



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

POLICY AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at Fire and Rescue Services HQ, Bestwood Lodge, Arnold Nottingham NG5 8PD on 2 February 2018 from 10.00am - 11.39am

Membership

Present

Councillor Brian Grocock (Chair)

Councillor Andrew Brown

Councillor Sybil Fielding

Councillor Michael Payne

Councillor Malcolm Wood

Councillor Francis Purdue-Horan (Substitute for Councillor Jonathan Wheeler)

Absent

Councillor Jonathan Wheeler,

Substituted by Councillor Francis

Purdue-Horan

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

John Buckley

- Chief Fire Officer

Craig Parkin

- Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Malcolm Townroe

- Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority

Becky Smeathers

- Head of Finance

Catherine Ziane-Pryor

- Governance Officer

18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Jonathan Wheeler – Leave (Councillor Frances Purdue-Horan substituting)

19 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The Chair, Councillor Brian Grocock, and the Chief Fire Officer, John Buckley, both declared pecuniary prejudicial interests in agenda item 6, 'Croatian Ceremony of Thanks' (minute 23) insofar as the report sought approval for them both to attend a ceremony of thanks in Croatia. Both stated their intention to withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item.

20 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2017 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

21 FIRE AND RESCUE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR ENGLAND CONSULTATION

Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report on the 'Fire and Rescue National Framework for England Consultation' which provides the full copy of the consultation and proposed responses for submission before the consultation closes on 14 February 2018.

It is noted that Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) Officers recently attended a Policy Event hosted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) at which it was indicated that NFRS was scheduled to be inspected by HMI for compliance to the final version of the Framework with the second tranche of Authorities, during the autumn/winter of 2018/19.

The Policy Event enabled further discussion on the inspection in so much as it appeared to follow an approach similar to that of Police Constabularies but the governance of Fire and Rescue Authorities is totally different in that the Fire Authority is the decision making body consisting of locally elected members who rely on advice provided by NFRS officers, and Chief Fire Officer does not have the same decision making powers as his counterpart in the Police Service. It appears that now this governance point has been highlighted, the inspection is likely to include consideration of the governance arrangements of the Authority and that inspectors may request to meet with some Authority members.

Changes from the 2004 Framework to the proposed Framework are outlined in the report along with the proposed priorities and objectives against which Fire and Rescue Services will be inspected.

It is predicted that ensuring evidenced compliance to the new framework will require significant work and resources from Service although there is confidence that the Service is already performing well and meeting, if not excelling against many of the proposed requirements.

Members of the Committee were concerned at the proposal that Service reserves should not exceed more than 5% of the budget and suggested that any required justification should reflect the temporary necessity to facilitate the transition to a significantly reduced Service funding model.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the content of the report and receive future reports as the revised National Framework is agreed and implemented;**
- (2) to support the response to consultation proposed by the Chief Fire Officer on behalf of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.**

22 FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES INSPECTION PROGRAMME AND FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION

Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, introduced the report which, further to the previous item, presents the opportunity to respond by consultation on the proposed Fire and Rescue Service inspection programme and framework, and which outlines the proposed inspection process. The Committee's approval is sought for the Chief Fire Officer's proposed response to be submitted to the consultation.

It is noted that Senior NFRS Officers are broadly supportive of the proposed framework and that the Service performs well and is open and transparent in its governance.

As previously stated with regard to framework compliance, meeting the requirements of the inspection will also demand additional work and resources.

The grading categories for Fire Services will include outstanding, good, requires improvement, and, inadequate. The criteria by which Services will be assessed are set out within the report.

Continued networking with other Fire and Rescue Services, and even the Police Service, which is subject to similar assessments, has proved useful and enlightening and will continue to ensure the best understanding of the process and requirements can be achieved. This is particularly relevant with regard to the Suffolk, Staffordshire and West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Services which are undergoing a pilot inspection.

It is anticipated that NFRS's inspection will take place during the autumn/winter of 2018/19 with a 50% focus on operations. Once the inspection is complete, the Chief Fire Officer will receive the inspection report, which he can check for accuracy, before returning. It will then be published on HMI's website. It is not currently clear how often inspections will be undertaken, but it is predicted that there will be a random element with regard to visits.

As previously stated, it has been highlighted to HMI by Fire and Rescue Authorities and also the Local Government Association (LGA) that the proposed assessment of governance is not conducive to assessing governance of Fire and Rescue Services which operate under the control of Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Members of the Committee expressed concern that whilst the involvement of members of the Authority in the assessment is welcomed, by July 2018 the membership of the Authority may be substantially changed due to local elections and include Councillors with little or no previous knowledge or experience of the Fire Authority and Service.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the content of the report and support the response to consultation proposed by the Chief Fire Officer on behalf of Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority;**
- (2) to receive update reports on the progress being made in readiness for HMICFRS inspections.**

23 CROATIAN CEREMONY OF THANKS

Prior to consideration of this item Councillor Brian Grocock, Chair, and John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, withdrew from the meeting having declared interests, the details of which are included within minute 19. Neither returned to the meeting until the item had concluded.

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Michael Payne, Vice-Chair to the Authority, temporarily took the Chair for the duration of the item.

Following the Authority's donation of four appliances and obsolete equipment to the Fire Service in Varazdin County in the Republic of Croatia, followed by the discounted sale of a further two

appliances, the Mayor of Ludbreg has invited the Chair of the Authority, the Chief Fire Officer, and the Fleet Maintenance Manager, to attend a ceremony of thanks and unveiling of a nameplate in the town square to recognise the support given by the Authority.

The total cost of the above-mentioned attending the ceremony is anticipated to be approximately £2,000, which can be met from the 2018/19 conference attendance budget.

The Committee unanimously supported the recommendation.

RESOLVED to approve the attendance of the Chair, Chief Fire Officer and Fleet Maintenance Manager at the ceremony in Croatia as detailed in the report.

24 EMERGENCY SERVICES NETWORK (ESN) UPDATE

Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the quarterly report which updates the Committee on the progress of the Emergency Services Network.

As the existing radio contract nears an end, Central Government has undertaken a project to replace the current system with leading edge technology, which has not been applied anywhere else in the world. It is anticipated that the new system will be far more secure than the current system and enable all Emergency Services to easily communicate with each other to support the provision of efficient and effective collaborative working.

It is noted that whilst this is a Central Government driven programme, there is an element of escalating risk to the Authority due to development delays. Central Government has paused the project for further consideration and re-planning, the results of which may be available during the summer. It is anticipated that a revised business case will also be issued, confirming that the initial transition date of September 2018 will not be met and suggesting that full transition to the revised Emergency Services Network is unlikely to take place within the next two years, and may take up to six years for a full transition across the country.

The Authority initially agreed to participate in principle in the program during 2015, but as the project evolves, changes will be reported to the Committee.

Whilst continuation of the current contracts and use of equipment is confirmed, the longer term financial implications to the Service are unknown and therefore considered a risk. On engaging with the program, the Service employed specialist staff to work towards ensuring that the ICT applied by NFRS would be appropriate to enable transition to the new network. Whilst Central Government funding has been provided (although 8 months later than indicated), with the delays, the funding received will not cover the Service's engagement costs beyond this year, which is when the network was initially due to be implemented. It is unclear what, if any, further funding will be made available by Central Government and what proportion of the development work already undertaken by NFRS will remain relevant.

A further risk has been identified as Central Government has indicated an expectation that Services will transition to the new network as soon as they are able. However, this may result in an initial inability to appropriately communicate with other services and co-ordinate collaborative action if different networks are in use while transition is staggered.

Members of the Committee noted the anticipated need for the Service to allocate additional funding to support the transition programme and requested that the earmarked £200,000 is

reviewed once clarity is provided by Central Government regarding the revised programme timescale and cost implications.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report and agree for the Committee to receive further updates as the project develops, including to the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee.

25 TRI-SERVICE CONTROL UPDATE

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, introduced the report which updates the Committee on the progress of the Tri-Service Control Programme.

It is noted that whilst the Systel system has proven to be stable, significant issues have arisen with network maintenance, in that there have been multiple interrupting events. This is being investigated by the network provider.

The Systel product is considered to be top of its field and has now been commissioned by other Authorities. NFRS maintains a good working relationship with the Systel Project Team.

Members of the Committee welcomed the nearing completion of the project.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report on the progress made with the Tri-Service Control Programme.

26 COLLABORATION UPDATE

Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which updates the Committee on current work to establish and strengthen collaborative working with other Emergency Services.

Networking and relationship building across all levels continues. Progress has been made with regard to potential shared estates in that a feasibility study has been undertaken with regard to the Police, Fire, and Ambulance Service estates, the outcome of which will be reported to the Strategic Collaboration Board.

Consideration of potential learning and development collaboration has identified the common area of leadership skills and potentially community engagement, but, as expected, there is very little common ground regarding specialist operational skills. Further consideration is required to develop appropriate multi-service learning models.

NFRS intends to rebrand the welfare unit to enable it to also support the Police Service at major incidents.

NFRS continues to proactively examine potential collaboration areas within all aspects of the Service and is involved in the National Working Group, which has proved important for networking and information/ idea sharing.

A Register of Collaboration has been established and shows that NFRS is already very active, including sharing space with Neighbourhood Policing Teams and with ambulance/paramedic stop points at a number of the Service's fire stations.

There will now be fresh focus on satisfying Central Government's requirement within the proposed framework, to ensure that the Service is doing as much as possible to benefit communities.

The importance of collaboration has been communicated to the workforce, external partners, the local press and social media, specifically following the excellent collaborative work undertaken during the Nottingham Train Station fire.

Members welcomed the enthusiastic approach to collaboration, but it was noted with disappointment by a member of the Committee that in one instance where the Police and Fire and Rescue Services have collaborated by sharing facilities, some valuable voluntary support from the community had been lost due to the combined restricted access policies required by each service.

RESOLVED to note the report and receive further updates.

27 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

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

28 RESILIENCE ARRANGEMENTS UPDATE

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, and Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, jointly presented the report.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendations as detailed within the report.