



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

CONSULTATION UPDATE ON MIXED AND ALTERNATIVE CREWING

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 15 December 2017

Purpose of Report:

To update the Authority on consultation progress on Mixed and Alternative Crewing.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At the Fire Authority meeting in September 2017, the Chief Fire Officer presented a report to seek approval to commence consultation on mixed and alternative crewing models, both of which were proposed within the Sustainability Strategy for 2020 agreed by Members in February 2016.
- 1.2 In April 2016 Policy and Strategy Committee approved the continual use of the Authority's consultation framework. This framework outlines the approach and methods of consultation that will be undertaken during periods of consultation.
- 1.3 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) has recently completed a competitive procurement process and has 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.
- 1.4 This report seeks to provide Members with an update on how the process of consultation is progressing.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 Consultation commenced on 25 September and is due to finish on 17 December 2017. This ensures that the twelve-week consultation period is completed prior to the Christmas period in line with the Authority's consultation framework, reducing the risk of delay in reporting the outcomes to the Fire Authority in February 2018.
- 2.2 The consultation programme has included internal and external elements with quantitative and qualitative elements with an emphasis on 'deliberative' or 'dialogue' methods of consultation.
- 2.3 So far, the consultation process has resulted in 2185 questionnaires completed, ten focus groups attracting 88 people, and five individual responses being received. Importantly, the ORS data shows where the respondents reside, and through the use of Mosaic data the team have been able to focus activities on areas where the response has been low.
- 2.4 Communication about the consultation has included website and intranet publication; media briefings and resulting coverage; letters and correspondence; and adverts (online and printed, for both city and county). These activities have been supplemented with extensive work through NFRS social media channels, including weekly Facebook advertising, which has allowed tens of thousands of citizens from across the county to become aware of the consultation and its timeframe.
- 2.5 The weekly updates received from ORS indicate that these channels are the most popular way that people are hearing about the consultation. By mapping

the postcode data obtained through the monitoring questions on the questionnaire the consultation team have been able to constantly adjust the targeting of activities and communication.

- 2.6 In addition to utilising all internal communication channels, the Strategic Leadership Team has undertaken an extensive programme of station, watch and departmental visits to ensure all employees are informed and encourage them to participate in the consultation. These visits were facilitated by a senior manager alongside a member of the Shaping Our Future Team. In total 59 visits have been conducted and will form part of the findings of the report presented to Members.
- 2.7 At this point in time, NFRS does not have information on the way people have commented on the proposals, and will not have this information until the consultation process has been completed and ORS has analysed all data. This further ensures that the process remains transparent.
- 2.8 The outcomes of the consultation will be formally presented to the Fire Authority in February 2018 which will allow Members to consider the outcomes and inform decisions.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A budget is already set aside for public consultation activities and the costs associated with mixed and alternative crewing consultation will be met within this existing budget.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

The consultation work is a significant demand upon the Service as a whole, predominantly being undertaken 'in-house' supported by ORS with facilitation and reporting of the outcomes of consultation to the Fire Authority.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

Any consultation process and strategy will need to demonstrate that the Authority has engaged with all sections of the community. The Service's consultation exercises have been developed to be as accessible to, and targeted at, those people who are affected by the Service's decisions and for whom the consultation is intended to reach.

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. Although this specifically relates to IRMP, effective consultation will serve to demonstrate accountability to communities.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Effective consultation mitigates risk to the Authority as it demonstrates to the Secretary of State accountability and engagement with the community, thus removing the risk of Ministerial intervention; and reduces the risk of legal challenge, such as judicial review, over any proposals and changes the Authority may make as a result of consultation.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Public consultation can often be complicated and an emotive activity. The engagement of ORS as an independent and external partner will ensure the Authority delivers a competent, targeted and proportionate consultation process.
- 9.2 To facilitate the promulgation of information, the Communications Team has worked very closely with a number of other local authorities to use their existing systems and networks to reach as many people as possible in the community, for example featuring in the Ashfield Newsletter that is delivered to 55,000 properties and the Contacts that reaches 110,000 residents in Gedling.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER