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

Minutes of the meeting held at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD on 17 January 2020 from 11.17 am - 12.12 pm

Membership

Present

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

Absent

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Ian Pritchard	- Assistant Chief Officer
Mick Sharman	- Area Manager for Service Delivery
Damian West	- Area Manager for Prevention
Catherine Ziane-Pryor	- Governance Officer

10 Apologies for absence

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer

11 Declarations of interests

None.

12 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2019 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

13 Service Delivery Performance

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) submitted a question which was responded to at the end of the item.

Mick Sharman, Area Manager for Response, presented the report which provides the Committee with performance data for the period between 1 July and 30 September 2019.

- a) a total of 2,579 incidents were attended, which is a decrease of 1,020 incidents for the same period in 2018. A breakdown of these is included in the report;
- b) whilst the locally set response target is 8 minutes, the average attendance time was 8.25 minutes;
- c) on-call availability increased by an average of 1.36% to 83.31%, with the East Leake Station reporting the highest availability of 96.54%;
- d) the call answering time exceeded the '90% within 7 seconds' target at 96.5%;
- e) the mobilisation system target of 99% was met;
- f) annual training was completed on schedule with 14 of the 26 planned exercises completed;
- g) safe and well visits exceeded the target and there has been a range of community engagement and prevention activity, particularly around smoke alarm ownership and fire safety in the home;
- h) non-domestic premises fire protection regulation activity continues, including activity to support the recommendations of the Phase 1 Grenfell Tower report.

Members' questions were responded to as follows:

- i) the majority of accidental dwelling fires are cooking related. All incident data is collated and analysed and then targeted prevention campaigns introduced where appropriate;
- j) a question was raised about the cause of a fire at a solar farm which was reported; this information was not to hand but would be found and confirmed to the Members.
- k) training exercises take place at a variety of locations each year. For NHS hospitals, site specific information is available to fire fighters. Work is continuing with all non-domestic premises, including the hospitals in Nottingham, to reduce the number of unwanted fire signals.

The FBU posed their question, for which a response was provided.

There was a brief adjournment of 5 minutes when an additional question was posed (in line with the requirements). It was agreed for a response to be provided in writing and also circulated to members of the Committee. Both questions and the responses are issued with the initial publication of the minutes.

Members of the Committee welcomed the reduction in unwanted (automated) alarms.

Resolved

- 1) to note the report;**
- 2) for a summary of the planned response to a fire at a solar farm to be circulated to Members of the Committee by the Area Manager for Service Delivery following the meeting.**

14 Safer Communities Strategy

Damien West, Area Manager for Prevention, Protection and Fire Investigation, introduced the report which presents the Safer Communities Strategy to members for approval and sets targets to work towards by 2022.

The following points were highlighted, members' questions responded to and comments made;

- a) members expressed that the objectives within the strategy needed to be tangible so that progress against them could be reported, captured and monitored.
- b) there appeared to be a lack of understanding of the risk of not having and maintaining a fire alarm but with a persistent campaign, significant progress has been made;
- c) for some more vulnerable residents, the Fire Service will provide and fit fire alarms with 10 year battery life (as part of the safe and well visits scheme);
- d) although recommended where appropriate, the Service does not provide carbon-monoxide alarms as Cadent take the lead on this within the sector.

Resolved to support the adoption of the Safer Communities Strategy.

15 Unwanted Fire Signals Update

Damien West, Area Manager for Prevention, Protection and Fire Investigation, presented the report which informs the Committee of the progress in reducing Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UwFSs) since the Services' change in policy as of 3 December 2018.

The following points were highlighted, responses given to members' questions, and comments made:

- a) there has been a reduction of 18% attendance to UwFSs against the same period last year;
- b) of the 2,510 calls received, 2,169 were UwFSs. 1365 of these incidents only had one appliance attend;
- c) hospitals continue to present the largest proportion of UwFS but this is reducing with 53 fewer calls against the same period last year;
- d) 519 premises owners have been contacted where UwFS occur, and for the most common occurrences, fire safety audits are undertaken;
- e) whilst some members expressed continued concern that school premises alarms were challenged and not automatically responded to, they were assured that prior to placing schools in this category, thorough risk assessments had been undertaken to ensure this response was most appropriate. However, this can be reviewed and if significant additional risks are found, the categorisation can be amended.

Resolved to note the report and support the continuation of the Tri-Service Unwanted Fire Signals Policy.

16 Combined Campaign Calendar

Damien West, Area Manager for Prevention, Protection and Fire Investigation presented the Services' combined campaign calendar which lists engagement, support, and activity by the Service and with partners, in response recommendations made in the HMICRFS report to promote the greater efficiency for all partners.

The themes of campaigns and activity range from safety awareness such as drowning prevention, road safety and home fire safety, to community and faith focus including Holocaust Memorial Day and British Sign Language Week.

Resolved to endorse the approach being taken in relation to campaigns across 2020.

17 Update on the Service's Response to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services Inspection

Damien West, Area Manager for Prevention, Protection and Fire Investigation presented the report which includes the Services' responses to the findings of inspection by her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

In total there were 25 areas highlighted for improvement by the inspection, 12 of which are relevant to the Community Safety Committee. These have been charted with commentary outlining the issues and how they are to be addressed.

Questions from Committee Members were responded to as follows:

- a) there has been a long-standing agreement whereby firefighters from several fire stations towards the edges of the county cross borders to support neighbouring services, which is reciprocated when appropriate. This is a practical solution to best supports citizens;
- b) where the Service may be the first to attend a multi-agency incident, it will take initial control and if not a Fire Service focused incident, will hand over incident management to the relevant agency on their arrival. For instance, fires are obviously responsibility of the Fire Service, whilst the main responsibility in responding to terrorism incidents usually sits with the Police;
- c) training on critical skills is continuous with a 14 week course for starters, and then ongoing throughout their career with a risk based approach resulting in annual refresher training for some skills, and lower frequency training for other skills.

Members of the committee expressed an interest in the different types of training undertaken and were invited to attend some future sessions.

Resolved to note the progress made against the agreed action plan.

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FFBU Question to the

SERVICE DELIVERY PERFORMANCE, Page 15, Appendix A

Prior to implementation of mixed crewing at Retford and Ashfield stations and the removal of wholetime cover from the hours of 18:00-08:00 the availability of the second appliance at those stations was around 90%. Since then this has fallen dramatically to 18% at Retford and 39% at Ashfield. When this proposal was brought forward to the fire authority, it was done so on the premise that it would not cause a reduction in fire cover at these stations.

The table contained in appendix A does not reflect the second appliance availability at Retford and Ashfield, total On Call availability is 68% at Ashfield and 61% at Retford. This dramatically reduces the overall On call availability figures, this shows a reduction of availability and not an increase as reported.

Does the Fire Authority agree that all On Call availability should be reported and that an updated table should be made available to Authority members that accurately reflects the actual availability?

Authority Response

The Authority is committed to providing transparent performance reports to the communities it serves. On-Call availability is a key performance measure, particularly when assessing and monitoring changes to the services we provide. The Fire Authority agreed to the implementation of the Day Shift Crewing (DSC) crewing model following public consultation, which was implemented from 1 April 2019. It has always been the Services intention to carry out a review of the DSC crewing model at both Ashfield and Retford, after a period of twelve months. The collection of twelve months of data will enable the Authority to understand the wider impacts of the DSC crewing model at these two stations. The review will include any impact on the On-call availability and will present the results of the DSC review to the Fire Authority.

Within the report presented to the Community Safety Committee on the 17 January 2020, the Service reports against On-call availability per station, this is consistent with previous reports and performance data. The Service is currently working towards implementing a data collection and performance management system called PowerBi. This system is being developed to provide accurate and timely information report on a number of key performance measures, one of these being more timely and robust performance of On-call availability data.

The Chief Fire Officer recognises that on-call appliances provide the highest proportion of fire cover in the Service and maintaining On-Call fire cover in all areas of the county is an ongoing challenge, also recognised notionally in the 2019 State of Fire report. Investment continues with the On-Call Sustainability Team, tasked to further improve availability and resilience at all on-call stations and is a key focus for Service Delivery. To develop the On-Call for the benefit of Nottinghamshire communities, the Service welcomes further dialogue with Trade Unions to work collectively on the flexibility of its delivery model to improve outcomes for communities, whilst maintaining positive working conditions for staff.

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FBU question.

Agenda item 4, SERVICE DELIVERY PERFORMANCE, Page 9, 2.4

Is the authority aware that 10 out of the 16 stations have shown a reduction in availability (As shown in appendix A), with greater responsibility being placed on firefighters that undertake this duty as a secondary employment what is being done to prevent this trend from continuing?

Authority reply.

The Service, along with the wider fire sector, continues to seek solutions to the challenges faced to maintain On-call availability. Over the past 12 months the Authority has invested in a Sustainability of On-call Team, whose sole focus is sustaining and improving On-call availability. The Sustainability Team have a clear objective on improving both the recruitment and retention of all On-call employees.

The On-call performance data contained within today's report covers reporting quarter 2, 1 July to the 30 September 2019. The summer period is always the most challenging time of the year to maintain On-call availability, mainly due to family and school holidays. The Service has done much work to improve On-call availability, the result being that this year's quarter 2 average availability is 1.36% greater than the same period in 2018, with 12 of the 16 stations having improved availability this year compared to the same period in 2018.

The Chief Fire Officer recognises that On-Call appliances provide the highest proportion of fire cover in the service, and the Sustainability team have been tasked to consider alternative On-call models to further improve availability and resilience. To support this, the Service always welcomes further dialogue with Trade Unions to work collectively on improving outcomes for communities, whilst maintaining positive working conditions for staff.

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