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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE & CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY - COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

Date: Friday, 28 March 2014

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Fire and Rescue Services HQ, Bestwood Lodge, Arnold Nottingham NG5 8PD

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. [unclear]'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

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

AGENDA

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ANY COUNCILLOR WHO IS UNABLE TO ATTEND THE MEETING AND WISHES TO SUBMIT APOLOGIES SHOULD DO SO VIA THE PERSONAL ASSISTANT TO THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AT FIRE SERVICES HEADQUARTERS ON 0115 967 0880

IF YOU NEED ANY ADVICE ON DECLARING AN INTEREST IN ANY ITEM ABOVE, PLEASE CONTACT THE CONSTITUTIONAL SERVICES OFFICER SHOWN ON THIS AGENDA, IF POSSIBLE BEFORE THE DAY OF THE MEETING.

Constitutional Services Officer:

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Agenda, reports and minutes for all public meetings can be viewed online at:-
<http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/article/23479/Council-Meetings-and-Decisions>



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE & CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY -
COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Fire and Rescue Services HQ, Bestwood
Lodge, Arnold Nottingham NG5 8PD on 10 January 2014 from 10.00 am - 11.15
am**

Councillor Coleen Harwood (Chair)
Councillor Chris Barnfather
Councillor Brian Grocock
Councillor Ken Rigby
Councillor John Wilmott

Members absent are marked ^

Councillor Gordon Wheeler – present as an observer.

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None

13 MINUTES

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2013 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

14 FIRE PROTECTION DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Assistant Chief Fire Officer, David Horton introduced the Chief Fire Officers' report providing members with an update on fire protection activity. The main points drawn to the attention of Members were:

- the Fire Protection Department maintains a risk based approach to inspections. The risk based inspection programme is a key part of the overall risk reduction strategy. The principle aim of the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) is to make Nottinghamshire a safer place by reducing as far as possible

the risks and social and economic costs of fires and other dangers, without imposing unnecessary burden. Ensuring compliance with legal regulatory requirements is an important part of achieving this aim;

- the enforcement function of the Fire Protection Department ensures that preventative remedial action is taken to protect relevant persons and to ensure compliance with the regulatory system. The purpose of enforcement is to promote and achieve sustained compliance with the law, ensure that the person responsible for premises subject to fire safety regulation takes action to deal immediately with serious risks to the safety of relevant persons and ensure those individuals, businesses and other undertakings that breach fire safety requirements are held to account, which may include bringing alleged offenders before the courts;
- the Service has a wide range of interventions at its disposal to secure compliance with the law and to ensure a proportionate response to criminal offences;
- a further function of the Fire Protection Department is to reduce Unwanted Fire Signals (UFS). These are signals transmitted through an Automatic Fire Detection System (AFD) reporting a fire where upon arrival of the fire service it is found that a fire has not occurred. A strategy has been developed for reducing responses to UFS calls. This has resulted in a continued reduction of unwanted fire alarms since its implementation in 2009 with 4028 calls in 2009 compared to 2658 calls during 2012 giving a reduction in unwanted fire alarms of 34%.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report and to continue to support the activities of the Fire Protection Department

15 SERVICE DELIVERY PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Andy Pearson, Head of Service Delivery introduced the Chief Fire Officers' report updating Members on how Service Delivery monitors, manages and reports on risk reduction initiatives and data. The key points brought to members' attention were:

- the Service re-structure, following the findings of the Fire Cover Review, provided an opportunity for a re-energised intelligence driven, performance managed delivery model. Resources are now deployed and centred on identified risk;
- the drivers are; improved fact based evaluation; clear standards and expectations; scrutiny and support; inclusion of operational preparedness; inclusion of operational response; improved control and management of resources; becoming a true learning organisation; continual improvement and searching beyond the data;
- response is just one of the Services interventions. Preceding the response element are:
 - preparedness;

- fire prevention;
- fire protection;
- the governance arrangements of the Service include scrutiny and reporting performance. To manage the information, Service Delivery has a robust framework in place, gleaned intelligence from a number of different sources including analysts, partner agencies, incidence log books, Fire Protection, Arson Task Force, local knowledge, national and regional matters, monthly planners and Performance Indicator monitoring. The information is captured and stored in a number of formats. Some of the information is for management purposes, some for monitoring and some for measurement;
- the members of the Risk Reduction Teams, the Corporate Performance Team and the Thematic Leads interpret and analyse the data and intelligence. To prevent duplication of effort and to provide the requisite standards, scrutiny and support, there is a performance meeting timeline in place. This includes quarterly joint meetings, Group Manager Reviews and Service Delivery Scrutiny meetings;
- reports are populated and amended at each stage under the headings Action, Plan, Progress and Interventions. All interventions are evaluated to create a library of potential solutions to matters arising. The final report is sent to the Performance Monitoring Committee;
- the challenges still ahead are; to determine what Service Delivery are to measure and why; to determine what the Performance Committee see and why, to determine what data and feedback is available within the Service and how to capture it and report on it;
- the enhanced performance management framework and reporting will assist the Service to identify and react to the changing risk, adapting its interventions and practices as required.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report and to support the procedures in place to monitor performance and reduce risk.

16 VULNERABLE PERSONS UPDATE

Assistant Chief Fire Officer, David Horton introduced the Chief Fire Officers' report updating members regarding the Service's targeting of those most vulnerable to fire in the communities served.

The main points brought to the attention of Members were;

- it is a fundamental aim of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Service's (NFRS) to target vulnerability by working across individual agency boundaries, collecting data to identify risk and engage with these groups as a risk reduction priority;
- the establishment of the Vulnerable Person's Policy in 2011 has seen the number of referrals from other agencies rise by 45% in the last two years;

- a streamlining the referral and targeting process has seen involvement with extremely vulnerable individuals increase;
- a standard approach to home safety checks is not always appropriate and NFRS now offers a more tailored and bespoke service for the individuals who need it most;
- local and national statistics show that the most vulnerable to fire are the elderly, individuals with mental health issues and those living in deprived or socially isolated communities;
- Vulnerable Person's Awareness Training has been delivered to over 5000 frontline workers and carers across Nottinghamshire. This helps other agencies identify those at risk from fire and gives them the tools to make a referral to NFRS in a robust and timely manner;
- gaining data on housing stock has proved to be an extremely beneficial exercise and the Service now knows that 40% of all fires within Nottingham City occur in Nottingham City Homes (NCH) managed properties. This allows NFRS to work closely with NCH on new initiatives and home improvements as well as targeting their tenants for different safety campaigns;
- NFRS have purchased four stand-alone water misting systems. They are activated by a linked smoke alarm. They can be placed in the homes of those known to be particularly at risk;
- hoarders pose a fire risk not only to themselves but to neighbours and fire crews too. Over the last two years the Service has steadily been receiving increasing amounts of referrals for individuals considered as hoarders. This has instigated the development of the Nottinghamshire Hoarding Steering Group, chaired by NFRS which brings together agencies across the board to work together and support individuals with the issue;
- in addition to targeting vulnerability, a strategy must be established within the Service to target and record the pro-active early intervention work at groups likely to become high risk in the future.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report and to continue to support the Service's risk reduction initiatives aimed at vulnerable people.



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR BUSINESS FIRE SAFETY REGULATORS

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 28 March 2014

Purpose of Report:

To seek endorsement from Members for the adoption of the Competency Framework for Business Fire Safety Regulators.

CONTACT OFFICER

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1. REPORT

- 1.1 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) has an established fire protection department dedicated to the enforcement of fire safety in non-domestic premises within the City and County of Nottinghamshire. This is a statutory requirement under the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order (RRO) 2005.
- 1.2 Historically the inspecting officers who formed the inspectorate were selected from operational members of staff who were sent to the Fire Service College and completed a series of fire safety courses which equated to competence.
- 1.3 In recent years there has been several factors which have greatly influenced and changed this process, these being:
 - a change in fire safety legislation from the Fire Precautions Act to the RRO in 2005. This required existing trained officers to learn the new legislation and rendered some of the qualifications gained under the previous legislation invalid;
 - no framework to identify and address development needs;
 - no framework to assess competence in the workplace;
 - non-alignment with the National Occupational Standards for fire protection;
 - appointment of non-uniformed inspecting officers (NUIOs) under green book conditions with varying levels of responsibility and skill sets.
- 1.4 It should be noted that all of the NFRS inspectorate are qualified to the same standard and as such can undertake all aspects of fire protection activity. This is proving to be an efficient way of working, assisting business continuity and enabling resources to be managed more effectively.
- 1.5 Fire and rescue services nationally have been criticised by business due to their lack of consistency when providing advice, guidance and support to assist them to comply with their obligations under the RRO. This has been in some way due to the fact that businesses do not understand what different titles and skill sets mean across the country and as such what level of service, support and advice they may expect to receive.
- 1.6 There has also been criticism regarding a lack of consistency when taking enforcement action against businesses due to differences between individual fire and rescue services. As some businesses form part of national chains this has created confusion and in some cases prevented or hindered efficient compliance.

- 1.7 One way to address this problem, and others relating to supporting business fire safety regulation, is the development and implementation of a nationally recognised competency framework for those staff delivering business support and regulation on a day to day basis.
- 1.8 The Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO) promotes the use of competency frameworks as a means of ensuring consistency for businesses and for supporting regulators in the development of their staff. Business fire safety regulation was one of the few areas not supported by a nationally recognised competency framework. This has been recognised by the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) and their Business Safety Group has developed a 'Competency Framework for Business Safety Regulators'.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The Competency Framework for Business Fire Safety Regulators, produced by the Chief Fire Officers Association, has been developed for the use of Fire Safety Regulators throughout the UK, irrespective of the organisation, the work function being performed or position of the individual within the organisation. It takes into account not only the differing levels of authority and responsibility of inspecting officers but also their levels of competence as they develop and gain experience in the inspection role. This gives clarity and consistency to regulators involved with enforcing the RRO and a recognised method of gaining and maintaining competence.
- 2.2 The primary purpose of this framework is to ensure that Business Fire Safety Regulators have the skills, knowledge, understanding and other attributes necessary to be competent. It further protects the regulatory organisation by ensuring that Business Fire Safety Regulators are delivering the most up to date advice and information to the wider community to enable them to meet their statutory duties. This by default supports the government's agenda of providing better regulation which is focused on promoting growth.
- 2.3 The objectives of the Competency Framework for Business Fire Safety Regulators are:
 - To develop the critical knowledge and skills needed to improve organisational and individual effectiveness and performance;
 - To promote quality and consistency in Fire Safety Regulation practices throughout the UK resulting in better regulation;
 - To demonstrate to business that the regulator is meeting the national requirements in terms of quality assurance.

2.4 There are three defined levels of competence for business fire safety regulators:

A) Fire Safety Advisor

They can offer advice and educate those responsible for fire safety in regulated premises. They are not qualified to take enforcement action for a breach of fire safety legislation.

B) Fire Safety Risk Assessor

They can complete Fire Risk Assessments, offer advice to educate those responsible for fire safety in regulated premises, and visit low and medium risk sites. They are not qualified to take enforcement action for a breach of fire safety legislation.

C) Fire Safety Inspector

They can complete Inspections of all regulated premises including high risk sites, or those incorporating fire engineering principles. They can investigate and report on breaches of fire safety legislation for the commencement of legal prosecutions. They can report on submissions in liaison with building control bodies and advise on fire safety issues relating to the construction, demolition and/or refurbishment of regulated premises. They are qualified to take enforcement action for a breach of fire safety legislation.

2.5 NFRS is currently working towards all of its fire safety officers to be qualified to 'Fire Safety Inspectors' as defined above. This maintains the current way of working and the advantages of flexibility in the work force, increased business continuity management and quality assurance.

2.6 Currently NFRS's cadre of inspecting officers is made up of operational and non-operational staff. This group of inspectors has varying experience ranging from new starters to fully qualified staff.

2.7 The transition to the new framework will require different routes for each individual member of staff. New starters will require the full suite of courses and guided learning over an 18-24 month period; qualified and more experienced staff will have their existing qualifications checked and accredited through an approved body, with those in between undertaking a mixture of both.

2.8 The training of new starters is relatively straight forward as they follow a natural progression process through to full qualification status. The courses are generally those which would have been completed anyway, it is now the case that they are recognised as a national qualification.

- 2.9 The more experienced staff will undertake a path tailored to their specific needs and a pilot of accreditation for 2 officers is currently underway.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The cost for training new staff is budgeted for in the annual training plan and the new framework utilises the existing courses at the same cost and is within existing budgets.
- 3.2 There is a slight financial impact in that there are 19 existing 'qualified' officers that require conversion achieved by recognised prior learning [RPL]. A trial is taking place at a cost is £360 per person, which if successful will cost a total of £6,840 for all 19. This expenditure will be met from within the contingencies of the training budget.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

Existing staff will need to be provided with support to achieve qualification. This will have some impact on productivity but is not expected to prevent the department from achieving its objectives and meeting audit requirements. Learning and development impacts are identified in the main body of the report

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because this report does not affect policy or procedures, and only seeks to formalise existing ad-hoc arrangements.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications anticipated.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The FRS has to comply with the statutory duty outlined within the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order (RRO) 2005 and meet the Better Regulation agenda of the BRDO by improving consistency and quality of standards. Adopting this framework will assist in meeting both of these expectations.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The primary purpose of this framework is to ensure that Business Fire Safety Regulators have the skills, knowledge, understanding and other attributes necessary to be competent. It further protects the regulatory organisation by

ensuring that Regulators are delivering the most up to date advice and information to the wider community to enable them to meet their statutory duties. Failure to demonstrate competence of staff may expose the Service to challenge from businesses at the prosecution stage of the enforcement process and lead to reputational damage.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members note the contents of this report and endorse the adoption of the Competency Framework for Business Fire Safety Regulators

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

None.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER