

# Public Document Pack



## Additional / To Follow Agenda Items

This is a supplement to the original agenda and includes reports that are additional to the original agenda or which were marked 'to follow'.

## Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority

### Meeting of the Authority

**Date:** Friday, 24 February 2023      **Time:** 10.30 am

**Venue:** Dunkirk and Beeston Suites - Highfields Fire Station, Hassocks Lane, Beeston, Nottingham. NG9 2GQ

**Governance Officer:** Cath Ziane-Pryor    **Direct Dial:** 0115 8764298

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## **Nottinghamshire & City of Nottingham Fire & Rescue Authority**

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Joint Fire / Police HQ, Sherwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PP on 16 December 2022 from 10.32 am - 12.18 pm**

### **Membership**

#### Present

Councillor Michael Payne (Chair)  
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Callum Bailey  
Councillor John Clarke MBE  
Councillor Sybil Fielding  
Councillor Nicola Heaton  
Councillor Tom Hollis (from minute 38)  
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan  
Councillor Mike Quigley MBE  
Councillor Dave Trimble  
Councillor Nigel Turner  
Councillor Roger Upton  
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler  
Police and Crime Commissioner Caroline Henry

#### Absent

Councillor Steve Battlemuch  
Councillor Robert Corden  
Councillor John Lee  
Councillor Nick Raine  
Councillor Jason Zadrozny

### **Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

Craig Parkin – Chief Fire Officer  
Mick Sharman – temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Becky Smeathers - Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Authority  
Malcolm Townroe – Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority  
Catherine Ziane-Pryor – Governance Officer

### **35 Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Steve Battlemuch  
Councillor Robert Corden  
Councillor John Lee  
Councillor Nick Raine  
Councillor Jason Zadrozny – other Council Business

### **36 Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **37 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2022 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### **38 Chair's Announcements**

London Fire Brigade cultural review. The publication of the London Fire Brigade cultural review is a fair reflection and provides a poor picture of the cultural challenges within the service. The opportunity is now provided to every service to learn from this review, it is believed that there are still challenges ahead for cultural changes around diversity with the aim for staff to be supported and work as one team. The strategic inclusion board will discuss the LFB review following this meeting and consider what can be learnt from the report;

Note of thanks from the Private Secretary to the King. A note of thanks has been received from the Private Secretary to the King, passing on the Kings thanks for the condolences and thoughtful words sent on behalf of the Service and Authority and welcoming the assurance that he can rely on our support;

Lobbying the Fire Minister. The Chair had arranged a meeting with the Fire Minister regarding the ongoing cuts to the Service and to put the case for Nottinghamshire across in advance of the funding announcement, which will hopefully be published next week.

It was emphasised that this Authority has cross-party support for the joint lobbying, and councillors of all parties made time to put across the point, along with members of the Fire Brigades Union.

It was incredibly disappointing that the only MPs to attend were Alex Norris, Nadia Whittome and Lilian Greenwood, all from the City. It was further disappointing that not a single representative from the government attended, nor sent a representative, including from the office of the Fire Minister.

However, elected members will continue to push for Central Government to have a better understanding of the impact of continuously reduced funding. All those that did attend are gratefully thanked.

Heartfelt Thanks and Merry Christmas. This has been a testing year but this is an outstanding Fire and Rescue Service and heartfelt thanks are extended to everyone in the Service for their work. It was good to celebrate heroic colleagues and members of the public in the Fire Service Awards in November. It was very welcome that the Service was recognised as 'Good' by HMICFRS. A Merry Christmas to all staff and members of the Authority, particularly for working together for the benefit of the Service.

### **39 Changes to Membership**

The following changes to membership are noted;

- Councillor Toby Neal is replaced by Councillor David Trimble
- Councillor Jay Hayes is replaced by Councillor Gul Khan
- Councillor Angela Kandola is replaced by Councillor Nicola Heaton

Councillor Nigel Turner is welcomed as a newly appointed member of the Authority.

## 40 Governance Update

Malcolm Townroe, Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority, presented the report which seeks to update members on activity following recent changes during the past year.

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) The governance review is ongoing in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer and Chair of the Authority, and further updates will be submitted to future meetings;
- b) Following consultation with the Chair, the Chief Fire Officer has utilised his powers within the revised scheme of delegation and commenced Phase 2 of the workforce review;
- c) The work of the Independent Remuneration Panel has progressed, as set out within the report, but in regard to members allowances it has been complicated by the recent award of a flat rate pay increase, rather than a percentage figure, which is not an appropriate approach to members' allowances. A report will be submitted to the February meeting of the Authority with an update;
- d) The measures in place regarding business continuity now that the post of Deputy Chief Fire Officer has been replaced with a second Assistant Chief Fire Officer role need to be formalised and the proposal is set out in the report;
- e) It is also suggested that members consider the savings available to the Service if adopting a digital first approach to agenda.

Members of the Authority and officers commented as follows:

- f) With regard to Service continuity, the worst-case scenario needs to be considered whereby the Chief Fire Officer is unavoidably unavailable, so a named post immediately, and automatically steps in. In an emergency situation time could be precious and it could take too long to convene a meeting with the Chair. The arrangements need to be set out clearly in advance of any situation;
- g) Both current Assistant Chief Fire Officers are already capable of running the organisation, and would do so as necessary. However, it is stipulated in policy that in preparation of any executive decisions requiring urgent decision at a time when the Chief Fire Officer is unavailable or incapacitated, a named post to back fill is required. Members are being requested to give their opinion of how delegations, if any, are formally agreed;
- h) It is understood that a named officer would create a hierarchy, but responsibility needs to be clear in the Service and Authority members need to know who will make decisions. Convening a committee to determine who should lead on what will take time, and there is concern that a formal agreement may not be reached;
- i) The proposed arrangements are acceptable in circumstances when there is no immediacy, and the Chair, Vice-Chair and Clerk should be allocated this task, and it reflected in the constitution. This way the Authority can hold the Chair and Vice-Chair to account. Arrangements need to be in place for when an immediate response is required;

- j) The constitution will need to be amended to clearly reflect the arrangements and determine what to do if there is disagreement;
- k) There needs to be a clear distinction between the operational arrangements on a day to day basis and the formal arrangement of putting someone in the role of temporary Chief Fire Officer in case something happens to the Chief;
- l) Each Council appears to have a different electronic system with differing security which doesn't always allow the document from another council/authority to be accessed, so accessing papers electronically will be harder. Whilst each Local Authority issues an electronic device to elected members, it is not necessarily possible to access online district papers on a device issued by the County Council, and visa-versa. There is no expectation that the Fire Authority would provide further devices, but this illustrates the potential complications of moving towards a digital only approach. It would be welcomed if paper copy were to remain an option;
- m) Members of the Authority need to lead by example with the digital first approach, but if a digital first approach were to be taken to save on costs, there should still be some flexibility of digital by default, and the ability to have paper copy agendas retained;
- n) A digital first approach is agreed in principle, but maybe it should be considered following the May AGM, with the suggestion that the Policy And Strategy Committee consider a digital approach with the new intake of councillors in the new municipal year and make recommendations;
- o) A digital first approach is supported, but there are concerns with regard to accessing exempt information. In addition there will be a requirement for members to have full access to Wi-Fi, which isn't always the case, including in some Fire Service premises. Utilising G4 provision will cost the Service or Councils a lot of money so consistent access to Fire Authority papers and communications will be vital;
- p) Members with visual impairment can find reading digital documents difficult so would prefer paper copy. Paper copy is also more manageable for large documents. The need to achieve savings is wholly understood, but the option for elected members to pay for their own paper copies should also be considered as the financial and environmental savings available from a digital first approach are acknowledged.

**Resolved to:**

- 1) note the proposals with regard to further reviewing the Authority's Governance arrangements;**
- 2) note the activity undertaken by the Chief Fire Officer under the revised scheme of delegation following consultation with the Chair of the Authority;**
- 3) note the update on the work being undertaken by the Independent Remuneration Panel;**

- 4) **approve the business continuity arrangements recommended to be put in place at paragraph 2.4 of the report, in the event that the Chief Fire Officer were to become incapacitated or unavailable to the Authority for any length of time;**
- 5) **approve the principal of the adoption of a digital first approach to Authority reports at a date to be agreed following further review by the Policy and Strategy Committee.**

#### **41 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 to 2026/27 and Budget Guidelines 2023/24**

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Authority, presented the report, which provides an update to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), informs Members of the likely budget position for 2023/24, and requests that the Fire Authority set general guidelines within which the Finance and Resources Committee will develop a detailed budget proposal for 2023/24.

It is noted that a revised page 54 of the agenda pack has been circulated within the agenda supplement, correcting some minor typographical errors.

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) since the report was published last week there have been several changes which will impact the MTFS including:
  - i. Central Government issued a Local Government Finance Policy Statement which set out the government's intentions for the local government finance settlement. This included a £5 referendum principle on Band D Council Tax bills for all Fire and Rescue Authorities;
  - ii. The Bank of England announced an interest rate increase yesterday to 3.5%. CPI inflation has fallen from 11.1% in October to 10.7% in November;
- b) The budget deficit figure will be in the region of a £3.2 million with uncertainty remaining around pay. The Fire Brigades Union has approached its members regarding industrial action early next year, so it doesn't seem likely that a settlement figure will be provided in the near future. It is a concern it could not be set before the Authority is required to set the budget at the February Fire Authority meeting, but it has been assumed that a 6% pay award may be achieved in this current year, and 5% in 2023/24. A 1% pay award accounts for approximately £350,000 expenditure for the Authority. In the papers, the assumed pay offer is that which is currently on the table, of 5%, and assumed for the most likely scenario dropping back to 4% for next year, but that too remains uncertain;
- c) There are a few areas waiting for further information, such as updates from business rates following a revised valuation. The costs to the Authority could be as much as £0.5 million;
- d) Fire authorities now have the ability to increase council tax by £5. If this is approved by the Authority, it would raise income by an additional £1.6 million ;

- e) The worst-case scenario, most likely case scenario, and a best-case scenario are outlined in the report. If members approve the £5 council tax increase in February, the Service can avoid the worst case scenario position. The most likely case scenario, results in a deficit of £2.145 million;
- f) The Capital Strategy includes a 10 year capital plan. The debt cost ratio increases quite significantly as the years progress. There is currently a debt ratio maximum of 8% of income, as set by Fire Authority, and there is no recommendation to increase that percentage;
- g) Recent increases in interest rates will have a significant impact on costs. This year interest rates are increased significantly from assumptions that the budget was set on last year;
- h) Some capital expenditure, mostly around estates, has been delayed by two years to provide a little bit of flexibility, but depending on how interest rates may change, it may be possible to bring that work forward again. Some expenditure would be beneficial on the estates, but equipment and appliances were prioritised to make sure that firefighters have the most up-to-date equipment available to them;
- i) With regard to the Reserves Strategy, last year a minimum level of general fund reserves of £4.5 million was set. Members' concerns that the levels of reserves are significantly higher than some other authorities are noted, but the general fund risk register identifies that there are a significant number of risks and economic uncertainty at the moment, including potential industrial action and the unknown increase of pay awards. As a result, it is proposed that minimum reserve levels remain the same;
- j) Earmarked reserves need to be reviewed annually. Last year £1.8 million of earmarked reserves were released to create two new reserves of £936,000 for budget deficit support and £900,000 to support the Future25 efficiency programme;
- k) This year, it is proposed to allocate some further funding to communications development around the control mobilising system. With new contract issues, it would be prudent to have an increased level of reserves;
- l) Not pay related budgetary pressures have increased, most significantly, pressures are around fuel, gas and electric, but also major increases in the business rates. However, the Service has managed to contain these increases within budgets. Any further increases that cannot be contained within current budgets will need to be funded from General Fund Reserves;
- m) It is anticipated that Nottinghamshire will lose financially following the revised national business rate refresh which was originally anticipated for 2025/26. There is now some uncertainty around this date and the impact is not reflected in the programme;
- n) The Service will receive Section 31 Grant relating to business rate reliefs which is included in the net expenditure. This reached £1.9 million in 2022/23, and is expected to increase by CPI;
- o) The Home Office want the Pension grant to be moved into the base settlement, possibly with the support grant, and if so, it will then increase in line with the revenue support grant;



- p) The Home Office is undertaking a review of productivity and efficiency within the Fire sector and are developing a model to help compare performance;
- q) There will be some challenges ahead. The yearly settlement regarding the pay offer is unlikely to be resolved before January but the Service needs to set the budget before the new financial year and is dependent on the pay settlement confirmation;
- r) Members will be given further information as it emerges and informed of the impact on the Service.

Members of the Authority commented as follows:

- s) The proposed joint cadet scheme to be operated with the Police would be very welcome as a lovely collaboration idea, and is supported;
- t) When considering the financial need, demand also needs to be considered. In policing it's probably clearer with regard to callouts and predicted crime rates, but it's much harder when looking at prevention work. It would be interesting to examine patterns and areas where the Service is stretched;
- u) Knowing what the Central Government annual settlement would be for a three-year period would be helpful in helping to realistically plan budgets ahead. The year at a time approach isn't helpful and makes it very difficult to effectively plan ahead with such an unknown element so a 3, 4 or 5 year settlement would be more realistic;
- v) The ability to charge £5 council tax precept is very welcome for the Service, but members are very much aware that this would be adding to the financial pressures on citizens resulting from high inflation and the rise in living costs, particularly when it's likely that the councils will also increase their council tax precept by £5, and the Police by £15;
- w) More national level work is required to resolve some of the broader financial issues of the nation. We're asking a lot from a lot of people – there needs to be a coalition where politics are put to one side to try and sort out this national mess, which is getting very serious;
- x) It is frustrating that Central Government is pushing the burden of additional charging to local authority level, whilst reducing direct funding. Some counties surrounding Nottinghamshire are far better placed with many more high-level council tax band properties which bring in greater income, but Nottinghamshire is not the same and although necessary to implement, the majority of properties are band A and B and so will contribute less, maybe £3, which doesn't generate the same level of income;
- y) There are concerns that the top-up grant and even pension grant will reduce in future years, placing further financial burden on the Service in future;
- z) This Service is the 7<sup>th</sup> worst financially positioned service in the country with regard to the drop in net core spending power, with a 5.26% decrease since 2010/11, when more affluent services have seen up to a 14.95% increase. Successful lobbying would result in this service improving that position;

- aa) The Service cannot be funded on local rates and council tax – Central Government needs to answer as to how they have put this Service in this position.

**Resolved to**

- 1) approve the MTFS as set out in Appendix A to the report;
- 2) approve the Capital Strategy and Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy contained within the MTFS;
- 3) approve the Reserves Strategy contained within the MTFS;
- 4) approve the proposed minimum level of general fund reserves of £4.5m as set out in the Reserves Strategy;
- 5) approve the re-allocation of Earmarked Reserve as detailed in the Reserves strategy and set out in the table below:

	Balance 31-Mar-22 £	Required 2023/24 £	Required 2024/25 to 2026/27 £	To be Reallocate £
ICT Telephony Software Communications development Rescue Gloves Transformation and Budget Pressure Tri Service Control / Mobilising Total	53,000 171,753 50,000 553,495 936,287 178,083	0 (37,000) (103,276) (1,000,000) (200,000)	0 0 (223,155) (126,076) 149,836	(53,000) (171,753) (13,000) (123,789) 189,789 171,753 0

- 6) task the Finance and Resources Committee with providing guidance to the Fire Authority in February in respect of:
  - the options for Council Tax limited to either a Council Tax freeze or an increase in Council Tax within the referendum limit;
  - the options for addressing any budget deficit to enable the Fire Authority to approve a balanced budget, as required by law.

## 42 Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2022/23

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Authority, presented the report, which provides members with an update on treasury management activity during the first half of the 2022/23 financial year, as is required by legislation.

It is noted that:

- a) Investments currently stand at £16 million;
- b) Borrowing is at £2.9 million;
- c) No further borrowing has been undertaken due to the increase in interest rates and investments holding;
- d) The report sets out the prudential limits, against which there are no areas of concern.

**Resolved to note the update on treasury management activity during the 2022/23 financial year as required under the Local Government Act 2003.**

### **43 Corporate Risk Management**

Craig Parkin, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which provides the Authority with an overview of the corporate risk management process, including the current version of the Corporate Risk Register.

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) Following its presentation to Finance and Resources Committee, the committee requested that the current Corporate Risk Register (CRR) is presented to the Fire Authority due to the increase in the number of high and very high risks identified;
- b) There is a lot of work ongoing to ensure the CRMP and CRR are attuned to each other, but there is still further work to be done;
- c) Finance colleagues have referred to the risk register when considering the position with reserves;
- d) It is proposed that the Finance and Resources Committee will now receive the report quarterly instead of six monthly due to the fluid state of risk nationally, and determine if there should again be an escalation to full Fire Authority;
- e) Risks identified include:
  - i. The Futures 2025 programme and setting a balanced budget with a £3.2m deficit as of today;
  - ii. The Fire Fighter Pension Scheme is an ongoing 14 year issue with immediate detriment and other claims been brought on behalf of pension scheme members, as reported by HR committee and presenting a cost to the Authority;
  - iii. Employee engagement, mainly focused on national issues and pay disputes which may impact the organisation, resulting in the requirement for resilience planning, particularly with 95% of staff belonging to a Trade Union;
  - iv. Workforce sustainability across the whole organisation, but particularly with support staff although the establishment currently only has 5 vacant posts

following targeted recruitment, whilst operational posts are currently minus 20 due to reductions, temporary savings on budgets, including the holding of vacant posts. Challenges remain with regard to the national labour market;

- v. Tri-Service Risk Register and mobilising assets. Calls can be received and appliances mobilised but there is risk if the system fails.

Members welcomed the increased regularity of monitoring and scrutinising risks to the Service.

**Resolved to note:**

- 1) the most recent version of the Corporate Risk Register and the work ongoing to mitigate the risk to the Authority;**
- 2) the high level of risk and uncertainty associated with the current operating environment, and the subsequent impact on risk to both the Authority and the Service.**

#### **44 Serious Violence Duty**

Mick Sharman, temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which provides a brief overview of the Serious Violence Duty and the Fire Authority's responsibilities as defined by the 'Duty'.

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) This is a new legal duty which will commence from the end of January 2023 and is aimed at preventing and tackling serious violence, for which the Fire Authority is named and responsible for intervention, particularly with regard to young people;
- b) Whilst the Fire Service is a named authority, the PCC have taken a lead role, even though not a named authority, as it is best placed to facilitate and implement the duty;
- c) The PCC is working with partners to inform awareness of the duty and how it will be implemented. This is being facilitated by the Serious Violence Reduction Board and the Serious Violence Implementation Group which includes representative of the Fire and Rescue Service;
- d) Whilst the duty is new, many elements of activity are already undertaken by the Fire and Rescue Service, such as working with vulnerable people, visiting people in their homes and schools, visiting buildings that house vulnerable people, and schemes such as the fire setters programme;
- e) The Service will continue to provide complimentary activities, whilst continuing core duties and look at serious violence within a different context;
- f) It's important that frontline individuals understand requirements of the duty and are able to use the referral pathways to report concerns regarding serious violence;
- g) A gap analysis has been conducted, but there are areas for improvement, including the way the Service receives and shares data, including interventions. This is being

considered by the subgroup, including consideration of how data can be shared with other partners to better enable an intervention and prevention;

- h) All staff undertake safeguarding training annually and although initially some were reluctant, saying they were not social workers, since working with partners and occupational therapists, many have seen the value;
- i) Data sharing is a big issue. Potentially, there should be a greater appetite for risk on behalf of the victim. There is still cultural learning to take place but partners are committed;
- j) Fire is not commonly used as a weapon, but more usually as a method of concealing a crime. Fire investigation is not a standard duty of the Fire Service. Standards are changing around forensic requirements if a case is likely to go to court. As a result, some fire services will not be investigating fires, meaning the ability to share information and data will be further restricted. There are challenges with regard to assurance, but work is ongoing.

Police and Crime Commissioner, Caroline Henry, congratulated Service staff on the amount of work they have done to achieve the current status, being instrumental in establishing the Reduction Board and ensuring readiness for implementation at the end of January. It is noted that some funding is available from the PCC to support investigation into effective data sharing.

Members commented as follows:

- k) Violence is an increasing problem in society and the Police do a good job in difficult circumstances, but we are seeing an increase in violence against firefighters, which is appalling. Emergency workers don't go to work to be attacked;
- l) It might be helpful to share the data with the courts as it's frustrating how leniently violent crimes are dealt with, which doesn't necessarily support our staff if they are targeted;
- m) The Police do a very good job on the triage for mental health of potentially vulnerable citizens, which may be beneficial if linked with the Fire Service;
- n) Data sharing has been an ongoing issue, but where overcome, can provide invaluable information to benefit services and their communities, including financially if resources can be targeted where most required;
- o) To be able to address problems effectively, data needs to be shared between all partners to enable a full picture of situations;
- p) Following the recent tragic deaths in Clifton, is noted that the references to serious violence don't specifically include the potential for fire as a method of serious violence, so assurance is sought that it is fully incorporated;
- q) This is an excellent example not only of collaboration, but good partner relationships, for which Mick Sharman and all involved are thanked.

**Resolved to note the Fire Authority's responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty, and the progress being made by the Service in its preparation to meet the duty.**

#### **45 Committee Outcomes**

**Resolved to note the minutes of the following Committees:**

**Community Safety Committee 07 October 2022  
Finance and Resources Committee 14 October 2022  
Policy and Strategy Committee 11 November 2022.**

#### **46 Exclusion of the Public**

**Resolved to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, under Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3, on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining an exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.**

#### **47 Tri-Service Mobilisation System Update**

Mick Sharman, temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which provides an update on the Tri-Service Mobilisation System.

**Resolved to approve the recommendations as set out in the report.**



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

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham  
Fire and Rescue Authority

# COMMITTEE OUTCOMES

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 24 February 2023

**Purpose of Report:**

To report to Members the business and actions of the Fire Authority committee meetings which took place in January 2023.

**Recommendations:**

That Members note the contents of this report.

## CONTACT OFFICER

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Chief Fire Officer

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

As part of the revised governance arrangements the Authority has delegated key responsibilities to specific committees of the Authority. As part of those delegated responsibilities, the chairs of committees and the management leads report to the Authority on the business and actions as agreed at Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 1 June 2007.

## **2. REPORT**

The minutes of the following meetings are attached at Appendix A for the information of all Fire Authority Members:

Community Safety Committee	06 January 2023
Human Resources Committee	13 January 2023
Finance and Resources Committee	20 January 2023
Policy and Strategy Committee	27 January 2023

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

All financial implications were considered as part of the original reports submitted to the committees.

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

All human resources and learning and development implications were considered as part of the original reports submitted to the committees.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because this report is not associated with a policy, function or service. Its purpose is to update the Fire Authority on the outcomes of committee business.

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

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

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.



## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The Service's performance in relation to matters addressed through the committee structure is scrutinised through a range of audit processes. The Service needs to continue to perform well in these areas as external scrutiny through Comprehensive Performance Assessment and auditors' judgement is key to future Service delivery.

## **9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS**

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report, as the report seeks to provide Members with an update on the business and actions of Fire Authority committee meetings which have taken place in the last quarter.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members note the contents of this report.

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

None.

Craig Parkin  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

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

**Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Joint Headquarters - Sherwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PP on 6 January 2023 from 10.00 am - 11.12 am**

### **Membership**

#### Present

Councillor Jason Zadrozny (Chair)  
Councillor Robert Corden  
Councillor Nicola Heaton  
Councillor Nick Raine  
Councillor Dave Trimble)  
Councillor John Lee (Substitute for Councillor Nigel Turner)

#### Absent

Councillor Nigel Turner

### **Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

Bryn Coleman, Area Manager for Prevention and Protection  
Andy Macey, Area Manager for Response  
Mick Sharman, Acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Catherine Ziane-Pryor, Governance Officer.

## **12 Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Nigel Turner (Councillor John Lee substituting)

## **13 Declarations of Interests**

None.

## **14 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 07 October 2022 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## **15 Service Delivery Performance Update**

Andy Macey, Area Manager for Response, and Bryn Coleman, Area Manager for Prevention and Protection, presented the report which informs members of the performance of the Service between 01 September 2022 and 30 November 2022.

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) a total of 2,592 incidents were attended during this reporting period. The high numbers can partly be attributed to the dry, hot summer. Incident numbers have since stabilised, but the overall annual attendance rate is expected to show an increase of up to 11% higher than the previous year;
- b) the report provides details of incident type during the past five years, including incidents by district attendance and priority ranking;
- c) whilst the key Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) target for attending an incident is eight minutes, performance during this period, averaged 7.57 minutes;
- d) with the exception of Southwell Fire Station, achieving 70% availability, all other On-Call stations provided and availability of 80% or higher, with Hucknall, Misterton and, Newark, and Worksop, achieving 99.5%, 96%, 95.6%, and 98.6%, respectively;
- e) the disappointing availability of 80% against a target of 85% within the Southwell Area is an ongoing issue, although overall, the Service continues to achieve on or above the 85% availability target;
- f) it is noted fire stations not included in the list are Whole-Time crewed and therefore operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week, without On-Call staff, and that with the exception of Retford, on-call stations, generally only maintain one appliance;
- g) call numbers to 999 rose considerably during the summer months when the target of 96% of all calls being answered within seven seconds was not achieved. This was not only due to the volume, but also added complications in identifying with the caller, the precise location of some of the more rural incidents;
- h) with the high demand on the Service, mobilisation system availability also decreased, but has since returned to 98%. The new system is due to be implemented in 2024;
- i) the Service has now completed 36.5% of the target 13,000 Safe and Well Visits (SWV), with 4745 completed between 1 August and 30 November 2022;
- j) the multi-partner Safety Zone programme, which includes fire safety, was targeted and delivered to staff and pupils at a total of 25 schools where the overall demographic of pupils is considered to be at higher risk of being involved some way in in an emergency incident;
- k) the Fire Prevention Team has successfully engaged some of the harder-to-reach citizens, including home-schooled young people and their families, on issues including tackling behaviours around deliberate secondary fires;
- l) the Service also participated in multiagency road safety interventions, such as the Biker Down and New Driver Awareness Day, which included hazard awareness and the use of virtual reality goggles to illustrate the impact of alcohol and substance misuse on ability and perception;

- m) 763 of the 1,200 annual target for Fire Safety Audits were completed by 30 November 2022. This resulted in 266 informal action notices, with 29 formal notices issued;
- n) all managers are very proud of the significant increase inspections undertaken as a result of improved efficiency and increased productivity of the Fire Safety Inspection Team;
- o) 287 business safety checks been undertaken so far this reporting year, which is slightly down on previous years. This is mainly due to the number of supervisory managers yet to complete the required broad scoping qualification and productivity will increase once officers fully qualified and able to work independently;
- p) it should be noted that the Fire Safety Inspection Team also undertake other work such as post-fire inspections, enforcement notices, building regulation consultations, licensing consultations and consultations with agencies such as OFSTED and the care Quality Commission;
- q) Although the target was set to reduce Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFSs) by 3% per year, there is been 10% increase with 3,107 recorded so far this reporting year. This may be partly due to the restrictions on businesses operating during lockdown in previous years and work is ongoing to address the main causes;
- r) the Joint Audit and Inspection Team (JAIT) continues to work well with City Council and has conducted 16 building inspections, totalling 1855 flats, and 23 building re-inspections, totalling 1498 flats. A further 25 buildings in excess of 18 meters in height are yet to be inspected, along with 272 buildings below 18 meters. The number of buildings requiring inspection increases constantly, particularly with the increasing number of developments within the City. This is proving a significant impact on the volume of required work;
- s) it is anticipated that the Building Safety Act will be fully implemented by October this year, and will require multidisciplinary teams which are similar to that already operating in Nottinghamshire as JAIT. The National Fire Chiefs' Council is assisting the Health and Safety Executive in developing an efficient best practice model, which is likely to include working at a regional level, or with at least one neighbouring county Service. It is proposed that as Nottingham and Leicester cities have the most high-rise (over 18 meter) buildings in the region, teams will be based in each city. Funding from Central Government has been provided for one Fire Safety Inspector to be seconded to the Nottingham team to support this work. It is anticipated that the secondment post will be drawn from one of the two current fire safety officers working within JAIT. JAIT will continue to function and the support of the additional multidisciplinary team is welcomed;
- t) following the Grenfell Tower incident, Fire Safety England legislation comes into effect on 23 January 2023, requiring additional measures with statutory duties applied to those responsible for buildings, including alerting the Service to areas of non-compliance, such as a non-functioning fire alarm, to enable the Service to adapt its response as appropriate if an incident occurs;
- u) with regard to the evacuation of high buildings, it is noted that this element of work forms part of the standard firefighter training package across the county. This includes the rural stations which are some distance from any high-rise properties, to ensure that

these crews are capable and can be called on if necessary, which may include cross county boundary working.

Members of the committee commented:

- v) with regard to the numbers of UwFSSs, the Service needs to consider statistics prior to the pandemic for a true reflection of any quantity or trend variation;
- w) it's a concern that high-rise development within the City is an ongoing growth area and that further resources will be needed by the Service, with regard to Fire Safety Inspections to ensure that the Service's statutory obligations are met.

**Resolved to note the report.**

## **16 Reductions in Unwanted Fire Signals**

Prior to consideration of this item, the following question was posed to the committee from representatives of the Fire Brigades Union:

The Service is proposing a non-attendance of fire appliances between the hours of 07:00 and 19:00 at hospitals, although the majority of calls to these properties turn out not to be fires, the complexity and size of the buildings can cause the determination and location of the fire to take a considerable amount of time. If there is no fire service attendance at these properties, that have sleeping risk and immobile patients then should a fire break out that is not tackled immediately, then the consequences could be devastating. There are very little to no financial saving to making these changes and the FBU believe this will ultimately lead to further cuts to the Service in the future. Is the Fire Authority prepared to risk the lives of the public, just to reduce the number of turnouts per year?

To which the following formal response was provided by the Chair:

As part of the Service's Futures25 Efficiency Programme, the Service committed to changing and reducing demand on response resources, this is also supported by a commitment in the Services Community Risk Management Plan, to reduce false alarms by 10%, by 2025. The commitment and drive to reduce the Service's attendance at false alarms will assist the Service resource to risk, further enabling the Service to proactively prioritise activities that keep people safe. Responding to unwanted fire signals that are generated by automatic fire alarms, accounts for approximately 35% of all incidents attended, hospitals are the biggest contributor to false alarms. Attendance at false alarms places a significant impact on the Service's resources, diverting valuable time and resources from other preventing, protecting and responding activities.

Hospitals are well run and professionally managed facilities, with good levels of fire protection. Arrangements for fire safety and the care of patients is the responsibility of the hospitals Responsible Persons. The Service is committed to continually supporting health care professionals and hospital fire safety advisors ensure that hospitals are as safe as possible, by continuing to support and offering advice on both fire prevention and protection best practices. In the event of any uncertainty or a fire, hospitals should call the fire service and not rely on automatic fire alarms as a method of alerting the fire service, a direct call ensures the Service can assess the situation and send the required resources in a timely manner. The Service will work

with hospital Responsible Persons to ensure that they are prepared for the changes, ensuring that procedures are in place and appropriate to the type of building.

The Chair agreed that it was important that issues such as this are raised.

Mick Sharman, Acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer, resented the report and highlighted the following points:

- a) the Service has a clear commitment to reduce UwFSs by 10% by 2025. The report outlines the current call challenging policy, including listing premises which are exempt from call challenging (to gain confirmation that the attendance of the service is required). It is noted that local crews continue to assess risks within their area;
- b) during 2021/22, the Service responded to 3,480 UwFSs, which is a rise of 11% from the previous year, and represents roughly a third all responses;
- c) the breakdown of false alarm origins is outlined in the report and includes apparatus, good intent, and malicious action, with apparatus fault consistently being the most significant cause of the UwFS;
- d) alarm receiving companies contact the Fire Service by an automatic process which does not generally provide any information beyond that an alarm has been triggered. It is only following the emergency response attendance that the incident can be referred to as an unwanted fire signal;
- e) the service works with premises owners and responsible person's to reduce UwFSs , but this is often proving challenging and requires dedication of time by fire prevention officers who could be focusing on other prevention work;
- f) some issues are resolved following contact by Fire Prevention Officers, but, illustrated in figure 1 within the report, some of the main challenges continue to be blocks of single domestic premises, shared accommodation and sheltered accommodation. In previous years, UwFS from hospitals had outstretched the number of other types of false alarm, but following dedicated liaison work by Fire Prevention Officers, these are significantly reduced, but remain a concern;
- g) the response to UwFS has a significant impact on the Service, including engaging resources which would otherwise be available to attend emergencies, undertake prevention and protection activities and/or training;
- h) Nationally, fire services apply different approaches within the guidance issued by the National Fire Chiefs Council, by which some Services will not attend any automatically triggered signals, some have a reduced exemption list, and some operate a call challenging system during working hours, and have introduced charging for repeat UwFS offenders;
- i) analysis has provided valuable information regarding identifying a variance in the way in which some crews may have recorded incidents in the Incident Reporting System (IRS). On some occasions there had been an incident which triggered alarms, but was

resolved prior to the arrival of the Service. Although no action was necessary, the alarm system responded as intended, so this must not be considered an UwFS;

- j) NFRS is proposing a blended approach to reduce UwFSs, whereby if alarm apparatus is causing an issue, the Fire Prevention Team will intervene and raise the issue with the building management, under the leadership of Area Manager Coleman. Where an UwFS is identified as called in by good intention or a malicious act, the Fire Prevention Team will again intervene where possible with guidance, education and support;
- k) it is proposed that future reporting through the IRS will provide further detail determining how the incident was identified when reported, which will help identify trends which can then be addressed;
- l) there is potential for the Service to charge for attending what turns out to be an UwFS. This Service is not intending to charge for infrequent UwFS attendances, only persistent offenders, as enabled by the Localism Act;
- m) 10% of UwFSs originate from hospitals, with 96.5% found to be UwFSs, only 3.5% of these incidents were found to be fires, none of which has spread beyond the item first ignited and did not require the attendance of the Service. Hospitals are professionally managed and generally have good procedures in place. In addition there are generally a lot of staff on site during the working day, who will be available to check the nature of the incident and if necessary, confirm that the attendance of the Service is required. This could mean that the Service does not respond to automatic fire signals, unless followed up by a 999 call, between the hours of 7am and 7pm. Between the hours of 7pm and 7am the Service would attend regardless of any incident confirmation, due to the sleep risk;
- n) if a 999 call is placed confirming the Service is required to attend for a known incident, then 5 appliances will immediately be dispatched. Additional training will be required of hospital staff, but the Service can support this;
- o) the drop in the number of UwFS from hospitals is a result of their upgraded alarm system, and whilst numbers are predicted to plateau, there are still concerns that calls will increase as the system degrades over time unless hospitals take alternative action, such as further capital investment in the systems;
- p) hospitals are complex environments but are well managed by professionals and safe places with regard to fire safety. This is supported by evidence gathered from the Service over time, following attendance;
- q) consultation is ongoing and discussions have taken place regarding the proposed approach, including with NHS England. Concern has been raised with the proposal to do things differently, but similar proposals are in place with other fire services across the country;
- r) there is a potential risk that unscrupulous business owners will disable fire detection systems to prevent being charged for an UwFS, but the inspection processes are robust and inspections take place prioritising premises identified as being most at risk;



- s) it is unlikely that hospitals will wholly agree with the proposals, but at best it is hoped the Service can reach a mutual understanding with which hospitals, at best, can be comfortable.

Committee members commented as follows:

- t) a recent serious fire at County Hall, may have resulted in the loss of the building and possibly life, if the Service hadn't responded so promptly. Further information, including details of the consultation with the hospitals is required prior to members being asked to make a decision on recommendation 1 in the report;
- u) further liaison needs to take place with the affected stakeholders before a recommendation is proposed, not following a decision by the committee;
- v) the additional time waiting for a second phone call to confirm an incident could cost lives;
- w) from personal experience of having been in hospital for 18 months, the vulnerability of patient's can't be underestimated. There may be several staff on duty with an award, but it might require three people to move one patient;
- x) hospitals need to consider the proposal, and may suggest different timeframes;
- y) whilst not adverse to call challenging, the additional administration costs, including for tracking UwFSs and charging, needs to be covered by the penalty income;
- z) members of the committee are not experts on fire and are happy to take advice, but further detail is required before any decision can be considered;
- aa) hospitals contain chemicals and vulnerable, non-mobile patients, while also being hugely underfunded and staff are run off their feet. This is an additional life and death responsibility pressure for staff;
- bb) building managers need to take responsibility, but it is a concern where businesses are under financial pressure, they may remove or disable fire detection systems to prevent UwFS and the resulting charge. These potential risks resulting from the proposals need to be assessed;
- cc) consultation needs to be thorough and meaningful and the responses listened to and taken into consideration;
- dd) within figure 1 of the report, it is evident that hospitals are doing well in reducing UwFS. Should the service not just continue to support hospitals with this reduction;
- ee) with the potential ramifications of a decision of this level, initial consideration by this committee and then a recommendation made to the full Fire Authority for a decision to be made by the Authority should be considered;
- ff) a thorough consultation needs to take place, the responses listened to, and recommendations for a decision should preferably be made within this municipal year prior to changes in membership.

**Resolved to:**

- 1) support the consultation with appropriate stakeholders (including trades unions) of the proposal not to routinely attend automatic fire alarm calls at hospitals, between 07:00 and 19:00, which is reported back as soon as is possible;**
- 2) note the changes to future Unwanted Fire Signals performance reporting;**
- 3) support consultation and policy development to enable the Service to financially charge Unwanted Fire Signals persistent offenders.**

**17 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary And Fire and Rescue Services, Areas for Improvement**

Mick Sharman, Acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which provides the committee with an update on the Service's response to the 2021 inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services.

The Service was extremely pleased with the results across the board but 4 areas for improvement (AIFs) were identified, of which the following 2 fall within the scrutiny remit of this Committee:

- AFI 2 – the Service should assure itself that its risk-based inspection programme prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk;
- AFI 4 – the Service should ensure that, when responding to a 999 call, mobile data terminals are reliable to allow staff to access risk information.

The report outlines measures in place to progress work to address the two improvement areas identified, with a further update report to be submitted to the May meeting of the Committee.

**Resolved to:**

- 1) note the 'Areas for Improvement' delegated to the Committee for scrutiny and monitoring;**
- 2) agree the approach of the Chief Fire Officer for addressing the 'Areas for Improvement';**
- 3) note the actions undertaken to date.**



## **Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority Human Resources Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Joint  
Headquarters - Sherwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PP on 13 January 2023  
from 10.01 am - 11.02 am**

### **Membership**

#### **Present**

Councillor Dave Trimble (Chair)  
Councillor Robert Corden  
Councillor Tom Hollis  
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora  
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan  
Councillor Nigel Turner

#### **Absent**

### **Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

Candida Brudenell - Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Mick Sharman - Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Tracey Crump - Head of People and Organisational Development  
Matt Sismey - Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager  
Damien West - Area Manager, Head of ICT, Corporate Support, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion  
Catherine Ziane-Pryor – Governance Officer

### **8 Apologies for Absence**

None.

### **9 Declarations of Interests**

None.

### **10 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held 1 July 2022 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

### **11 Human Resources Update**

Tracy Crump, Head of People and Organisational Development, presented the report which provides the Committee with an update on key human resource metrics for the period 1 June

to 30 December 2022 for establishment figures, and for the period 30 April to 30 December for absence data.

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) The Service currently employs 804 staff, including 70 dual contract individuals who are Whole-Time firefighters and also provide On-Call cover;
- b) There were 20 full-time equivalent firefighter posts, and 10 full-time equivalent support role posts vacant, some of which have since been filled;
- c) The rates at which firefighters have left the Service is as predicted, but as is the national picture across public services, there are higher levels of turnover within support staff (Green Book roles). However, the rate of turnover is slowing down and recruitment increased following targeted work. The quality of new starters has been very high;
- d) Appendix A to report provides a breakdown of the sickness absence levels for Whole-Time staff, which shows a reduction of absence overall across all work force areas compared to last year's figures;
- e) Absences due to COVID-19 sickness are still recorded, and for this reporting period accounts for 17% of absence. Absence data will continue to be considered both with and without COVID-19 absences;
- f) This Service is above national absence rates against other Services, but only marginally for support staff. This is being considered in detail and solutions sought;
- g) Appendix C to report provides a breakdown of the top 10 reasons for absenteeism for Whole-Time, On-Call, and support staff, with regard to overall days lost to absence, short-term and long-term absences;
- h) There are different reasons but muscular-skeletal and mental health absence continues to rank highest but targeted support is ongoing for these areas;
- i) There were no significant areas of concern regarding disciplinary cases, grievances raised, harassment cases raised, dismissals, appeals and active employment tribunal cases;
- j) Long term absence does have a significant impact on the statistics and accounts for between 62%-71% of absence. Long term is defined as off work with a GP note for more than 28 days consecutive absence. Such staff are referred to the Service's Occupational Health Section to be able to access support with the view of enabling them to return to work when appropriate;
- k) Flu is predicted to be a massive problem nationally this year, with several deaths already having occurred within the county. Seasonal Flu cases have increased but it is anticipated that absence due to flu will have an impact on the Service and will be evident in the next reporting cycle.

Members commented as follows:

- l) It is a concern that Covid rates appear to be increasing across the population;
- m) With regard to the national sickness absence comparisons of other Services, once the anomaly of Cambridgeshire is removed along with non-comparable London, Nottinghamshire isn't far off the overall average sickness rate;
- n) The higher rates within Nottinghamshire are largely attributed long-term sickness of just a few individuals.

**Resolved to note the update.**

## **12 Update on Workforce Plan 2022-24**

Tracy Crump, Head of People and Organisational Development, presented the report which provides the Committee with an update on progress against the Workforce Plan 2022-24.

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) The workforce plan sets out an ongoing two-year plan to assist in predicting staffing numbers to inform recruitment and ensure that establishment planning is in place to maintain the required staffing;
- b) Last reported in July, consideration of 2025 workforce predictions will commence shortly as it takes approximately two years from the start of the recruitment process for operational firefighters to be considered fully competent;
- c) Recent turnover rates up to December 2022, have been as predicted at 3.9-4% for firefighters, most of which were due to retirements which are generally known in advance;
- d) A whole time recruitment campaign has just been completed and appointments will be made shortly. Nearly 400 applications were received with just over 100 applicants interviewed, which is very positive;
- e) Whole-Time posts have been recruited to annually, mainly through the migration process of enabling On-Call firefighters to apply to Whole-Time roles, but also via the transfer process of staff from other Fire and Rescue Authorities to fill gaps in Whole-Time establishment;
- f) With regard to the Whole-Time establishment, there has been the backdrop of some uncertainty with the Efficiency Strategy, and unpredicted elements, such as budgetary impact, have complicated workforce planning;
- g) It is anticipated that by the middle of next year, staffing will be at the current establishment levels;
- h) Turnover of the On-Call establishment is slightly lower than initially predicted, at approximately 7%, but recruitment takes place throughout the year and 11 trainee firefighters are currently working their way through the training program. Work continues

with crews of On-Call stations encouraged to locally promote the Service and benefits of the role;

- i) There has been a fairly high turnover of support staff. Exit interviews found that pay issues and the inability to progress through the organisation were the most predominant reasons for leaving. There is frustration that the pay issue is guided by the national pay awards, but since the Committee last met, there has been agreement of the Green Book pay award, which has helped bring the sector more in line with other employers. It is hoped that this will support staff retention but work is underway with regard to career grading to provide clearly defined routes for career progression, including the potential to move between departments;
- j) Apprenticeship routes continue to be developed, including development of 'home grown' in-house employees;
- k) Work has been undertaken to professionally promote the Service as an attractive employer of choice, with what the Service can offer employees, including long-term well-being welfare support, which has had a positive impact with 20 vacant support staff roles being filled this year;
- l) The Efficiency Strategy is having, and will have, an impact going forward. It was impossible to predict some of the budgetary pressures which the Service now faces. The workforce review is ongoing and will address some of the issues raised, including employees desire for more flexibility. The results of the review will be presented to members in due course;
- m) The potential for industrial action had not been predicted, but will be factored in moving forward into next year's plan;
- n) The Service regularly attends school career events across the county, including where possible, accompanied by an operational presence, with the intention of promoting the Service and positively embedding its presence within local communities;
- o) Everybody has at least a basic understanding of what the operational firefighter role is, but the Service is also trying to promote that there are other possibly less glamorously perceived, but still important roles within the Service, such as within Fire Prevention and Protection.

Members of the Committee commented as follows:

- p) The report is welcomed and provides assurance with regard to workforce planning;
- q) It's important to engage with schools and young people, to build intelligence and awareness from a young age to ensure the Service is seen as a positive presence, but also to raise the profile and awareness of the Service as a potential employer.

**Resolved to note the report.**

## **13 Equalities Monitoring Report**

Matt Sismey, Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager, presented the report which provides a detailed breakdown of the workforce and applicant analysis by protected characteristic for the period 1 April to 30 September 2022.

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) The numbers of female firefighter remains steady, but there is a slight reduction in the numbers of BAME employees;
- b) There was an increased reporting on LGBT numbers by 2.85% as of 30 Sept;
- c) Disability numbers reduced but the Service is actively trying to provide an environment in which staff feel comfortable disclosing disabilities. Work is ongoing to establish 'reasonable adjustment passports' which also ensure that disability information is appropriately shared, and managers receive appropriate training;
- d) A firefighter has been seconded into the EDI team for 6 months to assist in the development of positive action measures in the community. This includes promoting the Service at career fairs, festivals and community events such as the recently attended female football tournament.
- e) Regular fitness sessions were held focusing on fitness activities prior to the recruitment process;
- f) Work is ongoing to further promote the employer branding unique selling point of the Service as an attractive employer for both operational and Green Book roles;
- g) Exit interviews are held, in which their reasons for staff leaving the Service are requested. Resignations can be for a range of reasons, including a career change or personal circumstances;
- h) The Service is working with the Karima Institute, Radio Dawn and Radio Kemet, with further work planned from April to encourage applications and try and determine the reasons why people are not applying to join the Service;
- i) The Service's female Muslim Fire Fighter, Uroosa Arshid, wanted to be a firefighter following a school visit by the Service when she was 5 or 6 years old. As previously mentioned by members, there is value in reaching out to young people from an early age to establish a relationship and achieve longer-term engagement benefits;
- j) Of the 384 applicants for a Whole-Time posts, 50 were women, but proportionally this needs to be near a half to reflect the population balance. Work is ongoing to find new ways of raising women's interest in working for the Service;
- k) The revised census information from 2021, is being considered in detail and will be submitted to the Policy and Strategy Committee in June. Following members comments, social economic deprivation information can be included as an equalities metric.

Councillors commented:

- l) The value of engaging a truly diverse workforce is not just about statistics, but the importance of having employees who understand communities and are also able to promote the benefits of working for the Service;
- m) In some less diverse communities within Nottinghamshire, such as Ashfield, economic equality may be considered of greater relevance. Promoting the Service within some of the more deprived communities, such as council estates, will help people relate to the work of the Service, and feel that they realistically can work for the Service. Inclusion should be about all elements of the community, including economic scales, and not just focusing on BAME and sexual orientation representation;
- n) Councillor Gul Khan informed the Committee that he had promoted the Service on several occasions on the local Asian Radio Station and was disappointed that more applications from BAME community had not been received.

**Resolved to:**

- 1) note the content of the report and support the Service's continued commitment to attracting, recruiting and retaining a more diverse workforce;**
- 2) agree that as there is cross-over and duplication between this report and the workforce planning report, to maximise efficiency, the data provided in this report will be combined with the Workforce Plan report and subsequent Human Resources Update after a six month period.**

**14 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, Areas For Improvement**

Damien West, Area Manager, Head of ICT, Corporate Support, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, presented the report which provides an update on addressing the 'Areas For Improvement' (AFI) allocated to this Committee for monitoring and scrutiny.

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) The last HMICFR inspection identified 4 areas for improvement, compared to the 24 identified by the initial inspection;
- b) The only AFI allocated to this committee for monitoring and scrutiny, is AFI 3, 'AFI3 - The Service should assure itself that staff understand how to get wellbeing support';
- c) The Service currently offers a range of information regarding broadly available support, but some crews had expressed concerns on the availability and access to post event support consistency;
- d) A gap analysis has been undertaken to consider this, and also examine the support offer at other services, including how it is promoted and exactly what is provided;
- e) As a result, the service is to take the following action:



- Meeting with the Communications Team about developing a communications plan to raise awareness of Vivup (The Service employee benefit and EAP provider);
  - Refresher training on post-incident support has been completed for Station Manager roles and above;
  - A task and finish group to review the post-incident support process has commenced with support from a Service Delivery District Manager;
  - Work with the communications team to promote wellbeing support. Occupational Health to take a lead role in promoting the support available and a wellbeing message to all staff by, for instance, having more visibility on stations and other sites;
  - The Occupational Health team will promote and deliver a well-being message through activities such as station hubs (holding clinics at different locations) and a Wellbeing roadshow to raise visibility and access.
- f) to ensure that progress to address this AFI can be evaluated, questions will be included within staff survey and staff engagement events, from which feedback can be tracked.

**Resolved to:**

- 1) note the 'Areas for Improvement' delegated to the Committee for scrutiny and monitoring;**
- 2) agree the approach of the Chief Fire Officer for addressing the 'Areas for Improvement';**
- 3) note the actions undertaken to date.**

## **15 Apprenticeship Update**

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report, which, in line with public sector reporting requirements, provides an annual update on apprenticeship provision within the Service for the period of the 2021/22 financial year.

Following points were highlighted and responses provided to members' questions:

- a) The Service's apprenticeship scheme has been subject to an OFSTED inspection, which provided an overall assessment outcome of 'good' with some elements rated as 'outstanding', which is a very welcome result;
- b) Due to the 'good' 'assessment outcome, OFSTED will not inspect the Service again for at least five years, maybe longer;

- c) The Service is intending to develop a further 6 apprenticeship opportunities, predominantly in the ICT Department, but also including Finance, Fire Protection and Corporate Communications;
- d) Whilst many large employers are struggling to utilise their apprenticeship levy, it is not the case for the Service, which is able to utilise 100% of the levy.

Members of the Committee welcomed the report agreed that the provision of apprenticeships is massively important.

### **Resolved**

- 1) to recognise the progress made in the employment of apprenticeship roles within the Service during Financial Year 2021/22 including the Service exceeding the public sector targets relating to apprenticeship delivery;**
- 2) to note the positive outcomes of the recent OFSTED inspection.**

## **16 Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade (LFB)**

Matt Sismey, Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager, presented the report which informs the Committee of the outcome of the Independent Review into the culture of the London Fire Brigade.

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) This review is the result of an internal investigation into the tragic death of firefighter Jaden Matthew Francois-Espirit, who took his own life in August 2020. The review took place over 12 months with more than 2,000 individual interviews of staff, former staff and members of the community;
- b) As a result of the review, further cases of concern, including harassment and bullying have been identified nationally within the sector;
- c) Members are assured that this Service has considered the recommendations of the review and is examining the culture and development of the organisation, and points which may be relevant to this Service, and employee networks. The report sets out the changes proposed as a result;
- d) London Fire Brigade have responded to the recommendations (as set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report) and NFRS has set out the context relevant to this Service (which are set out in 2.4 of the report) which are summarised as follows for consideration and discussion by the Strategic Leadership Team and employee networks:
  - i. an acknowledgement that diversity work needs to improve and maintain momentum;
  - ii. staff networks have been helpful in moving forward culture change and identifying behaviours which had not been apparent to the Service;

- iii. a review of training and a new action plan was developed in 2022, including the mainstreaming of equality issues into operational training, and consideration of different identity and background when providing rescue, care and support;
  - iv. a staff survey is undertaken every 2 years and specific monitoring is included to ensure that issues raised and identified are addressed. The results of the survey have shown that line manager and teams are generally looking after each other and working well together, with good morale and job satisfaction, but some issues which were identified are being addressed;
  - v. an inclusive leadership programme for middle managers is to be provided, starting this week;
- e) the Chair and Chief will release a joint statement about culture, to ensure there is awareness and assurance that the Service is taking issues seriously.

Members of the Committee welcomed the report, acknowledged the importance of learning, and the work to ensure that the Service is a good employer, for which people want to work.

#### **Resolved**

- 1) to note the content of the report;
- 2) to support the Service's commitment and approach to developing an inclusive culture at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

#### **17 Exclusion of the Public**

**Resolved to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, under Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraphs 1 and 3, on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining an exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.**

#### **18 Exempt Minutes**

The exempt minutes of the meeting held 1 July 2022 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

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**Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority  
Finance and Resources Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held at Joint Fire / Police HQ, Sherwood Lodge, Arnold,  
Nottingham, NG5 8PP on 20 January 2023 from 10.00 am - 10.47 am**

**Membership**

Present

Councillor Michael Payne (substitute) (Chair)  
Councillor Callum Bailey  
Councillor Steve Battlemuch  
Councillor Sybil Fielding  
Councillor Nicola Heaton  
Councillor Mike Quigley MBE  
Councillor Roger Upton

Absent

Councillor John Clarke MBE

**Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

Craig Parkin – Chief Fire Officer  
Candida Brudenell – Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Becky Smeathers - Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Authority  
Terry Scott - Head of Procurement and Resources  
Catherine Ziane-Pryor – Governance Officer

**18 Apologies for Absence**

Councillor John Clarke (other council business) Councillor Michael Payne substituting

**19 Declarations of Interests**

None.

**20 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2022 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

**21 Revenue, Capital and Prudential Monitoring Report to November 2022**

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Authority, presented the report which informs members of the financial performance of the Service and Prudential Code monitoring to the end of November 2022.

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) An underspend of £220,000 is now projected, which is less than that identified in October, due to the uplift in the employers pay offer to 5% although this is yet to be agreed;
- b) If a 6% pay increase is approved, this cost would be an additional cost of £190,000 to the Authority;
- c) Slippage of £150,000 has been identified with regard to the Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS) projects, with £45,000 slippage predicted to occur regarding the investment in cyber security;
- d) Delivery time of 12-15 months is anticipated for the rescue pumps. The first 3 of the 17 chassis will be delivered in June this year for building into appliances. As previously discussed, the pre-ordering of chassis for rescue pumps has been necessary due to the long lead-in time and to achieve the best value for money, but it is noted that the release of the funds is not required until 2023/24, resulting in a request for slippage of £2,006m;
- e) Again due to the current extended lead-in times for vehicles £140,000 slippage is requested for five pool cars which are due to be delivered in June 23;
- f) All performance against the prudential indicators is as predicted.

## Resolved

- 1) note the contents of this report;
- 2) to approve slippage to the capital programme as detailed in the table below:

### Capital Project Amount to be slipped to 2023/24

Section	£'000
Community Fire Risk Management Information System	150
Cyber Security	45
Rescue Pumps	2,006
Light Vehicles	140
	<b>Total 2,341</b>

## 22 Budget Proposals for 2023/24 to 2026/27 and Options for Council Tax 2023/24

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Authority, presented the report which provides the Committee with detailed budget proposals for the next financial year and with consideration of the financial position of the Service, requests that the Committee makes a recommendation to the Fire Authority with regard to the 2023/24 Council Tax precept.

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) As previously discussed, there is still uncertainty regarding the next two years pay award and information from the precept authorities and business rates income;
- b) A £4 million capital programme is proposed for 2023/24 but this will increase when slippage from the 2022/23 programme is approved;
- c) Funding is mostly from borrowing as there is very little other funding available;
- d) ICT program presents a significant cost, reaching into 2024/25 for the Tri-Service Control and Mobilising system, and may further increase if Leicestershire Fire and Rescue decides not take part in the joint procurement. This could result in an additional cost in the region of £1m each to Derbyshire and NFRS;
- e) There has been significant movement in the budget since the MTFS was reported to the Fire Authority in December, with a projected increase in income , as summarised in the Table 1 of the report, potentially providing an additional £1,163,000;
- f) The funding settlement is again, unfortunately, only for the year ahead;
- g) Inflation has reduced slightly but is still having a significant impact;
- h) The efficiency programme provided savings, which will be outlined in a report to the Fire Authority in February;
- i) The pay award continues to be in area of uncertainty and whilst presumed in the budget as a 5% increase this year, and 4% next year, it is possible that the award will be higher than anticipated, especially as the London Fire Service have offered 6%. Pay negotiations are continuing and the ballot of trades union members is due to close at the end of the month;
- j) With regard to reserves, £4.5 million is earmarked, which is included within the £9.8 million total for reserves;
- k) The three potential options for members to consider with regard to Council tax are detailed in the report, along with the impact on the budget for each, but all assume a 5% and 4% pay award. The three proposed options are:
  - i. The council tax freeze;
  - ii. A 2.95% increase;
  - iii. A £5 council tax increase;
- l) Table 2 within the report shows that with no increases/a freeze in Council Tax levels were applied, there will be a deficit of £2.188m in 2023/24. This will rise to £3.4m in 2024/25, and increases further to £5.6m by 2026/27;

- m) Table 3 of the report shows that even with a 2.95% increase in Council Tax there would be a significant deficit of £1.362m in 2023/24 rising to £1.8m in 2024/25 and to £2m in 2026/27;
- n) If a £5 increase in Council Tax were to be approved by the Fire Authority in February, the estimated deficit position for 2023/24 would reduce to £529k, increasing to £806k in 2024/25 and £1m by 2026/27;
- o) The figures in Table 5 of the report were incorrect and have been corrected in the final column of the table below. The impact on council tax band properties A-H of both a 2.95% and 5 pound increase is as follows:

<b>Band</b>	<b>Annual Council Tax 2022/23 £</b>	<b>2.95% Increase 2023/24 £</b>	<b>£5 Increase 2023/24 £</b>
A	56.38	58.04	59.71
B	65.78	67.72	69.67
C	75.17	77.39	79.62
D	84.57	87.06	89.57
E	103.36	106.41	109.47
F	122.16	125.76	129.38
G	140.95	145.11	149.28
H	169.14	174.13	179.14

- p) The budgetary impact on the Service of both a 2.95% increase and a £5 increase are summarised in table 6 of the report;
- q) It is not anticipated that Central Government will extend the ability to apply a £5 increase beyond this current year.

Members of the committee commented as follows:

- a) Becky Smeathers and the Finance Team are praised for their outstanding work in a financial landscape that is increasingly difficult to navigate;
- b) It's frustrating that 60% of the Service's budget is funded by Council Tax and that the burden falls on residents, particularly during a time when many are struggling, however, members of the Authority have cross-party lobbied hard for greater Council Tax flexibility so it is appropriate that the opportunity to set the precept at £5 is accepted;
- c) As a proportion of the council tax bill, £5 is still a low and provides excellent value for money but members are aware that this is only one element of potentially several precept rises;
- d) Officers and members need to come together to look for longer term settlement period and future flexibility with regard to Council Tax funding;



- v) Increasing the cost to citizens is not an easy option, but members need to do the best for the Authority for the benefit of citizens;
- w) Following the cross-party lobbying and the budgetary needs of the Service, there realistically is no other option than to recommend that the Fire Authority considers approving the £5 precept;
- x) Once further clarity is received regarding the pay award, and outcome of the proposed efficiency savings, NNDR business rates, tax base and other areas of financial uncertainty, a debate by the Fire Authority would be welcomed, but there are too many uncertainties at this time to make a recommendation;
- y) The recommendation to raise Council Tax is not made lightly by any members when the cost of living for citizens continues to rise and the proposal should be thoroughly debated by the Authority prior to a decision;
- z) There is widespread opposition to cuts in the Fire Service so any increase in the budget is a trade off until further funding from Central Government is received. We would be 'cutting off our nose to spite our face' if we don't recommend the acceptance of the opportunity to apply the £5 increase. However this should be fully debated by the Authority once the outcome of the Futures25 consultation is available and the current financial uncertainties can be confirmed;
- aa) the 5.2% uplift in spending power referenced by Central Government is entirely predicated on the Authority applying the maximum Council Tax precept amount. The RSG increase is almost entirely off-set by the loss in Services Grant with a little bit of movement around the Section 31 Grant, and the £5 increase nets the vast majority of the 5.2% increase in core spending power. We as an Authority have cross-party lobbied our MPs for an uplift in spending power so we need to be seen to be taking advantage of the tool that provides us with that, or be seen to be contradicting ourselves.

**Resolved to recommend to the Fire Authority an increase in Council Tax, up to the maximum of £5.00.**

It is noted that Councillors Callum Bailey, Mike Quigley MBE, and Roger Upton, abstained from voting.

## **23 Exclusion of the Public**

**Resolved to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, under Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3, on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining an exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.**

## **24 Exempt Minutes**

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2022 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

**25 Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service Property at Clifton**

Terry Scott, Head of Procurement and Resources, presented the report.

**Resolved to approve the decision of the Committee as set out in the exempt minutes.**



## **Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority Policy and Strategy Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held at Joint Fire / Police HQ, Sherwood Lodge, Arnold,  
Nottingham, NG5 8PP on 27 January 2023 from 10.00 am - 10.58 am**

### **Membership**

#### Present

Councillor Michael Payne (Chair)  
Councillor Sybil Fielding  
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora  
Councillor Mike Quigley MBE  
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler  
Councillor Tom Hollis (Substitute for Councillor Jason Zadrozny)

#### Absent

Councillor Jason Zadrozny

### **Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

Craig Parkin – Chief Fire Officer  
Mick Sharman - Acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer  
Damien West - Area Manager Head of ICT, Corporate Support  
Becky Smeathers - Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Authority  
Malcolm Townroe – Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority  
Catherine Ziane-Pryor – Governance Officer

## **15 Statements made by the Chair on behalf the Service and Fire Authority**

Councillor Michael Payne, Chair, informed the committee that a statement had been made in support of firefighters who were injured fighting the recent fire that took place in Edinburgh City Centre. Our thoughts are with them and their families.

Today is National Holocaust Memorial Day. On behalf of the Authority and Service we remember the six million Jewish men, women and children, who were murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators, and all victims of Nazi persecution and all subsequent genocides.

The meeting observed a minute's silence.

## **16 Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Jason Zadrozny (Councillor Tom Hollis substituting)  
Councillor Tom Hollis for his delayed arrival.

## **17 Declarations of Interest**

None.

## **18 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2022 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## **19 Framework for Application of Firefighter Pension Scheme Abatement Policy**

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Authority, presented the report which provides a framework for the application of the Abatement Policy for the Firefighters' Pension Scheme by which discretionary abatements will be guided, as requested at the last Committee meeting.

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) Previously a blanket policy had been in place, but following the advice of the LGA, the policy is to be revised and consideration given on an individual basis if there is a clear exceptional benefit to the Service in doing so. This was agreed at the last meeting;
- b) An Abatement Discretions Panel consisting of 3 senior officers is proposed for making decisions which are then reported to the Pension Board, which is a publicly transparent committee meeting three times a year, which in turn reports annually to the Fire Authority;
- c) It is suggested that if the Pensions Board, which includes elected and pension specialist members, identify any issues or concerns, they can raise these with the Authority through the elected member.

Committee members' comments included:

- d) The report is welcomed as providing exactly what the committee had requested, with a clearly explained pathway for decisions, rationale and framework;
- e) These issues are about people's lives and life planning. It's not fair for one Service officer to be expected to take such decisions in isolation so the shared responsibility and consideration of a Panel is welcomed;
- f) The transparency of the proposed framework is welcomed but it should be reviewed in a year's time to ensure the arrangements are appropriate and if more regular reporting of pension abatement decisions is required.

**Resolved to approve:**

- 1) **the following rationale for making the abatement decisions relating to the firefighters' pension scheme:**

- **there is an overall financial benefit in doing so (for example avoiding the need to employ alternative staff at higher cost);**
  - **re-employment is required to enable the Service to deliver a statutory or key function or project;**
- 2) the creation of an Abatement Discretions Panel consisting of an Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Head of People and Organisational Development (or representative) and Head of Finance (acting as delegated Scheme Manager);**
  - 3) decisions of the Abatement Discretions Panel are reported to the Pensions Board and then the Policy and Strategy Committee by way of the Pensions Annual Report.**

## **20 Manchester Arena Inquiry - Volume 2**

Mick Sharman, temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which summarises Volume 2 of the Manchester Arena Inquiry, focusing on the impact of inadequacies in the planning and preparation by emergency services and in the emergency response.

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) Volume 1 of the enquiry focused on the security arrangements, and Volume 3, which is expected to be published in spring 2023, will focus on the security services and counter terrorism police;
- b) Volume 2 has brought some clarity to response arrangements of emergency services during the incident. Undoubtedly the report is worth reading in full;
- c) Powerful language is used in the damning report, such as 'inadequacy of planning by emergency services in the emergency response', stating that 'the performance of emergency services was far below the standard it should have been' and refers to 'the ineffectiveness of response';
- d) the report identifies several areas as follows:
  - i. All Category 1 responders in attendance that night made mistakes in adhering to and completing tasks outlined by the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP). JESIP are the principles whereby emergency services work together to ensure the ability to coordinate multiagency approach to an incident. These principles weren't applied as robustly as they should have been which has been identified as a failure;
  - ii. Multiple failures in the communications that occurred, particularly between the agencies that responded, and also the particular understanding between the various services. The report identifies inadequate training for fire control room staff;

- iii. There was inadequate training for Fire Control and NILOs (National Inter- agency Liaison Officers), who deal with and share the high level intelligence of an incident, particularly in handling a situation where communications broke down;
  - iv. Poor decision-making highlighted the lack of understanding of partner agencies' capabilities and training, and a lack of understanding of what each service should bring to the incident and how they should work together;
  - v. There was a lack of understanding of Operation Plato which is the national identifier for the response to a marauding terrorist attack;
- e) Prior to the Manchester Arena incident, during the past 3-4 years, NFRS has taken a proactive approach to improve a number of areas that have been identified as failings with this report;
  - f) Volume 1 of the report acted as a catalyst to further energise and focus on the work that the Service has undertaken, but there is still further work to be done, including the review of operational policies and procedures relating to terrorist attacks;
  - g) The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) is considering the report before issuing a collective sector response, including how the sector will learn lessons and move forward, not just as individual Fire and Rescue Services, but as a sector in addressing the recommendations clearly identified in the report;
  - h) NFRS will further consider its own processes and produce a further detailed action plan that will take on board the national recommendations;
  - i) It's very striking that the report highlights relationships and the importance of the Local Resilience Forums (LRFs). Nottinghamshire LRF is proactively taking the report into consideration and has formed a subgroup which is led by NFRS in terms of coordinating a response to volume 2;
  - j) Progress against the recommendations will feed into the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and be reported to members.

The Chair commented as follows:

- k) It's difficult to comprehend 22 people being killed, 1,017 people being injured and the psychological trauma resulting from such an incident taking place in England;
- l) the report has a consistent theme of poor communication between agencies, and a lack of awareness of the capability, including equipment, of the Fire and Rescue Service. Risk aversion, insufficient muscle memory due to lack of training are also referenced, so we all need to know where the standard will be set;
- m) A concern which was first raised during the initial pandemic lockdown, is with regard to the arrangements for responding to significant scale incidents such as the national lock down or the Manchester Arena attack. The accountability mechanism doesn't and hasn't included the engagement and input of elected members who are representatives of the public and to be held accountable for the services that responded;

- n) During the height of the Covid pandemic, operational decisions were driven by the strategic decisions of the LRF with absolutely no accountability and oversight by elected members. During Covid, some decisions were operational emergency response, but also some of those strategic decisions were about removing people's rights or infringing on their ability to go about their day-to-day lives, taken in isolation by operational staff. Central government has accepted that there is a strategic missing link regarding accountability to elected members. It's important to know where accountability of the LRF sits. Current arrangements also leave LRF officers vulnerable;
- o) This is a serious public enquiry for an incident where there was significant loss of life and a huge impact. There is a lot of criticism in the report, not just against the Fire Service, but for all responding services. If the LRF takes the lead, it needs to be accountable;
- p) It is important for members to have the opportunity to feed into the LRF, and it is also suggested that once complete, all locally elected members, including members of Parliament, along with community leaders, are briefed on the work of the LRF to ensure that they comprehend the arrangements and if incidents occur, can provide informed reassurance to communities and citizens on the processes applied, having been determined by the LRF. This would help address one area of criticism following the Manchester Arena incident with regard to communication and understanding;
- q) Once the LRF work concludes in this area, it would be beneficial to receive a report on lessons learned, with a headline briefing and illustration of accountability of the LRF work;
- r) It is a serious concern that the paper reports that the £56,000 Central Government allocated funding specifically dedicated to support preparation to respond to a marauding terrorist attack, will be reduced to just £19,000 in the next financial year. Other Fire and Rescue Services may not have buildings and venues which were open to the threat, but Nottingham and Nottinghamshire do. More clarity needs to be reported to members and citizens, including if and where representations have been made, and the response of the National Fire Chiefs Council.

Craig Parkin, Chief Fire Officer, responded:

- s) The Service is looking to clarify the concerns around the LRF accountability, but the Fire Services Act sets out where the powers of the Authority sit, and where the role of the officers sit with regard to discharging the duties in particularly relating to large-scale emergency responses;
- t) Accountability is reflected in reporting to forums such as these, and the Fire Authority, with powers of intervention by the Secretary of State if the Service does not meet its duties and function as expected, so Central Government also has scrutiny over the Authority. 'Future of Fire Standards' relies on the integration and deployment of the latest technology, whilst HMICFRS requires evidence of learning from incidents and consideration of risk aversion. There is still work to be done with regard to the principles of joint working and ensuring shared knowledge and understanding. 'JESIP', the joint interoperability framework, was established to address identified gaps in collective coordination and communication between services. There is existing National guidance, some of which was followed, some of which hasn't been. Added to which, some members may be aware that a paper is scheduled to be published focusing on the

'Reform of the Fire Service', including governance, standards and expectations that there will be a suggestion to implement a College of Fire;

- u) At its next inspection, HMICFRS will look in detail at training, competence, people and culture. Overall there is a lot of scrutiny of the Service and how it operates, including scrutiny around the LRFs and its resilience frameworks. It is anticipated there will be scrutiny of where elected members' roles end and operational independence. There is a lot of work ongoing and once officers are provided with more details, a report can be brought before members;
- v) Following significant incidents, Central Government established areas of focus work such as 'New Dimensions', with significant funding to kick-start implementation regarding emergency response to specific incidents such as terrorist chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incidents. This Service has been involved in this and further national work, including around terrorism;
- w) The Service has a responsibility to identify local risks, which may include those listed above, and ensure that it can respond appropriately within normal operational capability. The additional funding enabled the establishment of this work, but the fire sector should have been building this type of risk into its response capability locally and nationally. The funding and teams debate is ongoing, including whether firefighters should be paid additional MTA (marauding terrorist attack) element.;
- x) In the instance of the Manchester Arena the Police took control to identify and neutralise the threat and gain an understanding of risk. If there had been a building collapse then the Fire Service would take the multiagency lead, but in terrorism cases, the Police take the lead and agencies work assess and identify a joint understanding of risk.

Members of the Committee commented:

- y) It's a concern that the main anger towards emergency services was focused on the Fire Service, but they too, along with paramedics were stopped from entering the scene by the Police until it was determined safe to do so;
- z) Retrospective opinion is easily presented, but it needs to be understood that it is not uncommon for such attacks to include secondary explosive devices aimed at emergency responders arriving on scene, so the Police had to determine the risk of this prior to allowing other services to enter the scene;
- aa) Emergency services have issued a very humbling apology. Services can sometimes find it difficult to be objective on their own operation, which is why the HMICFR review is useful in raising challenging questions.

**Resolved to:**

- 1) note the contents of this report and endorse the actions being taken by the Service in response to the Manchester Arena Inquiry recommendations;**
- 2) agree to receive further reports to enable monitoring and scrutiny on the implementation of learning.**



## **21 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS), Areas for Improvement**

Damien West, Area Manager Head of ICT and Corporate Support, presented the update report on how the Service is responding to the areas for improvement (AFI) identified during the 2021 HMICFRS inspection.

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) The AFI delegated to the Policy and Strategy Committee (AFI 1) is in regard to 'the monitoring, reviewing and evaluation of the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration activity undertaken by the Service';
- b) The report submitted today is similar to that presented to the Fire Authority in September 2022 and provides a good, positive response, which requires the evaluation of the committee;
- c) As outlined in the report, a gap analysis has been undertaken resulted in the following work streams:
  - i. Review of the Services' evaluation framework;
  - ii. Further engagements with the broader Fire Service Sector to identify best practice and understand areas for improvement. This has been initiated with Kent Fire and Rescue Service and learning will be applied;
  - iii. Continue external evaluation work, such as that undertaken with Nottingham Trent University;
  - iv. Ensure that evaluation criteria are embedded in the Service's culture and incorporated into the year two annual delivery plan and potential future collaborations;
  - v. For internal governance meetings, such as the Service's Community Risk Management Plan Assurance Board, to consider and review evaluations, ensuring that development and learning can occur, with regular updates provided to members of the Fire Authority;
- d) Members will receive progress updates, with the completion target date for all work streams set as June 2024.

Members of the committee:

- e) suggested that specific collaboration evaluation update reports are submitted twice yearly to the Policy and Strategy Committee to ensure the prominence of the work is maintained and members can monitor progress;
- a) expressed interest in gaining an understanding of the assessments of neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services such as Derbyshire, which collaborate with NFRS.

**Resolved to:**

- 1) note the 'Areas for Improvement' delegated to the Committee for scrutiny and monitoring;**

- 2) **agree the approach of the Chief Fire Officer for addressing the 'Areas for Improvement';**
- 3) **note the actions undertaken to date.**

## **22 Exclusion of the Public**

**RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.**

## **23 Exempt Minutes**

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2022 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## **24 Resilience Update**

Mick Sharman, temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report.

**Resolved to approve the recommendations as set out in the report.**

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