



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

**Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Joint Fire and Rescue Service/
Police Headquarters - Sherwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PP on 12
January 2024 from 10.00 am – 10.46am**

Membership

Present

Councillor Jason Zadrozny (Chair)
Councillor Robert Corden
Councillor Anwar Khan
Councillor Devontay Okure
Councillor Nick Raine
Councillor Nigel Turner

Absent

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Damien West – Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Bryn Coleman - Area Manager for Prevention and Protection
Andy Macey - Area Manager for Response
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

16 Apologies for Absence

None.

17 Declarations of Interests

None.

18 Minutes

a) Confirmation

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2023 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

b) Update

As suggested by members within the Safeguarding, Disclosure and Barring Update (minute 14), enhanced DBS checks have been considered and consultation is underway for all frontline staff to undergo enhanced DBS Checks.

19 Service Delivery Performance Report

Andy Macey, Area Manager for Response, presented the response element of the Service's performance, with highlights including the following:

- a) Whilst overall this year, the number of incidents has reduced, in quarter three response to incidents is expected to increase due to the flooding in October and November;
- b) The report provides a comparison of activity levels month by month for the past three years, which follow a consistent pattern, as are the types of incidents responded to. Also provided are statistics of incidents attended by priority type and district station;
- c) The Service has set a standard of an eight minute response time, but this was fractionally missed with an average of 8 minutes and 16 seconds, mainly due to the new Appliance Mobile Data Terminals, for which there were some initial issues which have now been resolved;
- d) On call availability is listed for every on-call station, with Harworth and Southwell struggling to achieve the 85% minimum availability target. Some staff on both of these stations have experienced long term illness, but are now returning to work and so performance is expected to improve. On call availability at Warsop and Hucknall fire stations achieved an impressive 99.7% and 99.5% respectively;
- e) The year-to-date performance data for Retford Fire Station On-Call crewing is set out in the report, as specifically requested by members. Five of the 34 new On-Call firefighters will be based at Retford, and so performance is expected to improve;
- f) More detailed data regarding recruitment, including the proportion of initial applications to successful appointees, can be provided to a future meeting. It should be noted that consideration is underway to revise the requirements of On-Call firefighters living within five minutes travelling of the fire station, to expand the time in some areas of specific need where recruitment has been especially difficult;
- g) Approximately 400 whole-time firefighter applications were received in the current round of recruitment, with 170 candidates shortlisted and now undergoing testing;
- a) Whole-Time appliance availability consistently exceeded the 98% available turnout target, with a minimum 99% availability;
- b) Fire Control did not meet the Services target in quarter two, again, this can be mainly attributed to the to the initial introduction of the new Appliance Mobile Data Terminals, but as can be seen from the performance chart in the report, performance has since much improved.

Members commented as follows:

- c) Overall performance is looking good, and it is welcomed that where there were challenges, solutions are now in place;

- d) The 99.9% availability of both Arnold and Ashfield Whole-Time fire station crews is pleasing.

Bryn Coleman, Area Manager for Prevention and Protection, presented the prevention element of the performance data, followed by protection data, highlighting the following points:

- e) the Service is on target to complete 14,000 safe and well visits this year, with a focus on reaching those most at risk of fire injury;
- f) Youth engagement events will be held during the summer, working with partners such as the Police the National Grid, the Railway Police, and the Ambulance Service. There is an open invitation for members to attend;
- g) In areas where hoax calls become an issue, schools are targeted with safety focused visits and messages;
- h) 'Biker Down' is programme run by firefighters teaching motorbike riders how they can most safely assist a fellow fallen rider. As part of engagement the Fire Service is involved in Easter egg run again this year from Forest Fields to Mansfield Fire Station on Easter weekend;
- i) As usual, throughout party season there will be a focus on drink/drug driving awareness, including targeting new drivers through colleges. It's very difficult to gauge prevention success, but there is a general feeling that it is working;
- j) With regard to protection, it is likely that the service will miss the Fire Safety Audits (FSAs) target of 1,500 as there are not enough Safety Advisers within the Service, or even nationally, to undertake the volume of work required. In addition, the data only registers the property and not the number of visits undertaken or required, which can be multiple if premises owners are required to take action which then needs to be re-inspected. Work is ongoing to recruit and/or train Fire Safety Auditors;
- k) A breakdown by type of FSAs and business safety checks is included in the report;
- l) 48 formal notices of action were issued. The Service prefers to take an initial educational approach, but applies enforcement and prohibition when necessary;
- m) The Service is completing more safety audits than ever before, with supervisory managers on appliances now trained so operating crews can undertake audits. In addition, crews are also now able to identify required interventions which in turn releases capacity from the audit teams;
- n) Safety programs around the festive season, such as the '12 days of Christmas', highlight prevention messages and retaining fire safety standards, such as not blocking fire exits with stock;
- o) Whilst the Service aims to reduce Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFSs) by 3% every year, this has not been possible and nationally the number of UwFSs has

increased. A generally small number are due to good but mistaken intent, and some will be hoax calls. Between April and December 79 malicious or hoax calls were received. The Service can trace these telephone numbers, including a pay-as-you-go, and does take action;

- w) The highest number of UwFS was 2875 due to alarm apparatus. Whilst hospitals used to be the worst culprit, the Service has worked hard with these partners to address the issue, which, as a result has reduced. Residential properties are now the most frequent source, with a 13% increase on the previous year's data;
- x) Whilst the Service does have enforcement powers and liaises with commercial properties to address UwFS issues, it has no powers with regard to residential properties, and so an urging co-operation approach is taken;
- y) When attending such incidents, crews have identified other vulnerability issues, including deprivation, which can then be assessed through Safe and Well Visits, including referrals to other service pathways where necessary;
- z) The majority of UwFSs are from residential premises by telecare alarm activation by people living independently but with an alarm facility. If the telecare call handler doesn't receive a response from the activation address, the alarm is escalated to the emergency services;
- aa) The 'Building Safety Act' requires a multibit disciplinary team to look at high-rise buildings. Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire are the East Midlands Regional Team Leads as other areas do not have the same extent of high-rise buildings;

Members comments included:

- bb) Overall performance and progress is positive, and welcomed;
- cc) With an ageing population and more people remaining in their own homes, it is likely that there will be an ongoing increase in telecare type systems, and unless processes change, the numbers of UwFS will also increase. However, members welcome confirmation that the Service does follow up where vulnerabilities are identified;
- dd) With regard to the regional response to the Buildings Safety Act, having local building safety inspection capacity is preferable, but its hoped that under these new arrangements, local officers will not be required to travel beyond the region, due to the national lack of qualified personnel.

Resolved to note the report.

20 Update on learning from the Manchester Arena Inquiry - volume two

Damien West, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, the report which provides an update on the Service's response to the recommendations in volume II of the inquiry regarding how to the emergency services responded to the Manchester Arena bombing.

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

- a) The report provided 53 recommendations which the Service must respond to, 32 are now closed and 21 ongoing, but progressing on track. It is anticipated that all recommendations will have been addressed by December 2024;
- b) In many of the areas for improvement the sector has updated response processes, added training requirements and with the consideration of the Fire Chief's Council, produced new national guidance to ensure consistency across the sector;
- c) Some of the learning from the Manchester Arena Bombing was implemented during the Nottingham murders in June last year, with effective communication across the blue light partnership;
- d) This Fire Service Chairs the Local Resilience Forum sub-group which has been formed on the recommendation of the inquiry, to address 55 actions across all responders, 33 of which are now closed and 22 are ongoing;
- e) His Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) is due to visit the Service in March 2024 and will scrutinise the progress made against the inquiry recommendations;
- f) Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) equipment packs have now been issued and members will have the opportunity to examine the equipment and speak to an officer after the meeting;
- g) The current threat level from MTA is 'likely' and whilst the additional requirements of equipment and training are a financial burden, they must be provided by the Service to keep firefighters as safe as possible in the event of an attack.

Members of the committee commented:

- h) It is diabolical that Central Government has withdrawn 60% of funding from services, particularly after the incident last year, and when there is a clear requirement for Services to purchase and maintain additional specialist equipment against so many other financial pressures;
- i) Working out the level of threat can be difficult, as threats are continuously unstable and can come in many forms and with so many significant venues in the City, is unrealistic to reduce funding when the threat level is rising;
- j) We need to praise the Blue Light Services for their action last June and we need to remember that these people go into an often unknown situation and risk their lives to do their job.

Resolved to:

- 1) note the update from the report and endorse the actions being taken by the Service in response to the Manchester Arena Inquiry;**
- 2) receive further reports for the monitoring and scrutiny of the implementation of learning through the Community Safety Committee.**