



## **Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority - Community Safety Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held remotely and streamed to YouTube on 8 January 2021 from  
10.02 am - 10.53 am**

### **Membership**

#### Present

Councillor Nick Raine (Chair)  
Councillor Stephen Garner  
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan  
Councillor Sue Saddington  
Councillor Parry Tsimbiridis  
Councillor Jason Zadrozny

#### Absent

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

Craig Parkin - Deputy Chief Fire Officer  
Damien West - Area Manager for Prevention and Protection  
Mick Sharman - Area Manager for Response.  
Gavin Harris - Head of Digital Transformation  
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

### **3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2020 were confirmed as a true record and will be signed by the Chair.

### **4 SERVICE DELIVERY PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, introduced the report for the period between 1 September and 30 November 2020, with updates delivered by Damien West, Area Manager for Prevention and Protection, and Mick Sharman, Area Manager for Response.

It is noted that performance comparisons are to non-covid affected periods so are not a similar comparison.

Mick Sharman, Area Manager for Response, provided an outline of incidents.

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

- a) 2,238 incidents were attended, a decrease of 106 incidents which is within the expected fluctuation range;
- b) the attendance target average of within 8 minutes continued to be achieved and averaged 7.42 minutes;
- c) the on-call availability target is 85% but during this period availability was 91.75%;
- d) targets for the Joint Fire Control Centre were exceeded and system availability maintained;
- e) in-person operational exercises with partners have had to cease but alternative methods, such as table-top exercises have been implemented to ensure training standards are maintained;
- f) partnership work to support communities has delivered 11,000 food parcels. This activity including delivery of medication, has reflected well against the activity of other Fire and Rescue Services;
- g) the food parcels were gathered from a variety of different sources, including food banks, and some fire stations are even drop-off points for food banks. Partners identified those in need and the Service assisted with deliveries;
- h) with regard to on-call availability, the Ashfield and Rufford Stations are assessed separately due to the different day shift crewing model operating at these sites. An update report will be submitted, to the Authority, including the proposal of a pilot whereby the Service will offer an area specific on-call offer to help recruit local residents;
- i) the Service also performed well in the Thematic HMI COVID-19 Response Inspection, for which the Service was commended and only 2 minor points for consideration identified.

Damien West, Area Manager for Prevention and Protection, provided the following summary and responded to committee members' questions:

- j) safe and well visits by operational crews were initially paused in the first lockdown but are now being undertaken for the most vulnerable people in community by the Persons at Risk Team with a triage process against the 'CHARLIE' matrix, targeting those most at risk, primarily with telephone contact, and where possible, visits in person. 4 additional personnel have been temporarily engaged to address the backlog of referrals;
- k) there have been 2 incidents involving loss of life, one in Top Valley and one in Costock. Community reassurance activity was undertaken in each area following the incidents

but it is of great concern that there continues to be a lack of adequate smoke alarm installation (40% of the homes visited in Costock had inadequate smoke detection alarms) so this remains a focus for prevention work;

- l) with regard to Fire Protection work, 6 enforcement notices have been issued and 5 prohibition notices;
- m) the Service continues to work in partnership with the City Council's Joint Audit and Inspection Team (JAIT) to inspect higher risk premises. Over 100 premises were inspected with 47% having fire compartmental issues identified. Many compartmentation issues arise on properties which have been adapted for residential use. Examples have included the installation of hard wired fire alarms where the holes drilled for the cabling have not been sealed. The methodology on determining which properties to assess is agreed with the City Council and higher risk based properties (following patterns of size/ownership/signing-off officer) are prioritised for assessment. There are a range of options to follow depending on the severity of the issues, including initially encouraging the owner to undertake the necessary work, but legislation can be enforced where there is resistance or urgent action is required. The approach is being recognised nationally as good/best practice.
- n) 33 fire investigations were undertaken across commercial, domestic and the fatal fires;
- o) organised public bonfire events were cancelled due to COVID-19 socialising restrictions and whilst the Service discouraged citizens from holding their own displays, safety advice was offered where events continued. There is nothing to stop people having bonfires and fireworks on their own land as formal permission is not required. The Service worked with the Police, particularly in the Gedling area where a communal bonfire was held, but overall there was no significant increase in bonfire night related incidents;
- p) it is acknowledged that Councillors have expressed concern that there had been reports of industrial waste and plastics being burned during the bonfire night period. The Service works hard to initially liaise and educate people, alongside the Local Authority Environmental Health Teams which are the regulatory body, but if people are determined, then it's generally very difficult to prevent but any information gathered around such behaviours can be passed to the Local Authority and the Police.

Members of the Committee expressed concern at the 47% fire compartmental issues identified in the JAIT work, but were assured by the response of the Service and commended the Service on taking on additional community support duties whilst still maintaining the expected standards during this particularly difficult period.

**Resolved to note the report.**

## **5 HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES UPDATE**

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which updates the committee on progress on addressing the 25 areas identified for improvement (AFI) during Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services Inspection.

Overall, there are only four AFIs remaining to be fully addressed, but members should be assured that work continues to embed improvements into the culture of the Service.

**Resolved to note the progress made against the Areas for Improvement (AFI) action plan.**

## **6 UNWANTED FIRE SIGNALS UPDATE**

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which updates the committee on the Tri-Service (Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire) Unwanted Fire Signals (UFS) and provides an overview of unwanted fire signals during the past 12 months.

The report sets out the key elements of the Tri-service policy, including premises types that are exempt from call challenging.

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

- a) good progress has been made in reducing the number of UFSs by 9.5%, but there is further work to be done as they continue to have a significant impact on occupying the time of the Service, counting as one third of all call-outs;
- b) the most prolific offenders are a small number of complex premises such as the major hospitals but work is ongoing to ensure that the responsible person actively takes responsibility to comply to legislation, good practice and keeping their buildings safe;
- c) there will be a further review of exempt premises to reflect the results of a risk based inspection programme;
- d) it is noted that some Fire and Rescue Services have taken the decision not to respond to Automatic Fire Detection (AFD) systems, which is an approach the Service will monitor, although is currently not a proposed approach to adopt;
- e) there are occasions where access to premises is challenging due to on-street parking. It can be difficult to enforce with legislation but where apparent, the Service initially takes an engagement approach to educate and appeal to people's moral responsibilities not to prevent emergency vehicle access. It is a complex issue with the Local Authorities willing to assist, but their policies are to pursue changes through a consultation process with residents. Historically the layout of some residential areas were not designed for multiple car ownership households and whilst the instances of blockages may be rare, the implications can be very significant, including risk to life, so members are requested to support the Service at a local level with access issues wherever they occur, including in the planning process.

Some members of the Committee suggested that with regard to roads blocked by inconsiderate parking, further legislative powers should be sought to address these issues. It is acknowledged that some parking issues in the City are as a result of commuter parking which is also an issue for residents, although less so since the introduction of COVID-19 restrictions, so this may change again as businesses adapt after the pandemic.

**Resolved to**

- 1) note the progress made in addressing unwanted fire signals;**

- 2) **support the exploration of developing the Tri-Service Unwanted Fire Signals Policy;**
- 3) **receive a further report with recommendations within six months.**