



Nottinghamshire & City of Nottingham Fire & Rescue Authority

MINUTES of the meeting held at Dunkirk and Beeston Suites - Highfields Fire Station, Hassocks Lane, Beeston, Nottingham. NG9 2GU on 23 September 2022 from 12.06 pm - 3.01 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Michael Payne (Chair)
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora (Vice Chair)
Councillor Callum Bailey
Councillor Steve Battlemuch
Councillor John Clarke MBE
Councillor Robert Corden
Councillor Sybil Fielding
Councillor Jay Hayes
Councillor Tom Hollis
Councillor Angela Kandola
Councillor John Lee
Councillor Toby Neal
Councillor Mike Quigley MBE
Councillor Nick Raine
Councillor Roger Upton (minutes 22-32 inclusive)
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler
Councillor Jason Zadrozny

Absent

Police and Crime Commissioner Caroline Henry

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Craig Parkin – Chief Fire Officer
Becky Smeathers – Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Authority
Malcolm Townroe – Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority
Michael Sharman – Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Catherine Ziane-Pryor – Governance Officer

22 The passing of Queen Elizabeth II and Councillor Eddie Cubley

On behalf of the Fire Authority and Fire Service, the Chair extended condolences to King Charles III on the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, who had a very close relationship with the

armed and emergency services. Her Majesty carried out her constitutional duties with continuity until the end, even though she was unwell. She will be greatly missed, particularly for her considered compassion. God save the King. The Chair and Chief Fire Officer have both written to the King with and condolences and respect to the wider royal family.

The Chair also extended condolences to the Conservative group with regard to the untimely passing of Councillor Eddie Cubley, who was an outstanding elected member and first class and valued member of the Authority. Although quiet, was self-assured, diligent and gentle, his questions were searching and poignant. He will be missed. On behalf of the Authority and Service, our heartfelt sympathy is extended to Eddie's family, friends and colleagues.

Members of the opposition parties echoed the Chair's sentiment and also expressed their condolences on the passing of the Queen and fellow Fire Authority member Councillor Eddie Cubley.

All in attendance observed one minutes standing silence.

23 Changes to Membership

It is noted that the following changes to appointments to the Fire Authority have been made by Nottingham City Council:

- Councillor David Trimble is replaced by Councillor Toby Neal
- Councillor Gul Khan is replaced by Councillor Jay Hayes
- Councillor Nicola Heaton is replaced by Councillor Angela Kandola

24 Apologies for Absence

None.

25 Declarations of Interest

None.

26 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2022 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

27 Chair's Announcements

- a) With regard to the hot weather and resulting additional demands and pressures on the Service, on behalf of the Fire Authority, the Chair thanked firefighters and all those who support them for their huge efforts. Community feedback regarding the major incident at Ranskill, which required resources for over 35 days, has been very positive;

- b) The CFO and Chair have been meeting with local Members of Parliament and Chief Executives of local councils and providing an opportunity to discuss the great work of the Service, but more importantly the growing financial pressures and highlighted budget deficits in coming years, some of which are reflected later in the agenda. Conversations have been about the policies and politics around the growing pressures on the Service, particularly budgetary deficits in coming years. All have understood the position of the Service and the need for them to collectively make representations to Central Government about the investment required to continue delivering a first-class emergency service, which saves lives;
- c) On 7th October a seminar is planned with Members and MPs, so members are requested to take the time to attend and engage. Police and Crime Commissioner Henry will be attending if able, and joint letters are being drafted to the Home Office and Fire Minister outlining the financial challenges for the Authority. The Chair expressed gratitude for the cross-party support which greatly strengthens the case being put forward.
- d) This year's Awards Ceremony will take place on Thursday 24 November 2022, at the Albert Hall, Nottingham, with arrival from 18:00 for a 19:00 start. All members of the Authority are welcome to attend the event and be part of the celebrations, further details of which will be circulated shortly;
- e) The Emergency Services Carol Service will take place at Southwell Minster on the evening of Tuesday 13 December 2022. Fire Authority members are welcome to attend and should contact the Executive Assistant to the Chief Fire Officer to book attendance.

Members of the Authority supported the Chair's expression of appreciation for the exemplary work of firefighters during the exceptionally hot and dry summer and the excellent and valuable standard of communication on incidents with local elected members.

28 Futures 2025: Efficiency Strategy Update

Prior to consideration of the item, Stephen Tucker, representing the Fire Brigades Union, posed the following question with regard to paragraph 1.5 of the report:

- a) The Service is currently proposing to remove 1 appliance from London Road, 1 appliance from Stockhill and to the night-time cover from West Bridgford, all to meet budgetary requirements. The posts that this Service wish to remove are already vacant due to a lack of recruitment by management, because of this, there are minimal financial savings to be made by removing these posts before the end of the financial year.
- b) Given that we have already faced a 10% reduction in posts which is well above the 1.6% average and that we have one of the lowest financial costs per head across the country, we have already felt the devastating effects of the cuts that have already been imposed on this service, which is why the FBU applaud and support the proposal to revert Ashfield Fire Station to wholetime with adequate fire cover.
- c) However, we do not, cannot, and will not accept that the same flawed and failed model should be implemented at another station, one which does not even have the resilience of an on-call appliance to even attempt to maintain a level of fire cover between 19:00-08:00.

- d) Will the Authority agree to postpone all recommendations currently proposed until after the financial budgets have been officially announced by the government?

The Chair responded:

- e) The difficult choices that the Authority is considering from this report and the backdrop of many years of resource reductions is unwelcomed by all those involved. The proposals recommended are for implementation from April 2023 onwards and have been preceded by in year temporary savings in 2022/23 including the management of staff numbers.
- f) The move of resources to Ashfield takes a Service wide view of risk and a least worst option approach, meaning these resources are required to be taken from other, existing locations and still balance the budget.
- g) Government grant only equates to approx. £7.5million and to delay decisions will build up a larger financial issue to address within a shorter time period. It should be reiterated that this decision seeks to go out to public consultation, pending any financial settlements being announced.
- h) To delay would mean the consultation work would not be completed prior to the requirement to put forward a balanced budget proposal at the February 2023 Fire Authority meeting.

Mark Stilwell, representing the Fire Brigades Union, posed the following question with regard to paragraph 2.28 and table 1 of the report:

- i) The FBU believe that this report is incomplete, misleading and does not show the full impact on the proposed cuts.
- j) In recent times this service has faced spate conditions, it has relied on our members being recalled to duty, sacrificing their rest days to crew appliances and keep fire cover a safe level. How is it that this Authority can agree to further endanger the lives of the public and the safety of its fire crews by removing even more resilience from an already stretched and struggling workforce?
- k) Whilst it is clear for everyone to see that the proposed cuts will result in reduced fire cover for the City of Nottingham, what the report does not show is the impact on the availability of the aerial ladder platform (ALP) current stationed at London Road. At a time when we should be learning from the horrific tragedies of Grenfell and Shirley towers. This service would look to reduce its High-rise capabilities and delay the attendance of sufficient resources to the largest area of risk within the county.
- l) Again, the table does not show the impact on attendance times for the second, or third appliance which, in turn, has an impact on current safe working practices putting our firefighters and members of the public at a greater risk of harm.
- m) We reiterate that the information supplied at this moment in time is incomplete, misleading, and dangerous.
- n) Does the fire authority believe that they have sufficient information to make an informed decision based on the limited information presented to them in this paper?

The Chair responded:

- o) Authority Members and political group leaders have been provided with briefings, information and opportunities through wider Fire Authority seminars to receive information from the CFO and it is with deep regret that we are here to consider such proposals.
- p) The financial picture has been well documented over many months and indeed years, in numerous reports presented to both the full Fire Authority and the Finance and Resources Committee.
- q) The CFO is clear that these proposals, if supported, will obviously have an impact, including which emergency resources will attend and the likely increase in response times.
- r) If these recommendations are supported, a full implementation plan will be developed, this will of course include risk assessments that seek to address any significant change to working practices and the training needs of staff in future.
- s) With regards to the ALP query, the FBU will be aware from its conversations with the CFO that this is a point already being considered in the implementation plan and that no reductions are proposed. Further work will include how these will be deployed in the future. The FBU will also be aware of the commitment to provide 2 new Aerial Ladder Platforms.

Mark Stillwell, representing the Fire Brigades Union, posed the following question with regard to paragraph 2.31 of the report:

- t) The proposals call for a further 10% reduction to be made to operational firefighting crews. A significant reduction in the number of appliances directly correlates to a significant increase in fire calls for the remaining appliances, meaning longer working durations and inadequate rest periods between incidents.
- u) The Authority, under the advice from the Treasurer has committed to using its available reserves in a balanced and proportionate way. I would also say that the report highlights remaining future years of budget deficit that will need to be addressed. Reserves can only be used once.
- v) A cross-party letter has been drafted to send to the Fire Minister and the CFO and I have been meeting MP's to explain the future pressures facing the Authority.
- w) I have huge sympathy and support for the fire fighters in their current protest on pay. I was proud that we as an Authority budgeted for a 3% increase in pay last year. I think Central Government's proposal of 2% is a slap in the face, particularly following the heroic work during the pandemic and recent months, beyond their usual roles and duties. I will continue to argue that the pay award needs to be higher. If it does comeback higher but needs to be funded from Central Government but if it isn't, then the rise will need to be found by the Authority which can only be met as a result from reserves.

- x) We need try and ensure we have a balanced budget and try to ensure that pay is appropriate. The other work such as Safe and Well Visits, Business Safety Checks, Site Specific Risk Information Visits, School Visits, DICE & CRAE events which the Service has stated will be divided between the remaining appliances and neighbouring stations will undoubtedly force crews to leave their area without fire cover in an effort to try and meet the unachievable, unobtainable targets set out in the CRMP which was based on a workforce with increased staffing levels and a higher number of appliances.
- y) Will this Fire Authority commit to using its reserves to stop the devastating impact to both firefighter safety and the delivery of an essential emergency service to the public, placing the Fire Authority in better position for requesting future funding?

The Chair responded:

- z) The report recognises the impact and redistribution of workloads for the Service and in the recommendations laid out by the CFO, demands upon the resources that will be available are also being provided, for example, Unwanted Fire Signals. Ways of working are clearly going to change for the Service, and this will take considerable time to plan for and implement.
- aa) , but this can only do this if Central Government provides us with the funding we deserve in Nottinghamshire.

Craig Parkin, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report. Highlighted points and responses to members' questions included:

- bb) on the financial forward planning assumption currently available, a budget deficit is anticipated over the next three years, which must be found. Earlier this year the planning assumptions provided a deficit of £2.1m FY23/24, which has since risen with the rise to £3.3m;
- cc) the Service has been looking at pay budgets and non-pay budgets to achieve savings which are not only being sought from firefighters, but from every corner of the organisation, including support staff who have the same loyalty and pride in the organisation. This is not an easy position to report on and staff engagement is welcomed;
- dd) since 2010, £9.6m of funding has been cut from the Service. The budget has taken into account the £1.6 million of temporary in-year savings achieved this year. The staffing underspend due to vacancies is not intended to be an-ongoing situation and has been accounted for within this in-year saving figure. However, if the call for a pay rise of more than 3% is successful, this saving will effectively be cancelled if pay rises above 3% are not funded by Central Government;
- ee) HMICFRS examined 11 areas across the service and rated it as good, which is something to be proud of;
- ff) since 2016, the workforce has been reduced by 11%, which is significantly higher and the National average of 1.6%, possibly due to different and varied funding models, and yet, the cost per citizen head of the service is £1 in the base budget below the national average;

- gg) more than 50% of the Services' funding (£27- 28m) is from the council tax precept, an increase on which has been capped at 1.95%. There has been no increase in percentage or relaxation of the cap for this service, whilst some other services have been able to levy a £5 flat rate increase which would attract an additional £1 million in the base budget. The only other council tax increase possibility is to have a public referendum, but historically referendums to increase the council tax contribution have not been sympathetically received and are costly to implement, so in effect the only option available to the Service is to fund the shortfall with proportionality and balance;
- hh) Central Government provide £7.3m settlement funding and £8.5m is contributed from Business Rates and top-up grants, such as pensions, but on a year-to-year basis;
- ii) the Authority has repeatedly requested a longer-term financial settlement from Central Government, beyond the current one year at a time whereby the settlement amount is communicated in December for the start of the new financial year. This would enable longer term planning as the current arrangement does not support long-term budget and service planning;
- jj) phase 1 of the Workforce Review focuses on Green Book staff, some of which may be non-operational, such as prevention and protection. These posts equate to 15% of the total budget for the Authority. £250,000 savings have been identified. Phase 2 of the Workforce Review will look at the fundamental service redesign of these functions to achieve cost savings, based on the statutory duties and the risk faced and priorities of the CRMP. There will be a knock-on impact on how much the Service can do and what can be done, including an impact to delivery of services.
- kk) there are challenging times ahead. Savings must be found for the new financial year and this will mean that the service will not be able provide the same level and range of activity to communities as it has done previously;
- ll) managers appreciate that staff are anxious about the future organisation of the Service and want to provide clarity as soon as possible;
- mm) The Fire Cover Review (FCR) executive summary draws on lots of information, the underpinning information which informs these decisions will be made publicly available;
- nn) within the FCR, most fire stations are currently considered to be appropriately sited but with expanding residential developments, reviewing this and broader fire safety risks will be ongoing and there may be changes to the Community Risk Management Plan. It is inevitable that the reduction in resources will impact on response time and performance, and as such commitments in the CRMP will be reviewed;
- oo) the Service employs 431 whole-time staff across a range of roles (53% of budget is for wages);
- pp) there is also a review of Middle Managers. Area Manager posts have been reviewed previously and a change to the PO cohort that realises a saving of £80k could be achieved with a £20k per year ongoing saving;
- qq) since 2010, 6 fire appliances have been withdrawn around the city and county,

- rr) for 2010 and every year since, the same consistent approach to risk has been taken, including engaging ORH more recently to run an optimising model to identify different configurations of fire appliances to meet the required savings whilst taking into account the detailed operational activity of the Service over a 5 year period;
- ss) the model proposed to meet the anticipated budget deficit requirement has provided the result set out in the report with appliance and/or crewing changes to stations at London Road, Stockhill, West Bridgford, and Ashfield;
- tt) operational data has shown that response demand overall has reduced but there is greater risk to the north of the City and hence the proposed patterns which result in a reduction of 2 appliances and 44 posts to achieve the required £2m savings;
- uu) current response times aim to achieve 8 minutes on average, this will be reassessed. It may also be necessary to review the number of appliances attending incidents if there are to be fewer firefighters on appliances, more appliances may need to attend some types of incidents. Cover of appliances will also be reviewed and mutual assistance will continue with neighbouring services;
- vv) currently, a large percentage of incidents (approximately 40%) are Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS). This needs to be considered on a risk basis, however, there is potential for confirmation that attendance is necessary will be required before the incident will be considered a priority. Any change in responding to UwFS may result in an increase in the average response time;
- ww) no reduction in Fire Protection is recommended at this time, as the Service implements its statutory duty to ensure compliance with the Building Safety Act.
- xx) if the Authority agrees with the recommendations the outcome of consultation will be reported to the February 2023 Fire Authority meeting. It is not anticipated that citizens will support the proposals but the funding gap will remain regardless;
- yy) the Authority is aware that FBU members will understandably soon be balloted regarding pay, but it should be understood that every 1% increase above the 3% budgeted for equates to a £350,000 impact on the Service, unless underwritten by Central Government;
- zz) compared to other Fire and Rescue Services and reserves held, this Service is grouped within the lowest one quartile nationally. Whilst reserves will be drawn on, further drawing on the limited reserves would not be an easy option. The Fire Authority has a legal duty to set a balanced budget, or risks intervention from the Secretary of State under section 22 of the Fire Services Act;
- aaa) this will be the 12th year of budget reductions to the Service, with further changes and reductions presenting the risk of reduced citizen confidence in the Service and its reputation. The CRMP will need to be revised and will result in assessment of partner engagement as resources are reduced;
- bbb) further conversations need to be had with blue light partners, including the PCC and neighbouring Fire Services with regard to devolution and the impact on blue light services.

The Chair thanked everyone involved in compiling the report and noted that some suggested proposals within the report will impact directly on some of those officers.

At the request of members, the meeting was adjourned at 13:22 and reconvened at 13:41.

The Chair emphasised that the recommendations posed today are to enter into a consultation, as is legally required, and that no further decision will be made on Service amendments until the outcome of the consultation is known.

Questions from members were responded to as follows:

- ccc) a thorough review of the Service's sites and property has already been undertaken and will continue to be reviewed. As a result of the initial review savings were identified and pursued, including Collaboration on assets with blue light partners, such as the Joint Headquarters, but few are willing to be sited on Fire Stations. Some community groups access meeting facilities but don't have the funds available to pay a commercial market rate;
- ddd) Capital receipts cannot be used to fund revenue and therefore further 'sweating the assets' will not resolve the current situation and provide a sustainable solution;
- eee) Members should be assured that the current position is not a 'cliff edge' situation for which the Authority and officers are responsible. The Finance and Resources Committee and Group Leaders are regularly kept informed of the Service's financial position. Forward planning has been difficult when government grant funding is only confirmed on a yearly basis, restrictions on council tax precepts, rapidly rising inflation and the increased cost of living, which then will also be reflected in pay awards, are all contributing factors;
- fff) Reserves spent now will only provide a temporary solution and not resolve the ongoing budget deficit and provide a sustainable solution.

Comments from Members of the Authority included:

- ggg) Councillor Steve Battlemuch formally proposed an amendment to the recommendation as follows:

'That a vote on the Futures 2025 paper be deferred for up to 8 weeks to allow for:

- i. further discussion in committee;
- ii. more information and representations from the workforce, including their recognised trade unions;
- iii. for a cross-party approach to the new fire Minister and to invite him to a special meeting of the Authority.

- hhh) The financial pressures are fully understood and it is recognised that there are difficult decisions that the Authority do not want to take. However, reductions in service may lead to loss of life and whilst it is believed that the report is written in good faith and is the result of a lot of hard work, some elements need to be challenged and further details clarified, particularly as serving firefighters have serious concerns on the proposals.
- iii) This is the wrong time to enter into public consultation. There is a newly appointed government, including a new fire minister who needs to be fully informed of the position of the Service and the need for Central Government to fill the funding gap;
- jjj) Other members of the Authority agreed with Councillor Battlemuch's suggestion regarding meeting with the new Fire Minister prior to progressing consultation, but suggested that the Authority agree the recommendation as set out in the report, but delay implementation until the new Fire Minister has been fully briefed and every other option followed that so Central Government have had the opportunity to respond prior to consultation. If no progress is made, then the Authority could commence public consultation, but in this present financial climate, the response to consultation is inevitable. It makes sense to pursue every opportunity prior to entering into public consultation;
- kkk) The Chair commented:
- i. that due to the necessity of identifying how to address the £2m budget deficit by the required timeline in February, it would not be possible to delay the required 12 week public consultation by 8 weeks;
 - ii. all members of the Authority are passionate about the Service and are presenting a collective, cross party response in addition to the Chief Fire Officer and Chair approaching MPs to emphasise the urgency of the situation. All MPs approached have collectively said that they are willing to pose a joint representation to Parliament, so there is no further value in delaying consultation for this purpose alone;
 - iii. there may be value in delaying implementation of consultation for up to a couple of weeks until the new Fire Minister has been approached, subject to the advice of the Chief Fire Officer;
 - iv. the Authority legally needs to go out to consultation prior to any change to provision – there is no alternative. Unless funding can be found elsewhere, changes will have to be made to ensure that a legally required balanced budget is achieved in February;
 - v. all the proposals within the report are evidence and data driven, no alternative options are available to the proposals which have been formulated without any influence of elected members. The proposals have been formulated based on the professional advice of the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer;

- vi. the debate of the current position of the Service needs to take place in public to ensure that citizens realise the pressure that the Service is under. Quite simply, consultation will gather the views of citizens, staff, and partners;
- lll) some members of the Authority expressed regret that there had not been thorough debate and discussion prior to publication of the proposals, particularly with regard to the angst caused to staff, but also concerns of citizens, but it is recognised that any delay will extend the angst of staff;
- mmm) this Authority should at least have the option to apply a flat rate £5 increase to Council Tax, as other Authorities have. There has been cross-party lobbying from Fire Authority members to Central Government, which were not successful. If allowed, it wouldn't solve the deficit but would contribute to reducing the deficit;
- nnn) whilst not in favour of raising taxes, the Authority has not been given the flexible option provided to some other authorities, and it is believed that citizens would prefer a small increase in council tax rather than a reduced Fire and Rescue Service;
- ooo) there is concern that there is a proposed reduction in the city provision with all the new high rise development within the city, particularly following the Grenfell Tower incident;
- ppp) the cross-party approach is very welcome and likely to provide a stronger case for Central Government consideration, but it may prove difficult to avoid party politics if Central Government doesn't resolve the issue;
- qqq) public consultation is required to gather the opinions of citizens, the workforce and elected members. If Central Government is not willing to fund the budget deficit, very difficult decisions will have to be made but at least the Authority will have the evidence from public consultation of citizen's views to take forward to the Fire Minister;
- rrr) We are not making a decision on cuts, only to go out to public and work force consultation, which is legally required. The results of consultation may provide valuable evidence of citizen's views and opinions to then strengthen the case made to Central Government. These issues have been building with a cross party approach to try and address rising deficit. Cuts have been ongoing for many years and gaps will be beginning to show in the Service, which will be a risk to citizens. The comments of the FBU are concerning and whilst there isn't enthusiasm for the proposals, there will be tough decisions to be made if the Government doesn't put the required money forward;
- sss) 14 years of ongoing financial cuts is seeing the Service moving backwards. This is not sustainable. Citizens need to understand that the blame for this lies with Central Government which is currently focused to benefit richer citizens;
- ttt) members of the Authority are here representing political parties, but more importantly we are here representing the citizens of Nottingham and have a responsibility for their safety and the ramifications for people's lives. The detail of the needs based analysis and evidence driven data is missing from the report and, with respect to the CFO, the professional opinion of firefighters needs to be included and made available for members and citizens to scrutinise prior to responding;

- uuu) these proposals, which are required to provide a balanced budget, are a risk to public safety and people's lives. The additional pressures on the budget are not of the Fire Authority's making and whilst budgeting for a 3% pay increase, it's likely that with the increasing cost of living, the workforce will be wanting 10-12%, which will provide further pressure in the budget;
- vvv) cuts to frontline services cannot be supported and there needs to be more public information, including input from the experienced workforce, on what the ramifications will be;
- www) Police and Crime Commissioner, Caroline Henry, commented:
 - i. Trust - it is vital that the public have trust in the Fire Service to be and feel safe.
 - ii. Team - we haven't received enough detailed information, nor heard enough from firefighters to be able to make a fully informed decision prior to going out to consultation;
 - iii. Together - HMICFRS is pleased with collaboration so far but as PCC I need to know if there is anything further I can do to support further cost saving collaboration that would prevent cuts to front line services. This may be 'back office' collaboration or whatever we can do;
 - iv. Tomorrow - the future at 2024 is still uncertain with regard to devolution and the possibility of a combined Mayor or PCC, so whilst there are reserves available, should we really be cutting front line services?

CFO responded:

- xxx) that more detailed reports have been submitted to the Authority Committees and group leaders over many months, including quarterly final reports which have provided detail at various committees;
- yyy) staff engagement and feedback is welcomed and encouraged;
- zzz) capital programme reviews are ongoing and rationalisation is underway. Any income will be considered and overseen by Councillor Clarke and the Finance and Resources Committee which has representation from all parties;
- aaaa) the consultation period guidance suggests a period of 12 weeks can be flexible but it is best to give citizens as long as possible. Consultation needs to take place and be concluded prior to Christmas to ensure proposals for a balanced budget can be considered by the Finance and Resources Committee and budget setting in February 2023;
- bbbb) we can use more reserves, but it would not be prudent to recruit to full staffing on the basis of funding from reserves for only one year as there are no guarantees that funding will be forthcoming and potentially necessary to make redundancies, which is not acceptable;

cccc) collaboration is set out in the report and further collaboration opportunities are considered as they are identified;

Councillor John Clarke moved that the vote be taken on the proposed amendment and Councillor Nick Raine seconded the motion proposed by Councillor Steve Battlemuch.

The Chair invited Authority members to vote on accepting the amendment to the recommendations. 9 members voted in favour, and 9 against. The Chair's casting vote resulted in the proposed motion failing.

Members then voted on the substantive recommendations posed in the report.

9 for, 8 against and 1 abstention.

Resolved to:

- 1) **note the proposed reduction in support roles and the move to a second phase of workforce review;**
- 2) **support a period of public and workforce consultation to save £2m from the operational establishment;**
- 3) **note the proposed changes to reduce demand upon the response resources;**
- 4) **note the review of the Service incident attendance time measure;**
- 5) **agree not to pursue a referendum to increase council precept above the current cap;**
- 6) **support the review of CRMP commitments to communities;**
- 7) **endorse the limited use of reserves for financial year 2023/24 to support planned Service reductions;**
- 8) **agree to receive further update reports to future meetings of the Fire Authority;**
- 9) **support the Chief Fire Officer in investigating sustainable longer term strategic options for the Service.**

29 Annual Report of Information Governance 2021/22

Michael Sharman, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which informs the Authority of the Information Governance activity during the year 2021/22.

It was noted that:

- a) 104 Freedom of Information (Fol) requests had been received in the period, compared to 108 in the previous year, and that 85% were dealt with within the required 20 working days. This is below the 90% target but was considered acceptable in the circumstances of pandemic, so improvement is expected for future years;

- b) no Environmental Information Requests were received;
- c) no data protection incidents were reported whereby there was a breach of security;
- d) no Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 were required to be used during this period.

Resolved to note the report.

30 Environment and Sustainability Policy Statement

Michael Sharman, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, introduced the report which presents the recently reviewed Environmental and Sustainability Policy Statement.

Resolved to endorse the Policy Statement to reaffirm the Authority's commitment to matters relating to environment and sustainability.

31 Health and Safety Policy Statement of Intent

Michael Sharman, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, introduced the report which presents the recently reviewed Health and Safety Policy Statement of Intent.

Resolved to endorse the Health and Safety Policy Statement of Intent and reaffirm the Authority's commitment to effective Health and Safety risk management for employees and others who are affected by the Service's activities.

32 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services Inspection Report

Craig Parkin, Chief Fire Officer, and Mick Sharman, Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented the report which formally informs the Authority of the results of the 2021 Inspection by her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services and highlighted the following points:

- a) As a result of the 2018 inspection the Service was rated as 'requiring improvement' and 24 areas for improvement were identified. Since then, the service has worked hard to address the areas for concern and for the latest inspection has achieved a 'good' rating;
- b) From the latest inspection only 4 areas for improvement, which is the lowest received by any Service, and have been identified as:
 - o The Service should assure itself that its risk-based inspection programme prioritises the highest risks and includes proportionate activity to reduce risk
 - o The Service should ensure that, when responding to a 999 call, mobile data terminals are reliable to allow staff to access risk information

- The Service should make sure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration activity
- The Service should assure itself that staff understand how to get wellbeing support.

Work is already underway to address these points.

The Chair and members of the Authority welcomed the improved grading and thanked everyone involved in working to address the areas for improvement, particularly under the current pressures and requested that staff be formally thanked and the rating widely promoted.

Resolved to

- 1) note the outcome of the HMICFRS inspection and the progress made by the Service;**
- 2) acknowledge the four areas for improvement highlighted by HMICFRS and approve governance and scrutiny through the Fire Authority Committee structures.**

33 Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22

Becky Smeathers, Treasurer and Head of Finance, presented the report which provides details of the treasury management activity during 2022/22 as is required by the Local Government Act 2003, and highlighted the following points:

- a) page 42 of the report includes a table which shows that financial activity has been within the Prudential Indicators previously set by the Authority;
- b) estimated total Capital Expenditure to be incurred in 2021/22 was approved as £5.8m but slightly more was spent due to slippage from the previous year;
- c) investment yield benchmark was slightly below the 3 month LIBID rate but this is due to the Service's cash deposits being placed with smaller but secure institutions.

Responses to Authority members' questions included:

- d) with regard to reserves:
 - i. the Service holds approximately £10m reserves which equates to 20% of the gross annual Budget;
 - ii. CIPFA don't recommend a % and it is a decision for the Authority to gauge and balance risk. This is assessed in the reserve strategy within the Treasury Management Strategy and reserves are set as £4.5m, plus earmarked reserves, some of which relate to grants received and on-going project work which runs across the year end, such as the Emergency Services Network, the mobilising system and equipment. There is a table of earmarked reserves in the Futures 2025 report;

- iii. £936k of reserves has been set aside for budget support in future years (but will be needed and used in the next financial year) with further needed in future years;
- iv. £900k has been allocated to implement 'Futures 2025' including consultation, investigating further options and any necessary redundancy payments;
- v. £900k surplus is in the General Fund Reserve, which is currently being protected to provide limited protection beyond future years beyond the next the stability but this will be reviewed when the Authority considers the strategy and reserves in February. To reallocate any earmarked reserves would impact on the ability to deliver the mobilising systems;
- vi. it is noted that whilst there is £5.4m in general reserves, the Authority stance currently is committed to maintain just over £4.5m and the Authority is having to allocate nearly £1m to support Futures 2025.

Resolved to note the update on treasury management activity during the 2021/22 financial year as required under the Local Government Act 2003.

34 Principal Officer Establishment

Craig Parkin, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which seeks approval to amend the Principal Officer establishment and convene the Appointments Committee to recruit and appoint an Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) for Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

- a) a temporary structure was implemented at the time of the CFO appointment, in that the Chief's previous role of Deputy Chief Fire Officer was not filled but that an additional Assistant Chief Fire officer was temporarily appointed;
- b) having thoroughly assessed the current situation, at the moment the Chief considered it appropriate for the Chief Officer Team to continue to consist of 3 officers at the current levels, and delete the Deputy post;
- c) clarity will be sought for the process putting one of the Assistant Officers in charge if the Chief were unavailable for any reason. This will be considered by the Clerk and Monitoring Officer and proposals to amend the constitution if agreed by the Authority.
- d) if agreed today, it is anticipated that the appointment of Assistant Chief Fire Officer will be reported to the February Fire Authority meeting.

Resolved to:

- 1) agree to the deletion of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) post and creation of a substantive ACFO post;**
- 2) task the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) with supporting the Authority in the recruitment of an Assistant Chief Fire Officer.**