



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item No:

Date: 15 July 2011

Purpose of Report:

To inform and update Members on developments within the partnership agenda.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name : John Buckley
Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Tel : 0115 967 0880

Email : john.buckley@notts-fire.gov.uk

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

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 On 11 May 2009 the Partnership Manager took up duties within Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) with a remit for the strategic development and maintenance of Service-wide partnerships, supporting senior officers and the Community Safety Committee of the Fire Authority.
- 1.2 The partnership environment in the spring of 2009 was very different to the one that NFRS is facing today, and the changes within the Service over that time demand a different approach to partnership engagement.
- 1.3 Previously, NFRS's major involvement with Strategic Partnerships has been concentrated on the County and City Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), (The Nottinghamshire Partnership and One Nottingham) and the Strategic Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), (The Safer Nottinghamshire Board and Nottingham CDP).
- 1.4 At a local level, Group Managers engage with District LSPs and CSPs, and they are involved in local planning, tasking and co-ordination meetings.
- 1.5 In accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, NFRS, as a 'Responsible Authority' has a statutory duty to work with other responsible authorities through the CSPs to reduce crime and the societal impact of crime.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 Nationally, the recent financial restraints and changes in policy have had an impact on the structures and conduct of Local Strategic Partnerships. Financial restraint has meant that City, District, Borough and County authorities have had to seriously review the services that they do not have a duty to perform. As the Local Authorities have been the main drivers of the Strategic Partnerships and provide the bulk of the partnership infrastructure and financial resource, this has understandably been an area that has faced reductions.
- 2.2 The withdrawal of the LAA, National Indicators and Comprehensive Area Assessments means that LSPs no longer have a performance management role, nor, after the removal of the Performance Rewards Grant, an income. However, many authorities have chosen to leave the indicators in place until a replacement system is found.
- 2.3 In the County, partners have agreed that considering the above, there is no longer a formal requirement for a constituted body at that level and have dissolved the LSP (The Nottinghamshire Partnership). The Board felt that the new refocused thematic groups covering children and young people, community safety, health and well being and economic prosperity could cover the current partnership agenda, negating the need for an overarching Board.

- 2.4 In the District and Boroughs, only Ashfield has dissolved their LSP, the rest are continuing much as before. As these LSPs do not generally have a dedicated funding stream, the recent budget reductions have not been too much of an issue aside from the cost of officer time.
- 2.5 The Safer Nottinghamshire Board is the overarching Community Safety Forum for the County CSPs and will remain in place for the foreseeable future. Its performance group is now meeting every quarter and is considering establishing another strategic group to cover domestic violence. It has taken a decision however to limit its strategic activity and its funding to the 15 wards that it has agreed are the greatest priority. Out of this years county budget for Community Safety, £44k has been allocated to Districts for each of the 15 priority wards, with an additional £286k placed in a pot to commission county wide services.
- 2.6 The priority wards are as follows;
- Portland, Ravensdale Sherwood in **Mansfield**
 - Kirkby East, Sutton Central, Sutton East, Sutton North in **Ashfield**
 - Worksop North East, Howarth, Worksop North West in **Bassetlaw**
 - Castle in **Newark & Sherwood**
 - Carlton and Netherfield & Colwick in **Gedling**
 - Trent Bridge in **Rushcliffe**
 - Eastwood South in **Broxtowe**
- 2.7 With the exception of Trent Bridge, these areas reflect our own priority areas and we are currently working with Adult Social Care, the Police and PCSOs to target the elderly and vulnerable in these areas with Home Fire Safety Checks.
- 2.8 As the Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) still stand on a statutory footing, it is not possible to dissolve these entities without changes to legislation. The CSPs/CDP have developed substantially over the last decade with a momentum and credibility that is not easily waned. The decision by the Safer Nottinghamshire Board to focus on 15 priority areas has given the CSPs a little more focus and strategic direction, with targeted funding.
- 2.9 All CSPs in the County have now either a merged or reached agreement on more collaborative working. This has led to the joining of Bassetlaw with Newark and Sherwood; and, Broxtowe with Rushcliffe and Gedling. Although Mansfield and Ashfield have not formally merged, they have agreed to the sharing of their tasking groups.
- 2.10 Within the City, the One Nottingham (LSP) Partnership maintains its structure with a reduced number of officers (it now has just 2 full time staff) and has now moved in with the City Council at Loxley House. A review of the Theme Partnership structure will take place over the summer.

- 2.11 With the ending of the Working Neighbourhood Fund, Area Based Grant and the withdrawal of the Performance Reward Grant, it no longer has a budget of its own. The City council has assisted with the creation of a One Nottingham (ON) fund using previously unspent balances from the Partnerships funds.
- 2.12 The partnership will continue in its present form and work towards the objectives of the Nottingham Plan, which will be reprioritised to meet the short term needs in the current economic and political climate. Councillor David Mellen will chair the ON board and Jane Todd the ON Executive Group.
- 2.13 The Crime and Drugs Partnership (CDP) in the City have now moved to smaller premises at the Galleries of Justice and have greatly reduced their core staffing from over 40 to the current 21. They have been awarded £508k from the Home Office for this year for Community Safety activities. Along with One Nottingham, they have emphasised their commitment to the ten year plan with their objectives of a Safer Nottingham, reduction in the fear of crime and ASB, Substance Misuse and Re-offending.
- 2.14 Taking the above into consideration and with the Service becoming more targeted in its delivery of preventative interventions plus the advent of a new focus on the people most vulnerable to fire, the Services approach to partnership engagement needed to change. Although the Service will still engage at formal partnership level, the emphasis is now on reaching out to our target groups through the professional agencies that deal with them on a regular basis.
- 2.15 Our involvement with the Safeguarding Boards has brought a new dimension to this work enabling us to engage with areas of the NHS and Social Care that would previously have been unwilling to work with us. Work is also progressing with the voluntary and community sector who NFRS are actively engaging with using their particular areas of expertise.
- 2.16 More recently the Service has begun to work with Nottingham City Homes (NCH) as part of a comprehensive plan for a concerted approach to all Housing Associations. The NCH engagement has produced to date, information on unreported fires, notification of high risk tenants and updates when they move properties, and as a spin off NFRS has been able to use one of their high rise buildings for a large scale exercise as reported in the latest issue of Response.
- 2.17 Previous partnership arrangements are now being revisited to ensure that the Service receives maximum value from that engagement, particularly where it is paying for a service.

2.18 Examples of this new approach include;

- Information sharing agreements with Health and Social Care services
- Commissioning of Home Safety Checks to organisations catering for older people, drug and alcohol users, people with disabilities etc.
- The training of specialist care and health workers to identify those most vulnerable to fire in the course of their normal duties.
- Formal links with Mental Health Services to train workers and identify 'at risk' individuals living in the community.
- Formal referral systems for the vulnerable when discharged from hospital.
- Review of the established First Contact referral system to focus on those most at need.
- Better joint working with Housing Associations and Responsible Social Landlords (RSLs)
- Collaborative working with Nottinghamshire Police and County Older Persons Services to provide joint home security and home safety fire checks.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

NFRS currently spend approximately £56k per annum on Partnership activity; this includes contributions towards partnership infrastructure and all commissioning.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

NFRS is currently arranging for training in mental health awareness and Safeguarding Children and Adults to be delivered to relevant personnel. The Safeguarding training will incur a cost whilst the mental health training will be delivered by the NHS mental health training team at no cost.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This approach will ensure that we reach out to and work with those hard to reach groups that are most at risk which will be further enhanced by the adoption of the Vulnerable Persons Policy.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

The Service's intervention strategy is linked to the crime and disorder agenda and the reduction of anti-social behaviour through the Safer Nottinghamshire Board and Crime and Drugs Partnership of which NFRS remain a statutory partner in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

A partnership policy has been produced that lays out the legal implications of statutory partnerships and the arrangements for the handling of financial agreements. This will be assured at a local level with a generic Service Level Agreement for all commissioned projects.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Without this collaborative approach, NFRS will not be able to meet the objectives of its Vulnerable Persons Policy and address the needs of those most at risk.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That Members endorse the refreshed approach being taken by Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service in conducting its partnership activity.
- 9.2 Members agree to receive reports from the Chief Fire Officer as to the progress of the revised partnership arrangements.

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

None.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER