



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

Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Joint Headquarters, Sherwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PP on Friday 17 June 2022 from 10:00am to 11:06am

Membership

Present

Councillor Jason Zadrozny (Chair)
Councillor Robert Corden
Councillor Nicola Heaton
Councillor Nick Raine
Councillor Dave Trimble
Councillor Roger Upton

Absent

None

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Bryn Coleman - Area Manager for Prevention and Protection
Andy Macey - Area Manager for Response
Adrian Mann - Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council
Craig Parkin - Chief Fire Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

None.

2 Declarations of Interests

None.

3 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2022 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

4 Service Delivery Performance Report

Bryn Coleman, Area Manager for Prevention and Protection, and Andy Macey, Area Manager for Response, presented a report on the performance of the Service Delivery Directorate. The following points were discussed:

- (a) as at 31 May, the Service has attended 1,916 incidents. This represents an 8% increase overall when compared to the same period in the previous year, with 8.8% more false alarms, 5.7% more fires and 11.1% more special service calls (such as road traffic collisions). However, lockdown restrictions were still in place during April and May 2021, so this will have reduced the number of incidents during that period – meaning that incidents are now returning to pre-pandemic levels. Proportionally, the incident numbers per month remain largely consistent to those recorded for the preceding three years, with the highest levels in the City of Nottingham;
- (b) the number of fires continues to follow a pattern of peaking in the spring months, remaining relatively high throughout the summer, and then dropping down again during the autumn and winter. However, most of the fires that occur during the peak periods are of a relatively low level of severity. The instances of more dangerous fires (which represent a serious hazard or immediate threat to life) have remained stable across the period;
- (c) the number of special service and false alarm cases remained relatively constant across the last 12 months. The Service is considering its response to false alarms carefully, and has a target to achieve a 3% reduction in incidents. A risk-based approach has been taken to seek to ensure that the response to false alarms is as efficient as possible, to ensure that the best use can be made of the Service's limited resources. So far, the Service has responded to 418 false alarms (a 0.48% decrease on the same period last year), and is working closely with businesses to reduce the number of incidents further;
- (d) a key performance target is that all emergency incidents are attended within 8 minutes on average, from the time when the first fire appliance is mobilised. To date, the Service is achieving an average attendance time of 7 minutes 59 seconds overall, and the target has also been achieved in the majority of the previous 12 months;
- (e) to ensure that operational incidents are managed appropriately and safely, and for the purpose of continuous improvement, there is a performance target for the active monitoring of 10% of all operational incidents (which reflects the sector standard). The Service has consistently outperformed this target over the last 12 months, with active monitoring carried out for around 20% of incidents. This monitoring is important as the involvement of senior officers at operational incidents helps to improve preparedness at all levels, and the target for monitoring levels is reviewed annually. The Committee requested that the detail of the next review processes for the target levels of active monitoring for operation incidents is reported to the appropriate meeting;
- (f) in the year to date, twelve out of the sixteen on-call sections are performing above the target of 85% appliance availability, which represents an overall improvement (reaching 87.39% availability overall, on average). On-call availability at the Day Shift Crewing stations has been strong. However, availability at Southwell is below the Service's 70% minimum standard;
- (g) on-call recruitment and retention continues to be a challenge both in Southwell and across the sector, and this has a direct impact on availability. However,

people's working patterns have changed following the Coronavirus pandemic, and targeted recruitment activity is underway to seek to take advantage of this. A pilot scheme intended to improve retention through more flexible on-call contracts is also progressing well. The Committee requested that a report is provided to a future meeting to illustrate how the current recruitment activity is targeted and carried out;

- (h) the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service Joint Control Centre has three key performance measures. The first is that 96% of 999 calls are answered within 7 seconds. While performance slipped slightly in quarters 1 and 3 of 2021/22, the target has been met in four of the last six quarters. The second performance measure is that calls for the highest-risk incidents are handled within 89 seconds, on average. There was strong improvement in this area during 2021/22, with call handling times being as low as 82 seconds in the last two completed quarters;
- (i) finally, there is a performance measure that the availability of the computerised mobilisation system is 99%. Unfortunately, the performance of this ICT system has fallen short of the target for the last five quarters. Mitigations are in place and work is ongoing to address and manage the issues that this creates for effective mobilisation, and the Service is working closely with the system supplier to both identify and address the faults and concerns. The mobilising system is due for replacement in 2024, and a project to manage this began in March 2022. The Committee noted that, as a number of new members joined the Authority in May, it would be beneficial for a briefing note to be produced for all members on the background to any long-running issues such as this that are affecting the Service, currently;
- (j) a full training scheme is in place, with the 2022/23 exercise programme now underway. This includes practical exercises in the field, covering a wide range and scale of incidents, and all firefighters are expected to undertake at least one of these exercises each year. In addition, there is a new requirement for firefighters to complete two table-top training exercises per year;
- (k) 13,018 Safe and Well Visits were carried out in 2021/22, which exceeded the target of 12,000. The people most at risk during a fire are those with reduced mobility, so there is a particular focus on carrying out visits to those aged over 65 and those who consider themselves to have a disability. As part of the Service's person-centred approach, a new 'Vulnerable Persons' module has been added for teams carrying out Safe and Well Visits to record the details of each vulnerable person within a given residence, and this new system is being bedded in. An Occupational Therapist is in place to help engage with the people most at risk, and has helped to create strong links with the NHS and its databases. Work is underway with the NHS to help at-risk people improve their mobility;
- (l) 'Safety Zone' events for Year 6 school pupils are being developed as part of the engagement process with children and young people, with a particular focus on areas where incidents are high. The events are arranged for locations that are of a suitable size, but are also affordable and as easily as accessible as possible to the target attendees. The events will be multi-agency based and, as well as focusing on fire safety, will address rail safety, cyber safety, electricity sub-station

safety and stranger danger. The Service is also actively engaged in a multi-agency delivery of road safety awareness and intervention;

- (m) the Building Safety Act has now passed into law and expected to be fully operational by October 2023. This is likely to have resourcing implications as there is a requirement for the Service to support the new Building Safety Regulator. The Health and Safety Executive is investigating the establishment of multi-disciplinary teams across the country to support the Regulator, and the Service will make the case that Nottinghamshire would be a good location for one of these. However, although there will be a greater onus on Fire and Rescue Services to ensure that building fire safety is improved, there are a great deal of elements involved in the process of constructing a building that are outside their control. Ultimately, more investment is required in Fire Protection now, in order to be able to meet the likely future resourcing requirements – though this need sits within the context of reducing budgets, presenting significant challenges;
- (n) the Government is starting a consultation with the sector on the implementation of the Building Safety Act, and a response will be returned through the National Fire Chiefs' Council. The Committee suggested that a notification system to Local Authorities should be considered for property schemes falling under permitted development, as Local Authorities can often be unaware that the nature of a premises has been changed, which could have implications for fire safety;
- (o) 156 Fire Safety Audits have been carried out, so far. Inspectors review all non-residential premises where a fire has occurred, respond to complaints from the public, carry out any required safety enforcement activity, and engage in the Planning consultation process for new buildings. Ultimately, there are around 45,000 business premises that should be inspected over the next three years, and the number of premises subject to inspection is also likely to increase during this time;
- (p) a great deal of work is required to carry out the inspections, as part of ensuring that the built environment does comply with fire safety standards. As such, inspections must be targeted effectively and the top 10% of buildings of highest risk have been identified as a priority. Ensuring that all required buildings are inspected within the needed timeframe represents a significant challenge, but the current performance trajectory is moving in the right direction;
- (q) to support the inspectors' workload, training is underway for Crew and Watch Managers in Fire Protection so that crews can carry out Business Safety Checks for the lower-risk premises. A large number of business were closed during the Coronavirus pandemic, so it was not possible to inspect them during this time. However, the number of audits is now returning to normal levels. Overall, it is vital that all firefighters are trained to have experience in basic Fire Protection so that the specialist inspectors can focus on the most complex cases, and this will also increase the knowledge base available in responding to incidents. More investment is also being made in the training of Fire Engineers, and it takes at least two years to train staff in these specialist roles;
- (r) the Service has conducted 36 premises inspections (and 27 re-inspections) as part of the Joint Audit Inspection Team (JAIT). This is a collaboration with

Nottingham City Council whereby Environmental Health Inspectors and Fire Safety Inspectors work together to review high-rise residential buildings. These JAIT inspections have covered 59 buildings and 6,447 units of accommodation, but there are still 84 buildings over 18 meters high and 62 buildings below 18 meters high left to inspect – many of which are complex and resource-intensive, in the context of Fire Protection. It will take a number of years to complete these inspections, including any new buildings that are constructed in the meantime. As only the Service has the authority to carry out the relevant enforcement action where required, all inspections must be completed using internal staffing. However, it is possible that JAIT activity will form part of the work of the new Regulator, going forward;

- (s) many students live in complex, high-rise building and, although students often do not fit the CHARLIE profile for those most at risk in a fire, proactive work is carried out at their accommodation on what residents should do in the event of a fire. Work is also taking place with students on limiting the number of false alarms;
- (t) the Committee considered that developers have a responsibility to ensure that their buildings are constructed and operated safely. Ultimately, Fire and Rescue Services nationally must be funded sufficiently to achieve the right level of resourcing to address the important area of Fire Protection as effectively as possible.

The Committee noted the report.