

report

meeting	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY	
date	9 June 2006	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

RISK RESOURCING AND THE 3-YEAR COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To identify resource issues associated with the delivery of the Community Safety Plan and to seek Member approval for new appointments in line with risk-resource issues identified by the Strategic Management Team (SMT).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Authority has published its 3-year Community Safety Plan; identifying how it will allocate resources to reduce community risk. Within that plan the Authority has established critical objectives and performance targets.
- 2.2 In an earlier Community Safety Plan the Authority identified the importance of new working arrangements in the delivery of that plan. At its April 2006 meeting, the Authority gave approval for the signing of an Agreement between the Service and the Fire Brigades Union, covering the introduction of new working patterns into the Service. Those arrangements will come into effect from 5 September 2006.
- 2.3 Identified as integral to the success of the Plan is the introduction of the focus on community safety by operational crews during the three consecutive day duties and the introduction of the new 'Community Safety' Team, made possible by new risk-resource based crewing arrangements. That activity will be supported by the existing Community Safety Advocates and the central Community Safety Team.
- 2.4 Members will recall that, during early discussions relating to the shift change proposal, it was identified that previous shift arrangements were intended to satisfy a number of requirements, not simply efficiency through increased productivity. Management at that time reported that it would provide further reports to the Authority to address any identifiable 'shortfalls' and to make recommendations to address them.

3 REPORT

- 3.1 In the period between the end of consultation and the introduction of the Community Safety Plan, and in the aftermath of the recent working patterns agreement, Management has worked to identify key objectives and actions for the 2006/07 business plan. Work is also ongoing to ensure the transition to the new shift patterns on 5 September 2006.
- 3.2 That date is seen as a key milestone in terms of the delivery of the Community Safety Plan. It will provide a focus for Managers to engage with District based teams to identify local priorities within organisational objectives and performance targets,

and to develop 'Team Charters' within the Performance Management Framework. Senior Managers are producing a timetable for District based meetings with Middle and Junior Officers.

- 3.3 Members are aware that a major and continuing element of work associated with the management of the Service is the identification of corporate risk. As well as the requirement to ensure the effective day to day management of the Service there is the need to ensure that the ever-changing external pressures on the Service at central, regional and local level are addressed.
- 3.4 Since 2002 the Service has been the subject of major scrutiny by, among others, the Bain Enquiry and the Audit Commission (Pay Verification and CPA). The Government's White Paper in 2003, the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, National Framework documents, Fire and Rescue Service Circulars and other legislation and guidance set out clear and challenging expectations for the modernisation of the Service. In addition, value for money and efficiency targets now form a major component of Service management.
- 3.5 The Authority is planning to deliver the improvements highlighted in the first Comprehensive Performance Assessment of the Service. SMT are also working on the requirements to satisfy the next round of assessment. Key to success will be the ability of the Authority to evidence 'value for money', 'use of resources' and 'direction of travel' requirements within the Assessment methodology. For the first time in the CPA process for fire and rescue authorities will be an 'operational assurance' component of assessment. That work is in progress.
- 3.6 SMT has recently appointed Area and Group Managers to vacancies within the Service and has reviewed the Service structure to ensure the effective use of resources. As part of that work, Managers have identified risk-resource issues associated with the implementation of the Community Safety Plan and the effective management of the Service. Where conversion of posts is appropriate this will be dealt with in accordance within existing arrangements.
- 3.7 At its meeting on 15 May 2006, SMT dealt with issues associated with risk-resource priorities. Included within that discussion were items relating to HR, Finance, Operational Assurance and Change Management.
- 3.8 HR issues are also the subject of a separate report to the Authority. Outside of that report however there is a recommendation to Members for an immediate appointment to the HR team. Members will be aware that an existing HR resource originally established within the section is now (since 1 April 2006) a shared regional resource, with part funding from each of the other Services in the East Midlands. To replace this it has been identified and approved by SMT for the appointment of a Senior Personnel Officer.
- 3.9 The second approval sought by SMT is in response to issues highlighted by the Head of Finance and Resources relating to pressures faced within the Finance Department. SMT recently approved a temporary increase in resources to deal with issues associated with the original introduction of the replacement financial management/accounting system: Kypera. A number of audits have identified the requirement to deal with certain aspects of the system. As an existing risk identified by the Head of Finance and Resources this is now being addressed.
- 3.10 There are however additional, emerging pressures for the Finance Department that have been identified recently to SMT. Those issues relate to :

- Whole of Government Accounts
 - Comprehensive Performance Assessment
 - Changes Auditing requirements and international standards
 - Value for Money agenda linked to CPA
 - Increasing partnership working
- 3.11 In response to this need, the Head of Finance and Resources has identified a new post to support the existing finance team, in addition to the temporary arrangements put in place as described above. The post is that of Senior Accountant (Performance and Value for Money). The requirement is for a qualified accountant in this role and the grade of the post will be subject to evaluation under the NJC job evaluation scheme.
- 3.12 Members will be aware that, during the approval process for the 2006/07 budget, financial provision was made for the acquisition of a Vector Command training system. That requirement is an essential component of Incident Command Training provision. Having considered the project in advance of purchase, it has been identified that there is a resource requirement over and above that originally identified. It is recognised that, in order to effectively operate the system and secure its full use, there is a need for an additional trainer to support the ongoing individual development programme.
- 3.13 Two dedicated staff members will be required to operate the system. Financial provision has been made for one post. Approval is therefore sought for a second new post. This increase in non-uniformed establishment is justified on the basis of risk and the consequences of not addressing those risks previously identified to the Authority. Vector Command Training Posts will need to be evaluated under the NJC job evaluation scheme.
- 3.14 The final component in this report relates to the delivery of the 3-year Community Safety Plan and transformational change associated with the requirement to deal effectively with the reform agenda and the delivery of key objectives. A key component of that change agenda is the need to ensure that the Service evolves into one that can proactively identify changes in community risk and respond to them. It is also imperative that the Service continues to evolve to deliver its full potential in communities alongside partners. Issues associated with neighbourhood management, community sustainability and well-being being examples of future activity.
- 3.15 The Community Safety Plan 2006–2009 sets out the vision for the organisation over the medium term. The drivers for change and expected outcomes are well documented. With the increasing burden on the organisation to manage the change process it is recognised that change management expertise is required to work alongside Officers at all levels. A dedicated change management postholder will provide a skilled senior officer to :
- Identify existing internal and external change management processes.
 - Communicate areas of weakness and strengths in the existing processes.
 - Develop change management processes to deliver the Authority's vision and the community safety plan.
 - Up-skill internal managers to be better able manage future changes.
- 3.16 It is also recognised that, as well as the development aspects of Service need, is the requirement to ensure that aspects of change already identified are delivered within the current planning and performance management framework. The proposed role will build on the recent changes to the communications arrangements

in the Service and the developing need to ensure effective public and other stakeholder consultation.

- 3.17 ODPM, in the aftermath of the 2003 White Paper and the introduction of the National Framework arrangements, saw the need to introduce a number of regional business change managers (BCMs) to support the process of reform. There is no direct relationship between the Service and the East Midlands BCM. The value of the role is accepted.
- 3.18 In terms of the approval sought from Members for the appointment of a Change Manager, SMT have identified the need to seek a non-uniformed appointment at a level to be determined through the NJC job evaluation process, but which is likely to be at Grade 8 or 9 in recognition of the responsibilities of the role. Given the fact that the postholder will also be responsible for the training and development of existing personnel and embedding change process within the organisation, the proposal is for a three year appointment.
- 3.19 SMT are aware of the scale of the change agenda that the Service faces. It also recognises the risks associated with failure to deliver the Authority's vision. The improvements in strategic and business support identified in this report are key to that success and the management of organisational risk.
- 3.20 Whilst the appointments are in addition to the current authorised establishment, their importance and contribution is recognised. Of the posts identified, three are permanent and one temporary. As identified at the beginning of this paper, there are issues associated with the successful delivery of the Community Safety Plan, the ability of the Authority to respond to a changing and challenging operating environment, and to reduce risk exposure. It is appropriate therefore to recommend to Members that the additional funding for these posts is provided from the Service modernisation budget.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There will be a direct cost associated with Member approval of the identified posts. Budget provision for the purchase of the Vector Command training package has already been approved by the Authority. There is a requirement within this report to increase the budget provision to appoint a second trainer to the Vector project. The full year revenue budget implications of the 4 posts combined is in the region of £150K. In the current financial year (2006/07) the financial implications will be reduced proportionality due to the fact that appointments will commence in year. It is estimated that the financial implication for 2006/07 is £80K. Revenue support for the Change Manager post is fixed at 3 years, all other posts are permanent. Funding for these posts is contained within the existing modernisation budget.

5 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

All appointments will be dealt with in accordance with current policies and procedures. Job evaluation will be undertaken for the roles of Senior Accountant, Vector Command Trainer and Change Manager under the provisions of the NJC job evaluation scheme.

6 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An equalities impact assessment has not been carried out on this report. All approved appointments will be made in accordance with existing policies which are compliant with equalities and fairness requirements.

7 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The issues highlighted to the Authority in the report have risk management implications. There are financial implications associated with the failure to deliver the Authority's vision, Government expectations and performance targets. The degree to which the Authority is exposed to risk underpins the requirement for the appointments to be made in order to provide effective risk management controls.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members approve the above appointments and subsequent increase in the authorised establishment, as detailed in this report.

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION

None.

Paul Woods
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