



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

**Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service
Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge Drive, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD on 11
June 2021 from 10:03am to 11:04am**

Membership

Present

Councillor Jason Zadrozny (Chair)
Councillor Eddie Cubley
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora
Councillor Nick Raine

Absent

Councillor Scott Carlton
Councillor Toby Neal

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Adrian Mann - Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council
Craig Parkin - Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Mick Sharman - Area Manager for Response

1 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Scott Carlton
Councillor Toby Neal

2 Declarations of Interests

None.

3 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2021 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

4 Service Delivery Performance Report

Mick Sharman, Area Manager for Response, presented a report on the performance of the Service Delivery Directorate between 1 February 2021 and 30 April 2021. The following points were discussed:

- (a) a total of 2408 incidents were attended by the Service. Positively, there were no fatalities due to road traffic collisions in the period. However, the Coronavirus pandemic has created a period of non-typical results, so future reporting may

need to cover longer durations of time, in order to be able to make useful comparisons of the data;

- (b) unfortunately, 528 of the incidents were deliberate fires, which represents an increase of 161 compared to the same period in 2019/20. Action is being taken to manage this spike in cases, a number of which are concentrated in the Oak Tree Estate in Mansfield, often around school opening and closing times. Work is underway with Local Authority and schools to address this challenge. Cases can be seasonal and seem to have increased during lockdown, but it is possible to track the incidents and work is underway with partners to address the causes. The Service has a proactive education team that engages with children in school on fire awareness and prevention, and implications and consequences. It is also important to establish good role models for children, who may become interested in the Service's cadet scheme. However, the Coronavirus pandemic has made it more difficult to go into schools to carry out this work;
- (c) a key target for the Service is that all emergency incidents will be attended within 8 minutes, on average. The overall average attendance time in the period was 7 minutes and 57 seconds, which is a decrease of 9 seconds against the same period in 2019/20;
- (d) on-call availability reports an average of 90.3%, which represents a decrease of 4% compared to the same period in 2019/20, but on-call availability had been increased to higher than usual levels during to the pandemic. All on-call stations other than Southwell achieved the Service target of 85% availability, though the situation at Ashfield and Retford is still challenging. The number of people in Southwell applying to be on-call firefighters is relatively low, but some whole-time firefighters have moved to the area to also work on-call. However, the Service's performance remains good in comparison to others across the country;
- (e) on-call availability remains a challenge at a national level, and work is underway to review remuneration and tailor the national recruitment model to be more flexible locally. A different approach is being developed to increase opportunities and improve recruitment. A pilot scheme will be run from September for up to a year, to see what improvements can be made, and their potential impact;
- (f) during the pandemic, the Service entered into a staff secondment agreement with the NHS to support seven vaccination centres. As at 16 May, Service staff have administered 50,406 vaccinations, and are also working to help test for the Delta variant;
- (g) operational exercises had to be suspended due to Coronavirus restrictions, but have now resumed. Despite restrictions, the Service was still able to complete a total of 6453 in-person or virtual Safe and Well visits, targeting those people most at risk in the event of a fire in their home. Community Reassurance and Engagement activities are also carried out to support communities where there has been a serious domestic fire, with a particular focus on the areas most at risk. Proactive fire protection work continues during the pandemic, with teams working in a different way. It is intended to return to a 'business as usual' approach as soon as possible, but future work will be informed by learning arising from the pandemic;

- (h) the Service continues to respond to the findings of the Grenfall Tower disaster and is working to upskill operational personnel so that they have more training in fire protection measures. Unsafe building materials and methods of construction remain a concern and continued focus on these building materials is required, so the Service must be proactive in raising awareness. Currently, resources are being focused on the city, to identify those buildings that have fire protection deficiencies. A new national building safety regulator has been established, but a great deal of partnership working on enforcement is required;
- (i) ultimately, fire protection is an area of focus and growth. The sector needs to ensure that it has the right fire response processes in place, but effective fire protection is an area in which further investment is required. The Service needs to work with Local Authorities and other partners to ensure that it is involved at the right stage in the Planning process to ensure the construction of safer buildings, with the appropriate resources in place to support the effective provision of regulation and enforcement. The Service aims to invest to qualify operational staff, including fire engineers, but consideration will need to be given on how to retain these qualified staff so that they do not move to the private sector;
- (j) the committee thanked Service staff for their strong operational performance. It requested that a report setting out how the Service engages with schools is brought to its next meeting, and that it is kept updated on the progress of the on-call recruitment pilot scheme. It noted that members have existing links to education providers and can work to develop further connections between schools and the Service. Members should also seek to engage with Local Authorities and the Local Government Association on the fire safety issues relating to Planning and Building Control.

The Committee noted the report.

5 An Update on the 'Areas for Improvement' from the 2019 HMICFRS Inspection

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the Service's response to the 2019 inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the final Areas for Improvement (AFIs) falling under the remit of the committee are AFI 9 ("to ensure that mobile data terminals are reliable to allow staff to access risk information") and AFI 4 ("to ensure that prevention work is targeted at people most at risk"). AFI 4 was completed by the agreed deadline of 31 March with the conclusion of the Safe and Well Review and the implementation of a person-centred approach to future engagement;
- (b) however, progress against AFI 9 has not met the target date of 31 March 2021, so an extension to the timetable is required. The issues in completing this AFI are primarily related to ongoing delays from the supplier of the Tri-Service Control System in carrying out the required updates to the software. Potentially, it may be more difficult for terminals to connect remotely if the crew is in a rural area. While the problems are understood and engagement with the supplier to solve these

issues continues, back-up methods of accessing information are being explored if the terminal does not work, as not being able to access information on an incident site may result in avoidable risks for operational staff.

Resolved:

(1) to approve the closure of Area for Improvement 4;

(2) to approve the extension of the target completion date for Area for Improvement 9 to 30 September 2021.

6 Safe and Well Visit Review Outcomes

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the process to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Safe and Well visits and ensure that the Service has an inclusive approach to supporting those in greatest need. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the Safe and Well visits represent a long-term programme of community engagement with vulnerable people. During the Coronavirus pandemic, there has been a strong focus on making every contact count. Although it was not viable to carry out all of the in-person visits planned originally, it was still possible to continue to provide the service by alternative means, and performance during the pandemic has been good. A more normal service has now resumed, with around 1000 visits per month;
- (b) the Service has increased its targets for the number of visits carried out during the year, though visit numbers are still below the national average. However, the method used to record the number of visits by Services across the country is not completely consistent, so the methodology used locally is under review. Investment in the Service's database system is proposed to improve the recording of visits;
- (c) the Safer Communities Strategy will be updated as part of the Service's new strategic plan. An effectiveness review has been carried out, and the 80% quality target for visits referred by partners has been monitored as part of the Service's approach to its performance framework. The responses to the 2020 Safe and Well visit customer survey were very positive, but there is continual work in place to ensure that the service is of a good quality and reaches the right people. A revised Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to review both visit procedure and equality policy application. Close work is required with partners, where appropriate, to address any additional safeguarding concerns that may arise from visits;
- (d) the Service budgets £100,000 for smoke alarms and £52,000 for safety equipment each year. The Service is seeking to deliver more in this area, but this has cost implications that will need to be resolved within the overall budget.

The Committee noted the report.