

report

meeting	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AUTHORITY	
date	1 AUGUST 2003	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

DATA CO-ORDINATOR, TRANSPORT SECTION

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose the creation of an additional post within the Transport Section with the function of data entry, data analysis, audit and reporting.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The earlier report on the maintenance of the vehicle fleet has resulted in a recommendation that Nottinghamshire County Council be appointed as contractors for the provision of this service. However, the report made reference to the requirement to strengthen the Transport Section in order that proper management of the contract can be achieved.
- 2.2 It is also clear that even if the contract was not awarded to Nottinghamshire County Council, it would still be necessary to strengthen the Section in this way. This proposed action is supported by the PriceWaterhouseCoopers value for money report into vehicle maintenance.
- 2.3 In order to produce useable management information it is necessary to encode the maintenance activities conducted by the maintenance contractor. This encoded data will provide detailed financial analysis and highlight failure trends. The coding system used is the Vehicle Maintenance Reporting Standards (VRMS). It is one of several industry standard systems, and has been adapted for use within Fire Services. This adaptation has been carried out by the CACFOA National Transport Officers' Working Group in conjunction the Institute of Road Transport Engineers (IRTE) who sponsor VMRS within the United Kingdom. The use of VMRS is promoted in the "CACFOA Recommended Best Practice for the Maintenance of Fire Service Vehicles" publication.
- 2.4 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's annual maintenance budget is in the region of £0.5m. Without a suitable management system and with the current level of resources it is impossible to identify areas of potential cost saving. With a suitable system in place failure trends can be identified and remedial action instigated. High cost items such as major assemblies can normally be readily identified from purely financial information, but failure of these items is rare in Fire Service use. What is more difficult to recognise is repetitive failure of medium cost items or high failure rates of relatively lost cost items. The result of these types of failure is not purely financial, it impacts on the Fire Service's service delivery capabilities and erodes the time available for training and community fire safety activities.

- 2.5 Because of the necessity to encode each activity and spare part used, errors in invoicing are readily apparent and jobs where additional or incorrect parts have been wrongly charged to the Fire Service can be quickly identified. Details of these errors can then be passed to the contractor for resolution. Elimination of these errors in future will lead to further cost reductions.
- 2.6 The experience of having a temporary member of staff in this role for a period of time in 2002 has shown that cost reductions and improved management will result from this appointment.
- 2.7 The post holder would have responsibility for encoding (audit would be carried out as part of this process) and developing reports that analyse repair information.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The post has not yet been evaluated by the Personnel Section and therefore the grading has not been fixed. However, it is anticipated that the appointment will be made within the range of Scale 4-5.
- 3.2 The cost to the Service will be in the range £17,780 - £22,298 including all overheads. This cost will be met from cost savings achieved by the post holder from within the Transport Maintenance budget.

4 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The personnel implications arising from this report are chiefly those relating the increase of the non-uniformed establishment. As mentioned above, this is to be an openly advertised post and therefore will comply with all policies.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The post will be advertised in the usual way to ensure full compliance with the Fire Authority's Equal Opportunities Policy.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Failure to manage repair information leaves the Service open to financial risk, particularly with the introduction of a new Vehicle Maintenance Contract. There are also opportunities to minimise risk in service delivery by increasing appliance reliability.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That a post is created in the Transport Section with specific responsibility for data co-ordination in the grade range Scale 4/5, £17,780 - £22,298 (subject to evaluation).

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION

First Procurement Report
PriceWaterhouseCooper Report

P. Woods
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER