



**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 26 February 2016 from 10.33 - 12.19**

Membership

Present

Councillor Darrell Pulk (Chair)
Councillor Brian Grocock (Vice Chair)
Councillor John Allin
Councillor Chris Barnfather
Councillor Eunice Campbell
(Minutes 56-64 inclusive)
Councillor John Clarke
Councillor Roger Jackson
Councillor Neghat Nawaz Khan
Councillor Dave Liversidge
Councillor Michael Payne
Councillor Mike Pringle
Councillor Ken Rigby
Councillor Gordon Wheeler
Councillor Malcolm Wood
Councillor Liz Yates
Councillor Jason Zadrozny

Absent

Councillor Yvonne Woodhead
Councillor Jon Collins

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

John Buckley	- Chief Fire Officer
Neil Timms	- Treasurer to the Fire Authority
Malcolm Townroe	- Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Fire Authority
Wayne Bowcock	- Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Sue Maycock	- Head of Finance
Craig Parkin	- Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Catherine Ziane-Pryor	- Governance Officer

56 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Jon Collins (City Council Business)
Councillor Yvonne Woodhead (Personal)

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57 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

58 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2015 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

59 CHAIRS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair welcomed back to the Authority Councillor Jason Zadrozny and made the following announcements:

- as of 5 January 2016, responsibility for Fire and Rescue Services was transferred from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to the Home Office;
- the consultation response to Police Crime Commissioner Consultation has been published and the proposed changes are predicted to become legislation by the end of the year meaning that Fire and Rescue Authorities will could be taken over by PCCs. The Chief Fire Officer has invited the Fire Transition Director, Daniel Greaves, to Nottinghamshire and it is hoped that he will visit during April;
- the Armed Forces Covenant has been signed;
- the Chair attended a Prince's Trust celebration event held in London and was very proud of what has been achieved;
- the Service has signed up to 'Proud Friends' to support the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Trans-gender (LGBT) community and is amongst the top 100 Stonewall organisations.

60 PRUDENTIAL CODE FOR CAPITAL FINANCE 2016/17

Neil Timms, Treasurer to the Authority, presented the report which outlines the Authority's obligations under the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance and seeks the Authority's approval for the proposed Capital Plans, Prudential Limits and Monitoring Processes.

RESOLVED to approve the Prudential Limits for 2016/17 as follows:

Estimate of Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	5.6%
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Estimate of the Incremental Impact of the New Capital Investment Decisions on the Council Tax (Band D)	£0.55
Estimate of Total Capital Expenditure to be Incurred	£4,505,000
Estimate of Capital Financing Requirement	£29,190,000
Operational Boundary	£28,026,000
Authorised Limit	£30,829,000
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

61 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2016/17

Neil Timms, Treasurer to the Authority, presented the Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17 report which provides information on the following areas:

- balanced-budget requirement;
- economic background;
- management of cash resources;
- borrowing strategy;
- investment strategy
- minimum revenue provision policy
- training of officers and members.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17 as set out within the report;**
- (2) to approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy 2016/17 as set out in paragraphs 2.42 to 2.45 within the report.**

62 REVIEW OF RESERVES AND WORKING BALANCES

Sue Maycock, Head of Finance, presented the report which requested that the Authority consider and approve the minimum level of working balances sufficient to meet the needs of the Authority during the 2016/17 financial year and beyond. This is a legal requirement

and although there is no prescribed formula, guidance from CIPFA states that the level of general reserve should be appropriate for the risks to which the Authority is exposed. A risk assessment is attached to the report at appendix A.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the results of the review of risks shown at appendix A to the report;**
- (2) to approve the proposed minimum level of working balances of £3.8 million for 2016/17.**

63 BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2016/2017 TO 2018/2019 AND COUNCIL TAX 2016/2017

Sue Maycock, Head of Finance, presented the report which informs members of the proposals for the revenue and capital budgets for 2016/17 to 2018/19, to enable the Authority to determine the level of Council Tax for 2016/17.

The Finance and Resources Committee has considered several options and recommends to the Authority that a 1.95% Council Tax increase is applied for the year 2016/17.

It is noted that a 'Council Tax Freeze Grant' is not available and that funding from reserves will be used to balance the budget but a rise in Council Tax precept will still be necessary to help fund the shortfall.

Members made the following comments:

- (a) the Finance Team should be commended for the work they have done during the past year;
- (b) whilst the Service has lost £11million in grant funding over the past few years, steps have been, and will continue to be, taken to reduce costs and maintain a good service that provides value for money;
- (c) members are conscious of the additional financial burden on citizens when all other bills continue to rise, but a decision to increase the Council Tax will enable the Service to continue to provide a first class service;
- (d) the work of the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee, the Finance Team and the Chief Fire Officer should be commended in making every effort to identify and implement efficiency savings to ensure that the Service is in a positive position moving forwards;
- (e) as the Council Tax Freeze Grant is not available this year and the Authority is dipping into reserves to balance the budget, it is recognised that a rise in Council Tax is necessary and so it is reluctantly supported;
- (f) contracted staff have been forewarned that the National Insurance rise of 1.4% net to both the employer and employee will have an impact on pay packets;

- (g) funding the shortfall from reserves for this year is appropriate but will become a significant problem in future years so cannot be considered a long-term solution.

Members voting in favour of implementing a 1.95% increase of Council Tax precept are:

Councillor Darrell Pulk (Chair)
Councillor John Allin
Councillor Chris Barnfather
Councillor Eunice Campbell
Councillor John Clarke
Councillor Brian Grocock (Vice Chair)
Councillor Roger Jackson
Councillor Neghat Nawaz Khan
Councillor David Liversidge
Councillor Michael Payne
Councillor Mike Pringle
Councillor Ken Rigby
Councillor Gordon Wheeler
Councillor Malcolm Wood
Councillor Liz Yates

Members voting against implementing a 1.95% increase of Council Tax precept are:

Councillor Jason Zadrozny.

RESOLVED

- (1) to increase Council Tax by 1.95%, with the residual balance of £98,326 met by funding from reserves, and set a Council Tax and precept for 2016/2017 as required by statute;**
- (2) to approve the continued payment of Members Allowances for 2016/2017 in accordance with the approved scheme.**

64 AMENDMENTS TO THE PERMANENT ESTABLISHMENT

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which had been considered by the Human Resources Committee, seeking amendments to the permanent non-uniformed establishment.

RESOLVED

- (1) to approve the establishment of the roles of 'Information Governance Manager' and 'ICT Development Officer';**
- (2) to delete the vacant posts of 'Performance Officer' and 'Evaluation Officer'.**

65 OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY UPDATE 2015

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which informs the Authority of the Operational Activity of the Service during 2015. The following points were highlighted:

- (a) during 2015, the 'Fire Cover Review' of 2010 was refreshed but there have not been any changes to this Service's risk profile;
- (b) activity levels have remained generally constant during the past 3 years with approximately 9,500 incidents per year, of which more than 4000 were false alarms, the majority from automatic fire alarms, 1,500 were primary fires, 1,800 were secondary fires, and just under 500 were road traffic collisions;
- (c) the co-responding pilot is on-going;
- (d) incidents attended within 10 minutes of receiving notification was overall 69% (90% Target) whilst dwelling fires was 74%.

RESOLVED to

- (1) note the operational activity levels for 2015;**
- (2) request that the Community Safety Committee review the data in the report and consider any potential implications or opportunities for the delivery of services.**

66 SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY FOR 2020

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which outlines the potential budget shortfall of £4.5 million in future years unless further savings can be made by adjustments to the establishment and service delivery.

The report outlined the actions taken to date and proposed that the Chief Fire Officer is tasked to investigate the potential of further actions to ensure that the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) can meet the financial pressures and constraints anticipated up to 2020.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) there has not been any discernible impact on outcomes of the efficiency savings made so far but the Service needs to retain a safe and effective level of response;
- (b) as some whole-time crews only respond to an average of one call per week during periods of low activity, it is proposed that there is a move towards retained crewing for some areas with further recruitment of retained firefighters to ensure that appropriate day time cover is in place;
- (c) as there is currently an overcapacity of whole time assets, a collective agreement with the workforce will be sought to find a financially effective and efficient solution;
- (d) the collaboration consultation results have been published and it is expected that the model proposed by Central Government will be in place by the Autumn;
- (e) all Fire and Rescue Services will have to collaborate, so it's important to ensure that collaboration is considered in all decisions prior to the final arrangements;

- (f) work with Local Authorities and other partners will seek to find efficiencies to ensure an effective and efficient service.

The following comments were made:

- (g) further information on the potential impact of devolution is required as it could alter the position of the Police Crime Commissioner (PCC) if elected Mayors are approved. There is still some uncertainty as to how devolution would work;
- (h) once the PCC election has taken place, the Chair and Chief Fire Officer will seek to meet with the PCC to discuss the local implications and to promote an understanding of NFRS. All parties will need to collaborate but if the PCC doesn't want to take responsibility for NFRS, they will have the ability to sit on the Authority;
- (i) the Chief Fire Officer currently meets with the Police Chief Constable at Blue Light meetings and it is evident that the two organisations operate within very different structures;
- (j) if the PCC wants to take responsibility for NFRS, then NFRS will have to provide information for the business case to support this;
- (k) if all parties (PCC, City and County Councils) agree that the PCC should take responsibility for NFRS, then the PCC will take responsibility. If there is disagreement, an independent person will be appointed by Central Government who will consider the case highlighting the advantages of merging with the Police (which will have to be compiled by NFRS), and that person will make a decision as to whether the process progresses;
- (l) it is a concern that the Police and PCC do not have an in-depth knowledge of the Fire Service so NFRS need to inform the PCC of NFRS' s position;
- (m) there is an expectation that where the Police and Fire Services share co-terminus boundaries, transition will be rapid;
- (n) it would be wise to speak individually with PCC candidates to ensure they have an understanding of NFRS and even invite the candidates for a two way question and answer session;
- (o) it is a concern that many citizens don't appear to be aware that the PCC is one person who will take control of the Police and the Fire Service, so Councillors need to ensure this is understood by citizens so they can pose questions;
- (p) citizens don't feel that there is anything wrong with the FRS and often aren't aware of the implications that the responsibility transfer will have.

RESOLVED for the Chief Fire Officer to:

- (1) explore the use of alternative crewing models and emerging technologies to maximise the availability of appliances where crew numbers are less than four;**

- (2) identify opportunities where a mixed crewing approach utilising retained fire fighters at periods of lowest demand could be implemented to maintain appliance availability and reduce costs;**
- (3) enter into negotiations with workforce representatives to revise the current crewing collective agreement to release the surplus capacity within the ridership and create the opportunity to crew appliances for less than the full 24hr period;**
- (4) explore the use of voluntary secondary contracts to provide support for retained appliances at periods of highest demand and ease the transformation of the service through the change process;**
- (5) engage with partners to explore all opportunities that may exist for collaboration;**
- (6) provide reports on the outcomes of recommendations 1-5 above to future meetings of the Authority to inform the decision making process.**

67 COMMITTEE OUTCOMES

The report of the Chief Fire Officer provided (for information) the minutes of:

Community Safety Committee 8 January 2016;
Finance and Resources Committee 15 January 2016;
Human Resources Committee 22 January 2016;
Policy and Strategy Committee 29 January 2016.

RESOLVED to note the report.

68 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, as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12 A to the Act.

69 EXEMPT MINUTES

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2015 were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.