



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

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**MINUTES of the meeting held at Fire and Rescue Services HQ, Bestwood
Lodge, Arnold Nottingham NG5 8PD on 23 September 2016 from 10.30 - 12.46**

Membership

Present

Councillor Darrell Pulk (Chair)
Councillor Brian Grocock (Vice Chair)
Councillor Liaqat Ali
Councillor John Allin
Councillor Chris Barnfather
Councillor Eunice Campbell
Councillor Sybil Fielding
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora
Councillor Roger Jackson
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 John Clarke

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Wayne Bowcock	- Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue (NFRS)
John Buckley	- Chief Fire Officer, NFRS
Sue Maycock	- Head of Finance, NFRS
Craig Parkin	- Assistant Chief Fire Officer, NFRS
Neil Timms	- Treasurer to the Authority
Malcolm Townroe	- Clerk to the Authority
James Welbourn	- Governance Officer

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor John Clarke

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

13 CHAIRS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

Central Fire Station closing ceremony

- Past and present members of the service attended;
- Retired Members Association and Fire Service Preservation Group supported the event;
- Fitting tribute with a parade of vehicles dating back to 1940s;
- New London Road Station formal opening this afternoon (23 September);

Annual Firefighters Memorial in London

- Councillor Sybil Fielding attended with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer on behalf of the Chair as this clashed with the Central station ceremony. The memorial was addressed by the Bishop of London;

Members Seminar at the beginning of September

- The Chair thanked everyone for the good attendance;
- Meetings are being arranged to help inform future decisions regarding the impact of the Policing and Crime Bill;
- Feedback will be provided to Members as this progresses;

Death of Firefighter in Leicestershire

- Following the death of a Firefighter in Leicestershire the Chief Fire Officer offered the support of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) to enable as many members of LFRS to attend the funeral. 6 appliances and 2 officers were deployed to assist with strategic cover;
- With further support from across the region everyone who wanted to attend was able to do so;

National

- Fire Service Management Committee;
- National Pension Board

Local Meetings

- Strategic Equalities Board deferred from today and will be held at the rising of the Human Resources Committee on 4 November;
- Treasury Management for Members and Officers to take place at the rising of the Finance and Resources Committee on 20 January (Councillor Wood);
- Members will be sent a confirmation e-mail.

Other

- A delegation from Croatia have been over to the UK and thanked NFRS for their contributions. Firefighters from NFRS travelled to Germany at their own expense to transfer equipment, as well as provide training.
- The Chair reminded Members that it is useful for as many of them as possible to attend Treasury Management training.

14 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2016 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

15 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2015/16

Sue Maycock, Head of Finance at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service introduced the Annual Governance Statement for 2015/16.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) a number of conferences were held for employees – these events were open to all and attracted a cross-section of employees. Retained staff had a weekend conference organised, but this had a very small take-up;
- (b) unfortunately there was no comment in the report from the Peer Review Group regarding Members' involvement in the Governance arrangements.

RESOLVED to note the Annual Governance Statement for 2015/16.

16 FINAL ACCOUNTS 2015/16

Neil Timms, Treasurer to the Fire Authority presented the final accounts of the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Authority to the full Fire Authority for approval.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) the overall figure was an underspend of £871,000, which amounts to a variation of around 2% (the planned underspend was £570,000);
- (b) the accounts process went reasonably well this year. The only issue was with the valuation of Mansfield Fire Station;

Following comments from Members, further information was provided:

- (c) the Trading Company established in 2010 employs 8 members of staff and pays an annual dividend back to NFRS. Councillor Barnfather has met with personnel who feel a disconnect from NFRS.

The Chair and the Chief Fire Officer agreed to meet with Councillor Barnfather and Councillor Wood on this issue, and will suggest a suitable date for this meeting.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) approve the Statement of Accounts for 2015/16, as attached in Appendix A of the report;**
 - (2) note the financial results for the 2015/16 year for Nottinghamshire Fire Safety Limited, as attached at Appendix B of the report.**
- 17 EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE 2015/16**

Neil Timms, Treasurer to the Authority, introduced the auditor's report to Members. Andrew Cardoza, External Auditor from KPMG was present, and guided Members through his report.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) NFRS is required to have fixed assets valued once every five years unless something has happened to the building in that time period. Mansfield Fire Station was looked at during the five year review and the value from the last cycle didn't seem reasonable. The floor areas of different elements of the station had been double counted in error, and this error was corrected.**

This has not had a material impact on the accounts.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the contents of the External Auditors' ISA 260 report, attached as Appendix A to the report;**
- (2) approve the management representation letter to the External Auditors as set out in Appendix B to the report.**

18 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

Neil Timms, Treasurer to the Authority provided Members with an update on treasury management activity during the 2015/16 financial year.

Neil informed the Authority that all objectives have been achieved apart from one that relates to borrowing.

There is currently little to be earned from investment, so NFRS tend to use internal cash to avoid having to borrow. This creates a strange position in loan maturity profile in the short term. This is reported regularly to the Finance and Resources committee.

NFRS cover issues such as risk and reward over investment, and always go for the least risky options even though they don't have the highest yields. NFRS is currently AAA+ in terms of investment.

RESOLVED to note the report.

19 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2016/17 TO 2019/20

Sue Maycock, Head of Finance at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service presented an update to the Medium Term Financial Strategy to the Fire Authority.

The following issues were raised:

- (a) there is nothing in the financial strategy that binds the authority to levels of Council Tax. The authority is now allowed to use capital receipts flexibly for a fixed period of time;
- (b) Councillor Barnfather commented on the level of reserves held by NFRS, and the need to keep an eye on them;
- (c) NFRS has been invited to respond to a government consultation by Monday 26 September on the subject of business rates. Currently, the Authority picks up 2% of business rates in Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire, with half of total business rates collected being retained by government. The proposal is that collecting authorities retain 100% of business rates collected in the future.

Sue Maycock has now drafted a response for the consultation.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 to 2019/20;**
- (2) accept the government's offer of a four year financial settlement through the submission of the Sustainability Plan 2016/17 to 2019/20.**

20 CHANGES TO THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS

Neil Timms, Treasurer to the Authority summarised the changes to the arrangements for appointing external auditors following the abolition of the Audit Commission and the end of transitional arrangements following the 2017/18 external audit.

RESOLVED to approve option 4 set out in the report, which is to commit to participating in the Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd national scheme for local auditor appointments, with effect from the audit of accounts for 2018/19.

21 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer presented the Annual Statement of Assurance.

The following information was highlighted:

- (a) planned improvements within the report are underway, including work on health and safety. Additionally, work is being done with staff to make sure they are on board with organisational development and the inclusion strategy;
- (b) NFRS are delivering a new operational intelligence model and developing a new performance framework;

Following questions from Members, further information was provided:

- (c) Ashfield District Council is a partner on the Safer Nottinghamshire Board. It has acted in line with other partners; the New Cross team has also been subject to update reports on performance that go to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

The one member of staff that was placed with the New Cross team has since returned to NFRS – another individual has now been placed with the Broom Hill service;

- (d) NFRS are continually looking at increasing the services offered to staff, and this includes support for staff with sickness. There has been a big push through organisations such as Mind, with their Blue Light programme to highlight mental health issues. It can be difficult in male dominated organisations to share issues on mental health;
- (e) musculo-skeletal issues continue to be a problem in fire services across the country. NFRS have a healthcare package in place which offers musculoskeletal advice;
- (f) the cause of mental health issues is to be looked at and reported back through the Human Resources Committee. The sickness issue is currently going in the wrong direction, and is coupled with a shrinking workforce.

RESOLVED to approve the Annual Statement of Assurance 2015/16.

22 PAY POLICY

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer presented the Statement of Pay Policy 2016/17.

RESOLVED to approve the Statement of Pay Policy at Appendix A of the report.

23 AFFILIATION OF THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE RETIRED MEMBERS ASSOCIATION

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer introduced a report seeking formal adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Retired Members Association (NFRRMA).

Councillor Grocock and Councillor Barnfather spoke in support of this and agreed that memorials are part of the history of the Fire Service and anything should be done to ensure that they are in a fit and proper condition in the future.

RESOLVED to formally adopt the MOU with the NFRRMA. The Chair of the Authority then countersigned it.

24 ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY STATEMENT

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer introduced the Environmental and Sustainability Policy.

RESOLVED to endorse the Policy Statement to fully support its Integrated Risk Management Plan.

25 COMMITTEE OUTCOMES FOR NOTING

Members noted the contents of the Committee Outcomes report.

26 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.

27 POST OF ESTATES MANAGER

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer introduced a report on the post of Estates Manager.

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

28 PRINCE'S TRUST UPDATE

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer gave Members an update on the Prince's Trust.

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