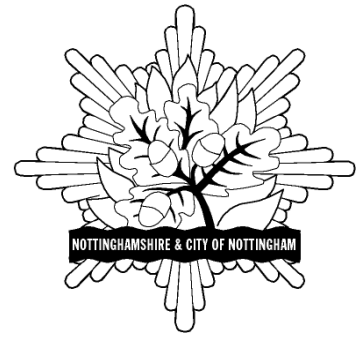


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Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority - Meeting of the Authority

Date: Friday, 14 July 2023 **Time:** 10.30 am

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

Members are requested to attend the above meeting to be held at the time, place and date mentioned to transact the following business

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. J. Lawrence'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

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

<u>Agenda</u>	<u>Pages</u>
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2 Declarations of Interest	
3 Minutes Of the meeting held on 27 May 2023, for confirmation.	3 - 8
4 Chair's Announcements	
5 Revised Procurement Thresholds Report of the Chief Fire Officer	9 - 20
6 Treasury Management Annual Report 2022/23 Report of the Treasurer	21 - 30
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9	Resourcing to Risk Report of the Chief Fire Officer	101 - 108
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11	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services Report of the Chief Fire Officer	117 - 122
12	Mobilisation System Update Report of the Chief Fire Officer	123 - 130
13	Committee Outcomes Report of the Chief Fire Officer	To Follow

Any councillor who is unable to attend the meeting and wishes to submit apologies should do so via the Executive Assistant to the Chief Fire Officer at Fire Services Headquarters on 0115 8388900

If you need any advice on declaring an interest in any item above, please contact the Governance Officer shown on this agenda, if possible before the day of the meeting.

Governance Officer: Cath Ziane-Pryor
0115 8764298
catherine.pryor@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

The agenda, reports and minutes for all meetings of the Fire and Rescue Authority can be viewed online at:

<https://committee.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CIId=224&Year=0>

If you would like British Sign Language interpretation at the meeting, please contact the Service at least two weeks in advance to book this, either by emailing enquiries@notts-fire.gov.uk or by text on SMS: 0115 824 0400



Nottinghamshire & City of Nottingham Fire & Rescue Authority

MINUTES of the Annual General Meeting held at Joint Fire / Police HQ, Sherwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PP on 26 May 2023 from 10.30 am - 10.49 am

Membership

Present

Councillor Michael Payne (Chair)
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora (Vice Chair)
Councillor Liaqat Ali
Councillor Callum Bailey
Councillor Richard Butler
Councillor John Clarke MBE
Councillor Robert Corden
Councillor Sybil Fielding
Councillor Tom Hollis
Councillor Anwar Khan
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
Councillor John Lee
Councillor Devontay Okure
Councillor Nick Raine
Councillor Nigel Turner
Councillor Roger Upton
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler
Councillor Jason Zadrozny

Absent

Police and Crime Commissioner Caroline Henry

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Craig Parkin – Chief Fire Officer
Damien West - Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Mick Sharman - Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Strategic Collaboration for Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Services)
Becky Smeathers – Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Authority
Malcolm Townroe – Clerk and Monitoring Officer
Catherine Ziane-Pryor – Governance Officer

1 Appointment of Chair

Resolved to appoint Councillor Michael Payne as Chair of the Authority for the 2023/24 municipal year.

2 Appointment of Vice-Chair

Resolved to appoint Councillor Patience Ifediora as Vice-Chair of the Authority for the 2023/24 municipal year.

3 Apologies for Absence

None.

4 Declarations of Interest

None.

5 Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting held on 24 February 2023 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

6 Chair's Announcements

The Chair welcomed newly appointed members and welcomed back previous members, highlighting that a Member's Seminar is to be held on 5 June and provides a valuable insight into the Service and requesting that all members attend. Details will be circulated to members.

The Bereaved Families Charter has been approved and adopted by the Service. Following the meeting a photograph will be taken of members with the signed charter in the memorial garden. The initiative, which ensures that post tragedy support is available, has come about as a result of the Hillsborough tragedy.

7 Membership of the Authority, Appointments to Committees and Boards, and Dates of Future Meetings

Malcolm Townroe, Clerk and Monitoring Officer, presented the report which sets out the appointments to the Authority by both the City and County councils, confirms the numbers of places on committees with regard to political balance, requests political group nominations to those places and the approval of the committee structure and schedule of dates, as listed in the report.

Resolved

(1) to note the following appointments:

The City Council has appointed the following members:

**Councillor Liaqat Ali (Labour)
Councillor Patience Ifediora (Labour)
Councillor Anwar Khan (Labour)
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan (Labour)
Councillor Devontay Okure (Labour)
Councillor Nick Raine (Labour)**

The County Council has appointed the following members:

Councillor Callum Bailey (Conservative)
Councillor Richard Butler (Conservative)
Councillor John Clarke (Labour)
Councillor Robert Corden (Conservative)
Councillor Sybil Fielding (Labour)
Councillor Tom Hollis (Independent Alliance)
Councillor John Lee (Conservative)
Councillor Michael Payne (Labour)
Councillor Nigel Turner (Conservative)
Councillor Roger Upton (Conservative)
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler (Conservative)
Councillor Jason Zadrozny (Independent Alliance)

- (2) to approve the Committee Structure;
- (3) to approve the following appointments to Committees, Chairs and meeting dates:
- a) **Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority (10.30 am unless otherwise stated)**
- 14 July 2023 (to be held at Highfields Fire Station)**
22 September 2023
15 December 2023
23 February 2024
24 May 2024 (AGM)
- b) **Policy and Strategy Committee**
- i. **Meeting dates(10.00 am unless otherwise stated)**
- 30 June 2023**
17 November 2023 (to be held at Highfields Fire Station)
2 February 2024
26 April 2024
- ii. **Membership**
- Councillor Michael Payne (Chair)**
Councillor Patience Ifediora
Councillor Sybil Fielding
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler
Councillor Nigel Turner
Councillor Tom Hollis
- c) **Human Resources Committee (10.00 am)**
- i. **Meeting dates (10.00 am unless otherwise stated)**

23 June 2023
10 November 2023
26 January 2024
19 April 2024

ii. Membership

Councillor Nick Raine (Chair)
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
Councillor Patience Ifediora
Councillor John Lee
Councillor Robert Corden
Councillor Tom Hollis

d) Community Safety Committee

i. Meeting dates (10.00 am)

9 June 2023
13 October 2023
12 January 2024
15 March 2024

ii. Membership

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

e) Finance and Resources Committee

i. Meeting dates (10.00 am)

16 June 2023
20 October 2023 (to be held at Highfields Fire Station)
19 January 2024
22 March 2024

ii. Membership

Councillor John Clarke (Chair)
Councillor Liaqat Ali
Councillor Anwar Khan
Councillor Sybil Fielding
Councillor Callum Bailey
Councillor Richard Butler
Councillor Roger Upton

f) The Personnel Committee

i. This Committee will meet as required;

ii. Membership

**Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
Councillor Patience Ifediora
Councillor John Clarke
Councillor Nick Raine
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler
Councillor John Lee**

g) Appointments Committee

i. This Committee will meet as required;

ii. Membership

**Councillor Michael Payne
Councillor Patience Ifediora
Councillor Sybil Fielding
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler
Councillor John Lee
Councillor Tom Hollis**

h) Strategic Inclusion Board

i. This Board will meet at the rising of each full Fire Authority meeting excluding the AGM;

ii. Membership

**Councillor Michael Payne
Councillor Patience Ifediora
Councillor Sybil Fielding
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler
Councillor Nigel Turner
Councillor Tom Hollis**

i) Pensions Board

i. This Board will meet as advised:

ii. Membership

**Councillor Sybil Fielding
Councillor Patience Ifediora (substitute)
ACFO Candida Brudenell (officer member).**

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

REVISED PROCUREMENT THRESHOLDS

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 14 July 2023

Purpose of Report:

To present revised procurement thresholds to be included in the financial regulations.

Recommendations:

That Members approve the updated procurement thresholds to be incorporated into the financial procedures of the financial regulations.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name : Terry Scott
Head of Procurement and Resources

Tel : 0115 8388100

Contact : terry.scott@notts-fire.gov.uk

Media Enquiries Contact : Corporate Communications
0115 8388100 corporatecomms@notts-fire.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 To conduct business effectively and efficiently, Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority ('the Fire Authority') needs to ensure that it has sound financial management policies in place and they are strictly adhered to. Part of this process is the establishment of financial regulations that set out the Fire Authority's financial policies.
- 1.2 Financial Regulations provide the framework for managing the Fire Authority's financial affairs, they apply to every member and officer of the Fire Authority and anyone acting on its behalf.
- 1.3 Financial Regulations should be read in conjunction with the Fire Authority's financial, contract and procurement policies, and any other relevant internal regulatory documents.
- 1.4 The financial procedures support the financial control objectives set out in the Financial Regulations of the Fire Authority.
- 1.5 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) Financial Regulations and Standing Orders set the thresholds at which procurement for and on behalf of the Service can be undertaken. The overriding aim of these procurement thresholds is to ensure that best value is obtained and the process in achieving this is documented and recorded.
- 1.6 The current procurement thresholds were agreed in 2011 and due to the increase in supplier costs they are outdated and inefficient when undertaking lower value procurements.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 This report is to seek approval from Members to amend the Procurement Thresholds to better reflect today's prices for goods and services leading to higher efficiencies whilst maintaining financial control and achieving best value
- 2.2 The proposed new thresholds better align with current procurement procedures in that they consider when tenders must be advertised using the Service's E-procurement Portal and Contracts Finder.
- 2.3 The Procurement Manager has consulted with the Finance Team to set the proposed thresholds. The proposed procurement thresholds are at Appendix A to this report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources or learning and development implications arising from this report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

As there are no known equality implications arising directly from this report at this stage, an equality impact assessment has not been undertaken.

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 from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members approve the updated procurement thresholds to be incorporated into the financial procedures of the financial regulations.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

REVISED PROCUREMENT THRESHOLDS

Existing Threshold Value	Existing Award Requirements	Contract Value (Proposed Threshold Value)	Contract Award requirements	Documentation Requirement	Budget Holder's Responsibilities	Form of Contract
Up to £499	Obtain a minimum of three competitive prices where practicable. Or The use of an existing framework / term contract where prices are pre-agreed. Or Order from the NFRS catalogue stock list through the financial management system. Or Justify purchase from single source supplier.	Remove this level				
New level added	New level added	Up to £999	Obtain a minimum of one verbal quote. Or	Verbal Quotation	Take advice from the NFRS Procurement department.	NFRS Purchase Order with standard terms and conditions or bespoke

REVISED PROCUREMENT THRESHOLDS

Existing Threshold Value	Existing Award Requirements	Contract Value (Proposed Threshold Value)	Contract Award requirements	Documentation Requirement	Budget Holder's Responsibilities	Form of Contract
			The use of a framework, Mini-Competition/ Direct award. Or A NFRS term contract where prices are pre-agreed.		Ensure best value has been achieved. Record all actions taken to achieve best value. If a framework is used, then the terms and conditions of the framework are to be strictly followed.	NFRS terms and conditions. NFRS Purchase order using a supplier's terms and condition. If purchasing from a framework, the framework terms and conditions will apply. Framework contract or standard form of contract or bespoke form of contract.
£501 to £5,000	Obtain a minimum of three written like for like quotes. Or The use of an	£1,000 to £4,999	A minimum of one supplier to be invited to quote. Or The use of a framework, Mini-	Written quotations may be via email or be obtained from an on-line price list(s).	Take advice from the NFRS Procurement department. Ensure best value has been achieved.	NFRS Purchase Order with standard terms and conditions or bespoke NFRS terms and conditions.

REVISED PROCUREMENT THRESHOLDS

Existing Threshold Value	Existing Award Requirements	Contract Value (Proposed Threshold Value)	Contract Award requirements	Documentation Requirement	Budget Holder's Responsibilities	Form of Contract
	existing framework / term contract where prices are pre-agreed; Or Order from the NFRS catalogue stock list through the financial management system; Or Authorisation to use a single source supplier using a single source supplier form.		Competition/ Direct award. Or A NFRS term contract where prices are pre-agreed.		Record all actions taken to achieve best value. If a framework is used, then the terms and conditions of the framework are to be strictly followed.	NFRS Purchase order using a supplier's terms and condition. If purchasing from a framework, the framework terms and conditions will apply. Framework contract or standard form of contract or bespoke form of contract.
New Level Added	New level added	£5,000 to £9,999	A minimum of two suppliers to be invited to quote. Or The use of a framework, Mini-Competition/ Direct award. Or	Quotations must be based on a written specification/ requirement. Quotations must be received in writing; alternatively, on-	Take advice from the NFRS Procurement department. Ensure best value has been achieved. Record all actions taken to achieve best value.	NFRS Purchase Order with standard terms and conditions or bespoke NFRS terms and conditions. NFRS Purchase order using a supplier's terms and condition.

REVISED PROCUREMENT THRESHOLDS

Existing Threshold Value	Existing Award Requirements	Contract Value (Proposed Threshold Value)	Contract Award requirements	Documentation Requirement	Budget Holder's Responsibilities	Form of Contract
			A NFRS term contract where prices are pre-agreed. Or Authorisation to use a single source supplier using a single source supplier form.	line price lists may be used to obtain like for like competitive prices.	If a framework is used, then the terms and conditions of the framework are to be strictly followed.	If purchasing from a framework, the framework terms and conditions will apply. Framework contract or standard form of contract or bespoke form of contract.
New Level added	New level added	£10,000 to £24,999	A minimum of three suppliers to be invited to quote. Or The use of a framework, Mini-Competition/ Direct award. Or A NFRS term contract where prices are pre-agreed.	Quotations must be based on a written specification/ requirement. Quotations must be received in writing; alternatively, on-line price lists may be used to obtain like for like competitive prices.	Take advice from the NFRS Procurement department. Ensure best value has been achieved. Record all actions taken to achieve best value. If a framework is used, then the terms and	NFRS Purchase Order with standard terms and conditions or bespoke NFRS terms and conditions. NFRS Purchase order using a supplier's terms and condition. If purchasing from a framework, the framework

REVISED PROCUREMENT THRESHOLDS

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Existing Threshold Value	Existing Award Requirements	Contract Value (Proposed Threshold Value)	Contract Award requirements	Documentation Requirement	Budget Holder's Responsibilities	Form of Contract
			Or Authorisation to use a single source supplier using a single source supplier form or business case.		conditions of the framework are to be strictly followed.	terms and conditions will apply. Framework contract or standard form of contract or bespoke form of contract.
£5,001 to £50,000	Obtain a minimum of three written like for like quotes; Or The use of an existing framework / term contract where prices are pre-agreed; Or Order from the NFRS catalogue stock list	£25,000 to £49,999	A minimum of three suppliers to be invited to quote. Or The use of a framework, Mini-Competition/ Direct award. Or A NFRS term contract where prices are pre-agreed. Or Authorisation to use a single source supplier	Quotations must be based on a written specification/ requirement. Advertising using the NFRS eprocurement portal and Contracts Finder. Quotations must be received in writing.	Take advice from the NFRS Procurement Section who will review all procurement documentation, approve, and advertise. Ensure best value has been achieved. Record all actions taken to achieve best value. If a framework is used, then the terms and	NFRS Purchase Order with standard terms and conditions or bespoke NFRS terms and conditions. NFRS Purchase order using a supplier's terms and condition. If purchasing from a framework, the framework terms and conditions will apply.

REVISED PROCUREMENT THRESHOLDS

Existing Threshold Value	Existing Award Requirements	Contract Value (Proposed Threshold Value)	Contract Award requirements	Documentation Requirement	Budget Holder's Responsibilities	Form of Contract
	through the financial management system; Or Authorisation to use a single source supplier using a single source supplier form or business case		using a single source supplier form or business case.		conditions of the framework are to be strictly followed.	Framework contract or standard form of contract or bespoke form of contract.
£50,001 up to EU procurement thresholds	Formal tender process to be followed, minimum of six supplier to tender; Or Purchase from an existing local, regional or national framework	£50,000 up to FTS Public Procurement thresholds	Formal tender process to be followed, minimum of five suppliers to be invited to tender. Or The use of a framework, Mini-Competition/ Direct award. Or A NFRS term contract where prices are pre-agreed.	Formal tender documentation. Tenders must be based on a written specification/ requirement. Advertising using the NFRS eprocurement portal and Contracts Finder. Tender Submissions must be received in writing.	Take advice from the NFRS Procurement Section who will review all procurement documentation, approve, and advertise. Ensure best value has been achieved. Record all actions taken to achieve best value. If a framework is used, then the terms and conditions of the framework are to be strictly followed.	NFRS Purchase Order with standard terms and conditions or bespoke NFRS terms and conditions. NFRS Purchase order using a supplier's terms and conditions. If purchasing from a framework, then the framework terms and conditions shall apply. Framework contract or standard form of contract or bespoke form of

REVISED PROCUREMENT THRESHOLDS

Existing Threshold Value	Existing Award Requirements	Contract Value (Proposed Threshold Value)	Contract Award requirements	Documentation Requirement	Budget Holder's Responsibilities	Form of Contract
						<p>contract.</p> <p>Legal advice may be required for bespoke Terms and Conditions.</p>
EU Procurement thresholds	<p>Formal tendering following the OJEU and UK procurement rules; Or Purchase from an existing local, regional or national framework</p>	Above FTS Public Procurement thresholds	<p>Formal tendering process following the UK Public Contract Regulations. Or The use of a framework, Mini-Competition/ Direct award</p>	<p>Formal tender documentation. Tenders must be based on a written specification/ requirement. Advertising using the NFRS eprocurement portal, Contracts Finder and FTS. Tender Submissions must be received in writing.</p>	<p>Take advice from the NFRS Procurement Section who will review all procurement documentation, approve, and advertise. Ensure the Public Contract Regulation tendering processes are followed. Ensure best value has been achieved. Record all actions taken to achieve best value. If a framework is used, then the terms and conditions of the</p>	<p>NFRS Purchase Order with standard terms and conditions or bespoke NFRS terms and conditions. NFRS Purchase order using a supplier's terms and conditions. If purchasing from a framework, then the framework terms and conditions shall apply. Framework contract or standard form of contract or bespoke form of contract. Legal advice may be</p>

REVISED PROCUREMENT THRESHOLDS

Existing Threshold Value	Existing Award Requirements	Contract Value (Proposed Threshold Value)	Contract Award requirements	Documentation Requirement	Budget Holder's Responsibilities	Form of Contract
					framework are to be strictly followed.	required for bespoke Terms and Conditions.

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

Report of the Treasurer

Date: 14 July 2023

Purpose of Report:

To provide Members with an update on treasury management activity during the 2022/23 financial year.

Recommendations:

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

CONTACT OFFICER

Name : Becky Smeathers
Head of Finance/Treasurer to the Authority

Tel : 0115 8388100

Email : Becky.smeathers@notts-fire.gov.uk

Media Enquiries Contact : Corporate Communications Team
0115 8388100 corporatecomms@notts-fire.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Treasury management is defined as:

“The management of the organisation’s borrowing, investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with these activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”

1.2 The Fire Authority is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2022/23. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy’s (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (revised in 2021) was adopted by the Fire Authority on 9 April 2010.

1.3 The primary requirements of the Code are as follows:

1. The creation and maintenance of a Treasury Management Policy Statement which sets out the policies and objectives of the Authority’s treasury management activities.
2. The creation and maintenance of Treasury Management Practices which set out the manner in which the Authority will seek to achieve those policies and objectives.
3. Receipt by the Fire Authority of an annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement for the year ahead, a mid-year review report and an annual report covering activities during the previous year.
4. Delegation by the Authority of responsibilities for implementing and monitoring treasury management policies and practices and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions.
5. Delegation by the Authority of the role of scrutiny of treasury management strategy and policies to a specific named body. For this Authority the delegated body is the Finance and Resources Committee.

1.4 This annual report has been prepared in compliance with CIPFA’s Code of Practice, and covers the following:

- An economic review of 2022/23;
- A review of Capital Activity during 2022/23 and the impact of this on the Authority’s Capital Financing Requirement;
- A review of the Investment and Cash Management Strategy during 2022/23;
- Investment and cash activity during 2022/23;
- A review of the year end investments, cash position and usable reserves;
- A review of the Borrowing Strategy and borrowing activity during 2022/23;
- A summary of compliance with treasury and prudential limits for 2022/23.

- 1.5 The Authority has appointed Link Asset Services as its external treasury management adviser.

2. REPORT

ECONOMIC REVIEW

- 2.1 Economic growth was tepid throughout 2022/23. Quarter 2 of 2022 saw UK GDP deliver growth of +0.1% q/q, but this was reversed in the third quarter, in part due to the extra bank holiday which was scheduled as a result of the Queen's funeral. Quarter 4 of 2022 GDP was positive at 0.1%, and the first quarter estimate for 2023 was also +0.1%. The level of quarterly GDP in Q1 2023 was 0.5% below its pre-pandemic level (Q4 2019).
- 2.2 Inflation has been a major issue during the year. CPI inflation peaked in October 2022 at 11.1% and was at 10.1% by the end of the financial year. Hopes for significant falls from this level will very much rest on the movements in energy markets, as well as supply-side factors impacting food prices.
- 2.3 The UK unemployment rate fell to a 48-year low of 3.6% during 2022, and this was despite a net migration increase of circa 500k. Due to the high number of economic participants registered as long-term sick, the UK labour force shrunk by circa 500k in the year to June 2022. Without an increase in the labour force participation rate it will be difficult for the UK economy to grow its way to prosperity, and with average wage increases running at over 6% the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee will be concerned that increasing pay inflation will heighten the risk of elevated inflation rates becoming embedded.
- 2.4 Given the upheaval caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, stubborn inflationary pressures, and political turmoil leading to the appointment of two different Prime Ministers within the space of two months, it is perhaps unsurprising that UK interest rates have been volatile right across the yield curve, from bank rate through to 50-year gilts. Bank rate rose steadily throughout 2022/23, starting at 0.75% and finishing at 4.25%.

REVIEW OF CAPITAL ACTIVITY IN 2022/23

- 2.5 The Authority undertakes capital expenditure on long term assets. These activities may either be:
- Financed immediately by way of capital or revenue resources (capital receipts, capital grants, revenue contributions), which does not give rise to a requirement to borrow; or
 - If insufficient financing is available, or if a decision is taken not to apply resources, the capital expenditure will need to be financed by borrowing.

- 2.6 Actual capital expenditure forms one of the required prudential indicators. The table below shows actual capital expenditure in the year and how this was financed.

	2021/22 Actual	2022/23 Revised Budget	2022/23 Actual
	£000's	£000's	£000's
Capital Expenditure	6,499	4,084	2,265
Resourced By:			
- Capital Grants	0		0
- Capital Receipts	473		513
- Revenue Contributions/Earmarked Reserves	527		298
- Borrowing	5,499		1,454
Total Financed Capital Expenditure	6,499		2,265

- 2.7 The 2022/23 revised capital budget underspent by £1.8m. The largest area of underspend was ICT (£964k), and there were underspends of £4754k relating to property, £189k relating to operational equipment and £192k relating to transport. Further details of these variances can be found in the 2022/23 Revenue and Capital Outturn Report, which was presented to members of the Finance and Resources Committee on 16 June 2023.
- 2.8 As at 31 March 2023 the Authority's capital financing requirement was £30,533k, which was within the prudential indicator set of £34,526k. The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) figure represents the Authority's underlying need to borrow to fund capital expenditure and equates to un-financed capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for by revenue funding or other resources such as capital grants or receipts. The CFR is reduced over time by way of a statutory Minimum Revenue Provision charge to revenue which effectively charges the revenue budget for the use of capital assets over their asset lives.

REVIEW OF THE INVESTMENT AND CASH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

- 2.9 The Treasury Management Strategy approved by the Authority set out the policies for managing investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. The risk appetite of this Authority is low in order to give priority to security of its investments. Accordingly, the following types of low risk specified investments may be made:
- Deposits with the Debt Management Agency (Government);
 - Term deposits with Banks and Building Societies;
 - Term Deposits with uncapped English and Welsh local authority bodies;
 - Call deposits with Banks and Building Societies;

- Triple-A rated Money Market Funds;
- UK Treasury Bills;
- Certificates of Deposit.

During the year, all investments were made with banks or building societies (term deposits or call deposits).

- 2.10 The Authority has a maximum limit of investments with any single counterparty of £4m. The maximum investment placed with any single counterparty during the year was £4m.
- 2.11 No term deposits are made for more than 1 year without the prior approval of the Treasurer and the Chair of Finance and Resources Committee. There have been no term deposits for more than 1 year made during the year.
- 2.12 The selection of counterparties with a high level of creditworthiness is achieved by reference to Link's weekly credit list of potential counterparties. The Link weekly credit list shows potential investment counterparties, which are colour-coded to indicate the maximum period it is recommended that investments are made for. The Authority has made all investments with counterparties during the year in accordance with the maximum periods advised by Link.
- 2.13 Due to the volatile interest rate environment, the Authority avoids locking into longer term deals unless exceptionally attractive rates are available which make longer term deals seem worthwhile.
- 2.14 In terms of cash resources, the strategy is to maintain a bank overdraft facility of £200,000 and to continue to use cash flow forecasting to predict cash surpluses and shortfalls. These surpluses and shortfalls are managed, and current account balances are transferred to the Business Premium Account on a daily basis if the interest rate is favourable. The current account was overdrawn on two occasions during 2022/23, resulting in the payment of £71 in interest costs.
- 2.15 The Treasury Management Strategy stated that the Authority will only use approved counterparties from countries with a minimum sovereign credit rating of AA from Fitch ratings. An exception to this policy can be made for the UK in the event that its sovereign credit rating is downgraded to AA-, in which case the Authority can continue to use counterparties from the UK. The UK was downgraded to AA- by Fitch on 27th March 2020.
- 2.16 All aspects of the Annual Investment Strategy outlined for 2022/23 remained in place throughout the year.

INVESTMENT AND CASH ACTIVITY IN 2022/23

- 2.17 As at 31 March 2022, the Authority held £3.0m of principal as short term investments on the Balance Sheet and £7.0m of principal as shorter dated "cash equivalent" investments.

- 2.18 The investment activity during the year conformed to the approved strategy, and the Authority had no liquidity difficulties. All investments during the year were made with UK or European banks and building societies.
- 2.19 Of the five call accounts held at 31 March 2023, four had been held for more than 1 year. These accounts had notice periods ranging from 1 day to 95 days. All counterparties have their creditworthiness continually monitored against Link's credit listings, and had it looked likely that the maximum recommended investment term for these institutions would have fallen below the call account notice period then the funds would have been withdrawn.
- 2.20 Investment returns increased steadily during 2022/23. The weighted average rate of return for the Authority's investments went from 0.17% in April 2022 to 3.51% in March 2023. Interest rate forecasts were initially suggesting only gradual rises in bank rate during 2022/23, but by August it had become clear that inflation was moving up towards a 40-year high. The Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee increased bank rate at every meeting during 2022/23 in an effort to control inflation. Bank rate increased from 0.75% on 17 March 2022 to 4.25% 23 March 2023.
- 2.21 The average 90 days backward looking SONIA compounded benchmark rate for the year was 1.3804%. The Authority's investments earned an average rate of 1.6103% during the year. This resulted in total investment (including overnight savings interest on the current account) income earned of £220k, against a budgeted sum for investment income of £20k. This means that the investment returns achieved by the Authority were above the benchmark set in the Treasury Management Strategy.
- 2.22 The Treasury Management Strategy set a Weighted Average Life (WAL) benchmark for liquidity of approximately 0.4 years for the Authority's investment portfolio. The actual WAL during 2022/23 was 0.16 years. The Strategy also set a security benchmark of 0.08% historic risk of default. The historic risk of default as at 31/03/2023 was 0.004%.

REVIEW OF INVESTMENTS / CASH POSITION AND USABLE RESERVES

- 2.23 For the first time since 2019/20 the Authority's usable reserves were fully cash backed at 31 March 2023. The reason for the increase in cash and investments relative to usable reserves are twofold: firstly, the Authority opted to borrow £6m in 2021/22 in order to secure reasonably low interest rates, and secondly there has been significant slippage in the capital programme which has led to a sizeable amount of the borrowed funds being temporarily invested rather being applied to capital expenditure. Current cash flow forecasts indicate that the Authority will not have to borrow further until the end of the 2023/24 financial year.

REVIEW OF THE BORROWING STRATEGY AND BORROWING ACTIVITY IN 2022/23

- 2.24 The strategy recommended that a combination of capital receipts, internal funds and borrowing would be used to finance capital expenditure during 2022/23. Capital receipts of £513k, borrowing of £1,454k and revenue contributions of £298k were applied to finance expenditure.
- 2.25 The Authority did not take any short-term borrowing during 2022/23.
- 2.26 The Authority repaid £5.8k in principal on PWLB annuity loans during 2022/23. No new long-term borrowing was taken during the year.
- 2.27 No rescheduling of debt took place, as the differential between new borrowing rates and premature repayment rates made rescheduling unviable.
- 2.28 The Authorised Limit is the affordable borrowing limit above which the Authority does not have the power to borrow. Total external debt as at 31 March 2023 was £32.9m, which was well within the Authorised Limit.
- 2.29 The Operational Boundary is the expected borrowing position of the Authority within the year. This was set at £36,907k for 2022/23. The Operational Boundary was not exceeded at any point during the year.

SUMMARY OF COMPLIANCE WITH TREASURY AND PRUDENTIAL LIMITS

- 2.30 The following indicators were approved by Members for the 2022/23 financial year. Actual performance is shown in the final column of the table below:

Treasury or Prudential Indicator or Limit	Approved for 2022/23	Actual for 2022/23
<i>Estimate of Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream</i>	5.6%	4.65%
<i>Estimate of Total Capital Expenditure to be Incurred</i>	£3,909,000	£2,266,606
<i>Estimate of Capital Financing Requirement</i>	£34,526,000	£30,533,000
<i>Operational Boundary</i>	£36,907,000	Not exceeded
<i>Authorised Limit</i>	£40,598,000	Not exceeded
<i>Upper limit for fixed rate interest exposures</i>	100%	100%
<i>Upper limit for variable rate interest exposures</i>	30%	0%
<i>Loan Maturity:</i>		
<i>Under 12 months</i>	Upper 30% Lower 0%	9.1%

12 months to 5 years	Upper 30% Lower 0%	6.1%
5 years to 10 years	Upper 75% Lower 0%	4.6%
10 years to 20 years	Upper 100% Lower 0%	12.2%
Over 20 years	Upper 100% Lower 30%	68.1%
Upper Limit for Principal Sums Invested for Periods Longer than 365 Days	£2,000,000	£0

Local Indicator or Limit	Approved for 2022/23	Actual for 2022/23
<i>Upper limit for internal borrowing as a % of the Capital Financing Requirement</i>	20%	No internal borrowing
<i>Lower limit for proportion of net debt to gross debt</i>	50%	Not breached
<i>Upper limit for proportion of net debt to gross debt</i>	85%	Not breached
<i>Investment security benchmark: maximum historic default of investment portfolio</i>	0.08%	0.004%
<i>Investment liquidity benchmark: maximum weighted average life of investment portfolio</i>	0.40 years	0.16 years
<i>Investment yield benchmark</i>	Internal returns to be above 3 month compounded SONIA rate	0.16103% (above the 3 month compounded SONIA rate)

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications of this report are set out in full within the body of the report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources or learning and development implications arising from this report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because this report gives a review of activities rather than introducing a new policy.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report, other than the requirement to act within the Authority's powers when undertaking treasury management borrowings and investments.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Risk management is a key aspect of treasury management, and the Treasury Management Strategy sets out the parameters within which activities will be carried out with a view to managing credit risk, liquidity risk, re-financing risk and market risk. The Authority has approved a prudent approach to treasury management and this report allows Members to review how well risks have been managed during the year.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

None.

Becky Smeathers
TREASURER TO THE FIRE AUTHORITY

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2022/23

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 14 July 2023

Purpose of Report:

To seek the approval of Members to the signing of the Annual Governance Statement by the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer.

Recommendations:

That Members approve the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name: Becky Smeathers
Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Authority

Tel: 0115 8388100

Email: becky.smeathers@notts-fire.gov.uk

Media Enquiries Contact: Corporate Communication Team
0115 8388100 corporatecomms@notts-fire.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Annual Governance Statement is a statutory document which explains the processes and procedures in place to enable the Service to carry out its functions effectively. The Annual Governance Statement contains details of the most recent review of governance arrangements and sets out challenges for those arrangements going forward.
- 1.2 The Authority must approve the Annual Governance Statement each year prior to adopting the Statement of Accounts. Once approved by the Authority, the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer can sign the Annual Governance Statement.
- 1.3 The Annual Governance Statement is expected to be up to date at the time of publication. It reflects the governance of the organisation as at 31 March 2023 but may be updated to reflect any retrospective factors that should be taken into account, such as the impact of any audit reports received between 31 March 23 and approval of the Statement of Accounts. The Governance Statement will be included in the unaudited 2022/23 Statement of Accounts when they are made public on the website by 31 May 23 in line with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.
- 1.4 The Local Code of Corporate Governance was adopted by the Authority in February 2017. This Annual Governance Statement, and the annual review of governance is against this framework.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 sets out how the Service has complied with the current local code of corporate governance during the year and meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 with regards to the preparation and approval of an annual governance statement.
- 2.2 The Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 is attached to this report as Appendix A. It concludes that the Service has well developed and evolving governance arrangements in place that are fit for purpose. The reasoning behind this conclusion is outlined in the paragraphs below.
- 2.3 The Service's policies and procedures continue to be updated and reviewed.
- 2.4 The Local Code of Corporate Governance was adopted by the Authority in February 2017 and CIPFA's Financial Management Code was adopted by the Authority in July 2021. The Authority's compliance against the Financial Management Code was reviewed by Internal Audit in 2021/22 – the report acknowledged that effective controls were in place regarding self-assessment, leadership, accountability, long term sustainability and value for money.

- 2.5 Whilst the 2021/22 and 2022/23 Statement of Accounts are yet to be audited, the External Auditors, Ernst & Young (EY), issued unqualified audits for the first 3 years of their contract (2018/19 and 2020/21), which indicates that the financial systems in place are robust.
- 2.6 Despite the delays to the audit of the Statement of Accounts and Value for Money Audits by the Authority's external auditors (EY), the Service's internal auditors (Nottinghamshire County Council) have completed a comprehensive audit programme which provides a high level of assurance. The Internal Audit Annual Report provided a judgement of Substantial Assurance regarding the arrangements in place for corporate governance, risk management and the control environment.
- 2.7 Seven internal audits have been completed within the year, 2 being graded as having Substantial Assurance and 5 being as having Reasonable Assurance. Three other external reviews have taken place, all of which provided reasonable or substantial assurance.
- 2.8 The Internal Audit Charter was adopted by Finance and Resources Committee in June 2022. The annual Internal Audit Plan is reviewed by SLT and approved by Finance and Resources Committee. All recommendations arising from internal audit reviews are actioned and monitored by SLT and Finance and Resources Committee.
- 2.9 The Service's second full HMICFRS inspection provided a rating of Good against all 11 areas of assessment.
- 2.10 The Service continues to address any governance issues as they arise and commits to keeping governance arrangements under review.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources or learning and development implications arising from this report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because the Authority's approach to inclusion and equality already forms part of its governance framework.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, Part 1 Section 6 set out the requirement for an Authority to conduct an annual review of governance and prepare an annual governance statement. It also provides that an Authority must consider the findings of the review and approve the annual governance statement in advance of approving the Statement of Accounts.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The governance framework of the Authority is the collection of systems, processes, culture and values which direct and control decision making and policy development within the organisation. The risk of not reviewing governance activity against this framework is that any weaknesses in governance may not be identified and rectified, thereby putting the organisation at risk of not achieving its objectives.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members approve the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

1 SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

- 1.1 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently, effectively, and equitably. The Authority also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvements in the way in which its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, the Authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, use of its resources and including arrangements for the management of risk and the maintenance of an effective internal control environment.
- 1.3 In 2017 the Authority approved and adopted a new local code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the 2016 CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) / Solace framework *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*:
- Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.
 - Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.
 - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.
 - Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.
 - Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.
 - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
 - Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

- 1.4 This statement sets out how the Authority has complied with the Code and also meets the requirements of regulation 6 of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 in relation to the publication of an annual governance statement.

2 THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, cultures and values for the direction and control of the Authority and the activities through which it is accountable to, engages with, and leads the community. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate and cost-effective services.
- 2.2 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is part of an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Authority's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively, and economically.

3 THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 In addition to the Annual Governance Statement the Authority has a Code of Corporate Governance that the Authority will commit to in carrying out its duties and responsibilities. In this document, officers have identified against each of the Code's principles what source documentation or existing practice demonstrates how the Authority complies with the principles that make up the Code.
- 3.2 In developing a code of corporate governance, the Authority had the aim of seeking compliance with the CIPFA / Solace guidelines and recognised that these constitute good practice for local authority organisations.
- 3.3 The Local Code of Corporate Governance was adopted by the Authority in February 2017. This Annual Governance Statement, and the annual review of governance is against this framework.
- 3.4 Summarised below are some of the key elements of the systems and processes that underlie the Authority's governance arrangements:

Identifying and Communicating the Authority's Vision and Outcomes for Citizens and Service Users

- 3.5 After consulting with the citizens of Nottinghamshire and service users, assessing current risks and service priorities, the Authority is required to prepare an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) that sets out the vision and service objectives for the organisation. The IRMP is delivered via the

Community Risk Management Plan 2022-25 (CRMP) which was approved by Fire Authority in February 2022.

3.6 The CRMP sets out how the Service aims to achieve its vision of creating safer communities by being one of the best fire and rescue services in England. Our ambition is focused around four strategic pillars:

- Community Outcomes,
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion,
- Strong governance and financial sustainability,
- Our professional and committed workforce.

3.7 The Plan sets out to achieve these aims using annual action plans which detail the key objectives for the year ahead. These cascade down to departmental business plans. Progress is monitored by the CRMP Assurance Board and reviewed through Fire Authority governance. Every year a Statement of Assurance is produced which outlines how the Service has performed against the Strategic Plan. The 2022/23 Statement of Assurance will be presented for approval by Fire Authority in July 2023.

The Internal Control Environment

3.8 The Authority's internal control environment comprises many systems, policies, procedures, and operations. These can be broadly split into risk management, internal check/financial control, and internal audit. Internal check and financial control are targeted towards financial matters whereas risk management has a much broader brief and is more associated with the risk of non-achievement of objectives and targets. The system cannot eliminate all risks of failure to achieve the Authority's aims and objectives. Once a risk has been identified the Authority, where possible, will eliminate that risk. If this is not possible or not cost effective then procedures are established to manage the risk effectively, efficiently, and economically. Some of the significant control processes are outlined below.

Policy and Decision-Making Process

3.9 The Authority has democratic control over its activities via an approved committee structure with agreed powers and duties that are periodically reviewed. The Authority has a written constitution that sets out how the Authority operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure these are efficient, transparent, and accountable. There is a formal briefing process prior to reports being finalised for Committee or Fire Authority meetings thus allowing key Members an opportunity to scrutinise proposed reports in detail. The Authority also runs Member seminars and training sessions to help Members discuss issues in more detail and in an informal environment.

Management Structure

3.10 The Authority has a clear management structure with defined roles and responsibilities. The Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) includes all

department heads as well as the Principal Officers. The current structure empowers managers to make appropriate decisions but also places accountability at the centre of this process.

- 3.11 The Authority has an approved scheme of delegation to officers that is reviewed periodically by the Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk to the Fire Authority, with any changes being approved by the Fire Authority.

Established Policies, Procedures & Regulations

- 3.12 The Authority ensures compliance with established policies, procedures, laws, and regulations. The information regarding policies and procedures is held on the intranet, and these are continually enhanced and developed through the introduction of new policies and procedures as and when required. The Authority has established policies on anti-fraud and whistleblowing. The Authority carries out a regular review of financial regulations which clearly define how decisions are taken and the processes and controls required to manage risk. The list below outlines some of the key policies and process in place to enhance the internal control system, which are reviewed as and when required:

- Treasury Management Strategy
- Procurement Strategy
- Financial Regulations & Standing Orders
- Scheme of Delegation
- Counter Fraud, Money Laundering, Corruption and Bribery policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Complaints procedure
- Code of Corporate Governance
- Constitution
- Code of Conduct
- Code of Ethics
- Equality and Diversity framework
- Workforce plan
- Full range of robust policies and procedures to underpin the conduct of staff from operational procedures, discipline processes, through to performance development reviews.

Internal Audit Function

- 3.13 The requirement for an Authority to maintain an Internal Audit function is derived from local government legislation, including Section 112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in that a relevant body must:

“maintain an adequate and effective internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control in accordance with the proper internal audit practices”

- 3.14 The responsibility for ensuring an effective internal audit function rests with the Authority Treasurer as part of their Section 112 obligations.
- 3.15 The Authority has a strong Internal Audit function arrangement with Nottinghamshire County Council and has well-established protocols for working with External Audit. Finance and Resources Committee review all internal audit reports and receive an annual internal audit report providing an audit opinion on the Authority's arrangements for governance, risk management and control as well as details of audits to be completed in the forthcoming year.
- 3.16 The Authority reviews Internal Audit as an integral part of the corporate governance framework

Risk Management Strategy

- 3.17 The Authority has a well-established and embedded risk management strategy. This is managed at the corporate/strategic level by The Finance and Resources Committee which receive regular reports on risk exposures both in terms of existing and emergent risk. Members scrutinise the Corporate Risk Register and receive explanations for changes. The Committee is advised by the Head of Finance and the Head of Risk and Assurance on behalf of the Chief Fire Officer.
- 3.18 The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise risks to the achievement of Service policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood and impact of those risks being realised and facilitate a risk management culture to enable risks to be effectively assessed, managed, monitored and reported.

Business Continuity Management (BCM)

- 3.19 Under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) (Part 1. Para 2(1) (C)) and The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 there is a duty for all Category 1 Responders to prepare plans to ensure so far as reasonably practicable, that if in an emergency the Service can perform its core functions.

Best Value Duty / Efficiency

- 3.20 The Local Government Act 1999 requires that the Authority makes arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England also requires that the Authority to produce an Efficiency Plan, which is currently delivered through our Futures 2025 Efficiency Strategy. The requirement to deliver services within a reducing budget over recent years has increased the focus on Best Value. The Authority has procurement policies in place, providing a framework within which to buy goods and services which offer good value for money.

Financial Management

- 3.21 Financial management in the Authority and the reporting of financial standing is undertaken through a financial system which integrates the general ledger, sales ledger and purchase ledger functions and facilitates good budgetary control. Budget Managers are supported by Finance Officers in the use of this system for monitoring financial performance.
- 3.22 The timetable for publishing and auditing the Authority's Statement of Accounts is set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. These were amended for the 2020/21 and 2021/22 Statement of Accounts to allow additional time to prepare the accounts in the light of Covid-19. The deadline for publishing the unaudited accounts for 2022/23 has now gone back to 31 May (from 31 July in the previous 2 years) and the approval by Fire Authority of the audited accounts back to 31 July (from 30 September).

Financial Management Code

- 3.23 In October 2019, CIPFA issued a new Financial Management Code. The purpose of the code is to support good practice in financial management and to assist authorities in demonstrating their financial sustainability. It contains a set of minimum standards for financial management for local authorities, including fire authorities. These cover the areas of:
- Organisational leadership – clear strategic direction.
 - Accountability – based on medium term financial planning.
 - Transparency – using consistent, meaningful and understandable data.
 - Adherence to professional standards.
 - Assurance.
 - Long term sustainability.
- 3.24 The Financial Management Code was adopted by the Authority in July 2021.

4 REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

- 4.1 The Authority has responsibility for conducting a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control, at least annually. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the Strategic Leadership Team and other senior managers within the Authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Internal Audit annual report, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.
- 4.2 Maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework throughout the financial year has been carried out by the following:
- The Authority and its Committees
 - Management Review
 - Internal audit
 - HMICFRS (His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue)

- External bodies

The Authority and its Committees

- 4.3 The format and structure of the Authority's democratic decision process is re-affirmed at the Annual General Meeting of the Fire Authority in June of each year and approval is given to the powers and make-up of the following committees:
- The Policy and Strategy Committee.
 - The Finance and Resources Committee (which undertakes the role of the Audit Committee).
 - The Community Safety Committee.
 - The Human Resources Committee.
- 4.4 In addition to the above Committees, there are also panels for appointments, Equalities, Personnel matters, and the Firefighters' Pension Schemes.
- 4.5 Terms of reference and responsibilities for all these Committees form part of the Authority's Governance arrangements.
- 4.6 A Constitutional Update Report was presented to Fire Authority in July 22. Members approved several amendments to the Scheme of Delegation to ensure that the constitution remains relevant and up to date. The revised Scheme of Delegation can be found on the [Service's website](#).
- 4.7 At the July 22 Fire Authority Members commented on the need for a more frequent schedule to review governance. This resulted in a [Governance Update](#) report being presented to its meeting on 16 December 22 which approved a small amendment to the Business Continuity Arrangements in the event that the Chief Fire Officer were to become incapacitated and an update on proposals to further review the Authority's Governance.

Management Review

- 4.8 Included in the day-to-day management of the organisation are a number of key officers, systems and procedures designed to provide core elements of the internal control mechanism, with a nominated lead officer responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of these systems.

Performance Management

- 4.9 There is a system of performance management and review embedded within the Authority's management structure and processes. The Corporate Risk Management Plan 2022-25 (CRMP) sets out the Authority's key objectives and these are broken down into annual delivery plans. These plans, along with any areas for improvement identified as part of the HMICFRS assessment, are monitored by the CRMP Assurance Board (which is made up of SLT members) and managed by the individual departmental management teams. The Board uses a performance management framework

to monitor progress against the CRMP targets and HMICFRS recommendations.

- 4.10 Performance against the CRMP is reviewed in the Annual Statement of Assurance published each year.

Risk Management

- 4.11 Risk management at the strategic / corporate level forms part of the overall responsibilities of The Finance and Resources Committee and Members of this committee take a keen interest in the Corporate Risk Register which is reported to the Committee every six months.
- 4.12 Risk Management is an integral part of project management and business planning within the Corporate Support department and both this and operational risk management are considered strong. The Service has a Risk Assurance Team which is responsible for corporate risk, operational risk and health and safety risk. The purpose of this is to enhance the co-ordination of assurance activities and management of risk within the Service.

Business Continuity

- 4.13 Business continuity arrangements are regularly reviewed. The Covid-19 pandemic allowed for real life testing of plans and of the management systems and processes in place. The Business Continuity Management (BCM) group worked well alongside a newly created Task and Finish group which ensured that decisions were actioned in a timely manner.
- 4.14 Following on from Covid-19, all departmental business continuity plans have been reviewed and updated to reflect any learning. Plans were again tested whilst the Service prepared for potential industrial action over the pay dispute. Whilst this was settled in February without the need for industrial action, it has provided a further learning opportunity and BCM arrangements will be updated during 2023/24 to reflect lessons learned. The 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan contains an audit of BCM arrangements towards the end of the financial year.
- 4.15 During 2022/23 internal audit reviewed the Service's cyber security and delivered a judgement of reasonable assurance.

Professional Staff

- 4.16 The Authority employs appropriate professional staff:
- A Statutory Monitoring Officer is responsible for ensuring the legality of Authority actions and supporting the Committee decision making process. No actions of the Authority were deemed ultra vires in the year. All relevant laws and regulations are being complied with. The monitoring officer is a qualified solicitor provided on a contractual basis to the Authority by the Legal Services Department of Nottingham City Council.

This arrangement also includes support for the Authority's wider governance structure.

- The Treasurer to the Authority ensures the proper and effective administration of the financial affairs of the Authority and holds the key statutory responsibilities under Section 112 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1988. The role of Treasurer is provided by the current Head of Finance and Treasurer post within the Service. This post holder is responsible for advising both senior managers and elected members on all financial matters in line with CIPFA's document *The Role of the Chief Financial Officer*. The post holder is professionally qualified and has many years' experience within Local Authority Finance.

Financial Planning

- 4.17 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy sets out a 4-year financial plan which is approved by Fire Authority in December each year. This, alongside the CRMP, provides the framework for developing the annual budget for the coming year.
- 4.18 The draft budget is scrutinised by the Finance and Resources Committee in January each year prior to final approval in February by Fire Authority. This process ensures that a realistic and affordable budget is achieved.
- 4.19 The Authority continued to ensure it had good arrangements for managing its finances including strong leadership throughout the year. The financial planning process is well embedded and understood across the Authority by staff and Members. It ensures that funding is matched to the strategic goals identified in the CRMP. An in-house financial team, managed by the Head of Finance and Treasurer, maintains the correct competencies and ensures that the Strategic Leadership Team receives all appropriate information to support the key decisions and objectives of the Service.

Budget Monitoring / Efficiency

- 4.20 Budget monitoring remains robust at both strategic and service level via the production of regular financial monitoring reports for both capital and revenue budgets alongside monitoring of treasury activity against the Prudential Indicators for the year. These reports, as well as being scrutinised by budget managers, are reported to the Strategic Leadership Team and quarterly to the Finance and Resources Committee.
- 4.21 Functional Heads also exercise a detailed degree of budget monitoring against both revenue and capital budgets.
- 4.22 The Service presented its Futures 25 Efficiency Strategy to Policy and Strategy Committee in May 2022, with a further report being considered by the Authority in September 22. Whilst initial estimates of the required level of savings have significantly reduced given the decision to increase Band D Council Tax by £5, the Strategy remains the vehicle for transforming the Service and increasing efficiency and effectiveness.

4.23 The 2023/24 budget report considered by Fire Authority in February 2023 identified a potential £1.1m gap in funding from 2024/25 onwards which remains to be addressed through careful budgeting and savings identified through the Futures 25 Efficiency Strategy.

Financial Management Code

4.24 The Financial Management Code was adopted by the Authority in July 2021. A gap analysis was undertaken where a small number of improvements were identified.

4.25 Internal Audit have undertaken an audit of the Service's compliance against the Code. This provided a Reasonable Assurance level – ie that risk levels were acceptable. The report acknowledged that effective controls were in place regarding self-assessment, leadership, accountability, long term sustainability and value for money.

4.26 The report identified four recommendations, two of which have been actioned. The remaining two are still in progress:

- Leadership – Several policies and procedures in relation to governance arrangements have not been updated in accordance with the revision schedule and have been found to be out of date – whilst progress is being made on this recommendation, this is a significant task and has been delayed due to other priorities for the Service over the last year.
- Professional Standards – Financial Regulations, Financial Procedures and Statement of Financial Principles are out of date – these are almost complete and will be presented to Fire Authority for approval by September 23.

Internal Audit

4.27 The Authority views Internal Audit as an integral part of the corporate governance framework, particularly in so far as it relates to the system of Internal Control. Whilst it is acknowledged that Internal Control is a managerial responsibility, it is considered that Internal Audit can provide managers with independent assurance that the system is working effectively and draw any deficiencies in the system to the attention of managers and elected Members.

4.28 These assurances, however, can only be relied upon providing the internal audit service is adequate to meet the needs of the organisation and is provided professionally.

4.29 The Internal Audit Service of the Authority is provided under a Service Level Agreement with Nottinghamshire County Council and requires the Auditors to operate within the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards set down by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). Operating to

these standards will ensure that the Authority meets its obligations under statute.

- 4.30 CIPFA published a guide on the role of the Head of Internal Audit in 2019 which led to the adoption of an Audit Charter in June 22, improved planning of audits and closer engagement with the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) and the Chair of Finance and Resources Committee, which fulfils the role of the Audit Committee.
- 4.31 The annual audit plan is reviewed each year by SLT and Finance and Resources Committee but remains flexible to enable the Treasurer to adapt to any changing needs within the year.
- 4.32 All internal audit reports include an assessment of the internal controls and prioritised action plans, if relevant, to address any areas needing improvement. These reports are submitted to the Chief Fire Officer, the Head of Finance, Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee and the relevant managers as appropriate. All finalised reports are reviewed by SLT and submitted to the Finance and Resources Committee acting in its role as Audit Committee.
- 4.33 The Internal Audit Annual Report for 2022/23 was reported to Finance and Resources Committee on 16 June 2023. Within the report the auditors provided a view on the internal control environment and concluded that:
- “Based on the coverage and detailed outcomes, overall, we consider the collective evidence provides **substantial assurance** concerning the arrangements in place for corporate governance, risk management and the control environment.”*
- 4.34 Substantial Assurance means that arrangements are effective at managing the risks and achieving the objectives, with no or few control weaknesses. This is an improvement on previous years where a rating of Reasonable Assurance was awarded. The report gave the rationale for the opinion as follows:
- *Although the assurance opinions on our audits are divided between substantial and reasonable assurances, the core systems audited in recent years have tended towards substantial assurance.*
 - *There were positive outcomes from following up the implementation of agreed actions from previous audit reports.*
 - *Other sources provided positive assurance in relation to governance, risk management, and control.*
- 4.35 Seven 2022/23 audits have been finalised during the year. A summary of the 7 audits is provided in the table below:

Summary of 2022/23 Audits

Report	Assurance Level	Comments
Budget Management	Substantial	
Risk Management	Substantial	
Asset Disposals – Follow up Audit from 2021/22	Reasonable	The 2021/22 Audit provided only limited assurance
Performance Management – Follow up Audit from 2021/22	Reasonable	Re-audited due to insufficient evidence in 2021/22
Cyber Security	Reasonable	
Vehicle Maintenance Contract	Reasonable	
Joint HQ Cost Apportionment		Opinion still to be finalised

4.36 The annual report also provided *substantial assurance* regarding each individual strand of governance, risk management and control arrangements, concluding that:

*Our opinion is that there is **substantial assurance** over the **Governance** arrangements:*

- *Governance arrangements are well structured with comprehensive reporting.*
- *Plans are in place to achieve strategic goals and to identify and realise improvements.*
- *There are regular reviews of performance.*

*Our opinion is that there is **substantial assurance** over the **Risk Management** arrangements:*

- *Risks are closely managed including through a corporate risk register that is actively maintained – reviewed, updated, and reported.*
- *Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) is in place, with arrangements to measure progress on its delivery.*
- *Emerging national and local risk issues are identified and addressed by local actions.*

*Our opinion is that there is **substantial assurance** over the **Control** arrangements:*

- *Close control over the finances, including current and future spending, and the financial assets held.*
- *Workforce requirements are identified and acted upon.*
- *Workforce performance is managed.*

External Review

4.37 The External Auditors (currently Ernst Young LLP - EY) are required by the International Standard on Auditing 260 (ISA 260) to communicate about the

audit of the Authority's financial statements with those charged with governance. This communication is in the form of a written report which is presented to Fire Authority on completion of the Audit.

4.38 The principal purposes of the Auditors' report are:

- To present key issues identified during the audit of the financial statements for the year ended 31 March and any material misstatements in the accounts,
- To report on any key issues for governance,
- To report on the Auditors' Value for Money conclusion,
- To give an "audit opinion" on the financial statements,
- To report on the implementation of any recommendations in the previous year's ISA 260 report,
- To seek approval to the management representation letter, which confirms the Authority's responsibilities and actions in relation to the financial statements.

4.39 The 2020/21 statement of accounts received an unqualified audit. They were approved by Fire Authority in May 22 subject to any non-material changes following completion of the external audit. This was completed with one minor change and the final accounts were presented to Finance and Resources Committee in October 22. A Value for Money conclusion is yet to be completed.

4.40 The statement of accounts in the first 2 years of the contract with EY (2018/29 and 2019/20) both received an unqualified audit and unqualified Value for Money conclusion. This provides some assurance around that the financial systems in place are robust.

4.41 Both the 2021/22 and 2022/23 audits have been delayed due to resourcing issues at EY. The 2021/22 audit is not due to commence until July 23, resulting in a delay to the accounts being presented to Fire Authority for approval until Autumn 23 at the earliest. The 2022/23 statement of accounts are not expected to be audited until mid 2024.

4.42 The ongoing delay in the audit of the Accounts presents a risk to the Authority as any audit findings will not be reviewed and corrected in a timely manner.

4.43 The contracted audit fee for the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts was originally set at £23,909. However, the Public Sector Audit Appointment (PSAA), who are responsible for issuing the audit contracts, have reviewed the audit fee scales and adjusted them to take account of a change to the scope of audit work required and an inflationary adjustment of 5.2%. The expected charge for the 2022/23 audit is now expected to be in the region of £32,648 plus any further charges for additional work agreed through PSAA.

4.44 EY were appointed for a 5-year term through a procurement exercise managed by the PSAA. The 2022/23 statement of accounts will be the final year of the contract.

4.45 Fire Authority opted into Public Sector Audit Appointment (PSAA) appointment process to select External Auditors for the five years from 2023/24. The contract has been awarded to KPMG. The 2023/24 audit cannot commence until EY have completed the 2022/23 audit. Given that the resourcing issues are a national problem, it is not guaranteed that the situation will improve under the new contract.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection

4.46 In addition to the usual Internal and External Audit reviews, the Authority had its second inspection by HMICFRS in October and November 2021. The final report was not published until July 22. The inspection graded the Service as Good in all 11 areas of assessment and gave an overall rating of Good. The grading was an improvement on the Service's first inspection rating of Requires Improvement in 2018. There were 4 Areas for Improvement (AFIs) identified which are:

- The Service should assure itself that its risk-based inspection programme prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk.
- The Service should ensure that, when responding to a 999 call, mobile data terminals are reliable to allow staff to access risk information.
- The Service should make sure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration activity.
- The Service should assure itself that staff understand how to get wellbeing support.

4.47 To address these areas for improvement, the Service has undertaken a gap analysis against areas of work that were already being progressed under the current CRMP. This has assured that work to address the AFIs was either already planned or has now been included in the Service's annual delivery planning. Progress against the AFIs is monitored through the Committee Structure.

Other External Audits

4.48 The Service had 3 other external audits during 2022/23.

- Babcock International undertook an audit of the Service's Terrorism Personal Protective Equipment on behalf of the Home Office. The equipment was found to be in good order and well organised, enabling a swift response if required.
- Again, working on behalf of the Home Office, the National Resilience and Assurance Team (NRAT) audited the Service's National Resilience Enhanced Logistic Support. The audit concluded that the

crews perform the role well in a practical scenario and the team size is such that this allows for good resilience within the team. There was a small action plan that the Service is working alongside NRAT to complete.

- NRAT also audited the Service's Flood and Rescue capabilities. The audit determined that the Service was well prepared and qualified to respond nationally if called upon. Again, there was a small action plan that the Service is working alongside NRAT to complete.

National Fire Standards

4.49 The National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) are undertaking a body of work to set minimum standards for key operational and non-operational areas of work. To date 16 have been released:

- Fire Investigation
- Operational Competence
- Operational Learning
- Operational Preparedness
- Code Of Ethics
- Community Risk Management Plans
- Emergency Preparedness and Resilience
- Emergency Response Driving
- Prevention
- Protection
- Safeguarding
- Communications and Engagement
- Data Management
- Leading the Service
- Leading and Developing People
- Fire Control

4.50 The Service has undertaken gap analyses for the above standards and is undertaking a programme of work to ensure compliance. This is being monitored by SLT through the CRMP Assurance Board.

HMICFRS Report on Values and Culture of the Fire and Rescue Service

4.51 Following recent reports of misconduct, and the findings of the Independent Cultural Review of London Fire Brigade, the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire commissioned a spotlight report into the values and culture of the Fire and Rescue Service.

4.52 HMICFRS considered the specific themes of values and culture (including bullying, harassment, and discrimination); training and skills; fairness and diversity; and leadership. The report was published on 30 March 2023.

4.53 The report presents 35 recommendations from HMICFRS to improve the sector. Of note, 19 are detailed as a requirement for Chief Fire Officers to

deliver, whilst the other recommendations are directed to other national bodies such as the Local Government Association, the National Fire Chiefs' Council, the Home Office, Government, the Fire Standards Board, and Chief Constables.

- 4.54 The Service had an independent review of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) undertaken in 2021 which presented recommendations, and a resulting 12-point action plan, that is being implemented.
- 4.55 This work has complemented and supported the Service's approach to embedding the Core Code of Ethics which has been progressed since their publication in 2021, alongside the Service's values which have been central to the Service's approach since 2015. The Service's own Behavioural Framework was updated in 2020 to incorporate the Core Code of Ethics.
- 4.56 In order to maintain the focus, resource and momentum on these improvements, and to address the required recommendations of the HMICFRS spotlight report, the Service's EDI strategic lead is drawing together a single approach under the Service's Year Two Annual Delivery Plan.
- 4.57 This approach will see assurance against the delivery of the HMICFRS recommendations, but also oversee the delivery of the Service's commitment to embed an inclusive culture and approach at NFRS which is set out in the Services' Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).
- 4.58 Whilst progress of this workstream will be monitored by the Chief Fire Officer through the CRMP Assurance Board, actions against the HMICFRS specific recommendation will also be reported to the Human Resources Committee.

5 SIGNIFICANT ISSUES FOR GOVERNANCE IN 2023/24

Fire Authority Governance Arrangements

- 5.1 In May 2022 the Home Office released a White Paper on Reforming Fire and Rescue Services. This is the Government response to the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, the Kerslake Review (on the Manchester Arena Attack) and to build on the findings from Sir Thomas Windsor's State of Fire and Rescue reports. The White Paper covers three key areas: people; professionalism; and governance. It includes consultation on whether to transfer governance to an executive model such a Combined Authority Mayor or to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner model. The consultation ended on 26 July 2022 but to date there has been no response from the Government.

Devolution Programme

- 5.2 In August 22 an East Midland devolution deal was announced by the Government to cover Nottingham, Nottinghamshire and Derby and Derbyshire, which sees the creation of a long-term investment fund totalling

£1.14bn over 30 years. The deal will see the creation of a Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA). This would compare with areas such as Greater Manchester and the West Midlands. Elections for the MCCA are expected to take place in May 2024.

- 5.3 Whilst the full implications on governance for the Fire Authority is unclear at present, it is expected that the service will benefit from the additional investment within the County.

2023/24 Budget

- 5.4 The Authority approved a budget for 2023/24 in February 2022 which required £404k use of General Fund Reserves. This was only achievable after making temporary savings in the region of £1.6m. Monitoring of expenditure against the budget is reported to Finance and Resources Committee.

Medium Term Financial Strategy and 2023/24 Budget

- 5.5 Budgets for 2024/25 to 2026/27 are due to be agreed by Fire Authority in February 2023. When the current budget was set in February 2023 there was an expected deficit position for 2024/25 in the region of £1.1m. The Futures 25 Efficiency Strategy was initially outlined at Policy and Strategy Committee in May 22 and work is underway to identify a range of savings to help balance the budget and enable the Service to meet the financial challenges expected in the coming years.
- 5.6 Fire Authority approved the creation of a £900k Earmarked Reserve to provide resources to implement any necessary changes coming out of the Futures 25 programme. A further reserve £1.126m has been created to provide support to the 2023/24 and future year budgets. Given these earmarked reserves and anticipated savings from the Efficiency Strategy, the Service is confident that it will be financially secure going forward.

Pensions

McCloud

- 5.7 The McCloud remedy is ongoing regarding the transition arrangements in the 2015 firefighter's pension scheme which were found to be discriminatory on the grounds of age in December 2018. All members have now been moved to the 2015 pension scheme as from 1 April 22. The transition arrangements effective between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 22 need to be removed and members given the choice between their legacy scheme and the 2015 scheme between this period.
- 5.8 Following the ruling and lack of progress, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) commenced legal proceedings in the High Court for three test cases against Fire and Rescue Authorities. Two of these cases were against this Authority as they related to former Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS)

employees. A settlement agreement on these cases was reached on 8 October 2021.

- 5.9 In the interim, the Home Office issued some guidance to assist implementation of the remedy and a Memorandum of Understanding was agreed between the Local Government Association and the Fire Brigades Union in October 21. However, in November 21 the Home Office withdrew its guidance stating that there could be significant financial risk if Authority's decided to proceed implementing Memorandum of Understanding.
- 5.10 With the ongoing threat of legal action, Policy and Strategy Committee approved the continuation of implementing the Memorandum of Understanding on 1 April 22, acknowledging the financial risks that it may face. An earmarked reserve of £200k has been set aside to cover any additional costs.
- 5.11 New pension legislation is expected to be passed in October 23 which will provide more certainty about how the remedy is to be applied. The Service will then have a further 18 months to ensure that it is properly implemented.

Matthews / O'Brien

- 5.12 On-call firefighters employed between 1 July 2000 and 4 April 2006 were retrospectively allowed to join 2006 Firefighters' Pension Scheme in 2014 following the Matthews court case. Following a further European Court of Justice case (O'Brien) the UK Government have recognised the right for on-call firefighters employed before 1 July 2000 to elect to join the pension scheme from the start of their employment. Revised legislation is due to be laid before Parliament in October 23.
- 5.13 The Local Government Association is working alongside Fire Services to prepare for the proposed changes and, an exercise is now underway to identify individuals who may be affected. It will be necessary to estimate data for some individuals whose employment records are likely to have been deleted in order to comply with data protection legislation.

Internal Audit

- 5.14 The 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan, approved by Finance and Resources Committee in June 23, includes provision for 6 audits during 23/24. These include compliance with the National Fire Standard for Leading the Service, Contract management and workforce planning and recruitment.

External Audit

- 5.15 Delayed local audit opinions are a huge concern across the public sector. These delays have been caused by the increased amount of regulatory requirement and the lack of audit resources within the public sector as a whole and is not limited to NFRS. The increasingly delayed audit of the Statement of Accounts (see sections 4.41 to 4.45) presents an increased risk to the Authority over the remaining years of the current contract and beyond.

- 5.16 KPMG have been awarded the contract to audit the Statement of Accounts from 2023/24 to 2027/28. However, they will not be able to commence the 2023/24 audit until EY have completed the 2022/23 audit which is currently not scheduled until mid 2024. Given that the resourcing issues are a national problem, it is not guaranteed that the situation will improve under the new contract.

HMICFRS

- 5.17 The third round of full HMICFRS inspections has commenced. All Fire Services will be inspected over a 2 year period. NFRS are in the second tranche of inspections which is due to commence in the Autumn of 2023.

Covid-19

- 5.18 The Service does not anticipate any ongoing impact on governance arrangements during 2023/24 and beyond. Finance and Resources Committee removed Covid-19 from the corporate risk register in April 22. This will be kept under review should circumstances change.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Authority has well developed and evolving governance arrangements in place that are fit for purpose.
- 6.2 The Service's policies and procedures continue to be updated and reviewed (3.12).
- 6.3 The Local Code of Corporate Governance was adopted by the Authority in February 2017 and CIPFA's Financial Management Code was adopted by the Authority in July 2021 (sections 1.3 and 3.23 - 3.24). The Authority's compliance against the Financial Management Code was reviewed by Internal Audit in 2021/22 – the report acknowledged that effective controls were in place regarding self-assessment, leadership, accountability, long term sustainability and value for money.
- 6.4 Whilst the 2021/22 and 2022/23 Statement of Accounts are yet to be audited, the External Auditors, Ernst & Young (EY), issued unqualified audits for the first 3 years of their contract (2018/19 and 2020/21), which indicates that the financial systems in place are robust (see sections 4.37 – 4.45).
- 6.5 Despite the delays to the audit of the Statement of Accounts and Value for Money Audits by the Authority's external auditors (EY), the Service's internal auditors (Nottinghamshire County Council) have completed a comprehensive audit programme which provides a high level of assurance. The Internal Audit Annual Report provided a judgement of Substantial Assurance regarding the arrangements in place for corporate governance, risk management and the control environment (see sections 4.27 - 4.36).

- 6.6 Seven internal audits have been completed within the year, 2 being graded as having Substantial Assurance and 5 being as having Reasonable Assurance. Three other external reviews have taken place (see section 4.35), all of which provided reasonable or substantial assurance.
- 6.7 The Internal Audit Charter was adopted by Finance and Resources Committee in June 2022 (section 4.30). The annual Internal Audit Plan is reviewed by SLT and approved by Finance and Resources Committee (4.31). All recommendations arising from internal audit reviews are actioned and monitored by SLT and Finance and Resources Committee (4.32).
- 6.8 The Service’s second full HMICFRS inspection provided a rating of Good against all 11 areas of assessment (sections 4.46 - 4.47).
- 6.9 The Service continues to address any governance issues as they arise and commits to keeping governance arrangements under review (see sections 4.6 – 4.7).

Signed..... Signed.....

Councillor Michael Payne Craig Parkin
CHAIR OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2022-23

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 14 July 2023

Purpose of Report:

To present the Annual Statement of Assurance 2022-23 to Members for approval.

Recommendations

That Members approve the Annual Statement of Assurance 2022-23 for publication.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name: Candida Brudenell
Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Tel: 0115 8388100

Email: candida.brudenell@notts-fire.gov.uk

Media Enquiries Contact: Corporate Communication Team
0115 8388100 corporatecomms@notts-fire.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework places a statutory requirement on fire authorities to provide assurance on financial, governance and operational matters, with due regard to the expectations set out in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).
- 1.2 The production of an Annual Statement of Assurance (ASoA) contributes to the requirement for greater public-sector transparency and accountability and through its publication offers and promotes accessibility to information.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The ASoA 2022-23 (attached as Appendix A to this report) provides a review of how the Service has performed against the first year of the six strategic goals of its 2022-25 CRMP.
- 2.2 The ASoA is designed to give the public assurance on performance in key delivery areas. An accessible version will be hosted on the Service's website, providing access to all.
- 2.3 The ASoA signposts other supporting information that can be accessed on the NFRS website or Fire Authority webpages, for example, the CRMP and the Statement of Accounts.
- 2.4 The ASoA 2022-23 gives the public confidence the Service is meeting its stated commitments. Highlights from 2022/23 include:
 - Attended 11,343 incidents (including 4042 fires and 582 road traffic collisions). A 12% increase on 2021/22 largely driven by increases in the number of fires attended during the exceptionally hot summer period;
 - Attended 1,341 incidents which involved rescues and humanitarian assistance from either buildings, vehicles, water, confined spaces, or heights;
 - Delivered 13,913 Safe and Well interventions – supporting a total of 14,489 people. Using a mix of physical visits for those most at risk and virtual visits for others;
 - Delivered 'Safety Zone' events to 2,657 year 5 and 6 pupils, 310 teachers and parents over two weeks from across the City and County;
 - Delivered 33 Data Intelligence Community Engagement (DICE) activities targeting the most vulnerable in our communities;

- Undertook 26 Community Reassurance and Engagement (CRaE) activities throughout Nottinghamshire;
 - Delivered a total of 701 training courses;
 - Completed 1,024 full fire safety audits and 531 business safety checks (short fire safety audits);
 - Recruited to 61 roles, which were: 2 Wholetime firefighters, 33 on-call firefighters and 26 support staff roles;
 - 99.5% of the operational staff successfully passed annual fitness tests;
 - Sickness across all workgroups reduced in 2022-23 compared to 2021-22.
- 2.5 In addition to the services delivered above, the organisation has been working hard to continuously improve and develop. During the last year the Service has achieved the following:
- 2.6 **Launch of New CRMP:** in April 2022 the Service launched its Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), which explains how it will deliver services to communities over the next three years.
- 2.7 **'Good' HMICFRS Inspection:** in July 2022 NFRS received its latest HMICFRS inspection report. HMICFRS rated the organisation as 'Good' in all eleven areas of inspection and stated that 'clear improvements' had been made since the last inspection.
- 2.8 **New Website:** this year a brand-new NFRS website was launched. The website is more secure and boasts more modern features which have helped to make it one of the most accessible fire and rescue service websites in the country.
- 2.9 **Firefighter Apprenticeship Provision:** Ofsted conducted a full inspection of the Service's wholetime firefighter apprenticeship programme and awarded an overall rating of 'Good.'
- 2.10 **New Incident Command Training Facility:** a new facility designed to provide training for our incident commanders has been built at Mansfield Fire Station. The facility exposes incident commanders to simulated scenarios to test decision making in a controlled environment.
- 2.11 **Leading with Pride:** in July, the Service continued its support of Pride and had the honour of leading the parade through the streets of Nottingham. A fire engine, accompanied by staff members and their families showed support for the LGBT+ community at the first event since Covid-19 restrictions were lifted.
- 2.12 **New Fire Station for Worksop:** the official opening of Worksop Fire Station took place in May. The new state-of-the art station has been built with the

latest renewable technology and has the ability to self-generate up to 50% of its energy consumption.

2.13 **999 Calling Made More Accessible for Deaf Community:** a new service has been launched to make 999 calling more accessible for people who use British Sign Language (BSL). 999 BSL connects users to interpreters remotely through the 999 BSL app on their phone or via the 999 BSL website.

2.14 **Longest Ever Incident:** on 6 August, the Service responded to a call of an industrial fire in Ranskill:

- The fire which involved thousands of used vehicle tyres turned into Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue's longest ever incident;
- NFRS, along with colleagues from Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire, were at the scene for a total of 35 days.

2.15 The ASoA details notable achievements which would not have been possible without the combined efforts from staff across the Service, collaboration with partner agencies and support from Fire Authority Members.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources or learning and development implications arising from this report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken due to the nature of this report.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The requirement to produce an Annual Statement of Assurance is a statutory requirement as directed by the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework Document for England.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members approve the Annual Statement of Assurance 2022-23 for publication.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Annual Statement of Assurance 2022/23

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Governance, Monitoring and Assurance

Assurance Declaration

Introduction

Welcome to our Statement of Assurance

In April 2022 we launched our Community Risk Management Plan 2022-25 (CRMP), which explains how we plan to deliver our services to you over the next three years.

The plan sets out our priorities, focusing on six strategic goals which explain how we will deliver our commitments. The CRMP places a strong emphasis on improving our understanding of communities so we can protect our County's most vulnerable people and identify buildings most at risk from fire.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England requires us to report on our progress against our CRMP every year. We do this through our Annual Statement of Assurance (ASoA). This year's ASoA is the first to report on the current CRMP and gives us the opportunity to explain our progress and highlight the work we continue to undertake to fulfil our core purpose of creating safer communities.



2022/23 has been an eventful year. We were delighted to receive a 'Good' report following our second inspection from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The report showed that we have made significant progress in our journey towards becoming an outstanding Service.

Last summer brought some exceptionally high temperatures and dry conditions which led to an increase in the number of fires. This posed a significant challenge to our workforce and at times presented a real test of our resources.

The economic and societal challenges caused by events here in the UK and overseas had an impact on the Service throughout the year, particularly in relation to our finances. Increasing costs and uncertainty over future financial settlements meant we had to make substantial in-year savings and consider options for further cost savings to ensure we could meet our statutory obligation to achieve a balanced budget.

The financial climate remains uncertain and we still need to make savings in future years to maintain a balanced budget. However, we will continue to provide you with the very best service possible with the resources we have available.

We hope that you find our Annual Statement of Assurance interesting, and it gives you confidence that we continue to serve you in the best way possible.

"Fire and rescue authorities must provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and show how they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their integrated risk management plan and the requirements included in the Framework. To provide assurance, fire and rescue authorities must publish an annual statement of assurance."



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

During 2022-23



We attended **11,343** incidents, an increase of **12%** on 2021/2022



We attended **104** fire, road and safety initiatives



We attended **4,024** fires, an increase of **19%** on 2021/2022



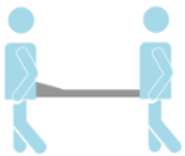
Fitness tests were passed by **99.5%** of our operational staff



We attended **582** road traffic collisions, an increase of **3%** on 2021/2022



We conducted **13,913** Safe and Well visits to **14,489** people



There were **2,111** incidents which involved rescues and humanitarian assistance



100% Site Specific Risk Information was in review date for the first time



We attended **4,626** false alarms, an increase of **12%** on 2021/2022



We completed **1,024** full fire safety audits and **531** Business Safety Checks



We provided **701** training courses for our staff



Accidents in the workplace fell by **17%**



Our on-call appliance availability was **87%**, this was above our **85%** target



We attended emergency incidents in an average of **8 minutes and 15 seconds**

2022/23 in Focus

Launch of our new CRMP

In April 2022 we launched our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), which outlines our ambition for the Service and explains how we will deliver our services to you over the next three years.



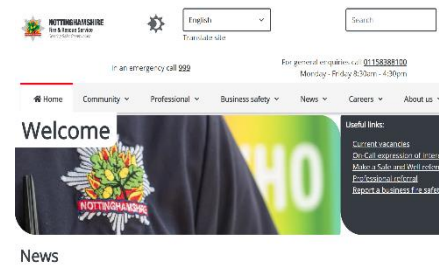
'Good' HMICFRS Inspection

In July 2022 we received our latest HMICFRS inspection report. HMICFRS rated us as 'Good' in all eleven areas of inspection and stated that 'clear improvements' had been made since our last inspection.



New Website

This year we launched our brand-new website. The website is more secure and boasts more modern features which have helped to make it one of the most accessible fire and rescue service websites in the country.



Firefighter Apprenticeship Provision

Ofsted conducted a full inspection of our wholetime firefighter apprenticeship programme and awarded us an overall rating of 'Good'.



New Incident Command Training Facility

A new facility designed to provide training for our incident commanders was opened at Mansfield Fire Station. The facility exposes incident commanders to simulated scenarios to test decision making in a controlled environment.



Leading with Pride

In July we had the honour of leading the Pride parade through the streets of Nottingham. A fire engine, accompanied by staff members and their families showed support for the LGBT+ community at the first event since Covid-19 restrictions were lifted.



New Fire Station for Worksop

The official opening of Worksop Fire Station took place in May. The new state-of-the-art station has been built with the latest renewable technology and has the ability to self-generate up to 50% of its energy consumption.



999 Calling Made More Accessible for the Deaf Community

A new service has been launched to make 999 calling more accessible for people who use British Sign Language (BSL). 999 BSL connects users to interpreters remotely through the 999 BSL app on their phone or via the 999 BSL website.



Our Longest Ever Incident

On the 6th August we responded to a call of an industrial fire in Ranskill.

The fire which involved thousands of used vehicle tyres turned into Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue's longest ever incident.

Along with our colleagues from Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire, we were at the scene for a total of 35 days.



Annual Delivery Plan 2022/23

Our annual delivery plan outlines the work we will do during the year towards delivering the commitments set out in our CRMP 2022-25.

It focuses on our six strategic goals:

- Strategic goal 1: We will help people stay safe from fires and other emergencies
- Strategic goal 2: We will improve fire safety in the buildings people live and work in
- Strategic goal 3: We will respond immediately and effectively to emergency incidents
- Strategic goal 4: We will continue to support and develop our workforce and promote an inclusive Service
- Strategic goal 5: We will continue our improvement journey to deliver an outstanding Service
- Strategic goal 6: We will manage and invest in our Service to ensure it is fit for the future

In this ASoA we will present information about our performance and the work we have been doing to achieve the objectives outlined in the annual delivery plan.

Strategic Goal 1: We will help people stay safe from fires and other emergencies

This goal focuses on our statutory duty to prevent fires and other emergencies from happening

In 2022/23 our key objectives were:

- Deliver Safe and Well Visits to 13,000 homes to provide advice, install smoke alarms and other safety equipment, targeting people at higher risk with a particular focus on those over 65 years old or who consider themselves to have a disability
- Develop our understanding of communities and the people who live in them, to help target and engage with those most at risk in an inclusive way
- Ensure all staff complete the mandatory safeguarding training needed for their roles, and that we make safeguarding referrals in line with the various Safeguarding Boards expectations
- Deliver fire, road and water safety education activities to those most at risk in the community
- Provide training and education to our partners on how to recognise the risks of fire and make appropriate referrals to us in line with our CHARLIE profile

Our focus on improvement included:

- Upgrading our computer systems to improve our ability to target our activities towards those people at the highest risk
- Improving our methods and processes for evaluation, to ensure our activities are delivering the greatest benefits

During the year:

- We conducted 13,913 Safe and Well interventions supporting a total of 14,489 people
- 47.15% of our Safe and Well interventions were delivered to people over 65 and 39.59% were delivered to people who considered themselves to have a disability
- We delivered 33 Data Intelligence Community Engagement (DICE) activities targeting the most vulnerable in our communities. We also undertook 26 Community Reassurance and Engagement (CRaE) activities following serious fires in locations across Nottinghamshire. Through these activities, our crews and prevention teams visited a total of 7055 properties
- We delivered Safety Zone events to 2,657 year 5 and 6 pupils, 310 teachers and parents from across the City and County
- We delivered 104 fire, road or water safety initiatives
- We supported 64 national safety campaigns
- We continued to deliver our Firesetter programme and conducted 128 interventions with young people who had shown an interest in setting or playing with fire

Other Highlights

We explain in our CRMP how our prevention work is vital to reducing the number and impact of emergency incidents. Through 2022/23 we have used our understanding of our communities to target our efforts where they are needed most.

Supporting Vulnerable Individuals

Our targeted Safe and Well visits offer advice on factors which increase vulnerability to fire and injury. This includes advice on stopping smoking, alcohol addiction, preventing falls, keeping warm in winter and general fire safety.

We have continued to educate and train our partners to recognise the risks of fire and make appropriate referrals, using the 'CHARLIE-P' profile.

Community Engagement

Our community engagement activities help raise awareness, reduce risk and prevent incidents.

In communities which have experienced a serious fire we carry out Community Reassurance and Engagement (CRaE) visits. We offer Safe and Well visits to residents alongside general fire safety advice to help prevent similar incidents from occurring.

We also proactively target communities most at risk from having a fire through our Data Intelligence Community Engagement (DICE) visits.

Integration and Collaboration

We have continued to work closely with a wide range of partners and community organisations to identify those most at risk and keep them safe. This included being an active member of the Safeguarding Board and the Violence Reduction Partnership.

We have supported the 'Safer Streets' programme led by Nottinghamshire Police in the city of Nottingham. Using funding provided by the police, we have assigned two fire appliances as 'safe spaces' for women if they feel vulnerable while out at night. The vehicles carry messaging which highlights them as 'safe spaces'. Enhanced safeguarding training has been provided to crews of the designated appliances.

We continue to play an active role in the Nottinghamshire Road Safety Partnership where we work with partners to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads. These intervention activities include the 'Biker Down' and 'Operation Highway' initiatives.

Similarly, we work as part of the Nottinghamshire Water Safety Partnership to help keep people safe near water.

As part of a schools-based education programme we participate in an initiative called 'Safety Zone'. The programme is held at Ashfield fire station, Ranby House and Holme

Pierrepoint and involves partners including Nottinghamshire Police, British Transport Police, Western Power, The Dogs Trust, Royal National Lifeboat Institution, VIA (County road safety team) and East Midlands Ambulance Service. Safety Zone delivers a range of interactive education sessions based on:

- Fire safety in the home
- First aid and CPR
- Knife crime
- Railway safety and safe travel
- Water safety and drowning prevention
- Electrical safety

Fire Investigation

Our fire investigation team works alongside the police and forensic experts to collect and examine evidence and determine the likely origin and cause of a fire. As well as providing expert opinion to the coroner, police and insurance companies the team also provide advice to property owners on future safety measures.

During 2022/23 we recruited two specialist fire investigation dogs and their handlers to detect the use of ignitable liquids at fire investigations. The Dog Unit is based in Nottinghamshire, but also provides support across Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire.

The Dog Unit also provides mutual support and training to the West Midlands Fire Service Dog Unit.

Our specialist fire investigators investigated 157 serious fires across the County during 2022/23.

Strategic Goal 2: We will improve fire safety in the buildings people live and work in

This goal is focused on our statutory duties to enforce fire safety regulations

In 2022/23 our key objectives were:

- Complete 1,200 fire safety audits, targeting high risk buildings
- Complete 500 business safety checks on business premises
- Continue to work as part of the Joint Audit and Inspection Team with Nottingham City Council staff, to inspect multiple-occupation residential buildings
- Promote fire safety through business engagement and networks
- Proactively work with building owners to reduce call outs to false alarms and people trapped in lifts

Our focus on improvement included:

- Updating our systems and processes in line with changes to new fire safety legislation
- Implementing the new high-rise residential building audits for buildings over 11m tall
- Completing the training of operational staff to enable them to carry out business safety checks

During the year:

- We completed 1,024 full fire safety audits and 531 business safety checks (short fire safety audits)
- We carried out 306 follow-up inspections to ensure compliance following an initial fire safety audit
- We issued 30 statutory enforcement notices, and 8 prohibition notices to premises where safety standards were unacceptable and people were being placed at risk
- Our Joint Audit and Inspection Team conducted 22 inspections and 25 re-inspections of higher risk residential buildings, covering a total of 4,105 flats
- We undertook 1,074 specific activities which include responding to complaints and providing advice to businesses
- We completed 766 statutory building consultations and 320 statutory licensing consultations
- We conducted 123 shadow inspections of staff being developed in fire safety
- We experienced an increase of 11% in the number of requests to attend fire alarm activations which resulted in the cause being a false alarm. We are continuing to work proactively with building managers to understand and address the causes of such incidents
- We achieved a reduction in attendances to persons trapped in lifts, attending 177 incidents, which is 7% fewer than in 2021/22

Other Highlights

Our Protection activity is focused on keeping people safe in buildings that are protected by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. This includes business premises, hospitals and care homes, high-rise buildings and apartment blocks.

Business Education and Engagement

As part of our statutory duty to educate and advise businesses, our business support team have used a range of activities and methods to engage with local businesses to provide guidance, support and advice on fire safety matters. Following serious fires, the team undertake Business Reassurance and Engagement (BRaE) activities to provide reassurance and support to local businesses, including fire risk assessments, business continuity guidance and information on keeping their premises safe from fire. The team undertook 9 engagements following a large fire at Ranskill and a further 13 engagements following the fire at the County Council offices.

We have continued to provide advice to companies who have business premises within more than one fire and rescue service area through the Primary Authority Scheme.

We have continued to focus on reducing attendances at false alarms, providing support and engaging directly with the businesses and industries where statistics indicate higher rates of attendance.

Fire Safety Inspections

Our Protection department is responsible for auditing and inspecting non-domestic premises as part of our statutory duty.

We work with landlords, business owners and those with responsibility for the management of non-domestic premises to ensure that they comply with fire safety regulations designed to keep the public safe from fire.

Our inspections are undertaken by suitably qualified staff who provide advice and educate, and where necessary, issue advisory and statutory enforcement notices to make sure buildings are managed and maintained in line with the law.

We have continued to fulfil our duty as a statutory consultee for fire safety in new developments as part of building control process.

We continue to develop the skills of the specialist staff within our teams to help ensure that we are prepared to meet the challenges that new legislation will bring in the future. This includes the development of staff in fire engineering, smoke control, sprinkler systems, external wall cladding and fire door safety checks.

Throughout 2022 / 2023, we have continued to work hard to increase our capacity to inspect a broader range of non-domestic premises.

We continue to deliver our externally accredited fire safety qualification to our operational managers, who become warranted to inspect low risk, non-complex buildings such as

offices, shops and commercial premises. This qualification aligns to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Competency Framework. To date we have 76 fully qualified operational managers, of which 45 are fully warranted to inspect premises and 31 are being supported through the warrant process.

Consultations

Our work has continued to improve fire safety standards across the County in non-domestic premises as we engage and consult with other regulators including Building Control, Environmental Health, the Health and Safety Executive, Nottinghamshire Police, the Care Quality Commission, Ofsted, and the Food Standards Agency.

We are consulted on licensing applications and part of the consultation process for all planning applications.

Collaboration

Since August 2019, we have worked collaboratively with Nottingham City Council to make high-rise residential buildings safer.

Our Joint Audit and Inspection Team (JAIT) have used powers afforded by each authority's respective legislation to continue to inspect and assure safety standards across entire buildings using a risk-based approach.

We expected the Fire Safety England Regulations 2022, which became law on January 23rd, 2023, to include within its scope, a statutory obligation to inspect high-rise buildings over 11 metres tall. This requirement was not included; however, these buildings have naturally fallen within the scope of the work being completed by the JAIT who have inspected over 190 multi-occupied residential buildings within the Nottingham City Council boundary.

We have continued to work closely with the NFCC's Protection Reform Unit, to help implement nationally recognised guidance and changes made as a result of the tragic Grenfell Tower fire in 2017.

We have engaged with and monitored a range of major construction projects across Nottinghamshire, with most recent examples relating to a number of new student accommodation blocks in and around the Trent Basin and Railway Station area of Nottingham City Centre.

We continue to support the National Fire Sprinkler Network and British Automatic Fire Sprinkler Association to help promote and provide guidance on the installation or retrofitting of sprinkler systems.

Strategic Goal 3: We will respond immediately and effectively to emergency incidents

This goal focuses on our statutory duty to respond to emergencies.

In 2022/23 our key objectives were:

- Deliver routine training and revalidation to maintain the skills and competence of operational staff
- Respond to incidents within an average time of eight minutes
- Work collaboratively with regional partners to improve the effectiveness of our response to incidents

Our focus on improvement included:

- Reviewing our initial firefighter training programme
- Implementing a new computer system to manage the rostering of operational staff
- Implementing the recommendations of the Special Appliances Review conducted in 2021
- Assessing the findings of the ongoing pilot to test alternate contracts for on-call firefighters and make recommendations for future implementation

During the year:

- We attended 11,343 incidents, an increase of 12% on 2021/22. This included 4,024 fires – an increase of 19% on 2021/22. Of these, 1,141 fires involved vegetation such as wildfires, woodland and grassland
- We attended 1,341 incidents which involved rescues and humanitarian assistance from either buildings, vehicles, water, confined spaces, or heights. In 2021/22 this figure was 1,347
- We attended 582 road traffic collisions – an increase of 3% on 2021/22
- We responded to 2,111 special service calls such as assisting East Midlands Ambulance Service and responding to flooding. This was an increase of 5% on 2021/22
- We delivered 701 training courses, attended by 3083 delegates, from a portfolio of 149 different training courses
- We implemented Fire Service Rota, our new rostering system
- We made changes to the location of some of our specialist capabilities, following our special appliances review

Other Highlights

In 2022/23 you continued to be served by 30 fire engines and a range of specialised vehicles at 24 fire stations across our County.

Our stations are made up of:

- Eight stations with wholetime crews
- Four stations with a mix of wholetime and on-call crews (two with a mixed crewing model)
- 12 stations with on-call crews

When we receive a 999 call for help, we respond immediately with the nearest appropriate fire engine and specialist equipment for the size and type of incident.

The exceptionally hot weather experienced in July and August 2022 led to a 136% increase in fires when compared to the same months in 2021, and to the declaration of three major incidents. This busy period meant our fire engines were busier than usual and sometimes had to travel further or stay longer at incidents than we would normally expect. This led to an increase in the average time that it took for response crews to attend some incidents. Overall, our average attendance time was fifteen seconds over our eight-minute target for 2022/23.

Local Resilience

We have continued to work collaboratively with our regional partners to receive and provide operational assistance. We have maintained our agreements to ensure that we can provide mutual resilience, particularly at times of increased demand.

Using the Joint Emergency Services Operating Principles (JESIP), we work alongside other emergency services. Using these common operating principles, we deal with incidents effectively and minimise impact to our communities.

Many larger incidents require multiple partners to work together to resolve the incident. We are an active member of the Nottinghamshire Local Resilience Forum. This statutory partnership of emergency services and other key partners, works together to share skills, information, and expertise to build, test and exercise the Community Risk Register. This ensures that all partners are ready for an effective response when needed.

National Resilience

The National Resilience Capabilities Programme (NRCP) is the government's central programme to increase the capability to respond to major incidents. As part of this we can be called upon to provide assistance locally, or if required, regionally or nationally.

Training and Competence

We have around 650 firefighters who are trained to deal with a variety of incidents, to a high standard through:

- Practical and face-to-face training at our Service Development Centre
- Station based training
- Training exercises for different types of incidents
- E-learning

This year, we have conducted a review of our initial firefighter training programme. The focus of the review was to ensure that we continue to provide safe and effective firefighter training and support.

From the review, key changes have been made to the programme. These include:

- Improved provision of pre-course and induction information
- Enhanced EDI content
- Integration of the Core Code of Ethics
- Additional course content on hazardous materials, building construction and command support awareness

Command Training

In 2022 we developed an accredited command course for middle managers which allowed us to deliver this training internally for the first time. This allowed us to focus our training on local risks. It also generated significant cost savings.

Exercises

To ensure we are prepared and to test our response to emergencies we have an exercise programme. Exercises range from small district level exercises, to large multi-agency scenarios that test how we work collectively with our emergency service partners to resolve incidents

In 2022/23 we conducted:

- 34 practical exercises and 83 Tactical Decision Exercises (TDEs) that tested our capability in a range of emergency scenarios including, high rise buildings, major road traffic collisions, water rescues, terrorist attacks, and hazardous material releases
- 19 other specialist training events specifically to test our effectiveness in working with other emergency partners

Among these exercises were some specifically aimed at testing the changes to procedures implemented as part of our response to the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. For example, we held TDEs based on fires at Victoria Centre flats and Nottingham Arena.

In March, we held a practical exercise at Highfields Fire Station and Joint Fire Control, based on a scenario which involved a fire in a high-rise building with several people inside. The exercise tested a number of systems in place to support people who may otherwise

have difficulty making emergency calls. These included the SMS system, Pegasus (a service aimed at people with learning difficulties), the BSL999 service (a translation service for BSL speakers), and the language translation service (for people who do not speak English). The exercise involved members of Pulp Friction, a social enterprise working with people who have learning difficulties and /or autism to develop their social independence and work readiness. Some of their members were asked to play the role of callers reporting a fire, which gave them practical experience of using 999, and highlighted to them the value of the What3Words application.

Productivity

Despite the increased number of incidents, the performance of response crews in other areas has continued to improve. In 2022/23 response crews delivered 12,554 Safe & Well Visits (enabling the Service to exceed its target for the year), undertook 531 Business Safety Checks (surpassing the annual target), supported community safety education events, maintained operational competence through engagement in a full training and exercise programme, and ensured that all 527 documents relating to Site Specific Risk Information were kept up to date.

On-call Availability

We have worked hard over the past year to further develop the sustainability of the on-call workforce, including the ongoing recruitment and training of additional employees.

During 2022/23 we trialled variations to the traditional on-call contract of employment, with the aim of making the on-call role attractive to more people, and enhancing retention. The outcomes of this trial are being considered and further work will be undertaken in 2023/24 with a view to enabling the introduction of alternative contracts in the near future.

With the assistance of our on-call support team throughout 2022/23 our on-call appliance availability averaged 87.07%. This exceeded our target of 85%.

Rostering

A roosting capability is an essential tool for planning the deployment of response staff, and for maximising the availability of our fire engines. In 2022/23 we introduced Fire Service Rota, a new roosting system that greatly improves the quality and auditability of the data we hold and provides new reporting mechanisms to support the performance and welfare management of all operational personnel.

Specialist Appliance Review

During 2022/23 we began to implement the recommendations of the special appliance review that was conducted in 2021/22. The review considered the efficiency and effectiveness of our special appliances fleet; how they meet the needs of our communities,

where they are located, how they are crewed, and how they contribute to the mitigation of risk.

Changes have been implemented as a result. Our animal rescue provision is now based at Newark and our technical rope rescue capability is at Highfields. Projects to replace our aerial ladder capability, command support unit and welfare unit, and to introduce a new rural firefighting vehicle are underway.

Contingency Planning

During much of 2022/23 the national bodies representing employers and the workforce were in dispute over pay. This presented a significant risk to the Service of industrial action by operational staff. To ensure that we were able to continue to meet our statutory obligations and provide the best possible service in the event of any such action, we channelled resources into contingency planning and preparations. This involved a significant amount of resource, to create new ways of working, provide contingency staff with additional training, and ensure core systems and other logistical arrangements were in place to cope with a range of eventualities. Thankfully, the disputes were resolved without any industrial action; however, the work undertaken and learning points from it have been embedded within our business continuity plans.

Strategic Goal 4: We will continue to support and develop our workforce and promote an inclusive Service

This goal focuses on inclusion and the development and wellbeing of our workforce.

In 2022/23 our key objectives were:

- Undertake community engagement and positive action to improve the diversity of applicants and appointees for roles at all levels of the Service
- Reduce sickness absence and promote employee health and wellbeing
- Deliver a range of learning opportunities to increase understanding of inclusion issues across our workforce

Our focus on improvement included:

- Undertaking a strategic workforce review, across all departments, to determine the skills and capacity we need to deliver effective services
- Enhancing support and promotion of healthy lifestyles and wellbeing initiatives
- Reviewing our Service's standards of dress and replacement of duty rig uniform to ensure that it is inclusive and fit for purpose for all our staff

During the year:

- We undertook a range of positive action activities to support our wholetime firefighter recruitment campaign. The majority of those successful in the process (62%) had previously attended positive action events
- An absence review group was established, chaired by an Assistant Chief Fire Officer to undertake scrutiny of absence figures on a quarterly basis. There was an overall reduction in staff absence of 11.6% compared to 2021/22
- We undertook a review of post-incident support and as a result we will be introducing an enhanced programme of support during 2023
- We have delivered a range of training courses to improve understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion, reaching over 150 members of staff
- As part of our future efficiency planning we conducted a workforce review across our internal support services. The review identified efficiencies which have resulted in savings of £250k per annum
- We have undertaken a review of our duty rig uniform, engaging staff and employee networks to understand requirements and to trial new items of workwear

Other Highlights

Our people are the heartbeat of our fire and rescue service. We are committed to ensuring that they have the skills, professionalism and flexibility to deliver our goals and provide the best possible service we can to the communities we serve.

Workforce

At the end of 2022/23 we had a workforce of 812 people, compared to 842 in 2021/22. This is made up of 653 staff in operational roles and 159 staff in support roles.

A total of 89 people left the Service during the year, of whom 27 were wholetime firefighters, 26 were on-call firefighters and 36 were support staff.

During 2022/23 we conducted an internal workforce review of our internal support services, with a view to identifying efficiencies which could lead to savings that would help balance the budget. The review was part of the first phase of our longer-term Futures 25 improvement programme, and it delivered a saving of £250,000 from the annual pay budget.

Recruitment

During 2022-23, we recruited to 61 roles: 2 wholetime firefighters, 33 on-call firefighters and 26 support staff roles. In addition, nine of our on-call firefighters transferred to wholetime roles.

We also conducted a wholetime firefighter recruitment campaign, to ensure the staffing establishment is in a sustainable position to meet demands and to deliver on our commitments.

As part of our commitment to improve the diversity of applicants to roles within the Service, particularly for operational roles, we undertook a series of positive action activities within our local communities during 2022 to encourage people to apply for a career as a Firefighter and to support them through the application process. This had a positive impact, with 62% of those successful in the process having engaged in positive action during 2022. Twenty-four new apprentice firefighters will commence their training in April and September 2023.

We are aware that the current workforce is not representative of the population of Nottinghamshire as reflected in local census figures. For instance, women in operational roles and employees from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds or those who declare a disability across the workforce are all under-represented in our workforce. Whilst there has been some improvement in the diversity of applicants over the last year, we will continue to promote the Service as an employer of choice and through engagement with our communities, in order to encourage the widest range of applicants to consider a career with the Service across all parts of our workforce.

Health & Wellbeing

We promote employee health and wellbeing through a dedicated Occupational Health team, including a fitness advisor who provides fitness testing and rehabilitation programmes to maintain fitness and support those recovering from injury or illness,

workplace gyms, on-line fitness programmes and access to counselling support. All of our operational staff are required to undertake annual fitness tests. Sickness absence was reduced in 2022-23 compared to the previous year. The main reasons for sickness absence relate to Musculo-skeletal conditions (28.4%) and Mental Health issues (23.1%).

In 2022/23:

- 99.5% of our operational personnel passed their annual fitness test
- 35 accidents were reported in the workplace, compared with 42 in 2021/22
- 38 near misses were reported, compared to 33 in 2021/22
- Sickness absence accounted for the loss of 5.33% of working time for wholetime operational staff, which is below the national sector average of 6.25%. Sickness absence within support roles equated to 4.97% of working time, which was higher than the national sector average of 3.7%

We have made improvements to the way we signpost and promote the wide range of health and wellbeing support available to staff, and continue to seek ways of enhancing our provision.

All staff have access to an Employee Assistance programme, including a 24/7 helpline and a Cash-back plan to help toward the cost of routine health screening, treatments and consultancy and therapy fees. A Peer Support scheme is also available to employees through a network of trained facilitators.

The Service also supports the Blue Light Together programme, which provides access to on-line support to combat mental health issues for those working in the emergency services.

Values & Culture

Our Service Values are clearly defined and well understood by staff. They ensure that our staff put communities first and at the heart of what we do, and they are aligned to the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services in England. During the last year we have been working to adopt and embed the Core Code of Ethics Fire Standard into our ways of working. We updated our Behavioural Framework, which underpins our values and sets out expectations about conduct to ensure that the expected standards are upheld.

During 2022/23, values and culture within the fire sector, and the wider public sector, have become topics of national debate and concern.

In November 2022, an independent cultural review of the London Fire Brigade raised serious concerns about that service. In March 2023 HMICFRS presented its own critical assessment of values and culture across all the fire services in England, based on evidence collected from inspections since 2018. Both reports highlighted examples of behaviours which are unacceptable.

As a Service we acknowledge those reports and reaffirm that there is no place for discrimination, harassment or bullying in the fire and rescue service. Whilst our own inspection report from HMICFRS, found that we had improved in all areas related to our people, we recognise that there is no room for complacency. We have studied both the

LFB and HMICFRS reports to consider where their recommendations can be applied to our Service, and we will take actions where they are necessary.

We are strongly committed to maintaining a positive, inclusive workplace and ensuring our staff have the skills to meet the needs of our community when delivering services.

During 2022/23 we have been working to deliver our 12-point EDI Action plan, which resulted from an independent review of equality, diversity and inclusion within our Service conducted in 2021.

As part of this work, we have delivered a range of EDI training involving over 150 members of staff. Courses have included:

- Introduction to EDI
- Disability Awareness
- Learning Differences (neurodiversity)
- Faith training
- Diversity in Employment
- Working with Vulnerable People
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Deaf Awareness

In addition, an Inclusive Leadership training course has also been piloted during 22/23 aimed at middle managers, with plans in place to roll this out to all middle managers in 2023/24.

We also provide a range of eLearning to staff on subjects such as Religion and Faith, Trans awareness, Unconscious Bias and EDI best practice and legislation.

We continue to raise awareness of EDI and personal identities through our staff networks and promote opportunities to attend events and conferences such as Women in the Fire Service and the Asian Fire Service Association conference.

Uniform Review

During 2022/23 we have undertaken a review of our duty rig uniform. A working group was formed to consider uniform options and report on a survey which was open to uniformed and non-uniformed staff across the Service. The results of the trial have been recorded and will inform the procurement process for the new workwear. As part of the review, it has been agreed that all officers will be wearing navy blue uniform in the future, in line with other uniformed staff. The new uniform is expected to be in Service in 2024.

Employee Networks

Supporting our employees and promoting a positive workplace culture is central to our ambitions of being an employer of choice and becoming a more inclusive service. Our employee groups and networks provide a voice for those who are under-represented in our workforce and the fire sector as a whole.

Women's Network

This year our Women's network celebrated its first anniversary. In an eventful first year the network has made great strides in promoting and celebrating the role women play within the Service. Regular meetings and events have contributed to our commitment to improving the representation of women in our workforce. These have included involvement in the uniform review process and inviting guest speakers who are role models within the sector to network meetings.

LGBT+ Network

The LGBT+ Proud Friends Network is open to all members of staff who are part of the LGBT+ community and people who are allies. The Network is a space for people to get support and learn more about different aspects of the LGBT+ community.

We attended Worksop Pride and were once again honoured to lead the Notts Pride parade, with the biggest turnout of staff that we've ever had marching at the event. For LGBT+ History Month in February 2023 we worked alongside Nottinghamshire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner to put on an event at Broadway Cinema, focussed on local Nottinghamshire LGBT+ history and films about different identities in the community.

Ethnic Minority Alliance Network (EMA)

Our EMA provides a platform for open, confidential, and supportive discussions for all employees. The alliance helps to create and support a culture where all members can participate and feel valued while informing the Service's approach to ethnic minority issues. Throughout the year we have provided opportunities for networking and support through a variety of multi-cultural initiatives. These have included Eid ul-Fitr, Easter, Vaisakhi, Eid-Al-Adha, Black History Month, Diwali/Bandi Chhor and Lunar New year. We are also sponsoring the Young Leader of the Year Award at the 2023 'Live our Best Life' Awards organised by Nottinghamshire Police. We aim to sponsor this award each year, in memory of Stephen Lawrence.

Disability Matters Network

Our Disability Matters Network contributes to all disability related outcomes within the Service and plays a significant role in helping to achieve an inclusive workplace. This year, our members and allies have contributed to many initiatives including consulting on building access and corporate plans, improving the accessibility of eLearning and assisting

in the development of our new website. The network has also helped to provide training on deaf awareness and reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

Veterans Network

During 2022/23 our Veterans Network held its first meeting at Joint headquarters. The network brings together like-minded individuals who have served their country to offer a friendly environment for social events, conversations, particularly looking at how we can improve Service support for our armed forces and veteran members.

Strategic Goal 5: We will continue our improvement journey to deliver an outstanding Service

This goal focuses on the continuous improvement of our services, systems and processes.

In 2022/23, our focus on improvement included:

- Using our Strategic Assessment of Risk and Fire Cover Review to prioritise our services and align our resources to best effect
- Developing an online repository of information about risks and communities for our public-facing teams
- Developing our management information capability to better support performance management and decision making
- Ensuring Service information is readily accessible to all service users including those with different needs or access requirements
- Evaluating the consultation approach used in the development of our CRMP, to identify areas of improvement
- Responding to the recommendations of public inquiries, sector learning and new fire standards as they are published
- Improving the availability of key systems to increase the scope for mobile working

During the year:

- We commissioned a fire cover review to explore options for providing the best possible service within a balanced budget. We carried out a public consultation on proposals arising from the review
- We continue to improve the quality and availability of our site-specific risk information (SSRI). At the end of 2022/23 100% of our SSRIs were reviewed and up to date. This is the first time that we have achieved this
- We have continued to develop our data management infrastructure to improve our reporting capabilities
- We implemented a new website to give our communities improved access to information and services that we provide. It is independently rated as one of the most accessible fire and rescue websites in the country
- We have implemented the recommendations of the Grenfell Tower inquiry and are continuing to progress our actions for the Manchester Arena inquiry
- Work has continued to improve the reliability of the mobile data terminals on our fire engines

Other Highlights

We are focused on providing the best possible services to our communities and becoming an outstanding fire and rescue service.

To achieve this, we know that we must strive to continually improve our efficiency and effectiveness, across all areas of our service.

Community focus

Futures 25 Improvement Programme

At the start of 2022/23, we set up our Futures 25 Improvement Programme. The overall aim of the programme is to ensure that the Service can continue to improve its service delivery to communities, whilst at the same time creating a more agile, responsive workforce, and driving productivity and efficiency gains. This programme will involve cross-department redesign of activities and investment in improvements to systems over a number of years.

Phase 1 of the programme was shaped by the immediate need to set a balanced budget for 2023/24, which is a statutory duty. By the summer of 2022, our financial forecasts predicted a multi-million pound budget deficit, driven by a range of factors including escalating inflation and uncertainty around pay awards. To address this risk, we commissioned a fire cover review, to identify options which could achieve the necessary level of savings whilst minimising the impact on service delivery. As well as identifying how best to make the savings, the fire cover review also highlighted a deficit in fire cover in the north of the County, which could be addressed by reinstating wholetime cover at Ashfield fire station.

A public consultation was carried out on these proposals and on the appetite for a £5 increase in council tax as a way of mitigating cuts in services. There was significant support for the increase in council tax and for increasing fire cover at Ashfield, both of which were approved by the Fire Authority in February. As a combined result of the increase in council tax, savings we made during the year and some increases in other government funding, the Authority was able to set a balanced budget for 2023/24 without needing to implement the proposed cuts to fire cover in the city.

However, the financial picture remains challenging and further savings will need to be achieved to ensure our future financial sustainability. This will be a key objective for the next phase of our Futures 25 Improvement programme.

A review of flexi-duty officer cover was also initiated. However, competing demands for resource, including for contingency planning for industrial action and to support the fire cover review, meant this workstream had to be suspended.

Site-Specific Risk Information (SSRI)

Fire and Rescue Services need effective arrangements for gathering accurate, relevant and timely information of identified hazards and known risks to a premises/site and making this available to ensure the safety of firefighters. Information gathering and analysis of that information is of critical safety importance as it can be used to deliver appropriate training for personnel exposed to specific risks.

We gather information about the use of the building, the hazards and risks, construction, operational and environmental considerations and information to assist in fighting a fire.

We have continued to update and review site-specific risk information (SSRI) for high-risk sites, which is accessible to our crews when needed. Throughout the year we have been developing our systems to improve the way our crews see this information.

We have 527 high-risk sites across the County. At the end of 2022/23, 100% of our SSRIs were in date for their review. This is the first time we have achieved this. Our SSRIs are shared with neighbouring fire and rescue services, and access to their risk information is available to our crews via the mobile data terminals on our fire engines.

Understanding and Meeting the Needs of Service Users

We continue to engage with our service users to ensure that we meet their needs, that our services are accessible and that we strengthen our relationships with our communities. We have maintained our commitment to driving equality through our work with external agencies such as the Disability Confident scheme, British Sign Language Charter and the Armed Forces Covenant.

In June we held an event at Joint Headquarters to launch a new service which makes calling 999 more accessible for people who use British Sign Language (BSL). 999 BSL remotely connects users to interpreters through the 999 BSL app or via the 999 BSL website. In an emergency situation, the interpreter will appear on the caller's screen and relay the information to the control operator.

In April 2022 we launched our new website. The website, which was developed by an 'in-house' team, gives our communities better access to information and services we provide and is one of the most accessible fire and rescue websites in the country. By developing the website 'in-house' we provided development opportunities for 'upskilling' to our staff and avoided the expense of commissioning a third-party supplier.

Quality, Efficiency and Effectiveness

Evaluation

Developing our use of evaluation techniques to routinely assess the impact of our activities has become a focus during the year. To improve the way we do this we are developing an evaluation framework to highlight areas of good practice which will inform future projects.

We have particularly been evaluating the effectiveness of:

- Safe and Well visits
- Building inspections risk methodology
- Our use of data in fire cover reviews
- The move to joint headquarters

Public Inquiries and Sector Learning

Grenfell Tower Inquiry

Following the Grenfell Tower inquiry, an action plan was produced to ensure that we learnt from this tragic event. All 47 recommendations have been adopted and all procedures have been updated. New procedures have been adopted at high-rise incidents to ensure better coordination if evacuation is required. New equipment has been purchased, including smoke hoods and smoke curtains which have already been used to rescue people from buildings.

Manchester Arena Inquiry

In November 2022 the Manchester Arena Inquiry, Volume 2, was released. This report focused on the response by emergency services on the night of the attack. The report makes a number of recommendations to improve the way that emergency services respond to and resolve an incident of this type. We are committed to improvement and working with partners in the Nottinghamshire Local Resilience Forum and have developed an action plan to deliver the required learning.

Emerging Risks

An emerging risk is that presented by electric vehicles, specifically electric vehicle fires. We have a Service and regional fire service working group looking at ways to best mitigate the risk that this type of incident presents. A training plan has been developed to ensure our crews are able to effectively deal with this type of incident.

National Fire Standards

The Fire Standards Board oversees the identification, organisation, development and maintenance of professional standards of fire and rescue services in England.

They have published six new standards through 2022/23 which we continue to work towards embedding into our ways of working.

Digital Technology and Innovation

Information Repository for Staff

We have been developing a digital resource for staff which explains what we do, why we do it, how we do it and our ambition and goals. The 'living' resource will provide our workforce with an up-to-date repository of information which will help them to do their work more effectively and efficiently.

Information and Data Management

Over the past year we have successfully transferred all of our ICT systems and reporting databases into the cloud, moving away from the need to have site-based servers.

We have been working hard on developing our data management infrastructure, which will improve our reporting capabilities and allow us, in the future, to become a fully digital organisation, able to deliver operational data to our workforce in real time. This work is expected to be completed by 2024/25.

Mobile Working

We have introduced the ability to access key systems directly via the internet, enabling staff to work from any location with an internet connection. Operational staff have also been issued with modern internet capable devices enabling a connection whilst mobile or at an incident.

Information Security

We understand the importance of protecting personal data and demonstrating the steps we take to protect people's rights.

Our data protection officer supports our data protection duties across the Service, and we continue to train all employees in their data protection responsibilities.

As a public authority, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service provides information about what services we provide, how we spend money, and how we make decisions. The list here includes information we routinely make available and includes links wherever possible.

- Who we are and what we do
- What we spend and how we spend it
- What our priorities are and how we are doing
- How we make decisions
- Our policies and procedures
- Lists and registers
- The services we offer

Cyber Security

Maintaining the security of our systems and data is a priority. The threat of cyber-attacks is a constant risk for all organisations, particularly in the public sector.

Updating our practices and monitoring these threats is vital to ensure that we can deal with current and future risks.

In 2022/23 we counteracted 437,322 threats, which included spam, malware and viruses.

Strategic Goal 6: We will manage and invest in our Service to ensure it is fit for the future

This goal is focused on financial and environmental sustainability.

In 2022/23, our key objectives were:

- Move into the new fire station at Worksop
- Complete the move out of Bestwood Lodge
- Complete an options appraisal for the replacement of Eastwood fire station
- Relocate the incident command training facility to Mansfield fire station
- Procure new vehicles to replace those which have reached the end of their serviceable life

Our focus for improvements included:

- Reviewing our 10-year Capital Programme in the light of our Strategic Assessment of Risk
- Revising governance and decision-making processes to take account of environmental sustainability considerations
- Re-tendering the cleaning and grounds maintenance contract

During the year:

- We moved into the new fire station at Worksop and completed the sale of the old station site
- Completed the move out of the old headquarters and progressed work to sell off the site at Bestwood Lodge
- Completed substantial refurbishments at Mansfield fire station, to install an up-to-date incident command training facility, improve welfare and meeting facilities and provide office space for the Fire Protection North team
- Progressed the procurement of 17 new fire appliances and a number of specialist vehicles
- Successfully retendered our cleaning and grounds maintenance contract and multi-activity maintenance contract
- Reviewed and refocused our capital expenditure programme
- Started work on the project to retender for our mobilisation system, in collaboration with Derbyshire Fire Service and Joint Fire Control colleagues

Other Highlights

Financial Sustainability and Capital Expenditure

Throughout 2022/23, events in the UK and abroad had a significant impact on the economic climate, resulting in the highest rate of inflation in a generation and rising interest rates.

Against this backdrop, we reviewed our capital expenditure plans for the next ten years. Our capital programme is funded through borrowing, and in light of the increasing rates of interest and the other financial pressures on our revenue budgets, we took the decision to minimise our capital expenditure as far as possible. This means we have decided to delay plans to build a new fire station at Eastwood. Instead, we will make essential improvements to our existing estate to improve accessibility and provide an inclusive environment for staff and visitors.

We will always try to provide the best possible service to our communities with the financial resources available. Providing value for money is a priority when planning for the future. As part of those plans, we work hard to ensure that the service we provide is both financially and environmentally sustainable. This means ensuring that our buildings, vehicles and equipment remain fit for purpose and cost effective and allow us to provide an effective and efficient service.

Managing and Developing our Premises

We have continued to develop more modern and energy-efficient buildings that provide operational response bases and community hubs. This year crews moved into the brand-new station at Vesuvius Way, Worksop, which was officially opened in May 2022 and is now fully operational.

The move to Joint Headquarters is now complete, with all teams relocated from our previous site at Bestwood Lodge.

Sharing of resources continues to play an important part of our plans. Co-location with colleagues from other services will continue to be considered where financial and operational benefits can be realised.

During 2022/23 support staff continued to work hard across our Service delivering projects which developed our buildings, vehicles and systems to make sure they remain fit for purpose.

These projects included:

- Building alterations to allow the relocation of Fire Protection North and members of our Prevention team at Ashfield station
- Relocation of Stores to Highfields station from the Bestwood Lodge site
- Utilities upgrades were carried out at several sites including Highfields, Mansfield, Ashfield, Stockhill and Bingham stations
- Resurfacing of Collingham drill yard and hard standing areas

- Surveys of training towers were undertaken to inform minor works and lifespan expectancy

Investing in Equipment

Work to change some of our operational vehicle fleet is underway with a new appliance tendering process being conducted this year. 17 new fire appliances will replace aging vehicles over the next few years, with the first of them coming into service in 2024. They will feature a 'clean cab' design which will help keep our firefighters protected from products of combustion and other contaminants following incidents.

A tender for our new Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) vehicles is underway. The new vehicles will have the capability to reach further than our existing ALPs, from 32 metres to 45 metres, which will give more versatility, particularly at incidents involving high-rise buildings. The vehicles will also provide greater assistance at incidents involving the rescue of bariatric casualties. The new vehicles are expected to come into service during 2026.

Upgrading operational equipment is essential for us to maintain our operational capabilities. During 2022/23 we have:

- Procured new thermal imaging cameras to assist our incident commanders
- Purchased new lay-flat hose to replenish stock
- Replaced gas-tight suits which provide chemical protection for our crews
- Procured new 'fall-arrest' lanyards for safe working at height equipment
- Purchased new lamps for our breathing apparatus sets, which will replace existing ones as they become defective
- Procured new operational surcoats for role identification at incidents

Investing in our Systems and Processes

As part of ensuring the Service is financially sustainable and fit for the future, we have continued to make improvements to existing ways of working and to invest in our ICT systems.

A key area of focus is the procurement of a new mobilising system. This is a critical system that allows our Joint Fire Control function to receive 999 calls and mobilise fire engines, specialist vehicles and officers to incidents. We currently operate with a system procured within our tri-service arrangement with Derbyshire and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Services (FRS). The contract for this system is due for renewal. In January 2023, Leicestershire FRS informed us that they intend to withdraw from the tri-service arrangement at the end of the current contract. We are therefore working in collaboration with Derbyshire to jointly procure a replacement system for our two Services. This project will continue into 2025.

Also in 2022/23:

- Work has continued to improve the reliability of mobile data terminals on our fire appliances, to ensure up-to-date risk information is available at incidents
- We have continued to improve our fire hydrant maintenance process which allows improved reporting, efficiency and productivity
- We have procured numerous ICT contracts to maintain and upgrade our systems

Financial Performance

Under the Local Government Act 1999, fire and rescue services are responsible for ensuring that their business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

We provide financial assurance through the publication of an Annual Statement of Accounts. This is a statutory requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and the accounts are prepared following the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. The financial statements are subject to review by independent auditors.

Our appointed external auditor is Ernst Young LLP. The auditors are responsible for auditing two key areas:

- Financial statements
- Use of resources – concluding on the arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness (the value for money conclusion)

Internal audit forms part of the wider system of internal control which deals with our exposure to financial, and to some extent, non-financial risk.

Our internal audit function is provided by Nottinghamshire County Council. The 2022/23 Internal Audit Annual Report provided a judgement of Substantial Assurance around the Service's arrangements for corporate governance, risk management and the control environment.

The full report was considered by Finance and Resources Committee in June 2023. This allowed members to see the work of the internal audit and the contribution that it makes to the overall system of internal control.

2022/23 Financial Budget

The 2022/23 budget was set at £46.006m. We underspent by £236k (0.5%) during this year which was transferred into Earmarked Reserves, mostly for future use on the replacement mobilisation system.

Capital expenditure for the year totalled £2.265m. This was lower than expected due to some supply chain issues relating to the purchase of fire appliances. The majority of expenditure (£1.5m) was spent on our buildings which included the completion of a new Command Training Suite.

Reserves at the end of March 2022 were £10.3m.

Governance Statement

The Annual Governance Statement publicly explains how we manage our governance and internal control measures. It is a transparent account of how we ensure our financial management system is adequate and effective. It also ensures a sound system of internal control, assuring the utmost integrity in all of our work.

The Fire Authority also has a Code of Corporate Governance in which it reaffirms its duties and responsibilities. In this document officers support each of the code's principles with documentation or existing practices, demonstrating how the Fire Authority complies with the principles that make up the code.

We recognise the importance of transparency over how public money is spent.

The Local Government Transparency Code 2015 has been used as the foundation for organisational transparency. In deciding what information we should make available, as a starting point we have used the recommended data sets as defined by this code.

Governance, Monitoring and Assurance

Various governance bodies and systems are required to deliver an efficient fire and rescue service to our communities.

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority

This is often referred to as the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) and is responsible for ensuring we have the people, equipment and training needed to carry out our duties in relation to fire prevention; fire safety; firefighting and rescue; road traffic collision extrication and rescue and other emergency rescue activities such as responding to flooding or terrorism.

The authority consists of 18 elected councillors from Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council. There are six committees that report to the Fire Authority. These are:

- Appointments
- Community Safety
- Finance and Resources
- Human Resources
- Personnel
- Policy and Strategy

Collectively these committees and the authority make decisions on key matters such as policy, strategy and budget.

Meetings of the CFA and its committees are open to the public. Further information can be found on the city council's website.



Strategic Leadership Team

The Strategic Leadership Team is responsible for implementing the strategy and policy decisions taken by the CFA.

Under the direction of the Chief Fire Officer, the team meets to discuss Service priorities, collectively understand emerging issues and determine whether additional formal reports or business cases are required for consideration.

CRMP Assurance Board

The CRMP Assurance Board focuses on the progress being made against the strategic goals in the CRMP. It meets monthly and is chaired by the Chief Fire Officer. It scrutinises performance reports and key performance indicators from all areas of the Service and oversees significant corporate projects.

Area Managers Team (AMT)

AMT consists of all uniformed and non-uniformed Area Managers. The team meets fortnightly and is responsible for monitoring progress towards the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP), managing resources required to deliver the ADP, providing direction for Service departments and reporting progress to CRMP Assurance Board.

Operational Learning Board

The Operational Learning Board meets to ensure that we can effectively learn from the operational incidents and exercises that have taken place.

This board also considers learning that has come from other fire and rescue services to ensure an efficient, safe and effective operational response and to support the goal of delivering an outstanding service. This board meets every two months.

Service Delivery Evaluation and Assurance Group

It is important to oversee the performance of our Prevention, Protection and Response departments to monitor our progress against the standards we set.

Risk and performance matters are considered, with the aim of addressing any areas of concern and highlighting and learning from areas of good practice. The Group meets on a quarterly basis.

Collaboration Board

We facilitate a Strategic Collaboration Board that looks for opportunities to work with Nottinghamshire Police and oversees current collaborations. The membership of the group includes the Chair of the Fire Authority, the Chief Fire Officer, the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

We also have a Collaboration Board which facilitates governance and reporting of our Joint Fire Control with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service and explores areas for continued collaboration. This is attended by Fire Authority members and senior officers of both services.

External Assurance

HMICFRS Inspection

All fire and rescue services are subject to inspection from HMICFRS. The aims of the inspection programme are to encourage improvement in the fire sector and to provide the public with accessible information about how their local service is performing.

We received our latest report, which rated us as 'Good', in June 2022 following an inspection in the autumn of 2021. We are inspected every 2 years and we are expecting our next inspection in the autumn of 2023.

Assurance Declaration

The Combined Fire Authority functions within the clearly defined statutory and policy framework.

The key documents setting this out are:

- The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007
- The Localism Act 2011
- The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority is satisfied that it has met government expectations and responsibilities expected of fire and rescue services with regard to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

It is satisfied that it has shown due regard for public money and that it was properly accounted for and used efficiently and effectively.

It has adhered to the commitments set out in the CRMP for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Payne'.

Councillor Michael Payne Chair of
the Combined Fire Authority



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Fire & Rescue Service

Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service,
Sherwood Lodge Drive,
Arnold,
Nottingham,
NG5 8PP

Telephone: 0115 838 8100

Text: 0776 629 9999

Website: www.notts-fire.gov.uk



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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority

RESOURCING TO RISK

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 14 July 2023

Purpose of Report:

To present Members with proposals relating to the deployment of resources to address current and future requirements in the Service.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members:

- Support and endorse the approach of the Chief Fire Officer in the deployment of resources to risk.
- Agree to receive further updates at full Authority meetings relating to this workstream.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name: Damien West
Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Tel: 0115 8388100

Email: damien.west@notts-fire.gov.uk

Media Enquiries Contact: Corporate Communications Team
0115 8388100 corporatecomms@notts-fire.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At the Fire Authority meeting in February 2023, Members voted to “*task the Chief Fire Officer to swiftly work up and implement proposals at Ashfield Fire Station to address the identified gap in resourcing to risk faced by the community.*”
- 1.2 The Service’s Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) details how the Service will aim to make the best use of resources to deliver its commitments to communities.
- 1.3 The February budget report to the Fire Authority identified that the Service faces a predicted shortfall in revenue budgets in the region of £1.2m for the financial year 2024/25.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 In 2021, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) commissioned an independent review of Fire Cover by a sector leading expert, with over 30-years’ experience of working with emergency services around the world. This review explained how resources could best be optimised to ensure the most efficient and effective response to emergencies throughout the county.
- 2.2 The review highlighted that the reinstatement of a 24-hour provision of wholetime crewing at Ashfield fire station would decrease attendance times by an average of 48 seconds in that area and support the Service’s CRMP commitment to attend all incidents within eight minutes on average.
- 2.3 In response to the review, and the decision of the Fire Authority, the Service proposes to reinstate wholetime crewing arrangements at Ashfield that mirror all other 24/7 wholetime stations. This will ensure that crewing and resilience arrangements for the station are as simple, efficient, and effective as possible.
- 2.4 To facilitate the required approach to crewing, an additional 12 posts are required. These posts would consist of two Watch Managers, two Crew Managers and eight firefighter posts.
- 2.5 Increasing the wholetime establishment to provide additional roles for Ashfield would cost circa £600k and is not viable due to anticipated budget deficit over the medium term.
- 2.6 It is therefore necessary to facilitate the required changes at Ashfield within the current establishment and without affecting the level of fire cover provided elsewhere.
- 2.7 The proposed approach to providing 24-hour wholetime cover at Ashfield station is to amend the current ridership levels, within the existing

establishment figure of 356. This would require ridership levels of 24 personnel across one appliance stations and 44 personnel across both two appliance stations, with some deviation to this at some stations due to the crewing of specialist appliances. This would enable a minimum crew of four to be maintained on all wholetime appliances.

- 2.8 This approach may lead to a greater number of occasions where appliances are crewed with four personnel, however it is noted that in 2022/23, appliances were crewed with four personnel 65% of the time (with a higher frequency during the busier summer periods). It is also noted that this approach does present a greater risk in relation to the impact of sickness and other abstractions from the ridership, however steps will be taken to address this, as is common practice, in line with the Service's current policies and procedures.
- 2.9 In addressing this proposal, the Service has reviewed the time it takes for a second appliance to attend incidents, where more than one appliance is required, across each district. Across all districts, whilst those in rural areas show the highest secondary attendance time, the longest average wait time for a second appliance remains under six minutes. This is reduced to nearer one minute in the City of Nottingham.
- 2.10 To support this approach, the Service will incorporate the new crewing levels into incident command training, awareness for operational crews, and exercises. It will also conduct a review of pre-determined attendances (PDAs) to incidents, and current operational practices (eg: the application of 'rapid deployment' of breathing apparatus resources).
- 2.11 The proposed changes to the approach to ridership presents a number of benefits including; an increase in 'productive' hours for the delivery of services to communities; training and maintenance of competence at Ashfield; greater flexibility for all operational personnel in relation to self-rostering; a reduction in 'stand-by' moves required to maintain availability; and an increase in capacity for off-shift training, sickness cover, and development time for personnel.
- 2.12 The proposed approach to crewing also releases four current operational posts to support the resourcing of Service priorities, resource the current Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) commitments, and support the mitigation of current corporate risks.
- 2.13 These posts will be reallocated within the Service to ensure the continued delivery of high-quality services to communities, improve community engagement and support the Service's continued cultural journey.
- 2.14 The implementation of the changes will take a project-approach to delivery, ensuring proactive engagement with all key stakeholders. The timelines for implementation aim for a return to 24/7 wholetime cover in Ashfield by the end of November 2023, however this will be subject to review as detailed plans are developed.

- 2.15 The Service will implement evaluation and monitoring measures for the implementation of this change, including the monitoring of response times, availability and key workforce metrics.
- 2.16 It is proposed that the Authority receives further updates on the progress of this workstream at future full Fire Authority meetings, including the reporting of evaluation of any changes post-implementation, at appropriate intervals.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The proposal for the reallocation of resources at firefighter level would be cost neutral. The cost of uplifting firefighter posts to two additional Watch Managers and two Crew Managers would be £36,310, including on-costs.
- 3.2 This can be contained within current year budgets given the current vacancy level. Future year costs will be picked up as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to be considered by Fire Authority in December 2023 which will bring together updated budgets and savings identified through the Futures 25 programme.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report presents proposals that impact upon teams and individuals in relation to their future places of work. The Service will engage fully and proactively with its workforce, and representative bodies, to ensure a transition that maintains staff well-being and engagement, through a well-established consultation and policy framework.
- 4.2 The proposals within this report do not present any permanent changes to the establishment.
- 4.3 There are no learning and development implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has been completed for the proposed changes within this report and highlights the below impacts:

Protected Characteristic	Impact	Rationale
Age, Disability (communities)	Potentially Positive	As characteristics of the Service's CHARLIE profile for those most susceptible to death or injury from fire, these groups may be positively impacted in communities through greater provision of response to communities in the Ashfield area where these demographics are present.
Rurality	Potentially Positive	The return of Ashfield fire station to 24/7 wholetime crewing means that response times to rural areas within the District will be reduced during nighttime hours.
Age, Primary Care Providers (workforce)	Neutral	The provision of day-shift crewing (DSC) provides options for personnel to not work night-shifts and the return of Ashfield to 24/7 wholetime crewing reduces the number of opportunities for this, however personnel do still have access to DSC at Retford fire station and day duty roles in other departments.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Fire and Rescue Services Act (2004) places a statutory duty on authorities to make provisions for firefighting, fire safety and responding to road traffic collisions and other emergencies.
- 7.2 The Secretary of State, under Section 22 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act (2004) has the power of intervention if the Secretary of State considers that a fire and rescue authority is failing, or is likely to fail, to act in accordance with the Framework prepared under Section 21 of the Act.
- 7.3 Sections 10 to 13 of the Local Government Act 1999 (c. 27) (best value inspections) apply in relation to a fire and rescue authority's compliance with Section 21(7) of the Act as they apply in relation to a best value authority's compliance with the requirements of Part 1 of that Act. Fire and rescue authorities must have regard to the Framework in carrying out their functions.
- 7.4 The Authority has a statutory responsibility to consult on changes to fire cover. Consultation was conducted in accordance with HM Government Code of Practice on Consultation and the outcomes of this consultation were reported to the Fire Authority meeting in February 2023.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The Service's corporate risk register highlights risks that are associated with the contents of this report:

Risk	Implications
Inability to Set a Balanced Budget	The proposals in this report present additional costs to the Service. This does not present a risk for the 2022/23 financial year, but presents an ongoing risk that will be managed through the delegated powers of the Chief Fire Officer through the management of the establishment within the existing allocated budgets.
Employee Engagement	The changes to duty systems and the proposals to change crewing models, present the risk of damaging employee engagement and industrial relations. Early, proactive engagement with affected personnel and representative bodies, along with an effective communications plan and a consultative approach will assist in mitigating this risk.
Preventable Deaths	The Service is reallocating risk, based on independent modelling and feedback from consultation that will aim to ensure that the right resources are prioritised in the right location, ultimately with an aim of creating safer communities.
Availability of Resources	This risk is mitigated in part by the proposals in this report by ensuring the best use of resources across the Service and ensuring a 24/7 wholetime response is available in the Ashfield area.
Corporate Reputation	This risk is presented through the proposals for change and public interest in these changes. A full communications plan and proactive engagement with this workstream will assist in mitigating this risk.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

Any proposed changes to the crewing at Ashfield fire station will be fully communicated with colleagues from neighbouring fire and rescue services ahead of implementation.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Support and endorse the approach of the Chief Fire Officer in the deployment of resources to risk.
- 10.2 Agree to receive further updates at full Authority meetings relating to this workstream.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

FUTURES 25 – PHASE 2 UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 14 July 2023

Purpose of Report:

To provide an update to Members on Phase 2 of Futures 25, the Service's efficiency and improvement programme.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- Members note the content of the report;
- Agree to receive future updates on the Futures 25 programme.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name : Leila Henry
Area Manager, Futures 25

Tel : 0115 8388100

Email : leila.henry@notts-fire.gov.uk

Media Enquiries Contact : Corporate Communications Team
0115 8388100 corporatecomms@notts-fire.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Futures 25 is the Service's efficiency and improvement programme. Phase 1 of Futures 25 commenced in May 2022 and was primarily concerned with efficiencies to enable the Authority to be in a position to set a balanced budget for the financial year 2023-24.
- 1.2 The Service is forecast to have a deficit of circa £1.14 million (subject to being at full establishment) by financial year 2024-25 meaning further efficiencies are likely to be required. Notwithstanding, it should be noted that the focus of Futures 25 is not solely one of efficiencies. The programme is also the vehicle through which targeted service improvement workstreams will be delivered including those relating to culture and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) associated with the updated People Strategy.
- 1.3 Additionally, in February 2023 Chief Fire Officers and Fire Finance Directors were asked by the Home Office to submit Efficiency and Productivity Plans covering the financial year 2023/24. The submission made it clear that Futures 25 will be the vehicle through which Home Office targets related to efficiency and productivity will be delivered by the Service.
- 1.4 This report aims to set out in broad terms the priorities and scope of Phase 2 of the programme.

2. REPORT

BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In May 2022 the Chief Fire Officer sought permission from the Policy and Strategy Committee to commence a programme of work to identify both pay and non-pay efficiencies to ensure that the Authority was in a position to set a balanced budget for the financial year 2023-24.
- 2.2 Phase 1 of the Futures 25 Efficiency and Improvement Programme commenced in May 2022 with three workstreams forming part of the initial tranche of work:
 - Workforce Review (review of Green Book posts Grade 5 and above);
 - Fire Cover Review;
 - Flexi-Officer Review.
- 2.3 The Workforce Review and Fire Cover Review were data driven and designed to present a range of options for consideration by the Strategic Leadership Team and the Authority to set a balanced budget for the financial year 2023/24 and beyond.
- 2.4 The Flexi Officer Review set out to review the Flexi Officer Collective Agreement to ensure that the command group structures were efficient and provided the levels of resilience of specialist functions required to mitigate

operational risk. On commencing the review it became clear that competing priorities including fire cover review and industrial action preparation, meant that there was insufficient capacity, both organisationally and within the Officer cohorts, to deliver the changes required. This workstream has therefore been paused to be restarted at a future date.

- 2.5 As the programme progressed it became evident that a longer-term improvement programme was required to ensure that the Service could continue to drive efficiency and productivity in the face of a challenging budget situation. The overall aim is to ensure that the Service can continue to improve service delivery to communities whilst at the same time creating a more agile and responsive workforce which is better positioned to deliver against national sector reform and improvement priorities.
- 2.6 Futures 25 aims to co-ordinate a number of improvement workstreams designed to support the Service to become outstanding by 2032. This includes continuing to drive productivity and efficiency through fundamental Service redesign activities cross-cutting departments.
- 2.7 As scoping of the Futures 25 programme has developed, it has become clear that the delivery of national priorities relating to culture, values, EDI and leadership in the fire and rescue service, are an integral part of the improvement journey. For this reason these workstreams have been bought within the Futures 25 scope to ensure delivery of the People Strategy relating to these areas is prioritised and resourced appropriately.
- 2.8 The ambition to be outstanding refers to ensuring that the Service offers outstanding services to its communities, is an outstanding place to work and that it co-ordinates and contributes effectively with partners to achieve outstanding results. Futures 25 will be a stepping stone to the Service realising this ambition.

HOME OFFICE EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY REPORTING

- 2.9 On 21 February 2023, the Home Office requested that stand alone fire and rescue authorities produce an annual efficiency and productivity plan. This request is made to satisfy existing requirements for Services to publish an efficiency strategy (albeit this is usually included within the Medium-Term Financial Plan).
- 2.10 For the financial year 2023/24, the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire has requested that efficiency plans also include more detailed information on how authorities will align with new national productivity and efficiency targets that have been set for the 2021/22 – 2024/25 Spending Review period.
- 2.11 The Local Government Association (LGA) has proposed that across the fire and rescue services in England, the sector could create 2% of non-pay efficiencies and to increase productivity by 3% over the period.

- 2.12 The Service had already identified the requirement to deliver efficiencies to ensure that the Authority was in a position to set a balanced budget for the FY 2023-24 together with ensuring the longer-term sustainability of the Service through more efficient and effective systems, processes and ways of working. The Futures 25 improvement programme remains the vehicle through which these efficiency and productivity improvements will be delivered.
- 2.13 The Service's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) for 2022-25 identifies stretching targets for productivity improvements. These targets remain extant and continue to act as key performance indicators for efficiency and productivity improvement.

PHASE 2 – STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.14 The high-level ambitions of Futures 25 are to ensure that:
- The Authority is in a position to set a balanced budget for the financial year 2024/25 and beyond;
 - The workforce is skilled and flexible to meet current and future needs of the Service and ensure that the Service is best positioned to respond to internal and external drivers for change;
 - Improvements to systems and processes continue to drive efficiency and productivity of the Service;
 - Service redesign activities support the long term ambition of being an outstanding Service by 2032;
 - Futures 25 delivers as a minimum the 2% non-pay efficiency and 3% productivity target as determined by the National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC) and LGA by 2025.

PHASE 2 WORKSTREAMS

- 2.15 In designing and developing the workstreams which form part of Phase 2, a significant amount of stakeholder engagement has taken place. In addition a suite of internal and external drivers including those from the Home Office, NFCC and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) have been considered.
- 2.16 There workstreams which form part of Phase 2 have been grouped under 4 key areas:
- Governance Review;
 - Revenue Budget Management;
 - Service Redesign;
 - Culture, EDI and Leadership.

GOVERNANCE REVIEW

- 2.17 These workstreams are designed to support the efficiency and effectiveness of meeting structures and decision making within the Service. The aim is to ensure the Service is able to make and implement decisions in a complex and fast changing operating environment effectively and efficiently.
- 2.18 The aim is to ensure that governance structures and delegation arrangements provide proportionate levels of control and that appropriate assurance arrangements are in place for the risk and impact of the decision being taken.

REVENUE BUDGET MANAGEMENT

- 2.19 These workstreams aim to ensure that revenue budgets are used to best effect to reflect Service priorities, and to determine if any further efficiencies can be extracted from non-pay budgets.
- 2.20 The NFCC and LGA have proposed that across fire and rescue services in England, the sector could create 2% of non-pay efficiencies and to increase productivity by 3% in the spending review period 2021/22 – 2024/25.
- 2.21 It should be noted that during the budget setting process for 2023/24, the Service found savings of over £1.1m that were either reinvested in CRMP projects or helped towards reducing the deficit. This is well in excess of the 2% target set by the Home Office, although it is noted that these savings include pay related savings some of which are one-off in nature.
- 2.22 In addition to cashable savings, the return also requested that non-cashable savings be included in the submission. The Service is currently working to enhance the reporting of non-cashable savings as part of routine monitoring and reporting arrangements going forward.

SERVICE REDESIGN

- 2.23 The Service redesign workstreams comprise the most significant portion of the improvement programme. The overarching aim is to ensure that the Service has appropriate resources deployed in the correct place to support its ambition to be an outstanding fire and rescue service.
- 2.24 It is recognised that in order to extract efficiencies and enable resources and capacity to be deployed to best effect, there needs to be improvement and investment in systems and processes. The programme aims to target development work in areas that integrate system, process and people elements to ensure the greatest overall benefit to communities.
- 2.25 Service redesign workstreams will aim to address resourcing gaps identified as part of Phase 1, including supplementing fire cover in the Ashfield area and delineating dedicated to support community engagement and positive action activities. A separate report presented to this meeting titled

'Resourcing to Risk' outlines the options for consideration by the Fire Authority specifically relating to fire cover in the Ashfield area.

- 2.26 A dedicated earmarked reserve has been created to support business process automation and streamlining of business processes and systems. This work dovetails into initiatives being delivered as part of the Year 2 Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) to support improvements to key ICT systems.
- 2.27 Redesign activities aim to support the Service's aspiration to be outstanding and the intention is to co-design change and improvement with staff working in impacted areas. A dedicated communications and organisational development role will ensure that staff are fully engaged in identifying issues with current systems, processes, structures and ways of working and are able to contribute to shape the future state.

CULTURE, EDI AND LEADERSHIP

- 2.28 People are key to the successful delivery of outstanding service to communities. National reports including the HMICFRS spotlight report on values and culture in fire and rescue services, and the London Fire Brigade independent culture review, have rightly focussed public attention and expectation on improving the culture, behaviour and leadership within the fire and rescue service. Priority must be given to ensure everyone is treated with dignity and respect, and that fire and rescue services are inclusive both for employees and those the Service works with and deliver services to.
- 2.29 The Service already had a focus on this area, and integration of these workstreams within the Futures 25 programme will ensure that priority and resourcing is given to progressing this work at the pace that is expected.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

An earmarked reserve of £900k has been created to support the implementation of Futures 25 workstreams.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

Some of the workstreams that fall within Futures 25 will have human resources and learning and development implications. These will be reported to the Authority at appropriate times throughout the programme.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken at this stage, however it is recognised that some workstreams will have equalities implications for both employees and communities. An equality impact assessment will be undertaken for each of these workstreams prior to commencement.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications associated with the report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Authority is legally required to set a balanced budget. In addition, the publication of an annual efficiency plan is required by the National Framework. Futures 25 will contribute to the delivery of this efficiency plan.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are a range of current and emerging risks which Futures 25 aims to mitigate, including the ability for the Authority to set a balanced budget, and to ensure that resources are effectively allocated to risk.
- 8.2 It is recognised that, as with any change programme, there is the potential to create uncertainty which may impact employee relations. However, the Service aims to mitigate this by adopting an organisational development approach with a clear prioritisation of employee engagement.
- 8.3 Futures 25 aims to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of Service Delivery, therefore supporting wider risk reduction aims in communities.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

Collaboration opportunities may be identified throughout the efficiency and improvement programme. These will be reported at the appropriate time should the Service wish to pursue them.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Note the content of the report;
- 10.2 Agree to receive future updates on the Futures 25 Programme.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
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Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

UPDATE ON HIS MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 14 July 2023

Purpose of Report:

To provide Members with an overview of national reports published by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services and to provide an update on Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's inspection preparation activities.

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of this report.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name :	Leila Henry Area Manager Futures 25
Tel :	0115 8388100
Email :	leila.henry@notts-fire.gov.uk
Media Enquiries Contact :	Corporate Communications Team 0115 8388100 corporatecomms@notts-fire.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) is, by Royal appointment, the inspectorate body for fire services in England.
- 1.2 Each year, His Majesty's Chief Inspector publishes a 'State of Fire and Rescue' report which summarises the findings from the year's inspections of the sector. In January 2023, Andy Cooke QPM DL, released his first State of Fire and Rescue report following his appointment as HM Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services.
- 1.3 In January 2023, HMICFRS commenced the third full round of inspections, aiming to inspect all 44 fire and rescue services (FRSs) within an 18 month period. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's inspection falls into Tranche 2 and is anticipated to take place around September 2023.

2. REPORT

STATE OF FIRE

- 2.1 The HMICFRS State of Fire report is an annual report which consolidates learning and findings from all inspections conducted by HMICFRS in FRSs in England within the review period.
- 2.2 The purpose of the State of Fire report is to support and drive continuous improvement through the identification of common areas of improvement and by exemplifying good practice.
- 2.3 The report identifies improvements under the three inspection pillars of efficiency, effectiveness and people.

EFFICIENCY

- 2.4 Efficiency in FRSs is assessed based on resource management and affordability. Tranche 3 Services showed decreased efficiency with some receiving lower grades than in the first round of inspections.
- 2.5 There were a range of issues identified, including inadequate pre-planning for collaborative arrangements, a lack of fully developed savings plans, staff shortages, issues with resource management and challenges associated with funding and governance arrangements.
- 2.6 HMICFRS believes that most FRSs had scope to improve their productivity, including through the use of more effective performance management arrangements, increasing the use of wholetime firefighters in prevention and protection activities and more efficient use of technology.

- 2.7 National productivity targets have been developed and aim to allocate wholtime firefighter capacity towards prevention and protection work. Services must ensure that increases in activity in any given area should be aligned to local risk and their Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

EFFECTIVENESS

- 2.8 The effectiveness of FRSs in ensuring public safety is assessed based on five key areas:
- Understanding the risk of emergencies;
 - Preventing risk;
 - Protecting against risks;
 - Responding to emergencies;
 - Preparedness for major incidents.
- 2.9 It was found during the last round of inspections, that many FRSs lack a clear link between their risk management plans and daily operations, however it was recognised that Services respond well to incidents, although availability and response standards could be improved in some cases.
- 2.10 Nationally, there has been an increase in fire fatalities, indicating a better understanding of local risks is required and that fire prevention should be a higher priority with prevention strategies aligning to identified risks.
- 2.11 It was noted that fire protection has improved, although the recruitment of fire safety inspectors remains challenging. The progress made in reducing fire risks in high-rise buildings was recognised.

PEOPLE

- 2.12 The people element focuses on how Services develop, look after and lead staff. Common themes in this area included challenges in recruiting staff in specialist roles and the difficulties Services are having in diversifying their workforces via recruitment.
- 2.13 Risk critical training was seen as being a strength and some Services are recognised for their efforts to develop training in other skills including leadership, management and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)
- 2.14 It was identified that there is sector-wide and immediate need for better EDI practices, and such was the level of concern, a separate Spotlight Report on values and culture was published on 30 March 2023.
- 2.15 A summary of the report findings was provided to Human Resources Committee on 23 April 2023, together with an outline of the approach the Chief Fire Officer is adopting to respond to the report findings.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (NFRS) INSPECTION PREPARATION

- 2.16 The third round of HMICFRS inspections began in January 2023. NFRS remains within the second tranche of Services to be inspected, and it is anticipated that the inspection will likely commence around September 2023.
- 2.17 There has been some adjustments to methodology following consultation with the sector. Perhaps the most notable difference is a change to the grading system. This will expand grading categories from four to five, with the addition of an 'adequate' grading between 'good' and 'requires improvement'.
- 2.18 The three overarching pillar judgements will no longer be issued. Instead, an assessment of the 11 areas which make up the inspection framework will be provided as individual gradings. This will enable greater understanding of specific areas of strength and areas for development.
- 2.19 Tranche based assessments will also be discontinued, with Service reports being published as soon as they are available. This will reduce the time interval between inspection and report publication.
- 2.20 In order to support the forthcoming HMICFRS inspection, the Service has ensured appropriate resources are in place. This is to support co-ordination of the forthcoming inspection, and to ensure that the Service is communicating effectively both with HMICFRS via the Service Liaison Lead, and internally with staff.
- 2.21 In addition, the Service's Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) continues to provide oversight and assurance of progress against the Areas for Improvement (AFIs) identified during the last inspection, together with the learning that has been taken from both the State of Fire and Spotlight on Values and Culture reports.
- 2.22 SLT continues to monitor progress against the Year 2 Annual Delivery Plan . This forms the basis of supporting the Authority to demonstrate how the Authority's CRMP translates into operational practice to support risk mitigation in communities.
- 2.23 HMICFRS will take account of implementation of the national fire standards created by the Fire Standards Board as part of their inspections. The Service continues work in both departments and at a strategic level to assess current arrangements and implement best practice from the suite of fire standards currently available.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources or learning and development implications arising from this report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because of the nature of the report.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Local Government Act 1999 places a statutory duty on the Service to 'secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised'.
- 7.2 The Police and Crime Act (2017) Chapter 4 Section 11 outlines that the English inspectors must inspect, and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of, fire and rescue authorities in England

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the content of this report.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
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Fire and Rescue Authority

MOBILISATION SYSTEM UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 14 July 2023

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on activities for the current Tri-Service and replacement call handling and mobilisation system.

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of the report.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name : Michael Sharman
Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Tel : 0115 8388100

Email : michael.sharman@notts-fire.gov.uk

Media Enquiries Contact : Corporate Communications Team
0115 8388100 corporatecomms@notts-fire.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Systel, the current provider of the Service's call receiving and mobilisation system is a French based company with a small satellite office in Yorkshire. The provision is under contract for three fire and rescue services (FRSs), (Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, and Leicestershire).
- 1.2 The mobilising system is used by the Service to take calls (including 999 and emergency calls), take details of emergencies and mobilise an emergency response to incidents. It is an integral system to delivery of the emergency response to the community. The current mobilising system, Systel, reaches the end of its contract in October 2024.
- 1.3 Currently, the Service operates its mobilisation system as part of a Tri-Service, collaboratively working with Derbyshire and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Services. A project has been underway since the middle of 2022 with the remit to procure and implement a replacement mobilising system.
- 1.4 In recent months the operating context of the Tri-Service has altered, increasing the risks to the current system and to the replacement mobilising system project. These risks being:
 - Leicestershire FRS has indicated its intention to withdraw from the Tri-Service arrangements from the end of the contract period. Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire FRSs have committed to continuing joint arrangements and to potentially use existing joint political governance arrangements.
 - Systel, the current mobilising system provider, continue to be under the supervision of the French Courts, due to financial and operating challenges.
 - An approaching Home Office deadline of December 2023 for a system modification to improve security, which has been further complicated by Leicestershire FRS's decision (see Sections 2.4 – 2.5).
 - Costs for the new system have not yet been quantified. The withdrawal of Leicestershire FRS is likely to create an increased proportional risk to Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire FRSs.
- 1.5 All of the above factors are interrelated and together they create significant operational and organisational risk.
- 1.6 The current replacement mobilising system project has been planning for a one-year extension to the current Systel contract. Consequently, there is potentially a year where Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire FRSs will be looking to continue to operate with the current Systel system without Leicestershire FRS.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 Principal Officers from Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire FRSs have met to discuss these risks and determine actions that need to be taken in order to urgently address the situation. As a result, a programme of works has been established that will be overseen by a joint temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer. The programme includes:
- Working in tandem with Leicestershire FRS for the remainder of the current contract period to continue to manage the day-to-day performance of the existing system and maintain the relationship with Systel.
 - Disaggregation of the Tri-Service – work to protect the interests of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire FRSs in terms of legal, technical, and financial implications, alongside ensuring appropriate contract extension arrangements are put in place.
 - Deliver the replacement mobilising system – incorporating the procurement and implementation of the replacement system, including driving efficiency through alignment of ways of working across both Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire FRS.

CURRENT MOBILISING SYSTEM

- 2.2 Existing Tri-Service arrangements are currently continuing with all three Services working with Systel to manage the day-to-day performance of the existing system, alongside a number of projects that will maintain and improve the performance of the system during its expected life.
- 2.3 The Tri-Service has committed to improving and investing in mobile data terminals (MDTs), which are located in frontline appliances and support the mobilisation of appliances, mapping, access to site specific risk information and other information key to firefighter safety and operations. The project aims to ensure that new MDTs are fitted to all frontline appliances by August 2023.
- 2.4 The Tri-Service, along with all other fire and rescue services in the UK and current mobilisation system providers, are required to undertake security improvements between current mobilisation systems and the radio network, Airwave.
- 2.5 The Home Office has stipulated this work be completed prior to the end of the year. As a consequence of the decision of Leicestershire FRS to withdraw from the Tri-Service, Leicestershire FRS will be seeking an alternative method, other than working with Systel, to meet the required system improvements. This adds both complexity and implications on existing ways of working between the Tri-Services.
- 2.6 Since 9 November 2022, when the Tri-Service received confirmation that the French Courts had approved for Systel to move under the protection of

“Redressement Judiciaire”, the Tri-Service has been working to maintain existing working arrangements.

- 2.7 In response to “Redressement Judiciaire” Systel have restructured, introducing a new management team/directors, who will oversee future operations.
- 2.8 Systel were back in the French Courts on 30 May 2023, which has seen an extension to the “Redressement Judiciaire” arrangements, until at least September 2023, when Systel return to the French Courts.

TRI-SERVICE DISAGGREGATION

- 2.9 As a result of the decision taken by Leicestershire FRS to withdraw from Tri-Service arrangements from October 2024, work is underway to ensure that the interests of both Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire FRSs are protected. Browne Jacobson solicitors have been appointed to represent the interests of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire FRSs.
- 2.10 Whilst Leicestershire FRS has committed to the existing contract until October 2024, in preparation for their new working arrangements and mobilisation system, works will need to be undertaken to ‘separate’ the existing integrations and working practices. The separation of existing functions and arrangements brings a high level of complexity, both in technical terms in separating the systems architecture and also implications to the ways of working for all three Services.
- 2.11 As work progresses to disaggregate the Tri-Service, Joint Control will need to amend business continuity management arrangements, call fail-over processes and call management practices in busy periods, such as spate conditions.
- 2.12 To oversee the Tri-Service disaggregation, a working group has been established, which will report progress and risks to the existing Tri-Service Executive Board, and a Members led Joint Collaboration Board.

REPLACEMENT MOBILISING SYSTEM

- 2.13 Since the middle of 2022, representatives on behalf of the Tri-Service have been undertaking work in support of a new mobilising system. The decision of Leicestershire FRS to withdraw from current procurement activities, resulted in minimal impact on intentions and timelines. However, whilst the complexity of any future system reduces, going from two control rooms to one, associated costs per Service may increase.
- 2.14 Procurement of a new system will be broken down into a number of separate contracts, or “lots”. The initial lot, Integrated Command and Control System (ICCS) and the Computer Aided Dispatch System (CAD) was published for tender on 15 May 2023. The receiving of tenders and the process of evaluation will take place throughout the summer, with the successful supplier being announced in September/October 2023.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The capital programme approved by the Fire Authority in February 2023 includes a £2m budget for replacing the mobilising system in 2024/25. The report identified that this was an indicative figure, due to the withdrawal of Leicestershire FRS, along with difficulty in estimating future costs until the procurement process had commenced.
- 3.2 Until the contract is awarded, it is unclear whether the new system will be hosted within the cloud or from on premises servers. This changes whether the costs will be in the form of lease payments or capital up front payments, which in turn affects the accounting arrangements (ie: revenue or capital expenditure).
- 3.3 The procurement exercise is due to complete in the autumn and revised costs will be reflected in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, which will be presented to Fire Authority in December 2023.
- 3.4 The ongoing project costs are being met from a mixture of current year revenue budgets and an earmarked reserve set aside for this purpose. Costs are higher than anticipated due to the withdrawal of Leicestershire FRS from the project, the sufficiency of the earmarked reserve is being kept under review.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are ongoing human resources and learning and development implications which require the Authority to ensure that its employees are suitably informed and trained to meet the requirements of the duty.
- 4.2 The Service contributes to a small Tri-Service Project Team, which would be impacted by any changes to the mobilisation provision, however, implications would be identified in future reports.
- 4.3 Personnel resources, skills and knowledge required to deliver the programme will be kept review to ensure the programmes changing needs are met.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken as currently there is no change to policy or service provision.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 places a requirement for fire and rescue authorities to put in place effective arrangements for receiving and responding to calls for help and for obtaining information to exercise its functions.
- 7.2 Fire authorities are required under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the Fire and Rescue National Framework to maintain and test business continuity plans.
- 7.3 The Government has powers of intervention under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, Section 22. This section applies if the Secretary of State considers that a Fire Authority is failing, or likely to fail, to act in accordance with the Framework prepared under Section 21.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Systel mobilisation system is integral to the receipt of calls and the mobilising of fire appliances, any impact on this provision places the Authority at risk of failing to fulfil its legal duties.
- 8.2 There are significant existing risks regarding the Systel mobilising system which are documented in the Service's Corporate Risk Register.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Service is embedded in the Tri-Service collaboration and is committed to meeting the requirements of the current mobilising contract, working with its partners (Derbyshire and Leicestershire) to manage and mitigate risks to all three Services until October 2024.
- 9.2 Due to the Leicestershire FRS decision to withdraw from the Tri-Service, Nottinghamshire, along with Derbyshire FRS, have begun seeking alternative arrangements post October 2024, and have commenced a programme of works to desegregate the Tri-Service.
- 9.3 The Service is committed to working collaboratively with Derbyshire FRS and continuing its collaborative relationship in the procurement of a new replacement mobilising system.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of the report.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

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