

report

meeting	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY	
date	24 February 2006	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

IMPLEMENTATION OF REVISED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to present to Members a proposed meeting schedule for the new Committee structures as agreed at the Fire & Rescue Authority meeting on 16 December 2005.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Since the outcomes of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) identified the need for greater Member involvement, Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire & Rescue Authority have been working on a structure for revised Governance. That structure and Members' roles within it was confirmed at the Authority meeting on 16 December 2005.
- 2.2 As a consequence of the need for Members to achieve greater involvement in the Fire & Rescue Authority, a revised Governance proposal was submitted to the Authority in June 2005. Throughout the latter period of 2005 the Authority, through its meetings and through a specific working group, agreed revised governance arrangements.
- 2.3 The Authority normally agrees its meeting schedule at an AGM between 1 May and 30 June each year. In order to enable transitional arrangements, it is considered beneficial for Members to agree the schedule prior to the AGM to enable a smooth transition.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 The new Governance arrangements present the best opportunity for Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service to deliver its agenda of a wider Community Safety role. Through the new arrangements Members will be involved more closely in the direction of the Service.
- 3.2 The revised committee structure and Governance arrangements will ensure that the Authority meets its obligations in respect of the future delivery of the Service. The meeting schedule involves all of the Standing Committees, but the Ad-Hoc Groups can be set at the AGM scheduled for June 2006.
- 3.3 It is proposed that the revised Governance arrangements come into place with effect from 3 April 2006. This is reflected in the proposed meeting schedule.

3.4 The proposed schedule for full Fire & Rescue Authority meetings is as follows :

24 February 2006	Council House	Existing structure
24 March 2006	County Hall	Existing structure
9 June 2006	County Hall	Revised Governance
15 September 2006*	Council House	Revised Governance
8 December 2006	Council House	Revised Governance
23 February 2007	County Hall	Revised Governance
18 May 2007	Council House	Revised Governance

It is proposed that the meeting originally scheduled for 28 April 2006 is replaced in favour of the new Governance arrangements and the associated meeting schedule.

* Standards Committee will meet at the rising of the Fire & Rescue Authority on 15 September 2006.

3.5 The proposed schedule for the Policy & Strategy Committee can be as follows :

19 May 2006	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
4 August 2006	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
17 November 2006	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
30 March 2007	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
28 May 2007	Conference Room, NFRS HQ

3.6 The proposed schedule for the Human Resources Committee can be as follows :

7 April 2006	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
7 July 2006	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
6 October 2006	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
5 January 2007	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
5 April 2007	Conference Room, NFRS HQ

3.9 The proposed schedule for the Finance & Resources Committee can be as follows :

13 April 2006	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
14 July 2006	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
13 October 2006	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
12 January 2007	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
13 April 2007	Conference Room, NFRS HQ

3.10 The proposed schedule for the Community Safety Committee can be as follows :

21 April 2006	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
21 July 2006	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
20 October 2006	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
19 January 2007	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
20 April 2007	Conference Room, NFRS HQ

3.11 The proposed schedule for the Performance Monitoring Committee can be as follows :

28 April 2006	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
28 July 2006	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
27 October 2006	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
26 January 2007	Conference Room, NFRS HQ
27 April 2007	Conference Room, NFRS HQ

3.12 As per the revised Governance structure the Personnel Committee will meet, as required, at the rising of the full Fire & Rescue Authority meeting.

3.13 It is proposed that all meetings will be scheduled to commence at 10:00 hours. In each case all committee meetings are proposed to be held on a Friday. This follows traditional Fire & Rescue Authority structures, however should individual standing committees wish to vary the proposed date to ensure they are quorate, then notification must be given to the Clerk of the Fire & Rescue Authority.

3.14 Support for full Fire & Rescue Authority, Policy & Strategy Committee, Standards Committee and Personnel Committee will be provided by the Clerk to the Fire & Rescue Authority. The remaining committees (Performance Monitoring, Human Resources, Finance & Resources and Community Safety) will be administered and attended by the Fire & Rescue Authority Committee Administrator. Relevant papers, agenda and minutes will be copied to the Clerk for these meetings to ensure monitoring of Authority business is undertaken.

3.15 Minutes for ad-hoc committees (Ad-Hoc Equalities and Best Value Review Board) will be undertaken by NFRS staff. Meeting schedules will be set by the Human Resources Committee and Performance Monitoring Committee respectively.

3.16 There is a clear opportunity within the proposed schedule of meetings, and the new Governance structure for the Authority to position itself well for future scrutiny from both internal and external stakeholders.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 To support the new Governance arrangements a revised agreement has been reached with Nottingham City Council regarding support for the Authority and its associated Committees. The City Council will provide a Clerk and Monitoring Officer for all meetings of the Fire & Rescue Authority, Policy & Strategy Committee, Standards Committee and Personnel Committee. Agenda and minutes will be circulated to the Clerk for all other committees.

- 4.2 For all committees Nottingham City Council will make provision for a Committee Clerk to be present. The total cost to Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire & Rescue Authority is £29k per annum for these services.
- 4.3 An independent remuneration committee has been established to look at the current allowances paid to Fire & Rescue Authority Members and the revised Governance structures to be implemented. The Panel will report its outcomes and recommendations prior to the commencement of the new Governance structure.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

The revised structures will require a greater degree of committee administrative support from Nottingham City Council. This will be addressed through the revision of the existing committee support arrangements as described in Section 4 above.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An Equality Impact Assessment has yet to be undertaken, but it is not anticipated that any direct implications will arise from the revised proposals.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The revised Governance arrangements will ensure that the Fire & Rescue Authority is best positioned to meet the challenges of modernisation and external scrutiny through CPA processes. Failure to meet these obligations could result in intervention by the Secretary of State.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That Members approve Monday 3 April 2006 as the date for commencement of the new Governance arrangements.
- 8.2 That as a result of the transition to the new Governance arrangements, Members note the proposed schedule of meeting dates for the period up to the 2006 Annual General Meeting.
- 8.3 That Members note the proposed dates for meetings to be held after the 2006 Annual General Meeting but that such dates be subject to confirmation at the Annual General Meeting.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION

- Fire Authority reports on Governance, June, July, September 2005
- Audit Commission – CPA Report
- ODPM publication – “Local Leadership, Local Choice”
- ODPM publication – “A Share of the Action”
- ODPM publication – “Political Leadership under the new Political Management Structures”
- ODPM publication – “The Future of Local Government Developing a 10-year Vision”
- ODPM publication – White Paper “Our Fire & Rescue Service”
- Fire & Rescue Services Circular 13/2005
- Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004
- Fire & Rescue Services National Framework 2004/2005
- Fire & Rescue Services National Framework 2005/2006
- CPA for Fire & Rescue Services – Audit Commission

Paul Woods
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER