



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM
FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Date: FRIDAY 4 OCTOBER 2013

Time: 10.00 am

**Venue: Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge, Arnold,
Nottingham.**

**Members are requested to attend the above meeting to be held at the time, place
and date mentioned for the purpose of transacting the following business.**

Clerk to the Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillors, colleagues or other participants in meetings are requested to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest in any matter(s) on the agenda

3 MINUTES

Last meeting held on 5 July 2013 (for confirmation)

Attached

4 FIRE INVESTIGATION

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Attached

If you are unsure whether or not you should declare an interest in a particular matter, please contact the Constitutional Services Officer shown on this agenda, if possible before the day of the meeting, who will provide advice in the first instance.

Any Councillor who is unable to attend the meeting and wishes to submit apologies should do so via the Personal Assistant to the Chief Fire Officer at Fire Services Headquarters on 0115 967 0880

Agenda, reports and minutes for all public meetings can be viewed online at:-
<http://open.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/comm/default.asp>

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3



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM
FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

of the meeting held on **5 JULY 2013** at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters,
Bestwood Lodge from 10.00 am to 10.46 am.

Membership

Councillor Harwood (Chair)
Councillor Barnfather
Councillor Grocock
Councillor Rigby
Councillor Wilmot

Members absent are marked ^

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made.

3 MINUTES

(a) Confirmation

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2013 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

(b) Matters Arising

RESOLVED to request Deputy Chief Fire Officer John Buckley to send a letter on behalf of the Authority to Councillor Fielding thanking her for her work and dedication as Chair of the Committee.

4 STRATEGIC CO-LOCATION - EAST MIDLANDS AMBULANCE SERVICE

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Fire Officer informing members of a six month pilot to co-locate East Midlands Ambulance Service on three Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Stations.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer John Buckley presented the report and highlighted the following points:

- There will be a formal arrangement with a memorandum of understanding but a joint agreement will allow either party to withdraw from the arrangements under an agreed set of conditions.
- Other than forecourt space, EMAS only requires access to existing welfare facilities which can be easily shared with Station staff.
- There is potential for rental income and a charge covering the use of facilities, including dedicated electricity supply.
- From a list of 14 sites potentially suitable for co-location, the following 3 have been selected for the pilot;
 - West Bridgford - whole time
 - Ashfield - whole time and retained
 - Stapleford - retained.

The Committee noted that co-location of blue light services will be considered during the development of future new build facilities. The initiative was welcomed by Councillors.

RESOLVED

- (1) to support the co-location trial with East Midlands Ambulance Service, initially in three locations using spare capacity;**
- (2) to request John Mann, Area Manager Strategic Support, to provide further updates on the progress of the trial to future meetings.**

5 PRIMARY AUTHORITY SCHEME PILOT

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Fire Officer informing members that Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) has entered into a pilot Primary Authority Scheme partnership with Boots Plc.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer John Buckley presented the report and highlighted the following points:

- The Primary Authority Scheme is currently voluntary and provides regional and national businesses with a single point of contact in relation to fire safety legislation, relevant duties and advice.
- Without the scheme, NFRS has responsibility for all businesses within the county.

- Boots' partnership with Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue means that NFRS Fire Protection Team has attended various training days and workshops outside of the County, providing guidance and training.
- Businesses can choose the level of support needed from the Primary Authority.
- Between January and June 2013, two schemes, one statutory and one non-statutory, were piloted across 17 Fire and Rescue Services and 17 businesses. NFRS operated the statutory model of the scheme during the pilot.
- Areas to be assessed from running the pilots will include cost implications, impact on Fire Service capacity and impact on the Integrated Risk Management Plan.
- NFRS already works closely with Boots, but under the pilot scheme, NFRS advice will be implemented and acted upon in all Boots premises within the UK, regardless of county, Local Authority or other Fire and Rescue Service boundaries.
- A central register of the partnerships will be maintained and Primary Authorities are expected to liaise as and when enforcement action was considered necessary.
- If the statutory scheme is approved by Central Government, Primary Authorities will be able to claim reimbursement to cover costs. However, any business in any part of the UK can demand that Fire and Rescue Service become their Primary Authority.
- Government feedback on the pilot is predicted to be released during October 2013.

RESOLVED to note the report and request John Buckley, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, to provide an update on the Primary Authority Scheme to a future meeting once Central Government has decided which of the two pilot schemes to implement.

6 DISTRICT INITIATIVES - INFORMAL REPORTING PROCESS

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Fire Officer requesting that the Committee consider receiving informal briefings from District Group Managers at the rising of the next three meetings.

The report proposed that Councillors might find it interesting and useful to receive informal briefings of approximately 30 minutes each, from the 3 district command units of:

City - Nottingham City
South Nottinghamshire - Broxtowe, Rushcliffe and Gedling,
North Nottinghamshire - Ashfield, Mansfield, Newark and Sherwood, and
Bassetlaw.

This will enable the Group Managers to inform the Committee of activities taking place at station level, particularly with regard to local community safety activities and initiatives.

The Committee welcomed the proposal.

RESOLVED to request informal briefings from District Group Managers at the rising of the next three Community Safety meetings.



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

FIRE INVESTIGATION

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item No:

4,

Date:

4 October 2013

Purpose of Report:

To inform Members of the arrangements for fire investigation currently in place in Nottinghamshire and the effectiveness of it.

CONTACT OFFICER

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service has maintained a Fire Investigation Team for a number of years on a voluntary basis by way of an addition to the role of flexi-duty officers. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 formalised the requirement to provide such a team. The 2004/2005 National Framework directed that Fire and Rescue Authorities should work together through Regional Management Boards to ensure effective fire investigation. This report details the Authority's response to the above and provides an overview of the activity of the team during the previous 12 months.
- 1.2 As a result of the direction from the Regional Management Board, a regional Fire and Explosion Investigation Policy was agreed on 30 June 2006. This policy requires that each of the fire and rescue services of the East Midland's region will maintain a minimum of 8 Investigators qualified to undertake Level 2 fire and explosion investigations.
- 1.3 The policy also provides that, in the event of no level 2 investigator being on duty within an individual fire and rescue service, the command and control centre for that service will request a suitably qualified investigator from the next nearest service within the East Midland's region to the location of the incident.
- 1.4 Fire investigation currently operates at 2 levels in Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service:
- Level 1 is conducted by Supervisory Managers;
 - Level 2 is conducted by specialist Fire Investigation Officers.
- 1.5 In support of the East Midland's Regional Policy, the 8 Investigators are made up of 5 flexi-duty operational officers and 3 non-operational uniformed officers. These 3 officers have recently been appointed following a selection process and will be a new addition to the team.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members with regard to the function and recent activity of the Fire Investigation Team. The report will be supported by a presentation from the Station Manager responsible for the team.

LEVEL 1 FIRE INVESTIGATION

- 2.2 This is conducted by supervisory managers at the scene of all fires and will produce fire cause information that will be recorded as the most likely cause on the Incident Recording System (IRS). Information from this system is used together with other factors to direct where community safety resources and interventions are allocated. Where a cause cannot be established, a level 2 Fire Investigation Officer may be requested to attend the scene.

- 2.3 All newly appointed Supervisory Managers attend a 2 day training programme delivered by the Fire Investigation Team Co-ordinator at the Service Development Centre. Refresher training to all operational personnel is currently being delivered and the programme will be complete by the end of this year.

LEVEL 2 FIRE INVESTIGATION

- 2.4 Fire Control will mobilise a level 2 Fire Investigator to the following incidents:

- fires involving fatalities or serious injury (excluding road traffic collisions);
- fires requiring the use of 6 or more pumping appliances (with the exception of pumps deployed for water relay);
- primary fires where the cause cannot be easily identified (except motor vehicles);
- on request from the senior police investigating officer;
- following a recall to the same address within 12 hours of a previous primary fire;
- Fires of Special Interest as defined by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

- 2.5 Level 2 Fire Investigators attend a practical and theoretical course currently provided by Fire Service College. They are also expected to complete a number of units from the National Occupational Standards for fire investigation before being deemed competent to conduct investigations on their own. They will also work alongside an experienced Investigator on a number of investigations prior to being deemed competent. There is both a person specification and job description for this role.

- 2.6 The fire investigation function is managed and coordinated by the Station Manager in the Arson Reduction and Investigation Team. This team consists of a Station Manager, a Watch Manager and 3 non-operational uniformed personnel.

- 2.7 There are 2 Memorandums of Understanding in place with regard to fire investigation in Nottinghamshire. One is with Nottinghamshire Police and the other is with the 4 other fire and rescue services in the East Midland's area. These memoranda cover agreed procedures for fire investigation and the individual responsibilities of the signatories.

- 2.8 The regional agreement provides funding for a regional hydrocarbon detection dog and handler. This is available to all regional partners however it is used mostly by Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. The dog and handler can be requested 24 hours a day 365 days a year by level 2 fire investigators or by request from the police. If the dog and handler are not available for any reason arrangements are in place to request a dog and handler from another service, this however will have a financial implication for the Service.

- 2.9 The dog will be requested at all fatal fires and those resulting in serious injury together with those where an accelerant is suspected to have been used. Since April this year, the dog and handler have attended around 40 investigations in Nottinghamshire.

- 2.10 The regional agreement also provides half a flexi duty Station Manager post to coordinate the regional provision. This post is currently provided by Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service. This coordinator chairs bi-monthly meetings where regional fire investigation managers share best practice and review regional policies and procedures. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service currently contribute £13,148 towards regional fire investigation.
- 2.11 From 1 January 2013 to date, 57 level 2 fire investigations have been conducted, this compares to 102 in total for 2012. It is therefore expected that there will be a slight decrease in the number of level 2 investigations conducted in 2013 compared with 2012.
- 2.12 It is the intention of the Arson Reduction and Investigation Team to ensure that its investigative practice and reports are of such a standard that they are accepted by the courts without the need for Investigators to appear in court. This is of huge cost benefit to the service as court cases can often last for a number of days or weeks and officers would be away from their normal duties for long periods. In 2012 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service through thorough investigations and comprehensive statements in relation to arson related offences and assisted the Crown Prosecution Service in securing convictions amounting to 76 years imprisonment. Throughout the above mentioned court hearings, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service officers were not required to attend any of the court cases.
- 2.13 There have been 2 fire fatalities in Nottinghamshire so far in 201 and these have been investigated by level 2 investigators in conjunction with the Police. Reports on these fire deaths will be presented to H.M. Coroner for consideration. Reports are now structured not only to provide the origin and cause of fire, but also to present the circumstances of the individual and their lifestyle in order to show why this individual has died as a result of the fire and to make any recommendations for further actions or interventions to prevent further deaths or injury from fire. This enables the Fire Investigation Officers to make a significant contribution to the aim of "Creating Safer Communities" working alongside partner agencies. The Fire Investigation Team has an excellent working relationship with H.M. Coroner and the staff within the Coroner's Office.
- 2.14 Fire Investigators also work closely with police crime scene investigators and forensic scientists. It is Home Office policy that a forensic scientist is appointed to investigate all fatal fires; however this can be changed on the instructions of the police senior investigating officer. If a forensic scientist is appointed, H.M. Coroner will still expect a report to be presented in court by the fire investigation officer.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, it is worthy of note that contribution to the regional support and provision of the hydrocarbon detection dog is currently £13,148 and ongoing training costs approximately £4,000 per annum.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

A workforce planning process is in place for ensuring that the team size is maintained at 8 level 2 qualified officers.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken because there are no equalities issues arising from this report. However, it is worthy of note that changes to the structure in 2012 has enable non-operational staff access to roles restricted to senior officers. This has enabled access to these roles from a much more diverse group and consideration is also being given to the potential of expanding these roles to either apprentices or graduate entry.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

The head of the Fire Investigation Team is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Service's obligations under the Fire Services Act.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The Authority has a statutory duty under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to investigate incidents of fire. In the case of a fatality, serious injury or financial loss, the Authority is also compelled to ensure that fire investigation reports are accurate, based on sound scientific evidence and robust with regards to legal scrutiny. The Fire Investigation Team, with support through regional arrangements, ensures that this duty, and relevant risk, is well managed.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report and continue to support the activity of the Fire Investigation Team.

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

Regional Fire & Explosion Investigation Policy.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

