

report

Meeting	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY POLICY AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE	
Date	22 November 2006	Agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

INTERIM REPORT ON GOVERNANCE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Policy & Strategy Committee on the current progress following the implementation of the revised Governance arrangements in April 2006.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 As part of its response to the first Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process for Fire & Rescue Authorities, and in a bid to improve their own engagement with the Service, Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire & Rescue Authority undertook a fundamental review of the Governance arrangements during 2005.

2.2 In conjunction with the review an independent panel was convened to look at the structure and associated allowances for Members. This ensured that the proposals for revised Governance were robust in all areas.

3. REPORT

3.1 Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire & Rescue Authority introduced its revised Governance on 1 April 2006. This saw the implementation of a number of committees and a reduction in the number of meetings of the full Fire & Rescue Authority. In summary the following Committees were established:-

COMMITTEE	MEETING FREQUENCY
FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY	QUARTERLY
POLICY & STRATEGY COMMITTEE	QUARTERLY
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE	QUARTERLY
FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE	QUARTERLY
COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE	QUARTERLY
PERFORMANCE MONITORING COMMITTEE	QUARTERLY
STANDARDS COMMITTEE	AS REQUIRED, MINIMUM ANNUALLY
APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE	AS REQUIRED
PERSONNEL COMMITTEE	AS REQUIRED

3.2 In addition two ad-hoc groups were also established these were:-

- Best Value Review Group
- Ad-Hoc Equalities Group

3.3 Since the inception of the new structure the revised committees have had the opportunity to meet on a number of occasions. Attendance and support by Members has been high. A breakdown of the Committee meetings and their attendance ratio is given below.

COMMITTEE	MEETINGS TO DATE	ATTENDANCE	ATTENDANCE RATIO
FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE	3	10/15	66%
COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE	3	14/15	93%
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE	3	11/15	73%
PERFORMANCE MONITORING COMMITTEE	3	12/15	80%
POLICY & STRATEGY COMMITTEE	2	11/12	73%
FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY	2	26/36	72%
PERSONNEL COMMITTEE	0	-	-

The attendance ratio is based on the number of meetings held and the number of Members attending in relation to the Committee size.

3.4 The revised structure and the commitment by Authority Members in attending the relevant meetings has already had to a greater awareness of issues facing the Service. In addition the continuity between each meeting has ensured that members are actively involved in the decisions of the Authority at key strategic levels.

3.5 Issues addressed to date by the revised structure are as follows:-

Human Resources Committee

- Absence Management
- New Posts
- Sports Leave
- Pensions
- Salary Grades

Finance & Resources Committee

- Auditors Reports
- Budget Monitoring
- Efficiency Gains
- Risk Management
- Value for Money

Community Safety Committee

- Member Champions
- Community Safety Programme
- Making Children Safe
- Vehicle Fires
- Future Plans

Performance Monitoring Committee

- Comprehensive Performance Assessment
- Absence
- Operational Performance
- Equalities
- Business Planning

Policy & Strategy Committee

- Community Safety Plan
- Shift Change
- Equalities/ Core Values
- Review of Stores & Procurement
- Acquisition of Premises

Fire & Rescue Authority

- Community Safety Plan Consultation
- Regional Control Centre
- Member/ Officer Code of Conduct
- Comprehensive Performance Assessment Process
- Governance

In addition an Ad-Hoc group on Equalities has looked at the following in relation to its role.

- Race Equality Scheme
- BME Development
- Equality & Diversity Strategy
- Cultural Awareness
- Core Values

3.6 The Authority has also continued with its Members/Officers seminar programme. To date the Service has engaged in eight informal seminars with a wide range of service issues being discussed.

- 3.7 Through the revised Governance Members have also been in attendance at key conferences relating to their roles on respective committees. Examples of this can be evidenced through attendance of the CIPFA Conference by the Chair of Finance & Resources Committee and at the National Extrication Conference by the Chair of the Community Safety Committee.
- 3.8 Members have also now enhanced their role in respect of “Member Champions”. Here Members are actively pursuing engagement with the Service within their “local” area attending Community initiatives and presentations organised by the Service. This has also allowed the Service’s message and vision to be disseminated into other areas dealing with related themes such as social inclusion safety and healthier communities.
- 3.9 One outstanding aspect of the revised Governance that is due to be concluded is a full training needs analysis of Members in relation to their Fire Authority role. This is intended to build on the constituent authority training and experience and will address specific Fire Authority Committee duties as well as the generic Fire Authority role. Once completed this will ensure that there is a key element of continuity within the Committee work.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications arising from this report were addressed as part of a review of Members Allowances which formed part of the revised Governance. The recommendations from that review have now been implemented.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

Although there are no specific Personnel implications arising from this report, all committee work addresses such impact through its meeting schedule. This ensures all reports cover any personnel issues that may related to the individual committee’s work.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An initial impact assessment relating to this report has revealed no specific equalities issues. All reports to all committees receive an appropriate impact assessment to ensure the Service meets its obligations under equalities legislation.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The revised Governance structure and Authority commitment to that structure has resulted in improved knowledge, continuity and engagement between Members and Officers. This ensures that the Service meets its obligations under external scrutiny processes, such as CPA and reduces the risk of ministerial intervention.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That Policy & Strategy Committee note the improvements and continuity achieved following the introduction of a revised Governance structure and endorse the continued commitment of Members and Officers to the process.
- 8.2 That Policy & Strategy Committee request a further report on progress following a twelve month review of the revised Governance.

8.3 That the meeting attendance analysis be updated and reported on at six-monthly intervals.

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

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