

report

meeting	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AUTHORITY	
date	23 JULY 2004	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

CONVERSION OF POSTS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek Members approval to reduce the Uniformed Establishment by upto 24 posts and use the resources to undertake activities specified in the Local Risk Management Plan (LRMP).

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Government White Paper "Our Fire and Rescue Service", the Draft National Framework and Integrated Risk Management Planning call on Fire Authorities to realign their resources and activities so as to become more proactive in reducing risk within the community.

2.2 The Fire Service Bill, which is nearing completion of its legislative process, will make Community Fire Safety a Statutory duty in the future. Nottinghamshire's Local Risk Management Plan (LRMP) approved by the Fire Authority on 26 March 2004 required the Service to realign its resources in order to address, more proactively, risk within the Community. The plan specified that the Service's Aerial Appliance provision should be staffed, in the longer term, by personnel on Retained (or On-Call) contracts. This would release 24 personnel for re-deployment to a dedicated and proactive risk reduction role.

3. REPORT

3.1 The movement of the Service's Aerial Appliances to new crewing and mobilising arrangements will take place on a phased basis. This phasing will ensure that the necessary preparatory work has been concluded before the transition occurs. It will also allow the resources released, to be managed effectively. The first phase of this transition, the placing of vehicles on request and at Fire Control's discretion, occurred in April 2004.

3.2 The second phase will be the conversion of Mansfield's aerial appliance to a new crewing system. This will happen as soon as personnel arrangements have been made.

The third phase will be the movement of Central's aerial appliance to Beeston and conversion to a new crewing arrangement.

3.3 Every uniformed operational employee has been asked if they would consider volunteering to undertake a day duty system within the Service, which would probably be in Community Fire Safety. There have been a small number of responses and these will be accommodated. Management will seek to

encourage this type of transfer as it will best enable the maximisation of contact with the community for risk reduction activity.

- 3.4 Management do not intend to compulsorily move personnel onto day duty. It believes that any excess uniformed personnel resulting from each stage of the Aerial Appliance crewing conversion, can be used in dedicated Community Safety activity on the existing shift system until vacancies occur. This is not the ideal and long term solution as it would not enable maximum contact time with the public. Nevertheless it would enable personnel to maintain their current working patterns prior to movement back into predominantly operational roles on other watches.
- 3.6 This paper seeks to create the facility to reduce the uniformed establishment by a maximum of 24 posts. It should be noted that is not a set reduction of 24 posts but an upper limit. The Service would handle the reduction in uniformed establishment by way of posts not being replaced as and when personnel retire or leave the Service. There will have to be a number of inter station and watch transfers in order to facilitate this approach.
- 3.7 It is recognised that there are some uniformed personnel who would welcome the opportunity and have the skills to move to a day duty Community Safety role. Whilst the request for volunteers has produced a few individuals who are interested, the numbers have not been sufficient to enable the full transition to be made. The opportunity for uniformed staff to transfer at a later date should remain open. Management understand that should volunteers wish to return to an emergency role at a later date, that there may not be sufficient volunteers to replace them.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The overall impact of this paper would be to move finance from the uniformed payroll budget to other budgets within the Service. This money would be used to finance the Authority's other LRMP objectives.

5 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This proposal would affect some personnel as they would have to change stations or shift systems. The Service does have a mechanism to facilitate this to compensate staff where appropriate.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Failure to convert these posts into other forms of risk reduction activity would put in jeopardy the LRMP and the Authority's Business Plan.

7 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct equal opportunity implications arising from this report.

8 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 The uniformed establishment is reduced by up to 24 posts. This will be implemented, on a phased basis by not filling posts as they become vacant.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION

- White Paper “Our Fire and Rescue Service”
- Draft Fire & Rescue National Framework document.
- Fire & Rescue Services Bill
- Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire Authority Local Risk Management Plan.

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