



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

MINUTES of the meeting held at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD on 21 June 2019 from 10.00 am - 11.04 am

Membership

Present

Councillor Nick Raine (Chair)
Councillor Jason Zadrozny
Councillor Parry Tsimbirdis
Councillor Sue Saddington
Councillor Stuart Wallace
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
Councillor Nick Raine (Chair)

Absent

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Craig Parkin - Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Mick Sharman - Area Manager for Response
Damian West - Area Manager for Prevention
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2019 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

4 SERVICE DELIVERY PERFORMANCE UPDATE

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which informs the Committee of Service delivery between 1 January and 31 March 2019, with contributions from Mick

Sharman and Damian West, both of whom focus upon Service Delivery, including all Response, Protection and Prevention work.

The report includes information on the numbers and types of incidents responded to, prevention and protection work undertaken and on-call availability by station.

Further to the detailed information in the report, the following points were made and responses provided to questions from the committee:

- (a) Overall, there were 42 fewer incidents compared to the same period last year but the number of deliberate fires has increased by 130;
- (b) On-call availability has increased by 1.26% and whilst the majority of On-call crew stations maintain an availability nearing 90% (one of the highest in the East Midlands), work continues to raise availability, particularly around the Southwell, Ashfield and Retford Stations. It is acknowledged that the On-call system was developed many years ago and that modern living and working is now very different. Nationally it is harder to recruit on-call firefighters, possibly as a reflection that the local nature of much industrial employment no longer exists and people often now travel further to work and can't get to the fire stations within the required 5 minutes travelling time. Recruitment to the Southwell Station continues to be a particular challenge. The on-going reduction of incidents to respond to, whilst committing availability may also impact on recruitment and retention. However, the need to have firefighters available to respond to incidents within a reasonable time remains vital so at this point. There are new approaches to recruiting On-call firefighters, including a national campaign and website for On-call firefighters;
- (c) When not responding, operational crews undertake lower risk Hazard Spotting, which releases capacity for the Protection Team to undertake higher risk checks at businesses within the Services risk based inspection programme. A significant training programme during 2019/20 will see operational crews trained to do Business Safety Checks further increasing the number of non-domestic premises visited by NFRS, with significant issues identified being referred to the Protection Team;
- (d) Joint Road Safety Operations with the Police, such as 'Operation Highway', are planned throughout the year with NFRS providing education on the potential hazards of not wearing seat belts, speeding, drink driving and inadequate car maintenance. There is a duty to promote road safety and this was one of the points of the HMICFRS inspection with encouragement to increase collaboration and co-ordination with partners, including local councils. As a result, the Service is pursuing further citizen and partner engagement activity;
- (e) The Service is fully engaged with national good practice and is able to respond to terrorist attacks as part of its statutory duty to respond but as the breadth of possible attack threat increases, further training has been requested and the Service is working closely with trades unions and staff in this area;
- (f) Last year the Service undertook approximately 4,600 Safe and Well Visits but HMICFRS considered this figure to be below average. As there is no standard format for checks, it is unclear how quality may vary between Services and to what

extent the most vulnerable individuals in society have been helped, advised and supported. NFRS aims to complete 6,000 this year and continue to increase this amount in forthcoming years.

Members of the Committee requested that, to enable an easy comparison, future reports provide performance information for the previous year.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the report;**
- (2) for Craig Parkin to seek availability and arrange for members of this Committee to visit fire stations later in the year.**

5 REDUCING THE NUMBER OF UNWANTED FIRE ALARM SIGNALS

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which informs the Committee of the number of Unwanted Fire alarm Signals (UwFS) which were triggered by automatic detection systems and the impact of the revised response policy to such alarms since its implementation 6 months ago.

The following points were highlighted and responses provided to members' questions:

- (a) With more than 3,000 UwFS per year, the demand on resources can be significant and frustrating, particularly on occasions when responding to what became apparent as false alarms coincided with crews being required to respond to genuine incidents;
- (b) Following guidance issued by the National Fire Chief's Council and approval by the Authority, the three Services of Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire (Tri-Service collaboration) introduced a policy on how automated fire alarms are responded to;
- (c) The new policy, which requires automated fire alarms in some categories of building to be challenged before fire crews attend, has resulted in a 17% reduction in UwFS, which equates to a 24% reduction in mobilisations per year;
- (d) The Fire Service takes a staged approach to the engagement with businesses, following the fourth false alarm occasion Officers will attend the premises and provide advice and guidance and emphasise the potential impact of engaging an appliance and crew which may be needed elsewhere for a 'risk to life' incident. If there is a sixth occasion of a false alarm, the inspecting Fire Service Officer will undertake a full audit of the premises to ensure the business is complying to the standards expected and all further alarms will be challenged;
- (e) NFRS is willing to enforce non-attendance, but only after repeated engagement and education has proved ineffective and it can be clearly evidenced as such, and the potential consequences of not responding can be shown to have been fully considered. Generally, Officers initially engaging with businesses provides the desired results of resolving false alarm issues;

- (f) Alarms at schools during daytime are usually challenged as historically schools are very effective and efficient at evacuation which significantly reduces the risk to life, but also the responsible person is required to confirm if it is an isolated alarm triggered or multiple alarms which may indicate an actual incident, before calling the Service;
- (g) Alarms at premises where anyone is sleeping, such as hotels and student accommodation, are automatically responded to without challenge;
- (h) There are approximately 700 known properties listed within the county that have specific risks such as storing or using flammable materials. This information, along with aligned practices is shared between Tri-Service partners and can be shared with other Services.

Some members of the Committee queried the risk implications of attending cross boarder incidents outside of the Tri-Service area.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the report and the reduction in unwanted fire alarm signals;**
- (2) for a further update report to be provided to the Committee in 6 months' time, to include:**
 - (i) a list of non-challenged premises;**
 - (ii) more information on the response time impact of alarm challenging.**