



Nottinghamshire & City of Nottingham Fire & Rescue Authority

MINUTES of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters - Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge Drive, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD on 24 September 2021 from 10.30 am - 12.19 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Michael Payne (Chair)
Councillor Toby Neal (Vice Chair)
Councillor Steve Battlemuch
Councillor Scott Carlton
Councillor John Clarke
Councillor Robert Corden
Councillor Eddie Cubley
Councillor Bethan Eddy
Councillor Sybil Fielding
Councillor Tom Hollis
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora
Councillor Roger Jackson
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
Councillor Nick Raine
Councillor Jason Zadrozny
Commissioner Caroline Henry
Councillor Nicola Heaton

Absent

Councillor Callum Bailey
Councillor Johnno Lee

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

John Buckley	Chief Fire Officer
Candida Brudenell	Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Craig Parkin	Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Becky Smeathers	FA Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Fire Authority
Malcolm Townroe	Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Fire Authority
Emma Powley	Governance Officer

20 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Callum Bailey
Councillor Johnno Lee

21 Declarations of Interest

Craig Parkin (Deputy Chief Fire Officer) sought advice from Malcolm Townroe - Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Fire Authority regarding agenda Item 8 – Chief Fire Officer Vacancy, as a potential candidate.

As the report referred to the recruitment process and not an appointment, he was advised that he did not need to leave the room and it did not preclude him from speaking on the matter.

Councillor Michael Payne declared an interest in item 15 as Deputy Leader of Council of the relevant planning authority referred to in the exempt minutes. As such, he would leave the room and Councillor Toby Neal, the Vice-Chair, would Chair that part of the meeting.

22 Appointments

- a) Resolved: to note the appointment of Councillor Nicola Heaton to the Authority by Nottingham City Council**
- b) Resolved: to note the appointment of Councillor Nicola Heaton as a member of the Community Safety Committee in place of Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora.**
- c) Resolved: to note the appointment of Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora as a member of the Human Resources Committee**
- d) Resolved: to appoint of Patience Uloma Ifediora as Chair of the Human Resources Committee**

23 Minutes

The Authority confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2021 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair

24 Chair's Announcements

The Chair made the following announcements:

- a) A members' seminar took place on 10 September 2021 and was well attended with slides circulated upon request.
- b) The Government had lifted all Covid restrictions and there had been a return to Business as Usual. However, good hygiene practices were still being promoted to keep infection rates to a minimum.
- c) Week commencing 20 September 2021 saw the start of the HMICFRS inspection. This will last for 6 to 8 weeks and the outcome would be expected to be reported back in summer 2022.
- d) The FBU were commended for their recent national campaign on Decontamination and the 'Decon-Training' being offered.

- e) The 9 September 2021 was Emergency Services Day with a 2 minutes silence held. The 11 September 2021 would mark the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks in the United States.
- f) Nottingham Pride was held on the 11 September 2021; it was especially welcomed that there was such good attendance given the increase in crimes against LGBTQ people of whom the Fire Authority were a proud ally.

25 Treasury Management Annual Report 2020/21

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Fire Authority, presented a report providing Members with an update on treasury management activity during the 2020/21 financial year. The annual report has been prepared in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice. The following information was highlighted:

- a) A significant change has been adopted by the Bank of England with regards to implementing its inflation target of 2%; there was speculation that this may rise to 4% and therefore there remained a degree of volatility.
- b) The Authority did not take any short term borrowing during 2020/21. The Authority repaid £53.3k in principal on Public Work Loan Board (PWLB) annuity loans during 2020/21. No maturity loans were repaid and no new long term borrowing was taken.
- c) In May 2020, changes to the original 2020/21 Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators were approved by the Policy and Strategy Committee due to potential challenges due to the pandemic; these changes had been made in order to provide additional flexibility. This included an increase in the Operational Boundary from £31.8m to £33.85m, this being the expected borrowing position of the Authority within the year.
- d) The total external debt was well within the Authorised Limit and the Operational Boundary was not exceeded at any point during the year.

Following comments and questions from the Committee further information was highlighted:

- e) The timing of borrowing was cited as being critical and advice was always sought from the Treasury Management Advisors who had strict criteria for the Authority to meet for borrowing funds and specific low risk specified investments.
- f) Risk appetite for the Authority remained low and all investments made by the Authority had been with high level banks or building societies.
- g) Ethical aspects of the Authorities investments would be considered by the Nottingham Fire and Rescue Finance and Resources Committee; any agreement and advice given by the Committee would then be discussed and included in the strategy for approval next year.

Resolved: to note the update on Treasury management activity during the 2020/21 financial year, as required under the Local Government Act 2003

26 Community Risk Management Plan 2022-2025

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, introduced the report presenting the Committee with the draft Community Risk Management Plan 2022-25. The tenure of the Service's current Integrated Risk Management Plan ends on the 31 March 2022 and the Service is required to publish a new plan from the 1 April 2022. The following points were highlighted:

- a) The proposed plan was for 2022-2025 but it also sets out the 10 year ambition to become an 'Outstanding' Fire and Rescue Service.
- b) The process of compiling the draft plan had been lengthy as they had sought to engage with a number of stakeholders in order for the draft Plan to be meaningful. The plan had been written in 'plain English' with emphasis being placed on it being accessible and understandable.
- c) As part of the proposed consultation process, views and feedback will be sought on the six strategic goals. The strategic goals had been shaped by various consultees with various working groups and Councillors imputing their views during the drafting process. The Service has appointed an external consultation company to facilitate the independent consultation on the Risk Management Plan with the proposed date of the consultation running from the 8 October to 24 December 2021.

Following questions and comments from Members the following additional information was provided:

- d) Committee Members recognised that there was training of partners in other sectors to raise awareness of fire risks in the home, including by using the CHARLIE profile. This helped the Authority and community partners identify people at a higher risk and stated that it would be beneficial if this was circulated much more widely. It was suggested that it be circulated to the County Council, City Council, District Councils, the Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner. Members also requested that structured use of Communication should be used to maximise the importance of the profile.
- e) The Committee voiced concerns that the Fire Authority were still not listed as statutory consultees in the planning application process. In order to increase fire safety, it was considered necessary for the Fire Authority to be a consultee, especially in Nottingham City where there was a lot of student accommodation being built and converted and whilst there was some emphasis on 'designing out crime' there was little being done with regards to design out fires or making buildings more fire/smoke averse.
- f) Members thanked the Assistant Chief Fire Officer for her work on the Community Risk Management Plan, specifically the 'plain English' aspect of it.

Resolved to:

- a) Approve the contents of the draft Community Risk Management Plan 2022-25**
- b) Approve the consultation of the draft Community Risk Management Plan 2022-25 in line with the Service's Consultation Framework.**

27 Chief Fire Officer Vacancy

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer introduced the report, seeking approval for the recruitment to the impending vacancy of Chief Fire Officer for when he retires on 15 April 2022. The following information was highlighted:

- a) Following the selection process an Appointments Committee will be convened to assess potential candidates. Recommendations will then be made to a future meeting of the full Fire Authority where the decision to appoint an individual will be made.
- b) The selection process for the future Chief Fire Officer will be robust and multi-faceted and will include multiple tests and interviews. The task of putting the recruitment process in place would be undertaken by the current Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk to the Authority; they, alongside the Head of People and Organisational Development would support Members of the Authority throughout the selection process.
- c) As part of the process, it was recommended that an external recruitment specialist be contacted to assist with the selection process, for which £30,000 had been set aside.

Responding to questions raised, the following information was given:

- d) The vacancy will be advertised widely and overtly and that the use of a recruitment specialist was advised as they would be able to reach out to potential candidates from a wider audience and it would also provide a level of transparency.

Resolved:

- a) **To task the current Chief Fire Officer and Clerk to the Authority to put in place a recruitment process for the Chief Fire Officer vacancy, in consultation with the Chair of the Authority; and,**
- b) **To ask the Current Chief Fire Officer, Clerk to the Authority and Head of People and Organisational Development to support Members of the Authority throughout the selection process.**

28 National Core Code of Ethics

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, updated the Committee on the progress to implement the national Core Code of Ethics. It was explained that a Core Code of Ethics, developed by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Local Government Association (LGA) and in partnership with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, was published in May 2021. The following points were highlighted:

- a) The Authority already has well embedded values and the Code would allow staff to know what behaviours would be expected of them with any poor behaviours witnessed being challenged.
- b) The Code is founded on the Nolan Principles in public service and applies not just to those in senior positions.

- c) An implementation plan has been developed to ensure that the code becomes embedded across the whole of the organisation and would build upon and enhance the current values of the Authority.
- d) The Committee agreed that they had a critical role as exemplars of the Fire Authority duelled with having the responsibility to hold the Fire Authority to account and to tackle any unwanted behaviours.

Resolved;

- a) To endorse the implementation of the National Core Code of Ethics**
- b) To note the review of the Employee Code of Conduct to align with the NFCC Core Code of Ethics.**

29 Joint Headquarters Collaboration Update

Candida Brudenell Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented Members with an update on the Joint Headquarters collaboration project, the relocation of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Service to a Joint Headquarters with Nottingham Police at Sherwood Lodge having previously been approved. The following information was highlighted:

- a) The transition to the Joint Headquarters was being managed through eight individual projects.
- b) There had been ongoing work with staff and a number of forums had been established in order for relevant information to be shared with the work-force.
- c) The programme was currently running on time and within budget, with the first relocation of resources anticipated to be in November 2021 with the rest of the work-force relocating over the next 6 months.

In response to questions raised, the following information was noted:

- d) It was expected that the Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority meetings would continue to be held at Bestwood Lodge until the Annual General Meeting in June 2022.
- e) Whilst the transition was being undertaken the security of the building and the equipment within in was paramount and work was well underway to ensure that it would be secure.
- f) The Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner concurred that the transition was proceeding well and was currently running on time and within budget.

Resolved: to note the progress of the Joint Headquarters programme.

30 Annual Report of Information Governance 2020/21

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report updating members on information governance at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service for the year 2020/21. The following information was highlighted:

- a) In March 2020 the information Commissioners Office announced that it recognised the Covid pandemic may affect organisations' timescales of compliance with public information rights.
- b) 108 Freedom of Information requests had been received between April 2020 and March 2021; 88% of these requests were replied to within 20 working days.
- c) No information requests received between April and March 2021 were classified as Environmental Information requests and no data incidents needed to be reported to the Information Commissioners Office in 2020/21.
- d) Work was continually undertaken to ensure that cyber security measures were up to date, with regular phishing campaigns and staff training being offered to reduce the risk of cyber-attacks.

Resolved: to note the contents of the report

31 Review of Statement of Intent

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report advising Members that Nottinghamshire Fire Rescue Services' Written Safety Policy Statement of Intent had been reviewed to ensure that it remains current. The following information was highlighted.

- a) The Fire Service has a very good appetite for ensuring high standards of health, safety and welfare of all its employees and would continue to strive to ensure a safe and healthy working environment.
- b) Work had been undertaken to ensure that any Brexit related delays would not significantly impact the service and there continued to be close observations of supply chains and work with the procurement team to ensure that any potential delays could be avoided.

Resolved: to endorse the content of the updated Written Safety Policy to reaffirm the commitment to effective health and safety risk management for employees and other who are affected by the Service's activities.

32 Environment and Sustainability Policy Update

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report updating Members that the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's Written Environment and Sustainability Policy Statement had been reviewed to ensure that it remained current. The following points were raised:

- a) The content of the current Environment and Sustainability Policy Statement communicates the commitment of both the Service and the Authority and reflects NFRSS approach to discharging its duty of care to minimise its impact on the environment.

- b) Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service is fully committed to minimising the impact that the organisational activities have on the environment and numerous steps were being taken which included:
- Setting targets on key aspects of our environmental performance and reviewing them periodically
 - Reducing carbon emissions from our buildings by investing in energy efficient design and technology during construction and refurbishment projects, better managing energy consumption and influencing colleagues' behaviour
 - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles by managing business travel, reducing the need to travel by the use of video conferencing and other technology, encouraging the use of public transport and other less polluting forms of transportation
 - Raising employee's awareness of environmental issues
- c) The committee requested that communications be stepped up for the 'Plant a tree for the Queen's Jubilee' event. Collaborative working on the campaign could highlight the positive environmental affect tree planting has and would contribute to the off-setting damage caused by fires.

Resolved to:

- a) **Endorse the Policy Statement to reaffirm commitment to the Environment and Sustainability Policy.**
- b) **Support a further in-year review to ensure that the Policy Statement aligns with the environmental and sustainability aspirations in the Community Risk Management Plan due for publication April 2022.**

33 Exclusion of the Public

The Authority decided to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of this/ the remaining agenda 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 outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, as defined in Paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act

34 Exempt Minutes

As Councillor Michael Payne, Chair of the Authority had declared an interest and left the room, Councillor Toby Neal, the Vice-Chair, chaired the rest of the meeting.

Resolved: to approve the exempt minutes of the meeting held on the 23 July 2021