



## **NOTTINGHAMSHIRE & CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY POLICY & STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Fire and Rescue Services HQ, Bestwood Lodge, Arnold  
Nottingham NG5 8PD on 6 July 2018 from 10.00 am - 11.08 am**

### **Membership**

#### Present

Councillor Brian Grocock (Chair)  
Councillor Andrew Brown  
Councillor Sybil Fielding  
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler  
Councillor Malcolm Wood

#### Absent

Councillor Michael Payne

### **Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

John Buckley - Chief Fire Officer  
Becky Smeathers - Head of Finance  
Matt Sysmey - Equality and Diversity Officer  
Ian Pritchard - Head of Procurement and Resources  
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

## **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Michael Payne – Unwell  
Malcolm Townroe

## **2 MEMBERSHIP**

### **RESOLVED**

- (1) to note that Councillor Sybil Fielding had been appointed to the Authority by Nottinghamshire County Council in place of Councillor Nicki Brooks;**
- (2) to confirm the appointment of Councillor Sybil Fielding as a member of the Policy and Strategy Committee;**
- (3) to reappoint Councillor Sybil Fielding as the Fire Authority Member representative to the Local Fire Fighter Pension Board and ACFO Craig Parkin as the Principal Officer representative to the Board;**

- (4) **to appoint Councillor Francis Purdue-Horan as a substitute member of the Local firefighter Pension Board.**

### **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Although not required to do so, Councillor Andrew Brown and Councillor Wheeler declared that with regard to Agenda item 10, Commercial Revenue Opportunities (minute 10) they are both Authority appointed Directors of 'Nottinghamshire Fire Safety Limited'. This did not preclude them from speaking or voting on the item.

### **4 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 May were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### **5 SHAPING OUR FUTURE ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH UPDATE**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which updates members on organisational development and inclusion activities taking place within the organisation. Matt Sysmey, Equality and Diversity Officer, was in attendance to respond to questions.

The following points were highlighted and responses given to members' questions:

- (a) the report provides an overview of the organisational cultural and behavioural values change to date;
- (b) there has been a focus on aspiring leaders at every level of the Service. There were 32 applications for the aspiring leaders course, the majority of which were female. As a result several secondments are underway and coaching is taking place as part of a holistic approach to developing careers;
- (c) a trial of 'three hundred and sixty degree' appraisals, with input from senior and junior colleagues, has been welcomed by staff as improving awareness and inclusiveness and will now be rolled out;
- (d) the staff suggestion scheme 'little acorns' continues to receive valuable suggestions at every level;
- (e) the focus on a diverse workforce is not merely about numbers but also progressing diversity of thinking and behaviours change;
- (f) the comprehensive programme of positive action has resulted in applications from 40 candidates during the recruitment drive, 13 of which are female and 7 are from a Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) background, which is the most diverse result yet;
- (g) 55% of staff responded to the staff survey which is an increase on last year's response of 40%. 84% of respondents would recommend the Service as a good place to work but only one third were happy with middle management. A working group will be established to develop an action plan to respond to and address the issues raised in the survey;

- (h) the Service is no longer listed in the Stonewall Top 100 Employers but this is due to the positive progress of other organisations;
- (i) the recruitment process is still at an early stage so there are no guarantees that all candidates will succeed. However, a female firefighter is actively supporting female candidates by running gym fitness sessions in preparation of the fitness tests;
- (j) communication with staff is regular and in different formats such as bulletins and via the intranet. It is appreciated that not all retained staff will regularly access such information, so a face-to-face communication approach with managers is to be promoted. The staff survey was helpful in understanding how staff prefer to receive communications;
- (k) staff may provide their details but the staff survey can be completed anonymously. It is hosted by an external company and every measure is taken to ensure that individuals cannot be identified. However, some staff remain sceptical.

Councillor Andrew Brown and Councillor Johnathan Wheeler reported that they had visited fire stations local to their constituencies and met crews. It was a concern that it appeared that there were some areas where communications needed improving to ensure that staff were informed of current circumstances, positions and activity. Meeting staff in person had proved a valuable experience which should be promoted to all members of the Authority.

The Chair welcomed as valuable both the positive and negative feedback by members of the Authority following their visits to stations and meeting with staff, emphasising the importance of staff being as open as possible in raising issues, suggestions and concerns.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) to note the progress made in the organisational development and inclusion agenda;**
- (2) to agree to receive further annual updates in this area.**

## **6 EMERGENCY SERVICES NETWORK UPDATE**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report updating members on the progress of the Emergency Services Network (ESN) programme by Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Services.

The following points were highlighted and responses given to members' questions:

- (a) the programme business case is being reviewed by the new programme Director, Bryan Clark. It is hoped that the outcome of the review will be issued by the end of July, before Central Government's Summer recess;
- (b) in summary there are 2 potential options, either close the programme down altogether or deliver it incrementally. It is suspected that the incremental introduction will be chosen;
- (c) the programme is currently 9 months behind schedule and further slippage is expected which presents a financial risk to the Authority in that the Section 31 Grant from Central Government for the programme is still set to expire in December 2019 and it is unlikely that the programme will be ready for implementation by then but it is yet to be clarified if any further funding will be available;

- (d) full records of the Service spend on ESN are maintained and include the engagement of temporary specialist staff. With uncertainty around future funding and the requirement to support a resilient ICT section, NFRS is reviewing the ICT structure.

**RESOLVED to note the content of this report and to receive further updates as the project develops.**

## **7      EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining items 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.**

## **8      EXEMPT MINUTES**

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2018 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## **9      RESILIENCE UPDATE**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the resilience update report.

**RESOLVED to approve the recommendation within the report.**

## **10     COMMERCIAL REVENUE OPPORTUNITIES**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report informing members on current income streams and potential opportunities for the future. Ian Pritchard, Head of Procurement and Resources, was also in attendance to respond to members' questions.

**RESOLVED to approve the recommendations set out in the report and added to in the meeting.**