



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM  
FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**POLICY & STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Fire and Rescue Services HQ, Bestwood Lodge,  
Arnold Nottingham NG5 8PD on 21 July 2017 from 10.00 am - 10.44 am**

**Membership**

Present

Councillor Brian Grocock (Chair)  
Councillor Michael Payne  
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler  
Councillor Malcolm Wood

Absent

Councillor Andrew Brown  
Councillor Sybil Fielding

Councillor Vaughan Hopewell  
Councillor Liaqat Ali

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

John Buckley	- Chief Fire Officer
Malcolm Townroe	- Clerk and Monitoring Officer
Matt Sismey	- Equality and Diversity Officer
Catherine Ziane-Pryor	- Governance Officer

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Andrew Brown (Councillor Vaughn Hopewell substituting)  
Councillor Sybil Fielding (Councillor Liaqat Ali substituting)

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

**3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2017 were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

#### **4 REPORT OF INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

Malcolm Townroe, Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority, presented the report which informs members of the findings of the Independent Review Panel which examined members' allowances, and annual uplift arrangements.

The Panel found the existing arrangements to be fit for purpose, including the current application of inflators and the level of expenses.

It is noted that whilst there appears to be some disparity with allowances and inflators applied when considered against those of other Fire and Rescue Authorities (as in appendix C), the organisational structure, models, size, operation and responsibilities of members vary greatly between Authorities and so there cannot reasonably be a clear comparison.

**RESOLVED for the findings of the Independent Review Panel regarding members' allowances and annual uplift arrangements to be accepted and forwarded to the full Fire and Rescue Authority meeting for adoption.**

#### **5 EX-GRATIA PAYMENTS**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which requests the Committee consider increasing the ex-gratia payments available within policy at the discretion the Chief Fire Officer to from £200 to £500.

Members raised no concerns with the request but suggested that ex-gratia payments are reported to members annually.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) to agree that the Chief Fire Officer is given authority to approve claims for ex-gratia payments up to the value of £500;**
- (2) for details of ex-gratia payments to be reported to the Fire and Rescue Authority on an annual basis.**

#### **6 SHAPING OUR FUTURE ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH UPDATE**

Matt Sismey, Equality and Diversity Officer in the Organisational Development and Inclusion Team, presented the report of the Chief Fire Officer which updates the Committee on the organisational development of the Service, including recent past, current and future inclusion activities, as it moves towards a values based organisation with a focus on leadership instead of command and control.

The report details how the Service focuses on the following 3 key areas to ensure organisational health with a variety of approaches:

- an engaged and motivated workforce;
- high quality services;
- good governance and financial sustainability.

The following points were highlighted and member's questions responded to:

- (a) a staff satisfaction survey is undertaken twice a year with responses monitored and action taken to improve working conditions;
- (b) the staff suggestion scheme 'little acorns' is proving successful with a wide range of small to major improvements now implemented. The Chief Fire Officer has the discretion to make honorarium payments where suggestions are implemented and have a significantly positive impact;
- (c) winter and spring conferences have proved successful with approximately 200 staff voluntarily attending and actively engaging in each session. Attendees had access to an app called Slido which enabled participation by voting in polls and posing questions and suggestions without having to speak publicly;
- (d) locally relevant motivational posters have been produced which relate to feedback on local Service activity and achievements, providing a personal link for employees;
- (e) Watch Manger development days, Service Delivery Forums, the Springboard Leadership Programme for women, the Future Leaders Programme, and the Coaching and Mentoring Strategy are also included in the drive to develop staff and improve the service;
- (f) dyslexia is estimated to affect 10% of the population but is predicted to be of a particularly high proportion in the Emergency Services. The Organisational Development and Inclusion Team have established the Tri-Service Dyslexia Network with Derbyshire and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Services and the assistive software 'TextHelp Read and Write Gold' is now available to all staff;
- (g) the Service continues to be placed in the Stonewall Top 100 employers;
- (h) workforce diversity remains a challenge, particularly as the Service has not recently recruited. Underrepresented groups are actively targeted for recruitment and although the Service generally attracts a proportion of applications which nearly matches the BME working population of 11.2%, it is frustrating that those applicants do not successfully progress through the recruitment process. It should also be acknowledged that some rural populations have a lower than average proportion of BME citizens, so BME applications from such areas will be lower;
- (i) staff continue to be engaged in the sustainability strategy and change process and there is an expectation that information shared at middle management meetings is cascaded to staff, ensuring that everyone is informed of changes and developments;
- (j) the National Pilot of the Emergency First Responder continues and is proving successful in saving lives which may otherwise have been lost, although there are complexities regarding the impact of firefighters who experience incidents in a very different environment to what they may otherwise have expected;
- (k) expansion of the health partnership continues with 'safe and well visits', 'FireFit' sessions and engagement at the New Community Safety Hubs;

(l) future activity is proposed to include:

- i. embedding of the new 'NFRSLearn' learning management system;
- ii. continued employee engagement;
- iii. progress of the Aspiring Leadership Programme;
- iv. more thorough engagement with stakeholders via 'MyNet' SharePoint;
- v. recruitment of wholetime firefighters in 2018;
- vi. participation in 'Tap the Gap'.

Members of the Committee were keen to highlight that in Local Government, that by ensuring that BME staff are visibly placed in senior roles, this had a positive effect on BME recruitment.

The Chair encouraged members to attend the Equalities meetings (which are held following full Fire and Rescue Authority meetings), to see the work being done to benefit staff and the Service.

Members welcomed the achievements to date and the planned activity of the Organisational Development and Inclusion Team.

**RESOLVED to note the report.**

## **7 EMERGENCY SERVICES NETWORK (ESN) UPDATE**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which provides the Committee with a quarterly update on the Emergency Services Network (ESN) local activity and progress.

The current airwaves contract for emergency services and other public safety users is due to expire in 2020 so a secure integrated alternative with voice and broadband data services, using 3G/4G/5G, is required.

A Regional Programme Board has been established with representatives from each Fire and Rescue Authority to work towards developing and embedding ENS locally. NF&R have received a contribution of £791,000 from Central Government towards this work for which NF&R has established a dedicated team.

Initially ESN was predicted to be implementation ready by 2018; however schedule slippage has already occurred due to Central Government issues, and is predicted to slip further with implementation ability not predicted before 2019. As a result, further funding bids may be submitted from Fire and Rescue Authorities to cover or contribute to the additional costs as all initial bids were submitted on the understanding of a shorter schedule.

Members of the Committee were dismayed that Central Government schedule slippage is likely to have a financial impact on the Authority.

**RESOLVED to note the contents of the report and agree to receive further updates as the project develops, including any costs to the Authority beyond Central Government funding.**