



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**  
**Fire & Rescue Service**  
*Creating Safer Communities*

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham  
Fire and Rescue Authority  
Community Safety Committee

# RETAINED STRATEGY REVIEW

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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**Agenda Item No:**

**Date:** 31 October 2008

**Purpose of Report:**

To present to Members the actions management are taking with regard to a review of the retained service within Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and with the objective of achieving a plan to deliver a long term strategy to ensure its resilience and availability.

## CONTACT OFFICER

**Name :** David Horton  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer

**Tel :** 0115 967 0880

**Email :** [david.horton@notts-fire.gov.uk](mailto:david.horton@notts-fire.gov.uk)

**Media Enquiries Contact :** Elisabeth Reeson  
(0115) 967 5889 [elisabeth.reeson@notts-fire.gov.uk](mailto:elisabeth.reeson@notts-fire.gov.uk)

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 As part of the 2003 pay agreement, new terms and conditions of employment were implemented, which placed retained firefighters on an equal standing with their wholetime colleagues. This change ensured that single status would be implemented and standard processes for recruitment and progression would be applied.
- 1.2 In addition to the changes to the conditions of employment of retained firefighters, the County continues to experience changes in its demographic profile. Once industrially focused towns and villages are now becoming satellite and dormitory settlements for major conurbations. A demise in shift based working, along with improved networks and communications, is making it difficult to recruit and maintain retained cover to previous levels.
- 1.3 In response to the issues raised in 1.1 and 1.2, and following concerns expressed by management, trade unions and Elected Members, it was previously resolved through negotiating panel and an informal Members' seminar, that the Service needed to address these factors with a long term (5–10 year) strategy.

## **2. REPORT**

- 2.1 The Service has made it a priority to integrate the Retained Duty System (RDS) staff into the Service and to break down previously perceived barriers, particularly between RDS and wholetime counterparts. Modifications in employment arrangements have been pursued to enhance consistent approaches in areas such as staffing, career progression and operational competence, so as to demonstrate transparently what the Service expects and how the RDS can further improve on the contribution it makes to the Authority agenda.
- 2.2 This has been both a challenging and innovative period where, with the co-operation of local and regional partners, a number of processes have been put in place to ensure that the recruitment, development and promotion of retained and wholetime staff are inextricably linked.
- 2.3 National reviews have been undertaken which the Service has reacted to positively and incorporated findings, as far as possible, into its undertakings and arrangements. The Service has identified the need to consolidate all of the work which has been ongoing and develop a formalised strategy for the future. Many components have been or will be discussed by Members so as to best inform the Authority of how this key area is being progressed.
- 2.4 As with many challenges the Service has faced over the last five years, the long term sustainability of the RDS is critical to the future of the Service. Additionally, initial work undertaken reveals that there is no short term fix and that any formalised strategy must take account of issues within the fire and

rescue service and those external to it, such as demographics and economic development.

- 2.5 An initial scoping exercise was undertaken to establish key objectives that the Service may want from such a review. The following aspects were identified:

<b>Scope of Work to be Included</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Establish an understanding of the Strategic Management Team and Fire Authority's expectations of future needs and requirements.</li><li>2. Meet with each of the key stakeholders to establish:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Existing and proposed official roles and responsibilities.</li><li>• Recruitment and retention policies currently operated.</li><li>• Each stakeholder's willingness or reservation to explore the possibility of providing a co-ordinated approach to the review and its outcomes.</li><li>• Understand and appreciate any specific internal and external issues that are relevant to the review.</li><li>• The limitations, if any, placed by each stakeholder on Fire and Rescue Service delivery outside of the current jurisdiction or remit.</li><li>• Any specific known deficiencies or difficulties preventing Fire and Rescue Service delivery.</li><li>• Resources available in terms of staff and equipment.</li></ul></li><li>3. Identify the current initiatives and programmes for employing, managing, retaining and training of personnel on the RDS.</li><li>4. Recognise recent national reports and publications, regulations, legislation, standard operating procedures and safety documents that may impact on future provision.</li><li>5. Acknowledge and record the current RDS management, systems and schemes as operated within Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service that satisfy, comply or exceed national reviews and guidelines.</li></ol>

- 2.6 In addition, the following deliverables were considered:

- Complete the review of the RDS as operated within Nottinghamshire based upon information and evidence gathered, without any preconceived ideas, to identify an appropriate strategy for Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service for the next 10 years.
- Recognise the resources currently available, taking account of any known limitations, and identify those areas of positive action in respect of the above review.

- Identify potential initiatives that could be employed and, where possible, offer alternative proposals and practices that are operating elsewhere in the country that are worth considering.
- All viable proposals will, where possible, be realistically costed to identify the financial impacts of each solution.

2.7 In consultation with other Services who have undertaken such work, the Service has identified an individual to pursue this project. Terms of reference for the work have been discussed, with a detailed outline of the arrangements the Service expects, being prepared. This is considered a necessary approach as the organisation's capacity to deliver such a report in the timeframes required is limited. It also ensures that an objective view is taken without local bias or the potential impacts that may arise.

2.8 It is intended that the review will be a comprehensive process involving all those with an interest in Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and its retained staff. This is to include Elected Members, trade unions, retained staff, managers and other personnel. No specific commencement date has been proposed, however a target of January 2009 has been considered appropriate.

2.9 Once completed it is anticipated that the outcomes of the review will be incorporated into Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's next integrated risk management planning process and as a consequence, will form part of the next three year Community Safety Plan.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

No fees have yet been agreed with the individual, however it is expected to come from within existing budget provisions and the amounts delegated to the Chief Fire Officer for such activities.

### **4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The process will clearly identify areas which have human resources and learning and development implications. These will be addressed as part of the process and discussed with responsible staff.

### **5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

An initial equality impact assessment is attached at Appendix A.

### **6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Fire and Rescue Authority has a statutory duty to provide a Fire and Rescue Service under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Chief Fire Officer is tasked with the delivery and management of this through delegated responsibilities. A retained service is an essential part of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and as such, a review will help the Service plan its future more effectively and will enable the organisation to meet its statutory obligations.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The RDS is a pivotal resource available to the Service, and failure to fully engage, equip and resource adequately this group will have negative consequences and could adversely affect scrutiny as part of Audit Commission inspection regimes. It will also have potential legal obligations as stated in Section 7 above.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members note the approach of the retained review being taken by management and agree to contribute to the process as necessary.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)**

- The Fire and Rescue Service Retained Duty System: A review of the Recruitment and Retention Challenges;
- The Retained Duty System: A Survey of Local Employers.

Frank Swann  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**



## INITIAL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Section Risk Response	Manager DCFO Horton	Date of Assessment September 2008	New or Existing N/A
<b>Name of Policy/Service/Procedure to be assessed</b>		Retained Duty System Strategy Update	
1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy/service/procedure	To enhance the quality of the RDS provision and to explore better ways of working.		
Who is intended to benefit from this policy and what are the outcomes?	RDS staff principally and the Service generally.		
2. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy/service/procedure?	RDS and Wholetime Fire fighting staff.		
3. Who implements and who is responsible for the policy/service/procedure?	DCFO Horton		

4. Please identify the differential impact in the terms of the six strands below. Please tick yes if you have identified any differential impacts. Please state evidence of negative or positive impacts below.

STRAND	Y	N	NEGATIVE IMPACT	POSITIVE IMPACT
Race		<b>x</b>		<p>Greater cohesion in the Services approach to Recruitment and Selection of potential staff will enhance integration and opportunity for all the groups/strands.</p> <p>Any differential impacts will be addressed as part of the overall process.</p>
Gender		<b>x</b>		
Disability		<b>x</b>		
Religion or Belief		<b>x</b>		
Sexuality		<b>x</b>		
Age		<b>x</b>		

6. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group?	Y	N	7. Should the policy/service proceed to a full impact assessment?	Y	N
	<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>