



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

REVIEW OF SPECIALIST RESCUE PROVISION

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 25 September 2015

Purpose of Report:

To advise Members of the current arrangements for specialist rescue provision to enable them to consider future opportunities.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members will appreciate that a great deal of analysis has taken place over the past few months and it is clear that opportunities exist to deliver a specialist rescue provision in a more efficient way.
- 1.2 In 2007 the Specialist Rescue Team (SRT) was formed following a review of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's (NFRS) response to non-fire related incidents.
- 1.3 As part of the steps taken to improve the specialist rescue provision, all front line appliances were provided with an upgraded capability through the provision of both enhanced equipment and training. Over the preceding years since the formation of the SRT, response crews have therefore developed an increased level of competence in this area.
- 1.4 Current levels of demand and risk can be found in the latest operational activity report for 2014.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The SRT is responsible for broadly four main areas of specialist rescue which are road traffic collisions, animal rescue, water rescue, and rope rescue. The SRT currently provides a county-wide response from two locations, Highfields and Tuxford fire stations.
- 2.2 The current road traffic collision data shows a county-wide spread of road traffic collisions which occur not only on major roads, but also on minor roads. The rescue capability that exists currently on all front line appliances provides a first response and resolves most of the incidents attended by the service. The Specialist Rescue Unit and the Rapid Response Unit are currently utilised for heavy rescue and for more complex incidents.
- 2.3 Animal rescue incidents account for a relatively low number of calls, but can be complex in nature relying on a high degree of skill and technical equipment. Generally the incidents are resolved using simple methods and basic equipment, however in a proportion of incidents the complexity requires the full range of skills and technical equipment.
- 2.4 Flooding incidents have been relatively low over the period since 2009, however data for 2007 shows a totally different overview during major flooding. Flooding can occur from heavy rainfall alone, does not necessarily follow a river course and can be totally random in geographical location. When flooding is discounted, the water incidents tend to follow the River Trent corridor through the City and in to Newark, with exceptions being known hotspots such as fords and other water hazards.

- 2.5 With the potential for flooding to have a high demand on the Service and the high risk level identified for water/flood rescue, contained within the national and local Community Risk Register, a county-wide water rescue provision utilising front line appliances and crews as a first response, with support from the technical water rescue capability for more complex operations such as rescues, is deployed.
- 2.6 Rope incidents are an infrequent event but when they do occur they require a high skill level and a substantial amount of specialist equipment where a rapid response may be required to save life. Rope rescue capabilities are utilised to support other specialist rescue capabilities.
- 2.7 Other capabilities include heavy rescue equipment, hydraulic shoring for trench or building collapse, initial urban search and rescue and national resilience assets.
- 2.8 In 2015 a review and feasibility study has been carried out and the opportunity to update the delivery model has been identified. The work carried out so far has challenged the need for a separate SRT and has looked at the feasibility of other delivery models.
- 2.9 A number of areas for consideration have been identified, ranging from a reduction in the current specialist rescue provision to an integration of the specialist rescue capabilities into response locations across the Service.
- 2.10 The next steps are to enter into formal discussions with employees and their representatives, and to further investigate and analyse identified areas so that firmer proposals and options can be presented to Members at a future Fire Authority meeting.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The current staffing costs of the SRT are £1.78 million, therefore significant scope exists to generate efficiencies.
- 3.2 There is also the potential to reduce costs in non-pay budgets, for example equipment, personal protection equipment and training.
- 3.3 All financial implications will be identified and reported in full to Members as part of future reports.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

Any changes to the current specialist rescue provision will have implications of a contractual nature and have significant learning and development impacts for the Service. The scale and impact will vary dependent upon the changes made, further details will be presented as part of future reports.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment (EIA) has not been undertaken at this stage because a final decision has yet to be made on the options available and therefore the impact cannot be assessed. An EIA will be undertaken when required.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Fire Authority has to satisfy its legal obligations under various legislation, but primarily the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Any proposals contained within this report will be assessed to ensure the Fire Authority will not be in breach of these legal duties.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There is a risk that any changes to the current specialist rescue provision will impact upon the Service's ability to meet its statutory duties to provide a rescue capability. This risk will be mitigated by ensuring that any changes to the current delivery model will be fully risk assessed to ensure the current level of service provided by NFRS will reflect the risk and demand that currently exists or can be reasonably expected to exist in the future.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members support the Chief Fire Officer to carry out further analysis of the specialist rescue capability, to consult with workforce representatives and to report back specific options to a future Fire Authority meeting.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER