



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

TRANSFORMATION AND EFFICIENCY STRATEGY

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 28 February 2020

Purpose of Report:

To provide Members with details of how the £1.4m transformation and collaboration reserve will be used to transform the service and increase efficiency and effectiveness.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members:

- Agree the approach of the Chief Fire Officer to target resources over the next two years in line with the transformational work streams identified within the report.
- Agree to receive updates on the expected efficiency and effectiveness outcomes.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 An outcome from the recent inspection of the Service by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) identified a number of areas of improvement across all three pillars of the inspection matrix.
- 1.2 There are also a number of learning outcomes following the Grenfell Tower Inquiry which the Service is responding to, and it is anticipated that more will follow as the Inquiry moves through the second phase of the process.
- 1.3 Collaboration is a continuous theme for the Authority with a number of workstreams being delivered to improve efficiency and outcomes for the communities of Nottinghamshire. The new Joint Headquarters is an overt programme of works, but there are also many others workstreams involving partners.
- 1.4 Another point to note is that as part of the National Framework Document (2018) Authorities are required to consider strategies to deliver ongoing efficiencies.
- 1.5 This report identifies where improvements in the Service are being pursued and how resourcing will be allocated from the transformation and collaboration reserve previously approved by the Authority. The report also articulates where longer term efficiencies will be made, either through direct reduction of costs or through increased productivity.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Authority on 20 December 2019, Members approved the amalgamation of a number of earmarked reserves to form the transformation and collaboration reserve totalling £1.4m. This was created to demonstrate clear strategic commitment to transform the Service and strive for continuous improvement through the workstreams within the Strategic Plan over the next two years.

TRANSFORMATIONAL WORKSTREAMS

- 2.2 **Digital Technology £325k** – building on the previous focus on technology infrastructure and security, a number of workstreams will be delivered to enable the more efficient and effective working of staff; increasing productivity and improving outcomes for communities. This will include a rationalisation of systems, improved data, training and improved end user experience.
- 2.3 Mobile working will be enhanced through the provision of Wi-Fi and Sim-card enabled devices for all wholtime stations. This will enable multiple activities to be undertaken when away from the station, leading to real-time data input and retrieval, and reducing the need for subsequent manual data entry.

- 2.4 Currently, there are a number of systems in use to access training and record competencies. These will be rationalised to provide greater consistency and accuracy in the measurement of competence.
- 2.5 Data management, in terms of collecting, cleansing and presenting information will be improved to support the new performance management software being implemented within the Service. Furthermore, investment will be made to integrate performance management to enhance scrutiny and drive continuous improvement through effective evaluation.
- 2.6 In recognition of the breadth of digital technology available and in use, there is a requirement to deliver training to users to ensure the maximum benefits can be realised. This will result in a blended approach utilising on-line learning as well as traditional face to face input.
- 2.7 The vast amount of operational equipment deployed across the Service requires continuous and robust asset tracking. The current barcode system is effective in this regard; however, it does require significant input from equipment users. This will be assessed to identify if an automated process can be introduced to increase accuracy, provide real time data and reduce the burden on staff.
- 2.8 **Evaluation of Community Outcomes £100k** – the Service currently engages a whole host of activity to drive down risk in the community, save money and also support staff in their daily roles. Much of this work is based on previous experience and good intention, however it has been identified through the inspection that more robust evaluation is required to ensure activity is having the correct and sustained impact.
- 2.9 A number of areas will be subject to in-depth evaluation; this will include benefits realisation of collaboration activities, the outcomes of safe and well visits in domestic properties; the effectiveness of the new business safety Checks being rolled out in commercial properties, and the post-incident and wellbeing support put in place for staff.
- 2.10 **Workforce Development, Diversity and Culture £350k** – a clear outcome from the local HMICFRS inspection, and also in the State of Fire and Rescue national report, is the need to focus on the workforce to ensure staff are capable and supported to deliver the objectives of the Service.
- 2.11 Training and development is required to meet the continuous improvement challenge and ensure staff are able to deliver within an effective performance management framework. This will include enhanced progression and support processes to ensure talent is recognised and grown within the Service.
- 2.12 The value of diversity needs to be more broadly understood in pursuit of inclusion and improve delivery of services. This will require a shift in culture and a temporary role will be created to support the delivery of the organisational development workstreams, the behavioural framework and community engagement.

- 2.13 The move to the new Joint Headquarters in early 2022 is a significant change for staff, and to achieve the full benefits of collaboration, work is required to ensure staff are prepared and have a full understanding of the direction of travel. This will be undertaken through focused workshops involving staff from the two organisations with the expectation of enhancing the productive relationships between Police and Fire colleagues.
- 2.14 In recognition of the need to increase the productivity of staff, a number of workstreams are focused on reducing duplication, providing greater clarity on expectations and automating processes. This will form part of the organisational performance management framework and staff will need to be upskilled to fully engage with it.
- 2.15 To ensure the Service is able to deliver the required performance improvements, it is anticipated that structural changes may be required across corporate functions. This could involve permanent changes in the establishment which will be subject to the appropriate governance processes within the Authority.
- 2.16 **Collaboration £250k** – a number of collaborative workstreams are ongoing, including the delivery of the joint control with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service, tri-service response hub at Hucknall, Joint Headquarters and shared stations with Nottinghamshire Police.
- 2.17 To support the ongoing work, a temporary role to support the delivery of collaboration will be put in place, and additional funding invested in the joint control to support transition and the harmonisation of operational procedures.
- 2.18 **Performance Management £100k** – the HMICFRS inspection recognised that the Service needs to improve the procedures and processes in place to clearly demonstrate that its activities are focused on risk, and that outcomes are evaluated to drive continuous improvement. This will require additional short-term capacity to deliver a robust performance management framework and support the Service in its preparation for future HMICFRS inspections.
- 2.19 **Grenfell Tower Inquiry Response £275k** – the Inquiry and subsequent Hackitt review has identified that much work is needed to address the issues within the built environment. This will result in increased workload for the Service and the requirement to develop competency and capacity.
- 2.20 It is proposed that the recently agreed national framework for the competencies of fire inspectors will be adopted which will provide a consistent and assured approach to the inspection of commercial premises. This framework will also underpin the foundation training currently being delivered to operational supervisory managers to enable them to deliver business safety checks.
- 2.21 Fire protection solutions in the built environment are increasingly complex due to new and innovative construction techniques being deployed; and also major infrastructure projects like HS2. To enhance the competence of the

Service, a Fire Engineer (funded from revenue) will be employed to provide specialist advice within the Fire Protection department thus reducing the need to buy in the service, and also develop the competence of the organisation.

- 2.22 Training is underway for supervisory managers to enable them to undertake business safety checks. This will create capacity for specialist inspectors to focus on the high-risk premises, such as residential and complex commercial buildings. The training delivery creates costs regarding operational cover, and also the attainment, validation and quality assurance of the qualification process.

EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS EXPECTATIONS

- 2.23 **Safe and Well Visits** – during 2018, the Service expanded the focus of the previous home fire safety check to become a safe and well visit (SWV). The number undertaken per annum was then 4,500; growing to 6,000 in 2019. With the implementation of mobile working, automated data input and enhanced targeting, it is expected that this will increase by 100% to 12,000 per annum by 2022, with 80% of those being delivered to medium and high risk households.
- 2.24 **Fire Safety Audits** – currently, the Fire Protection Department undertakes all business fire safety inspections within the Service. To increase capacity and ensure that the specialist inspecting officers are able to focus on the highest risk, operational crews will commence the business safety checks in lower risk premises. This should lead to a 100% increase in fire safety audits by 2022.
- 2.25 **Creation of a Joint Inspection Team** – through collaboration with Nottingham City Council, a joint inspectorate has been created to work with the Safer Housing Team to focus on those premises which present the greatest risk to residents. This is a collaborative team that will help drive down risk and reduce the number of fires and resultant injuries. Evaluation of the work will be undertaken to assess the outcomes achieved to identify efficiencies.
- 2.26 **On-Call Availability Improvements** – On-Call crews provide the majority of fire cover across the county and targeted effort is ongoing to increase their availability and effectiveness. The aspiration for 2022 is to achieve an average availability of 85% with no section falling below 70%. Work will focus on recruitment, retention and targeted support to maintain appliance availability. Other workstreams are also ongoing investigating alternative working arrangements and contract models.
- 2.27 **Collaboration Outcomes** – collaboration is an integral part of the drive for efficiency and effectiveness. A number of workstreams are already in place which will help drive costs for the Service. The Joint Headquarters programme will be delivered by 2022 leading to annual revenue savings, but more importantly lead the way for greater integration and savings over the longer term.

- 2.28 Other opportunities are also being considered with a number of partners with the focus on driving down costs and increasing effectiveness. Work is ongoing to identify the savings achieved so far, and this will be built upon to demonstrate the efficiencies being delivered for the future through evaluation work being undertaken.
- 2.29 **Procurement Collaboration and Frameworks** – the Service already excels in procurement, but work in this area will continue with the adoption of more joint procurement activities. The recent purchase of structural firefighting personal protective equipment has been secured through a national framework. As well as securing the most competitive price, this also negates the need to undertake market research, staff consultation and procurement processes, therefore reducing hidden costs and increasing productivity.
- 2.30 Further collaborative approaches are being considered for the procurement of other goods and services, and savings are expected in both actual purchase prices and increased efficiency of procurement staff. Thorough evaluation will be required to provide the analysis of savings however, a target equivalent to offsetting inflation is considered achievable by 2022.
- 2.31 **Technology** – costs within this area are rising, not least because the Service increasingly relies upon technology to create efficiency and effectiveness within working practices, and also because the security of systems is a critical part of the infrastructure. It is difficult to demonstrate efficiencies; however, technologies will be integrated to increase security, reduce complexity, duplication and failures, resulting in a user-centric platform that is mobile and agile.
- 2.32 Accurate and accessible data is key to support the implementation of organisational performance management. Operational crews and their managers will be able to use better targeted data, work with greater mobility and agility, therefore increasing their productivity.
- 2.33 Consideration will also be given to emerging firefighting technologies and protective equipment to determine if operations can be improved and risks to firefighters reduced.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 In December 2019, Members agreed to combine a number of earmarked reserves to support a strategic programme of activity to transform the Service and deliver efficiencies. The resultant transformation and collaboration reserve is £1.4 in total.
- 3.2 This report provides indicative figures on where that reserve will be targeted over the life of the Strategic Plan and the expected efficiencies resulting from it. Spend will be monitored through the normal reporting processes within the Finance and Resources Committee.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct human resources or learning and development implications arising from this report, however there may be some that arise as a result of the individual workstreams. These will be dealt with in line with normal service policy and procedures.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because this report does not change policy or service delivery procedures.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

Greater focus on prevention and protection activities will ensure the Authority continues to meet its responsibilities with regard to crime and disorder.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Local Government Act 1999 requires fire and rescue authorities to deliver best value. Focused targeting of resources to drive improvement in efficiency and effectiveness will support the Authority in meeting that duty.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Continually striving for improvements and efficiencies will support the Service's improvement journey with regards to the HMICFRS inspections. This report provides clear strategic intention to transform the Service and strive for improvements across all three pillars of the inspection process, therefore driving down risk within the community.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

The collaboration implications are articulated within the body of the report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Agree the approach of the Chief Fire Officer to target resources over the next two years in line with the transformational work streams identified within the report.
- 10.2 Agree to receive updates on the expected efficiency and effectiveness outcomes.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

John Buckley
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