillor Jackie Morris

Absent

Councillor Liaqat Ali

Councillor Brian Grocock - substitute for Councillor Liaqat Ali

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Wayne Bowcock - Deputy Chief Fire Office
Tracy Crump - Head of People and Organisational Development
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None. In the absence of Councillor Liaqat Ali, Councillor Brian Grocock substituted.

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

17 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2017 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

18 HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Tracy Crump, Head of People and Organisational Development, presented the report which updates the Committee on the key human resources metrics for the Quarter 3 period, 1 October 2017 to 31 December 2017.

Whilst the report provides full details, the following points were highlighted:

- (i) there was very little change in sickness levels compared to the previous quarter with 66% of sickness being considered as long-term illness;
- (ii) 20 members of staff have left the organisation (6 wholetime, 10 retained and 4 support staff) and 6 joined;
- (iii) there was 1 disciplinary.

Members of the Committee were interested in the reasons why staff left the Service and requested that this information (gathered at the optional exit interview) is provided to the Committee. It is noted that national work which includes examination of such reasons is taking place so it was agreed that a report would be submitted to the Committee once this work was completed as it would provide valuable comparison information.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the report;**
- (2) for a report exploring the reasons why staff left the Service, to be submitted to a future meeting.**

19 PROPOSED RESTRUCTURE OF THE RISK AND ASSURANCE SECTION

Wayne Bowcock, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which seeks approval for a restructure of the Risk and Assurance Section.

The following points were highlighted:

- (i) following the recommendations of a peer review which suggested that the Service would benefit from closer internal collaboration, and the results of functional analysis which identified areas of common work within the 'Corporate Risk Management' and 'Operational Assurance and Health and Safety Risk Management' Teams, a restructure is proposed;
- (ii) the required vacancies now exist to support a smooth transition with a single 'Risk and Assurance' manager;
- (iii) the proposed restructure would also involve changing a currently vacant full time CAD operative post to part time whilst providing an uplift to an administrative post. In year 1 this would provide savings of £12,367 but this figure would reduce as post holders advance through the post increment system.

It is noted that the high risks within the Corporate Risk Register are submitted for consideration to the Finance and Resources Committee every six months.

RESOLVED to approve the proposed restructure of the Risk and Assurance Section of the Service and receive an update reviewing the changes six months after implementation.

20 MAINTAINING A HEALTHY AND FIT WORKFORCE - FUTURE CHALLENGES

Wayne Bowcock, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which outlines the work undertaken to maintain the health and fitness of the workforce, particularly in relation to additional challenges of an older workforce since the firefighter retirement age was extended to the age of 60 years.

The Service's Occupational Therapy Team have again excelled and now hold bronze, silver and gold awards in the Workforce Well-being Scheme for their preventative and health promotion work. It is noted that in addition to achieving recognition for valuable work, participating in the scheme is beneficial as it introduces new approaches and initiatives.

The following points were highlighted from the report:

- (i) musculo-skeletal injury accounted for 30.6% of absence in operational employees during 2017;
- (ii) a Wellbeing Strategy is being developed which will refer to a range of illnesses including mental health, stress and anxiety and depression;
- (iii) in addition to services and support provided by the Service, employees are also able to access support through MIND, Blue Light, and the Firefighters Charity. A peer support network of trained staff is increasing within the Service and proving useful as a first point of contact. The Employee Assistance Programme is also a potential route to access support;
- (iv) as the size of the service reduces and there are fewer posts, it becomes more difficult to find appropriate redeployment opportunities if personnel need to change their role through ill health or injury. Previously staff did not tend to transfer between roles covered by either the green or grey book, but this may now be a possibility due to the restricted availability of vacant posts, however it would result in changes to the employee's terms and conditions of employment, pay and pension;
- (v) an older workforce will result in additional care issues which need to be supported and which are likely to require additional financial investment in future years.

In response to a question from the Committee, if it is believed that an employee cannot be supported back into work with the Service, the Occupational Health Team will refer them to an independent Occupational Consultant who will assess that employee and provide an independent opinion, determining if they are unable to meet the requirements of their role or if they would be able to work elsewhere. If they are in a medically capable condition to find alternative employment outside of the Service, then they will not be eligible to receive ill health retirement, but if alternative work is not possible, even in the longer-term, they will receive ill health retirement but benefits are dependent on a range of circumstances including length of service.

Councillor's comments included:

- (a) the implications of an aging workforce need to be specifically highlighted with Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI);
- (b) while there may need to be additional support for older firefighting employees, it's important that the Service doesn't give the impression that younger employees are valued more than older ones as this is not the case;
- (c) in the majority of instances where mental trauma is experienced, if timely support is received, this can provide the best outcomes;
- (d) it is beneficial to the individual and the Service if an alternative role within the Service can be found if the employee is unable to continue in their role. There is a wealth of knowledge and experience in the workforce which is often the result of the Service's investment in training of employees; this needs to be recognised and valued.

RESOLVED to note the report and applaud the Occupational Health Team for their award winning work.

21 UPDATE ON APPRENTICESHIPS

Tracy Crump, Head of People and Organisational Development, presented an update to the Committee on the development of Apprenticeships.

The cost of the apprenticeship levy is in the region of 0.5% of the National Insurance collected from any organisation with over 250 employees, so NFRS is expecting to pay approximately £115,000 during 2017/18, but can draw back these funds to training apprentices.

As a result of the Public-Sector Apprenticeship Target Regulations 2017, the Service will need to annually engage apprentice's equivalent to 2.3% of workforce or be reported to the Secretary of State, although it is unclear what the penalty will be for non-compliance. Whilst NFRA are working to meet this target with appropriate, not age-restricted apprenticeship schemes, other fire authorises have declared that they do not intend to take part in the scheme and will be 'writing off' the apprenticeship levy as a cost.

NFRS has developed a new Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship and applied to become a recognised employer provider on the register of approved training providers to ensure the levy funds can be drawn upon.

It is anticipated that new Firefighter Apprentices will be recruited in the autumn of 2018, be paid to national firefighter grades and undertake a 2 year apprenticeship. Further apprenticeships in Business Fire Safety and Community Safety Advisor are also likely to be developed.

It has been agreed that the Service will also draw on the levy to fund ILM Level 5 Operations/Departmental Manager apprenticeship with Sheffield College for 10-12 middle managers for a 2-year course in management and leadership.

As NFRS is a fairly small organisation, there is not an expectation to employ the apprenticeships after their 2 years, but NFRS intends to engage all successful graduating

firefighter apprentices where at all possible. This may not be an option in other areas of the Service, such as ICT and Finance, where employment will be dependent on vacancies occurring at the appropriate time.

The Service is not able to host apprenticeships on behalf of other Fire Authorities unless an arm's length organisation is created, so the feasibility of this is being investigated.

The majority of the levy paid in Year 1 will need to be written off as there was not enough time available to enable NFRS to develop their scheme, so this will need to be explained to the Secretary of State. It is disappointing that the retained firefighter post is not eligible for the apprenticeship scheme due to the level of their contracted hours.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the report;**
- (2) for a report to be submitted to the Full Fire Authority with reference to the disappointing apprenticeship eligibility criteria which does not allow the scheme to be available to potential retained firefighters.**

22 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

23 EXEMPT MINUTES

Subject to providing the correct membership details, the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2017 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.



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

POLICY AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at Fire and Rescue Services HQ, Bestwood Lodge, Arnold Nottingham NG5 8PD on 2 February 2018 from 10.00am - 11.39am

Membership

Present

Councillor Brian Grocock (Chair)

Councillor Andrew Brown

Councillor Sybil Fielding

Councillor Michael Payne

Councillor Malcolm Wood

Councillor Francis Purdue-Horan (substitute for Councillor Jonathan Wheeler)

Absent

Councillor Jonathan Wheeler

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

John Buckley - Chief Fire Officer
Craig Parkin - Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Malcolm Townroe - Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority
Becky Smeathers - Head of Finance
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Jonathan Wheeler – Leave (Councillor Frances Purdue-Horan substituting)

19 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The Chair, Councillor Brian Grocock, and the Chief Fire Officer, John Buckley, both declared pecuniary prejudicial interests in agenda item 6, 'Croatian Ceremony of Thanks' (minute 23) insofar as the report sought approval for them both to attend a ceremony of thanks in Croatia. Both stated their intention to withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item.

20 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2017 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

21 FIRE AND RESCUE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR ENGLAND CONSULTATION

Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report on the 'Fire and Rescue National Framework for England Consultation' which provides the full copy of the consultation and proposed responses for submission before the consultation closes on 14 February 2018.

It is noted that Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) Officers recently attended a Policy Event hosted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) at which it was indicated that NFRS was scheduled to be inspected by HMI for compliance to the final version of the Framework with the second tranche of Authorities, during the autumn/winter of 2018/19.

The Policy Event enabled further discussion on the inspection in so much as it appeared to follow an approach similar to that of Police Constabularies but the governance of Fire and Rescue Authorities is totally different in that the Fire Authority is the decision making body consisting of locally elected members who rely on advice provided by NFRS officers, and Chief Fire Officer does not have the same decision making powers as his counterpart in the Police Service. It appears that now this governance point has been highlighted, the inspection is likely to include consideration of the governance arrangements of the Authority and that inspectors may request to meet with some Authority members.

Changes from the 2004 Framework to the proposed Framework are outlined in the report along with the proposed priorities and objectives against which Fire and Rescue Services will be inspected.

It is predicted that ensuring evidenced compliance to the new framework will require significant work and resources from Service although there is confidence that the Service is already performing well and meeting, if not excelling against many of the proposed requirements.

Members of the Committee were concerned at the proposal that Service reserves should not exceed more than 5% of the budget and suggested that any required justification should reflect the temporary necessity to facilitate the transition to a significantly reduced Service funding model.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the content of the report and receive future reports as the revised National Framework is agreed and implemented;**
- (2) to support the response to consultation proposed by the Chief Fire Officer on behalf of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.**

22 FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES INSPECTION PROGRAMME AND FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION

Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, introduced the report which, further to the previous item, presents the opportunity to respond by consultation on the proposed Fire and Rescue Service inspection programme and framework, and which outlines the proposed inspection process. The Committee's approval is sought for the Chief Fire Officer's proposed response to be submitted to the consultation.

It is noted that Senior NFRS Officers are broadly supportive of the proposed framework and that the Service performs well and is open and transparent in its governance.

As previously stated with regard to framework compliance, meeting the requirements of the inspection will also demand additional work and resources.

The grading categories for Fire Services will include outstanding, good, requires improvement, and, inadequate. The criteria by which Services will be assessed are set out within the report.

Continued networking with other Fire and Rescue Services, and even the Police Service, which is subject to similar assessments, has proved useful and enlightening and will continue to ensure the best understanding of the process and requirements can be achieved. This is particularly relevant with regard to the Suffolk, Staffordshire and West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Services which are undergoing a pilot inspection.

It is anticipated that NFRS's inspection will take place during the autumn/winter of 2018/19 with a 50% focus on operations. Once the inspection is complete, the Chief Fire Officer will receive the inspection report, which he can check for accuracy, before returning. It will then be published on HMI's website. It is not currently clear how often inspections will be undertaken, but it is predicted that there will be a random element with regard to visits.

As previously stated, it has been highlighted to HMI by Fire and Rescue Authorities and also the Local Government Association (LGA) that the proposed assessment of governance is not conducive to assessing governance of Fire and Rescue Services which operate under the control of Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Members of the Committee expressed concern that whilst the involvement of members of the Authority in the assessment is welcomed, by July 2018 the membership of the Authority may be substantially changed due to local elections and include Councillors with little or no previous knowledge or experience of the Fire Authority and Service.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the content of the report and support the response to consultation proposed by the Chief Fire Officer on behalf of Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority;**
- (2) to receive update reports on the progress being made in readiness for HMICFRS inspections.**

23 CROATIAN CEREMONY OF THANKS

Prior to consideration of this item Councillor Brian Grocock, Chair, and John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, withdrew from the meeting having declared interests, the details of which are included within minute 19. Neither returned to the meeting until the item had concluded.

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Michael Payne, Vice-Chair to the Authority, temporarily took the Chair for the duration of the item.

Following the Authority's donation of four appliances and obsolete equipment to the Fire Service in Varazdin County in the Republic of Croatia, followed by the discounted sale of a further two appliances, the Mayor of Ludbreg has invited the Chair of the Authority, the Chief Fire Officer,

and the Fleet Maintenance Manager, to attend a ceremony of thanks and unveiling of a nameplate in the town square to recognise the support given by the Authority.

The total cost of the above-mentioned attending the ceremony is anticipated to be approximately £2,000, which can be met from the 2018/19 conference attendance budget.

The Committee unanimously supported the recommendation.

RESOLVED to approve the attendance of the Chair, Chief Fire Officer and Fleet Maintenance Manager at the ceremony in Croatia as detailed in the report.

24 EMERGENCY SERVICES NETWORK (ESN) UPDATE

Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the quarterly report which updates the Committee on the progress of the Emergency Services Network.

As the existing radio contract nears an end, Central Government has undertaken a project to replace the current system with leading edge technology, which has not been applied anywhere else in the world. It is anticipated that the new system will be far more secure than the current system and enable all Emergency Services to easily communicate with each other to support the provision of efficient and effective collaborative working.

It is noted that whilst this is a Central Government driven programme, there is an element of escalating risk to the Authority due to development delays. Central Government has paused the project for further consideration and re-planning, the results of which may be available during the summer. It is anticipated that a revised business case will also be issued, confirming that the initial transition date of September 2018 will not be met and suggesting that full transition to the revised Emergency Services Network is unlikely to take place within the next two years, and may take up to six years for a full transition across the country.

The Authority initially agreed to participate in principle in the program during 2015, but as the project evolves, changes will be reported to the Committee.

Whilst continuation of the current contracts and use of equipment is confirmed, the longer term financial implications to the Service are unknown and therefore considered a risk. On engaging with the program, the Service employed specialist staff to work towards ensuring that the ICT applied by NFRS would be appropriate to enable transition to the new network. Whilst Central Government funding has been provided (although 8 months later than indicated), with the delays, the funding received will not cover the Service's engagement costs beyond this year, which is when the network was initially due to be implemented. It is unclear what, if any, further funding will be made available by Central Government and what proportion of the development work already undertaken by NFRS will remain relevant.

A further risk has been identified as Central Government has indicated an expectation that Services will transition to the new network as soon as they are able. However, this may result in an initial inability to appropriately communicate with other services and co-ordinate collaborative action if different networks are in use while transition is staggered.

Members of the Committee noted the anticipated need for the Service to allocate additional funding to support the transition programme and requested that the earmarked £200,000 is

reviewed once clarity is provided by Central Government regarding the revised programme timescale and cost implications.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report and agree for the Committee to receive further updates as the project develops, including to the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee.

25 TRI-SERVICE CONTROL UPDATE

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, introduced the report which updates the Committee on the progress of the Tri-Service Control Programme.

It is noted that whilst the Systel system has proven to be stable, significant issues have arisen with network maintenance, in that there have been multiple interrupting events. This is being investigated by the network provider.

The Systel product is considered to be top of its field and has now been commissioned by other Authorities. NFRS maintains a good working relationship with the Systel Project Team.

Members of the Committee welcomed the nearing completion of the project.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report on the progress made with the Tri-Service Control Programme.

26 COLLABORATION UPDATE

Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which updates the Committee on current work to establish and strengthen collaborative working with other Emergency Services.

Networking and relationship building across all levels continues. Progress has been made with regard to potential shared estates in that a feasibility study has been undertaken with regard to the Police, Fire, and Ambulance Service estates, the outcome of which will be reported to the Strategic Collaboration Board.

Consideration of potential learning and development collaboration has identified the common area of leadership skills and potentially community engagement, but, as expected, there is very little common ground regarding specialist operational skills. Further consideration is required to develop appropriate multi-service learning models.

NFRS intends to rebrand the welfare unit to enable it to also support the Police Service at major incidents.

NFRS continues to proactively examine potential collaboration areas within all aspects of the Service and is involved in the National Working Group, which has proved important for networking and information/ idea sharing.

A Register of Collaboration has been established and shows that NFRS is already very active, including sharing space with Neighbourhood Policing Teams and with ambulance/paramedic stop points at a number of the Service's fire stations.

There will now be fresh focus on satisfying Central Government's requirement within the proposed framework, to ensure that the Service is doing as much as possible to benefit communities.

The importance of collaboration has been communicated to the workforce, external partners, the local press and social media, specifically following the excellent collaborative work undertaken during the Nottingham Train Station fire.

Members welcomed the enthusiastic approach to collaboration, but it was noted with disappointment by a member of the Committee that in one instance where the Police and Fire and Rescue Services have collaborated by sharing facilities, some valuable voluntary support from the community had been lost due to the combined restricted access policies required by each service.

RESOLVED to note the report and receive further updates.

27 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item in accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

28 RESILIENCE ARRANGEMENTS UPDATE

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, and Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, jointly presented the report.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendations as detailed within the report.

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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