



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Human Resources Committee

CO-LOCATION TO JOINT HEADQUARTERS

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 23 April 2021

Purpose of Report:

To provide an update on the co-location to a joint headquarters with the Nottinghamshire Police.

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of this report.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In February 2019, the Fire Authority approved the relocation of Service Headquarters to a shared site with the Nottinghamshire Police. This to be achieved through co-location at the Police's existing Sherwood Lodge site.
- 1.2 The relocation of staff to Sherwood Lodge is planned to take place from January 2022, with the majority of staff relocating from March 2022.
- 1.3 Planning for the relocation has been co-ordinated through a Joint Headquarters (JHQ) Programme Board, chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, with joint workstream leads from both organisations, including for the workforce aspects of the move. These workstreams include ICT, Estates, People, Finance and decant from the Bestwood Lodge site.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 Whilst it is important to manage the logistics of the move in a planned way to enable staff to operate efficiently at the point of relocation, the over-riding objective from a workforce perspective is that all employees will relocate to the new shared headquarters in a managed and supported manner, with concerns having been addressed as part of transition planning, so that the impact of any disruption to working arrangements will be kept to a minimum.
- 2.2 In order to maximise opportunities for joint working and efficiencies, comparable teams will be relocated together, for instance the Police and Fire HR and Organisational Development teams will share office space. Office arrangements have recently been agreed and these can now be shared with staff so that they can raise any issues and have an opportunity to contribute how the new arrangements will work. Teams are actively encouraged to make links with each other, both formally and informally, to develop good relations and understanding ahead of the move and this will be a focus over the next year.
- 2.3 Communication and employee engagement is central to ensuring that the move is a positive experience for both Police and Fire employees. There have been a number of employee briefings setting out progress on the project and updates on key issues, and employees are encouraged to raise questions at these briefings to make them as open and engaging as possible. These briefings will continue over the next year. A Communications Plan has been established and will be delivered by a joint communications team.
- 2.4 A joint employee forum has also recently been formed to ensure ongoing engagement and input from staff, particularly around communal areas and ways of working. The group members, who are volunteers from both services, will act as conduits for suggestions, information-sharing and issues raised by staff, and will feed into the programme board. Issues which have been raised so far include car parking, shared facilities and reception

arrangements. The employee forum will also be consulted on issues such as signage and branding of the new JHQ and joint working protocols.

- 2.5 There are a number of issues which are specific to fire service employees, such as contractual changes to work base, additional travel time and vetting arrangements. Consultation has been ongoing with representative bodies over the last year about possible impacts, and a vetting policy has already been agreed and the process is underway for headquarters based staff. Ongoing consultation will form part of the Joint Negotiating and Consultation Panel agenda as a standing item to ensure ongoing feedback. This includes an assurance that there are no planned redundancies anticipated as all job roles will transfer to the new JHQ.
- 2.6 Individual meetings with those who will be relocating will take place to allow people to raise any specific issues so that they can be addressed as early as possible. This will include any reasonable adjustments for employees who require provision of specialist equipment, modification to their work area or individual issues related to their health or well-being.
- 2.7 There are also a number of areas of shared policy with the Police which are being progressed through a joint HR project group. Some of these are specific to the shared site, for instance smoking policy, agile working arrangements and data security, and some create opportunity for more collaborative working, for instance around equality and diversity and organisational development.
- 2.8 The Occupational Health (OH) teams will be co-locating to a shared building on the existing Sherwood Lodge site and this will entail agreement on the use of shared facilities and appointments process. A separate working group has been established to manage through the changes to working practices required by both OH teams to ensure that their services are maintained throughout the transition period.
- 2.9 The co-location of Fire and Police staff will represent a significant change for both organisations and planning for the move is well underway. The focus for the People aspect will be to create a positive experience for all employees who will be affected by the change, and to ensure that communication and engagement with staff are a priority over the next year.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Costs associated with the co-location to a Joint Headquarters with the Nottinghamshire Police have been approved by the Authority and form part of the programme management which is overseen by the Strategic Collaboration Board and JHQ Programme Board.
- 3.2 There will be costs associated with the relocation of staff in cases where employees incur additional travel expenses, and these have been factored into budget projections for 2022-23.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are significant implications for Human Resources as part of planning for the co-location. These include contractual, logistical and employee engagement issues, these are set out within the report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has been undertaken as part of the design of the new build and is currently under review. A full equality assessment is being undertaken jointly with the Nottinghamshire Police, led by the Service's Inclusion and Organisation Development Manager, to establish and address any implications arising from the co-location.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The relocation of service headquarters is a significant undertaking and a comprehensive risk register has been developed for each project strand under the auspices of the Joint Headquarters Programme Board. The risk register is regularly updated, issues addressed and controls implemented to ensure a smooth transition to the new shared headquarters.
- 8.2 The People workstream of the JHQ Programme identifies key risks as potential lack of positive employee engagement, potential loss of staff, potential contractual issues and potential lack of work space – however these risks are being managed effectively through appropriate consultation mechanisms, staff engagement and communications and new/revised policies.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The proposed relocation is a key collaboration project for the Service and the Service is working with the Nottinghamshire Police to deliver against the project timescale and objectives.

9.2 The co-location may result in further opportunities to collaborate on joint provision of services or sharing of resources. Any such proposed collaboration would be subject to agreement of a detailed business case to the Strategic Collaboration Board.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER