



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

FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service HQ,
Bestwood Lodge Drive, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD on 11 October 2019 from
10:01am to 10:29am**

Membership

Present

Councillor John Clarke (Chair)
Councillor Toby Neal
Councillor Mike Quigley MBE
Councillor Nick Raine

Absent

Councillor Andrew Brown

Councillor Jonathan Wheeler
(Substitute for Councillor Andrew
Brown)

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Leila Henry - Head of Corporate Support
Adrian Mann - Governance Officer
Ian Pritchard - Assistant Chief Officer
Becky Smeathers - Head of Finance

10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Andrew Brown

11 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

12 MINUTES

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2019 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

13 REVENUE, CAPITAL AND PRUDENTIAL CODE MONITORING TO 31 AUGUST 2019

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance, presented a report on the financial performance of the Service during the 2019/20 financial year, to the end of August 2019. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the current underspend remains at £1.1million. This is because the day-crewing project was delivered on time and did not require its £200,000 contingency; payments of £647,000 for the Joint Control Room merger and the planned closure of the Prince's Trust Programme were ultimately accounted for in the 2018/19 financial year (rather than in 2019/20, as initially anticipated); and the Service received £672,000 to compensate for loss of income from National Non-Domestic Rates caused by Government policy, which was £233,000 above the estimate figure used in the budget;
- (b) it is proposed to allocate the £200,000 day-crewing project contingency budget to cover over-time pay in whole-time roles, where additional cover has been required due to long-term sickness. In addition, some senior vacancies – which, traditionally, are uniformed roles – have been filled by non-uniformed members of staff on a temporary basis. As uniformed and non-uniformed staff roles are budgeted separately, it is proposed to re-balance the budgets to reflect the positions that they have been funding;
- (c) the overall on-call pay budget is expected to be underspent by £214,000. This is due to a reduction in the number of planned recruitment courses and a lower numbers of on-call staff than was included in the budget. It is proposed that £35,000 of the underspend is allocated to on-call pension provision, where an overspend is anticipated due to the new rates announced in March. A further allocation of £65,000 is proposed towards on-call community safety work, which was identified as a priority in the Strategic Plan and an area requiring improvement in the recent Service inspection;
- (d) the General Reserve is predicted to be £5.5million at the end of the financial year, with an anticipated spend from earmarked reserves of £429,000 towards planned expenditure. The reserves will remain above the required minimum level of £3.9million;
- (e) capital programme spending to date is £425,000. A number of small ICT schemes are progressing well, but a review of the Tri Service Project is necessary following the creation of the Joint Control Centre with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service. Expenditure may be delayed into 2020/21 for this project. The new hose and storage drums have been delivered and installation is underway. The upgraded breathing apparatus communication equipment has been delayed to allow more time for thorough testing. As such, it may be possible to bring forward the upcoming project to update fire helmets, to align the two projects. The installation of new CCTV in vehicles is ready to commence but, due to the £330,000 cost, a full European Union procurement exercise is required, which will delay expenditure until 2020/21;

- (f) the initial work for a new Worksop Fire Station is currently on hold as the East Midlands Ambulance Service has indicated that it may need to withdraw from the project due to a review of its operational model;
- (g) the cost of fuel remains a concern for the Service and a contingency sum is held within reserves in case of emergency;
- (h) in terms of Prudential Code Monitoring, total borrowing at the end of August 2019 was within the operational and authorised limits, at £25.6million. There has been no borrowing activity since the start of the financial year. All current loans are on fixed-interest terms.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) approve the reallocation of the unneeded £200,000 whole-time pay budget to cover overtime pay in whole-time roles, where additional cover has been required due to long-term sickness;**
- (2) approve the reallocation of £205,000 between the uniformed and non-uniformed staff budgets, where some senior vacancies have been filled on a temporary basis by non-uniformed members of staff;**
- (3) approve the reallocation of £35,000 from the underspend in the overall on-call drills and training budget to on-call pension provision, where an overspend is anticipated due to the new superannuation rates announced in March;**
- (4) approve the reallocation of £65,000 from the underspend in the on-call drills and training budget towards on-call community safety work, which has been identified as a priority in the Strategic Plan and an area requiring improvement in the recent Service inspection;**
- (5) reinstate the £22,000 budget for the conversion of hose reel equipment into the 2019/20 capital programme;**
- (6) approve the slippage of the £313,000 capital expenditure for new CCTV in vehicles to the 2020/21 budget.**

14 CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT

Leila Henry, Head of Corporate Support, presented a report on the corporate risk management process and the current version of the Corporate Risk Register. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the four highest risks in the Register are the use of vehicles on Service business; the mobilisation process; health, safety and welfare; and working at height;
- (b) mobilisation processes have been reviewed to take account of changes following the implementation of Joint Fire Control. Additional governance and oversight, together with the development and testing of business continuity arrangements, has been put in place to ensure that there is no overall change to the risk rating.

Due to a recent issue with ladders in the Service and a couple of serious incidents nationally, the risks relating to working at height are being managed closely and actively. All ladders on engines are serviced every twelve weeks. Where necessary, stations that have new risks in their areas, such as building sites with construction cranes, will assess these risks and ensure that firefighters are adequately trained to deal with them;

- (c) agency reporting and a multi-agency planning structure is in place through the Local Resilience Forum for the UK's exit from membership of the European Union. The Service has business continuity arrangements in place to deal with a range of eventualities but, given the high levels of uncertainty, an £800,000 contingency has been included in the General Fund Reserve.

15 MANAGEMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL ROAD RISK

Leila Henry, Head of Corporate Support, presented a report on the management of occupational road risk, which is a major risk area on the Corporate Risk Register. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the previous vehicle insurer declined to renew its policy with the Service due to a number of recent, high-cost claims. As a result, the 2019/20 Road Risk Action Plan has been updated with new actions following recommendations from the Fleet Risk Review Report 2019, which was completed by the Service's new vehicle insurers;
- (b) the focus of the Action Plan is on developing driver skills and behaviours, with the aim of reducing the frequency of slow-speed manoeuvring accidents. These actions are in addition to the Service's routine driver training and other fleet management activities. In addition to the work outlined in the Action Plan, Nottingham Trent University has provided the Service with four driver training packages to supplement the existing driver training in hazard perception. These have been incorporated in the Service's e-learning system. Where appropriate, knowledge and best-practice sharing arrangements are in place with Derbyshire and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Services, and with Nottinghamshire Police;
- (c) it is anticipated that recruitment to a vacant post within the Service's Driver Training Team will be completed by January 2020, to provide the necessary resource to enable completion of the outstanding actions in the Action Plan;
- (d) the planned improvement to CCTV systems on fire engines will also improve driver safety and allow for remote access to the camera footage;
- (e) following the introduction of these measures, a full performance report will be brought to the next meeting of the Committee to set out the improvements made and to close the two outstanding items in the Road Risk Action Plan.

16 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, under Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3, on the basis that, having regard

to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining an exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

17 EXEMPT MINUTES

The Committee confirmed the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2019 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.