



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

COMMITTEE OUTCOMES

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 23 July 2021

Purpose of Report:

To report to Members the business and actions of the Fire Authority committee meetings which took place between March and July 2021.

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of this report.

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1. BACKGROUND

As part of the revised governance arrangements the Authority has delegated key responsibilities to specific committees of the Authority. As part of those delegated responsibilities, the chairs of committees and the management leads report to the Authority on the business and actions as agreed at Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 1 June 2007.

2. REPORT

The minutes of the following meetings are attached at Appendix A for the information of all Fire Authority Members:

Community Safety Committee	19 March 2021
Finance and Resources Committee	26 March 2021
Human Resources Committee	23 April 2021
Policy and Strategy Committee	30 April 2021
Community Safety Committee	11 June 2021
Policy and Strategy Committee	02 July 2021
Human Resources Committee	02 July 2021
Finance and Resources Committee	02 July 2021

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All financial implications were considered as part of the original reports submitted to the committees.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

All human resources and learning and development implications were considered as part of the original reports submitted to the committees.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because this report is not associated with a policy, function or service. Its purpose is to update the Fire Authority on the outcomes of committee business.

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 directly from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The Service's performance in relation to matters addressed through the committee structure is scrutinised through a range of audit processes. The Service needs to continue to perform well in these areas as external scrutiny through Comprehensive Performance Assessment and auditors' judgement is key to future Service delivery.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report, as the report seeks to provide Members with an update on the business and actions of Fire Authority committee meetings which have taken place in the last quarter.

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



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

**Minutes of the meeting held remotely and streamed to
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCt4VuYp8JJJvXCLRmSRJ1mw/featured> on 19
March 2021 from 10.02 am - 10.44 am**

Membership

Present

Councillor Nick Raine (Chair)
Councillor Stephen Garner
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
Councillor Sue Saddington
Councillor Parry Tsimbirdis

Absent

Councillor Jason Zadrozny

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Craig Parkin - Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Mick Sharman - Area Manager for Response
Bryn Coleman - Area Manager for Prevention and Protection
Gavin Harris - Head of Digital Transformation
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

7 Apologies for Absence

None.

8 Declarations of Interest

None.

9 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2021 were confirmed as a true record and will be signed by the Chair.

10 An update on the 'Areas for Improvement' from the 2019 HMICFRS Inspection

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which provides members with an update on the progress in addressing the 25 AFIs across the service.

Highlighted points included:

- a) following on from the inspection, further potential areas for improvement were identified at departmental level and are being addressed;
- b) whilst 10 of the 12 AFIs aligned to the Community Safety Committee for scrutiny have been closed as completed, 2 AFIs remain active;
- c) the Committee is requested to approve an extension to 31 March 2021 for the completion AFI 4, 'ensuring that prevention work is targeted at people most at risk' as the initial schedule for the improvement of this area has been significantly impacted by the lockdown and Covid-19 restrictions;
- d) the inspectors had criticised the Service for not evaluating the work undertaken regarding safe and well visits to vulnerable people. As a results Nottingham Trent University has evaluated the work to ensure that the most vulnerable people are effectively targeted;
- e) there is clear and strong evidence that operational domestic smoke alarm ownership could be as low as 40% in some communities, there is still much work to be done;
- f) progress to address AFI 9, 'to ensure that mobile data terminals (MDTs) are reliable to allow staff to access risk information' continues.
- g) the storing and processing of information on MDT's can be complex, but it is essential that all crews are able to recall and register all risk information including car build, chemicals, buildings, and site-specific risk information (SSRI).

Resolved

- 1) to note the progress made against the areas for improvement;**
- 2) to agree the extension of area for improvement for to 31 March 2021.**

11 Service Delivery Performance Report

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, introduced the report which provides an update on the performance of the service delivery directorate in the period between 1 December 2020 and 31 January 2021. It is noted that despite Covid 19, the Service has been undertaking an array of work, including:

- i. 362 urgent care shifts completed for EMAS;
- ii. 1209 urgent care patients transported;
- iii. 12,195 medicine and food parcels delivered;
- iv. 515 Covid tests administered;
- v. 24,506 vaccinations given;
- vi. 3646 signposting and befriending calls made;
- vii. 11 Covid testing centres built;
- viii. 212 Covid testing volunteer trained;
- ix. 39 staff supporting partner organisations.

Mick Sharman, Area Manager for Response, provided the following summary with regard to response and COVID-19 partnership working:

- a) the Service attended 1,228 incidents, which is an increase of 423 incidents compared to the same period in the previous year;
- b) whilst the report states that there have been 3 fire fatalities, since publication of the agenda it has been confirmed that one fatality was due to other circumstances;
- c) the report provides a breakdown by category of incidents, a comparison of numbers to the previous year, and the multi-appliance attendance numbers;
- d) the average response time remains at 7.42 minutes, which is within the target of attending within 8 minutes. With regard to the slightly heightened response time to Priority 1 incidents, which includes road traffic collisions, these can take place anywhere and appliances often have to travel further to attend from the fire stations which are sited to serve the built environment;
- e) the on-call availability target is 85%. As set out in appendix A to the report, availability has increased significantly, due to lockdown, with an overall availability average of 92%, with Stapleford achieving an impressive 99%;
- f) on-call availability at Retford and Ashfield stations are listed separately as they operate a different model of day shift crewing, with the availability of one appliance considered very good, but the availability of a second appliances needing further support;
- g) call answering within 7 seconds at the Joint Control Centre surpassed the 90% target, but mobilisation system availability missed the 99% target by 0.2% due to significant power outages;
- h) although the average response times for England for 2019/20 are provided in the report, it is noted that such results are influenced by number of factors including call handling times, turnout times, drive times, traffic conditions, time-of-day, all of which can vary depending on the geographical and urban area, but members should be assured that the NFRS is performing well;
- i) all staff are working very well to support the Service in supporting the community, with staff supporting seven vaccination centres and now administering vaccinations.

Bryn Coleman, Area Manager for Prevention, provided the following overview of prevention and protection work:

- j) although several staff are temporarily supporting partner emergency and health services with COVID-19 work, the Service continues to maintain its statutory duties;
- k) Safe and Well Visits (SWV) were initially paused due to lockdown, partners continued to make referrals and there is now a backlog. A triage process has been established using the 'CHARLIE matrix', enabling identification of those at high and very high risk who will then receive personal visits;
- l) for referrals of citizens who are considered medium risk against the CHARLIE matrix, visits have been paused during the pandemic but where possible telephone contact is made;

- m) post-incident visits to affected communities continue to take place. Following serious incidents in Warsop, Ashfield, Hucknall and Stockhill, firefighters undertook appropriately socially distanced community reassurance and engagement work, targeting 653 properties, of which 204 were provided with safety advice and smoke alarms were fitted at 148;
- n) road and general fire safety initiatives continues predominantly via social media as socially interactive engagement has been paused due to the pandemic and secondment of staff to partners to support COVID-19 work;
- o) safety of buildings remains a priority with the Service undertaking inspections to identify potential safety hazards and failings, educate and inform residents and those responsible for safety, the activity of which is outlined within the report;
- p) the City Council and NFRS partnership, the Joint Audit and Inspection Team (JAIT), continues to examine major developments across the city, with a particular focus on buildings converted for accommodation and high rise developments to identify any safety concerns that require addressing prior to occupation;
- q) a Fire Engineer from the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service provides support to NFRS in more complex issues. Due to a nationwide shortage resulting from an increased demand following the Grenfell Tower Fire, the Service is investing in 2 members of the Protection Team studying to become Fire Engineers to ensure that in the longer term the Service will have its own in-house capability;
- r) there were 155 Unwanted Fire Signals (UFS) and 10 Unwanted Lift Rescues (ULR) during the performance period. Officers continue to work with building managers and the 'responsible person' to remind them of their legal obligations and reduce unwanted calls;
- s) the new Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) is being developed and will be submitted for to the Fire Authority prior to going out to consultation next year with the delivery plan including target actions and dates, and a longer term strategic view;
- t) it's anticipated that HMICFRS's next inspection will be far more in-depth than previously and require more detailed information.

Members' comments included:

- u) it's reassuring that the Service continues to provide excellent support and meet statutory requirements, even during these unusual times;
- v) specific information on the outcome of deliberate fires, including if the Police make any arrests or press charges, would be interesting;
- w) personal thanks are given to all staff who have supported the more vulnerable citizens in our communities during the pandemic.

Resolved to note the report.



**Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority
Finance and Resources Sub-Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held remotely via Zoom and live-streamed on YouTube on
Friday 26 March 2021 from 10:08am to 10:35am**

Membership

Present

Councillor John Clarke (Chair)
Councillor Andrew Brown
Councillor Toby Neal
Councillor Mike Quigley MBE
Councillor Nick Raine

Absent

None

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Candida Brudenell - Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Gavin Harris - Head of Digital Transformation
Adrian Mann - Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council
Becky Smeathers - Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Fire Authority

12 Apologies for Absence

Leila Henry (Head of Corporate Support)
Terry Scott (Head of Procurement and Resources)

13 Declarations of Interests

None.

14 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2021 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

**15 Revenue, Capital and Prudential Code Monitoring Report to 31 January
2021**

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Fire Authority, presented a report on the financial performance of the Service in 2020/21 and the Prudential Code monitoring to the end of January 2021. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the current revenue monitoring shows a forecast outturn position of £44,127,000, which represents a £1,238,000 underspend against the revised budget of £45,365,000. This represents a slightly lower underspend than forecast previously, as some planned expenditure has been moved forward, to relieve pressure on next year's budget. The underspend figure also accounts for grants that have been received this year, but that have not yet been allocated fully, so some of the expenditure will take place next year. A new Covid funding grant of £150,000 has been awarded and will be accounted for in the relevant annual budget, depending upon whether it is received in this or next financial year. The Service has also received a £101,000 Grenfell Infrastructure Improvements grant, to address the recommendations arising from the Grenfell Phase 1 inquiry;
- (b) the full extent of the firefighter pension liability costs arising from the McCloud judgement are still unknown. The remedy will require moving some officers back to prior pension schemes, but the national guidance and framework for achieving rectification across the sector is still awaited. Work is underway with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs to calculate the extra costs, and the Local Government Association is seeking financial burdens support from the Government to manage these. Depending upon the known situation at the end of the financial year, the year-end accounts will either need to make a specific provision for the pension remedy costs, or set out an appropriate contingent liability;
- (c) there is a forecast overspend in premises costs of £105,000, of which £44,000 is due to business rates being higher than expected at the point of setting the budget. An appeal has been made against the business rate valuations, which is expected to achieve significant savings. As there has been a regular overspend on service costs in recent budgets, the condition of all of the Service's properties has been reviewed and a programme of planned maintenance works over the next ten years has been produced, to seek to ensure that expenditure is more controlled and less reactive. The 2021/22 maintenance budget has been increased in the context of the plan, which has been used to inform future budgets. The same process has been carried out for the Service's vehicles, as some of the fleet is now beginning to age;
- (d) the budget for external audit fees is expected to be overspent by £63,000, as there has been a significant increase in the fees charged by Ernst & Young beyond the original fee of £24,000. The revised fees are due to an increase in the work required because of changes to the audit regulatory framework. However, the increase is being challenged and negotiations are underway to reduce these costs for the 2019/20 accounts. Nevertheless, the audit costs relating to the 2020/21 accounts audit are expected to increase significantly;
- (e) the Covid-19 grant from the Government has helped the Service to make a big difference through undertaking over 370 shifts for the East Midlands Ambulance Service, working on the setting up and running of the temporary mortuary, delivering over 12,200 food parcels and medical supplies, helping to set up testing centres within Nottinghamshire, and delivering over 25,100 vaccinations. The Covid grant funds around 8 staff employed on a temporary basis. An overspend of £250,000 is anticipated in on-call pay. However, £228,000 of this relates directly to the additional costs arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, and these costs can either be offset by the Covid-19 grant, or are being funded by partner organisations. Meanwhile, other staff have worked extremely hard in keeping the normal service in operation while colleagues were participating in the additional Coronavirus-related duties. Currently, work is underway to

catch up on 'safe and well' visits, which have been delayed due to the pandemic. Regular DELTA returns are made to the Government in relation to the spending of the Covid grant;

- (f) expenditure on the ICT programme is expected to be £758,000 by the end of the year, rather than the £3,858,000 stated in error in paragraph 2.28 of the report. During the upgrade of the HR systems, a document scanning solution was identified as a requirement, as it will not be possible to transfer the current level of paper records from the existing to the new headquarters. As such, an additional investment of £46,000 is needed for this. Funding of £20,000 from the Business Solutions budget has been used to offset this additional expenditure in part, with the remainder coming from underspends elsewhere in the programme. The cyber-security budget has been fully utilised to purchase an advanced threat detection solution to strengthen the Service's defences against malicious cyber-attacks;
- (g) ultimately, the current capital expenditure and prudential monitoring is otherwise on track.

Resolved to approve an increase of £46,000 to the HR system upgrade capital project, to include document scanning. The additional expenditure will be funded from the Business Solutions budget (£20,000) and from underspends elsewhere in the capital programme.

16 Corporate Risk Management, Including Management of Occupational Road Risk

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the Corporate Risk Management Process, including the current version of the Corporate Risk Register. The following points were discussed:

- (a) a robust risk management process is in place to enables the consideration of key external and internal risks as part of the management and decision-making process. The Corporate Risk Register identifies the risks that are considered to be the most significant in terms of their potential impact on the Service's priorities. The corporate register is informed by a number of risk registers at various other levels in the Service, which feed in to it;
- (b) the Coronavirus pandemic continues to pose a significant risk, so a new risk has been created in the register to encompass the implications and key work streams that are ongoing to mitigate the impacts that Coronavirus has had and will continue to have. Coronavirus has affected the whole of the Service, and addressing the associated risks effectively represents a substantial burden on the available resources;
- (c) the financial risks associated with reduced council tax and business rates collection, coupled with the increased expenditure due to the Coronavirus pandemic, have been mitigated to a large extent by supplementary funding from the Government. However, the register has been updated to reflect the ongoing uncertain position relating to the required remedy for the firefighter pension scheme, due to the McCloud judgement;

- (d) the Service's insurance provision has been re-tendered, with new insurances due to start from 1 April 2021. Despite a hardening of the insurance market, this tendering process has resulted in a £50,000 saving against the previous financial year;
- (e) the arrangements in place for Management of Occupational Road Risk have now been consolidated into the Corporate Risk Management report, and work has continued on the management of this occupational risk.

The Committee noted the report.

17 Update on the 'Areas for Improvement' from the 2019 HMICFRS Inspection

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the Service's response to its 2019 inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The following points were discussed:

- (a) of the 25 'Areas for Improvement' (AFI) arising from the inspection, two were assigned to the Finance and Resources Sub-Committee, for scrutiny. AFI 16 has been completed, and AFI 15 ("The Service needs to accelerate its plans to improve ICT so that it makes best use of available technology to support operational effectiveness and efficiency") is on target to be completed by 31 March 2021, in line with the forecasted timescale.

The Committee noted the report.

18 Exclusion of the Public

The Committee decided to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining agenda items in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

19 Exempt Minutes

The Committee confirmed the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2021 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.



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

**Minutes of the meeting held remotely via Zoom and live-streamed on YouTube on
Friday 23 April 2021 from 10:15am to 11:28am**

Membership

Present

Councillor Shuguftah Quddoos (Chair)
Councillor Vaughan Hopewell
Councillor John Longdon
Councillor Salma Mumtaz

Absent

Councillor Jawaid Khalil

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Tracy Crump	- Head of People and Organisational Development
Gavin Harris	- Head of Digital Transformation
Adrian Mann	- Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council
Craig Parkin	- Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Matt Sismey	- Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager

13 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Jawaid Khalil

14 Declarations of Interests

None.

15 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2021 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

16 Human Resources Update

Tracy Crump, Head of People and Organisational Development, presented a report on the key Human Resources metrics for the period of January 2021 to 31 March 2021. The following points were discussed:

- (a) sickness in the third quarter (1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020) has increased compared to the previous two quarters across all work groups – although it should be noted that sickness absence in these preceding periods was much lower than

usual. A seasonal increase would normally be expected in the third quarter.

However, absence was still lower than in the same quarter in the previous year, and was below the national average;

- (b) absence due to Coronavirus has been significant in this quarter, with just under 400 working days lost through positive cases or a requirement for self-isolation. A strategic plan for supporting and managing sickness due to Coronavirus is in place and is updated regularly. A business continuity plan is in place, and the strategic intentions are brought forward into delivery. A full risk assessment has been carried out for staff vulnerable to Coronavirus, and for the potential long-term effects of having had Coronavirus, as this could have an impact on the ongoing physical health of employees. A health and wellbeing strategy for both physical and mental health is in place, and healthcare support for staff is available both internally and via an external helpline;
- (c) otherwise, the primary case of illness for operational personnel was musculo-skeletal, while mental health represented the main reason for absence for support personnel (though the total number of staff affected by this in the period was 4). Both of these can represent long-term health issues, which accounted for 60% of all absence during the period. Support is available to staff through the Occupational Health team, HR and line managers, and the Service's long-term absence is lower than the national average for the sector;
- (d) ultimately, the absence statistics during the Coronavirus lockdowns are likely to be anomalous in the context of the long-term trends, so careful consideration is needed on what a reasonable baseline for sickness absence will be, following the pandemic. An overview of sickness absence figures will be prioritised as part of the normalising of working arrangements;
- (e) currently, there are four vacancies in whole-time operational roles. However, recruitment continued across the board throughout last year and 28 new firefighters have joined the Service, with the first cohort starting training this month, and the second starting in September. There has been an increase in on-call firefighters, and a number of new support staff have been appointed, mostly on fixed-term contracts. The Workforce Plan has been reviewed, and a new plan to take the Service through to 2023 will be brought to the next committee;
- (f) there have been no new employment disputes or grievances. There is one outstanding Employment Tribunal case, which will be heard later in the year. Currently, there are no formally recorded cases of harassment or bullying. A staff survey undertaken last year did find that some employees reported feeling that they have been subject to harassment or bullying in the workplace, and the Service is proactive in dealing with such issues. Support is provided to managers at all levels in addressing these issues at an early stage, and very few incidents have become formal cases. However, this area will be kept under close review.

The Committee noted the report.

17 Co-Location to Joint Headquarters

Tracy Crump, Head of People and Organisational Development, presented a report the progress towards co-location to a joint headquarters with the Nottinghamshire Police. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the relocation to a joint headquarters represents a key change for the organisation. The Service is very aware of the significant impact it will have on staff who will be moving their work base, and to the need for the change to be managed in a sensitive way. Currently, a Programme Board is managing the approach to the logistical issues, while HR is focusing on supporting staff through the transition as positively as possible. The relocation process will take place between January and April 2022;
- (b) there is ongoing communications and engagement to ensure that staff are kept informed about the current plans, and it is intended to carry out familiarisation visits to the new HQ when this is possible. There is an open forum where questions can be raised, and a Joint Employee Forum has been set up between both Services to explore how the two organisations will interact communally at the new HQ;
- (c) there will be some employee contractual considerations to resolve due to the move to a new work base, and engagement is underway with the staff unions on policy and management issues. However, there are no redundancies or team structure changes planned as part of the move. Team work areas are being established at the new HQ, and staff from both Services will be working together in the same spaces, so it is hoped to carry out in-person visits in the summer. The Occupational Health team will be co-locating with the equivalent Police team, and work will be carried out to ensure that there is no disruption to occupational health provision during the transition period.

The Committee noted the report.

18 Wholetime Firefighter Recruitment 2020

Matt Sismey, Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager, presented a report on the whole-time firefighter recruitment process that took place during 2020. The following points were discussed:

- (a) a full whole-time recruitment campaign was carried out during 2020. Firefighter recruitment is a challenging process, and it was made more difficult than normal due to the Coronavirus pandemic. However, it was possible to carry out much of the recruitment process in a virtual way;
- (b) a lead for positive action was seconded to the campaign. Although there were fewer opportunities to carry out in-person positive action, there was targeted advertising for BAME communities, women and other groups that are under-represented in the Service. Online sessions were held to tell people about the role, which were very well attended. Mentoring sessions for interviews were provided, in addition to sessions to help improve literacy and numeracy skills. Socially-distanced fitness sessions were also provided;

- (c) the recruitment process began on 24 August 2020, and there were 646 applications submitted within the first week. The diversity of candidates was good, with 15% BAME, 12% women and 8% identifying as LGBTQ+. Success rates for these groups were good, with 5 women and 4 people from a BAME background appointed. Being a firefighter requires a certain level of physical ability, health and fitness. However, the Service needs to take full account of all people who aspire to become a firefighter, and neuro-diversity and mental health conditions should not be a barrier to this. As such, reasonable adjustments for disability are made, whenever possible;
- (d) more work is required to achieve a Service that is fully representative of its communities, but the results of the recruitment process were positive – particularly in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic. It is important that positive action and proactive engagement is now carried out continually going forward, in preparation for future recruitment, and a Community Engagement Manager is in place to further develop these links;
- (e) in addition to the recruitment process, a migration process was held to enable on-call firefighters to apply to become whole-time. It is important to balance Service needs and to retain the right level of skills and experience in the on-call teams, as well as working to increase the diversity of the workforce through an open selection process. As such, this is a challenging area in terms of workforce management.

The Committee noted the report.

19 People Strategy 2017-20

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, and Tracy Crump, Head of People and Organisational Development, presented a report on the outcomes of the People Strategy 2017-20. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the highlights and lessons of the previous People Strategy are now being brought forward into the new strategy document, and there is a focus on culture change within the organisation. There are likely to be upcoming challenges across the sector, so it is vital that the Service identifies what needs to be delivered to its communities, with the resources available. There is a continuity between the plans, to work toward excellence. Departmental restructures have been carried out to ensure that the organisation has the optimum number of people in the right places, and with the right skills, to deliver a service effectively;
- (b) the creation of the Joint Control Centre with the Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service has worked well, as has the introduction of mixed crewing models and changes to on-call crew structures. A cadet scheme has been established with the Police to engage with young people, while development processes are in place for current and future leaders, including an Aspiring Leaders programme. A middle manager scheme has also been set up, with a focus on coaching, mentoring and self-development;
- (c) there is a full commitment to workforce development and training, with updated performance development and review processes. An e-learning platform has been established, and there is a strong focus on ICT training. The Service is very involved

in the implementation of the national Operational Guidance. Apprenticeships have been championed for apprentice firefighters;

- (d) it is vital to have a fully informed and engaged workforce, and the results from last year's staff survey were positive on this point. There is a focus on achieving a positive engagement and a workplace with a culture of inclusion. A wellbeing strategy and support structures are in place. Equality, diversity and inclusion are promoted and, currently, work is underway to make it easier for service users who are deaf to contact the Service. Work is also needed to raise awareness and understanding around faith and culture.

The Committee noted the report.

20 Organisational Development and Inclusion Update

Matt Sismey, Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager, presented a report on the organisational development and inclusion work-streams that form part of the People Strategy. The following points were discussed:

- (a) a substantial amount of work is underway in the context of the People Strategy, and a new Organisational Development and Improvement Officer is in place. The latest staff survey received a good response rate and had some positive headlines. Take-up and living of the organisation's values has been strong, and the staff response to the situation caused by the Coronavirus pandemic was good;
- (b) the results show that the level of harassment experienced by staff has decreased, both within the workplace and from service users. Some staff report experiencing discrimination, however, and work is underway to address this, including through a BAME forum. It is important that equality impact assessments are used to ensure that services and policies are analysed in the context of potential indirect discrimination. A deaf communications tool has been developed to help frontline staff communicate more effectively with deaf service users;
- (c) a multi-agency Future Leaders programme is in place, and participating Service staff are performing well. The staff Personal Development Review process has been reviewed and is progressing well, with a simplified and shortened form, and improved objective setting. Coaching and mentoring are being embedded, including reverse mentoring. A competency framework is also in place to develop staff in Green Book roles, with more competencies to be developed for staff in uniform roles over the next twelve months. In terms of good governance, the sector's Code of Ethics is a vital document, and the Fire Authority's member Code of Conduct is being reviewed. Both of these documents will be covered during member induction.

The Committee noted the report.

21 Exclusion of the Public

The Committee decided to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining agenda items in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the

public interest in disclosing the information, as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

22 Exempt Minutes

The Committee confirmed the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2021 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

23 Changes to the Permanent Establishment

The Chair of the Committee agreed that this item, although not on the original agenda, could be considered as a matter of urgency because there is a pressing need for the amendment of the current establishment to better support the effective delivery of services, and this decision should not be deferred to a later meeting.

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on proposed changes to the Service's current permanent establishment.

Resolved to approve the recommendations as set out in the exempt report.



Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority - Policy and Strategy

Minutes of the meeting held at To be held remotely and streamed to Youtube on 30 April 2021 from 10.01 am - 10.56 am

Membership

Present

Councillor Michael Payne (Chair)
Councillor Toby Neal (Vice Chair)
Councillor Andrew Brown
Councillor John Clarke
Councillor Sybil Fielding
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler

Absent

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Candida Brudenell	- Assistant Chief Fire Officer
John Buckley	- Chief Fire Officer
Gavin Harris	- Head of Digital Transformation and IT
Craig Parkin	- Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Becky Smeathers	- Head of Finance
Malcolm Townroe	- Clerk and Monitoring Officer
Phil Wye	- Governance Officer

55 Apologies for Absence

None.

56 Declarations of Interest

None.

57 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

58 Closure of the 'Areas for Improvement' from the 2019 HMICFRS Inspection

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, introduced the report providing Members with an update on the Service's response to the outcomes regarding the 2019 inspection of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services and presenting closure of the associated 'Areas for Improvement' that were identified.

Resolved to

- (1) Agree the closure of Area for Improvement 13;**
- (2) approve the reporting of the three 'Areas for Improvement' aligned to the Policy and Strategy Committee as discharged.**

59 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services - State of Fire Report

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, introduced the report presenting Members with an overview of the 'State of Fire' report published by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, highlighting the following:

- (a) in his annual assessment of England's fire and rescue services, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services, Sir Thomas Winsor, highlighted that Fire Services rose to the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic, with many fire and rescue staff taking on additional activities;
- (b) the six recommendations for national reform of the fire service which were made previously remain necessary and need to accelerate;
- (c) since the publication of the NFCC Code of Ethics, the Service has adopted the document and reflect the principles within the Service's Behavioural Framework. This is being rolled-out to all personnel across the Service and builds upon the Service's focus in this area since the refresh of the Service Values in 2016.

The following points were raised during the discussion which followed:

- (d) the Report recommends that the Government change the law to give Chief Fire Officers operational independence. In Nottinghamshire it is not clear how this would be beneficial, as there are already strong governance arrangements and a clear scheme of delegation in place, and it remains important that the public are represented in decision making;
- (e) the Service has worked hard in recent years to improve its diversity and culture. Recent recruitment drives have increased the numbers of female employees and those from ethnic minorities. Recent staff surveys have also shown that staff have increasing confidence in management.

Resolved to note the update on the 'State of Fire' report.

60 Collaboration Update

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report presenting Members with an update on the Service's collaborations including the Joint Headquarters Programme, highlighting the following:

- (a) work is well underway for the necessary processes to ensure a smooth transition of personnel between the current Fire Headquarters and the new Joint Headquarters. These include vetting processes, a revised equality impact assessment, reasonable adjustments and workforce engagement including employee forums and joint meetings;
- (b) collaboration work that has taken place during the Covid-19 pandemic is not included in this report and will be reported later this year in a separate report;
- (c) Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Joint Fire Control continues to deliver emergency call and incident management on behalf of both Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Fire Authorities. Its performance is monitored and reported to the Authority's Community Safety Committee on a quarterly basis and performance levels are continually above the agreed measures;
- (d) work is continuing on the high-level disposal options for the Bestwood Lodge site, and the Service will look to achieve full market value for the site.

Resolved to

(1) note the content of the report;

(2) agree to receive a revised Collaboration Framework for approval in Spring 2022.

61 Exclusion of the public

Resolved to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, under Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3, on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining an exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

62 Firefighter Pension Scheme Age Discrimination Remedy

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report on the ongoing implications of the age discrimination case related to the transitional protection for the 2015 Fire Fighters' Pension Scheme.

Resolved to approve the recommendations as set out in the report.



**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.



**Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority
Policy and Strategy Sub-Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service
Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge Drive, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD on Friday 2 July
2021 from 10:02am to 11:40am**

Membership

Present

Councillor Michael Payne (Chair)
Councillor Sybil Fielding
Councillor Roger Jackson
Councillor John Lee
Councillor Toby Neal

Absent

Councillor Jason Zadrozny

Councillor Tom Hollis (Substitute for
Councillor Jason Zadrozny)

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

John Buckley - Chief Fire Officer
Adrian Mann - Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council
Becky Smeathers - Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Fire Authority
Malcolm Townroe - Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Fire Authority
Damian West - Area Manager for Prevention

1 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Jason Zadrozny

2 Declarations of Interests

None.

3 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2021 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

4 Update on the Service's Consultation Framework

Damien West, Area Manager for Prevention, presented a report on the amendments to the Service's Consultation Framework, ahead of the engagement relating to the new Strategic Plan. The following points were discussed:

- (a) as a public body, the Service must engage in consultation with communities, staff and partners as part of ensuring transparency and accountability. The Integrated Risk Management Plans must be to be easily accessible to the public and reflect effective consultation. The Service's Consultation Framework was published in January 2013 to align with the Government's Code of Practice on Consultation (2008). The Government produced an updated set of Consultation Principles in 2018, so the Service's Consultation Framework has now been reviewed to reflect these principles in preparation for the 2022 to 2025 Strategic Plan;
- (b) within the Framework, there is now an increased emphasis on the proportionality of consultations. This will enable shorter, more focussed consultation processes for certain activities, with full, 12-week consultations maintained for any proposed significant changes that would affect the delivery of services to communities. There will be pre-consultation processes with staff, stakeholders and partners. An Equality Impact Assessment has also been carried out in relation to the new Strategic Plan, to ensure that all communities have the opportunity to provide feedback in its development;
- (c) in replying to consultations, respondents are invited to provide contact details so that they can be sent future consultations directly. A collaborative database is also in place with the Police, which is very helpful for carrying out pre-consultations;
- (d) the Committee welcomed the new Framework and felt that it was positive that consultations would avoid time periods containing public holidays or elections. It encouraged the Service to seek to reach as many people as possible when it consulted, making use of a wide range of means to contact harder to reach communities (which may have limited access to the internet and social media) when required, including pre-engagement and taking advantage of partner links. It requested that, if it is not possible to acknowledge every response to a consultation in an individual way, consideration is given to a viable means of acknowledging all responses in a general way.

Resolved to endorse the Service's approach to consultation and approve the updated Consultation Framework.

5 Service Learning from Covid-19

Damien West, Area Manager for Prevention, presented a report on the learning arising from the Service's response to the Coronavirus pandemic to date. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the pandemic has had a significant impact upon the Service, but its response to supporting the needs of communities during the period has been strong, including the delivery by staff of tests and vaccinations, and working with partners in responding to community needs. In retuning to 'business as usual', the experiences of the pandemic can be used to improve service provision going forward;

- (b) during 2020, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) undertook thematic inspections of all Fire and Rescue Services in England, and it inspected the Service during October. Its report identified two areas of focus for the Service to consider: how it will adopt the new and innovative ways of working introduced during the pandemic for the longer term, to secure lasting improvements; and how it should update its plans, including business continuity plans, using the lessons it has learned from the pandemic to date;
- (c) a strategic debrief raised recommendations covering a range of areas including revising strategic, tactical and departmental Business Continuity Management (BCM) plans, utilising ICT transformation to enhance the BCM response of teams, revisiting mental health assessments and support in the light of Coronavirus, and embedding practices that were demonstrated to have worked well during the pandemic response. Key areas of good practice highlighted by the report were communications, engagement with representative bodies and minority groups within the workforce, liaison between teams and departments, and the use of Strategic Intent documents to focus Service direction;
- (d) the response rate to HMICFRS's staff survey was 22%, which matched the national average. Overall, 56% of staff reported being satisfied with the level of development available to them (16% above national average) and 81% felt that their line manager had useful conversations about learning and development with them (36% above the national average). However, only 47% of staff agreed that they had an appropriate level of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to do their job safely, while 12% of staff felt that they had been discriminated against at work in the last 12 months;
- (e) an action plan has been developed to address these areas for improvement, and a 'Lessons Learned' log has been compiled to inform ongoing development. The whole sector had to move to secure appropriate levels of PPE at the start of the pandemic, but the Service did hold stocks of effective respirators and disposable protective clothing before the pandemic began. Engagement with staff representative bodies is in place and will continue, to provide assurance that the right level of protective provision is available;
- (f) Coronavirus cases in the workforce have been relatively low, and nobody has been seriously ill. Cases are monitored daily and staff are experienced in infection control. The Service has carried out regular engagement with staff on getting the vaccine and attitudes have been positive, so the majority of staff are now vaccinated. Nevertheless, there can be occasional spikes in staff needing to self-isolate;
- (g) staff are concerned about exercising operational discretion to respond to an incident in a way not mandated in the standard operational policy and procedure. This is an issue of focus following the Grenfell Tower disaster, and operational policy and procedure documents should seek to capture everything foreseeable that could occur at an incident. However, there can be exceptional circumstances, so it is important to work with staff so that they can be confident in exercising operational discretion when a situation requires it;
- (h) overall, 85% of the workforce are operational staff, and measures need to be in place to ensure a full organisational response to significant incidents – where support staff will often volunteer to assist operational staff directly. However, means of agile working will be used going forward, though with processes in place to enable collaboration across the organisation and avoid any development of silo working. The organisation's total amount

of office space is relatively small, and it is shared with partners as much as possible, for collaborative work;

- (i) there was a good relationship between officers and Authority members on the exercise of emergency decision-making powers during the pandemic, thorough the mechanism of Group Leaders' meetings. The operation of governance processes during the pandemic will be reviewed and reflected upon, and formal arrangements will be put in place for how effective governance will be carried out in the event of a future pandemic. Careful planning for the coming periods of transition between the stages of the national recovery roadmap are required, as re-opening may have an impact on cases during the summer, with the normal winter pressures beginning to rise again later in the year;
- (j) the Committee recommended that the Service is more explicit in reporting the engagement that it has carried out with minority groups, and sets out the specific needs identified by these groups and how they are addressed. It hoped that the Service's Communications team can draw together positive stories about its performance arising from the pandemic, as these are of interest to the media;
- (k) the Committee requested that an annual report is produced on the Service's preparedness for any future pandemic, including on how the Coronavirus-related learning will be applied;
- (l) the Committee thanked the whole Service and its partners for its strong performance and vital work with communities during the pandemic, and moved that this should be recognised formally by the Authority.

Resolved:

- (1) to agree that the Authority's thanks to all staff and partners that have contributed to the Service's response to the pandemic be recorded, and to ask the Chief Fire Officer to communicate this appropriately;**
- (2) to endorse the Service's approach to learning arising from the response to Covid-19.**

6 Collaboration Update

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the Service's collaboration activity, including the new Joint Headquarters Programme. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the Service has a number of collaborative partnerships. The current major initiative to relocate to a joint headquarters with the Police is underway and progressing to timetable and budget, for completion by the end of March 2022. A full range of options for the disposal of the current Service headquarters are being considered and will be presented to the full Authority later in July. Joint personnel forums are developing well and branding for the joint headquarters is being developed. Service Fire and Police Crime Scene Investigation Officers will be moving to co-locate shortly;
- (b) the move to the joint headquarters will have the greatest impact on support staff, and some concern is being expressed by employees in both Services – with the potential for redundancy being a primary worry. However, there are no proposals to rationalise posts

as part of the headquarters transfer process, and existing roles in the Service will not be taken over by staff in the Police. A great deal of work is underway to bring the teams in both Services together, and it will be vital to ensure that staff can meet each other and form connections;

- (c) shared estate collaborations with other partners are progressing well, and a drone that was procured jointly with the Police is proving extremely helpful in managing major incidents. The Joint Fire Control Room continues to operate as the emergency response function for both Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire and is performing beyond the expected standards. A number of collaborative 'prevention' initiatives are also in place, and collaboration to improve community outcomes is an important area of strategic focus;
- (d) the Service works closely with its neighbouring Fire Authorities on alignment and risk management plans, to provide mutual support in filling any gaps in coverage. The Service will always only deliver collaboration for the purposes of serving the best interests of communities. Although the Service seeks appropriate partnership approaches for all major estates projects, it was not possible to achieve this in relation to the new Worksop fire station;
- (e) the Committee acknowledged the valuable work carried out by Service staff and suggested that members of the Authority could be asked to support the integration process for the joint headquarters project directly, as appropriate. It noted that care should be taken to ensure that the Service does not lose any of the mechanisms that enable it to operate effectively as part of this collaboration, so the standard of service provision to the public is not impacted negatively.

The Committee noted the report.

7 Exclusion of the Public

The Committee decided to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining agenda items in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

8 Resilience Update

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the national issues that have the potential to impact the Service, and the resilience arrangements in place to ensure that critical response activities can be maintained.

Resolved to approve the recommendations as set out in the exempt report.



Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority

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

**Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service
Headquarters - Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters,
Bestwood Lodge Drive, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD on 2 July 2021 from 12.00
pm - 1.07 pm**

Membership

Present

Councillor Bethan Eddy
Councillor Tom Hollis
Councillor Roger Jackson
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
Councillor Chantal Lee (Chair)
Councillor Toby Neal

Absent

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Nick Linthwaite - Human Resources Manager
Leila Henry - Head of Risk Assurance and Operational Training
Emma Powley –Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council
Candida Brudenell - Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Matt Sismey - Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager

1 Apologies for Absence

None

2 Declarations of Interests

None

3 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on the 23 April 2021 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

4 Human Resources Update

Nick Linthwaite, Human Resources Manager, presented a report on the key Human Resources metrics for the period of April 2021 to 31 May 2021.

The following points were discussed:

- a) Since the Committee last update, there has been 7 leavers and 18 starters. These included 14 Wholetime firefighter apprentices who had started their initial training in April 2021.
- b) Absence across the workforce (excluding On-Call employees) decreased by 267.36 days (20.15%) compared to the previous quarter; 59.28% of these absences was of a long-term nature. The pandemic contributed to 1177.48 days of absence during the year which were attributed to COVID related reasons.
- c) Support was provided to employees through a number of avenues including Occupational Health and Fitness Team and the Employee Assistance Programmes. Focus was also placed on the two primary reasons for sickness absence; musculo-skeletal and mental health issues. Support that was offered to staff included access to counselling, fitness advisors, on site gyms and physiotherapy.
- d) It was noted that a part-time mental health practitioner would be appointed as part of a pilot scheme. This would assess the need for in-house support in reducing mental health related absences. The Service also offered access to self-help organisations, mental health charities and also offered peer support and cognitive behavioural therapy
- e) Other workforce metrics were considered the Committee were informed that the 1 case of Harassment and Bullying has been dealt with through the Harassment and Bullying policy and a satisfactory outcome had been reached; an Employment Tribunal was currently being dealt with by Human Resources. In reference to the number of leavers (7) it was explained that this was across the non-uniformed area and included a small number of retirements. The number of leavers was regarded as standard and was not considered unduly concerning.

The Committee commended the Fire Authority on their provision of mental health support.

The Committee noted the report.

5 Apprenticeship Update

Leila Henry, Head of Risk Assurance and Operational Training, presented a report outlining the delivery of the operational firefighter apprenticeship programme within the Service.

The following points were discussed:

- a) Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Services was one of very few Services nationally to offer an apprenticeship for wholetime firefighters which began in January 2019. The apprenticeship scheme was initially delivered in conjunction

with Sheffield College, however in September 2019, the Service became a registered employer provider for operational firefighter apprenticeships which allowed the Service to run and administrate in house courses which subsequently allowed the Service to utilise the apprenticeship levy rather than incurring costs from the use of a third-party provider.

- b) As an apprenticeship provider, the Service is now subject to OFSTED inspections. Following an inspection carried out in March 2021, OFSTED reviewed the quality of the in-house programme; the subsequent successful OFSTED report meant that the apprenticeship levy could continue to be drawn down by the Service for in-house firefighter apprenticeship provision.
- c) Since the start of the apprenticeship programme, the Service has had 11 competent firefighters that have successfully passed through the programme, with a further 8 anticipated to undertake their end point assessments in July 2021.
- d) Additional training was provided for those needing to focus on English and mathematics skills through supported learning.

In response to questions asked by the Committee the following information was given:

- a) The majority of apprenticeships were from Nottinghamshire, with the exception of those applying under the 'Armed Forces Covenant'.
- b) Whilst there was not targeted recruitment for apprenticeships, the Service participated in a lot of community engagement, including within schools across the City.
- c) Further consideration would be given in accessing areas (for apprenticeship recruitment) in more deprived areas of the City.

The Chair congratulated the Service officers who took part in the OFSTED inspection and the Committee offered their congratulations to the newly qualified previous apprentices.

The Committee noted the report.

6 Workforce Plan 2021-23

Matt Sismey, Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager, presented a report on the Workforce Plan for 2019-2021 and informed Members of the updated plan for 2021-2023.

The following points were discussed:

- a) The plan was based upon projections of anticipated turnover and information received from all departments regarding their workforce needs for the forthcoming year.
- b) Overall, the staffing levels had remained relatively stable over the last financial year, with the number of leavers during 2020-21 being slightly less than

predicted. This reflected a general reduction in turnover across the national workforce during a period of uncertainty, in part due to the pandemic. It was anticipated that that levels of turnover would increase during 2021-23.

- c) Retention of on call staff had posed some challenges and a number of on-Call recruitment programmes had been carried out.
- d) On-Call recruitment and retention remained a challenge for the fire service nationally due to the limitations of recruitment pools of applicants who live or work within the required five-minute response time of a station and the commitment required to attend incidents and training whilst undertaking a primary employment. In response to this, a project to review On-Call Pay and Contracts project is being piloted, with the aim of improving recruitment and retention, by offering greater flexibility to existing and prospective employees.
- e) It was noted that women account for 16.53% of the workforce with the largest proportion of women being employed in support roles (54.49%). The number of employees from BAME backgrounds has slightly increased from 37 to 40 equating to 4.72% of the total workforce. Positive action measures were undertaken to encourage applications from BAME applicants as part of the 2020 firefighter recruitment process.
- f) The number of female recruits and apprenticeships were seeing some improvements and it was explained that female candidates were being given additional support with their strength and fitness as this was identified as a time when a number of female recruits would drop out or fail to continue. Females were tested at the same level as men and there had been a transition away from the traditional concept that fire-fighting was a job for men.
- g) The Committee noted that Fire Cadets were still functioning, which also offered younger people awareness around fire-prevention. Whilst the Fire cadets did not involve direct access to the Fire Service there was a drive to strengthen and improve this to enable young people to grow into the role of fire-fighters including on-call and wholetime.

Resolved that information on the Fire Cadets be circulated to the Committee.

Resolved that a report be presented at the next Committee to assess the outcome of the review of On-Call Pay and Contracts.

The Committee noted the report.

7 Exclusion of the Public

The Committee decided to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining agenda items in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

8 Exempt Minutes

The Committee confirmed the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2021 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

9 Regrading of Posts

See confidential minutes



**Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority
Finance and Resources Sub-Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service
Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge Drive, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD on Friday 2 July
2021 from 2:01pm to 3:20pm**

Membership

Present

Councillor John Clarke (Chair)
Councillor Callum Bailey
Councillor Eddie Cubley
Councillor John Lee
Councillor Toby Neal

Absent

Councillor Steve Battlemuch

Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan (Substitute
for Councillor Steve Battlemuch)

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Candida Brudenell - Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Rob Disney - Internal Auditor, Nottinghamshire County Council
Adrian Mann - Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council
Terry Scott - Head of Procurement and Resources
Becky Smeathers - Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Fire Authority

1 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Steve Battlemuch

2 Declarations of Interests

None.

3 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2021 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

4 2020/21 Revenue and Capital Outturn

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Fire Authority, presented a report on the provisional financial performance of the Service for 2020/21, with an analysis of the

significant variances against the original revenue and capital budgets. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the revenue and capital outturn has been completed for the previous financial year, and the Statement of Accounts is being finalised. However, further provision may need to be included as a result of the McCloud judgement in relation to firefighter pensions. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, 2020/21 was completely different to the expectations when the annual budget was first set, so there were significant in-year changes made to provision;
- (b) currently, the total provisional expenditure for 2020/21 is £43,243,000, representing an underspend of £1,649,000 (3.7% of the annual budget). An appeal was submitted in relation to a large increase in business rates, and the Service will be reimbursed for the sums levied in error;
- (c) the whole-time pay budget was underspent by £944,000 (4%). Crews needed to operate in bubbles, which stopped the use of overtime to cover staffing gaps. Sickness rates were lower than expected. A number of vacancies were also held due to a whole-time training course being delayed until April 2021;
- (d) Covid-related grants were provided from central Government to cover additional costs incurred. Some of this grant funding has been carried forward for expenditure this year. Grant funding for responding to the learning arising from the Grenfell Tower disaster was also received in 2020/21, to be spent this year. In total, £480,000 of unspent grants will be transferred into earmarked reserves. The Service has also secured some income for assistance provided to partners during the pandemic;
- (e) additional earmarked reserves were also created to deal with some unforeseen cost pressures, such as upgrading the Mobile Data Terminals on appliances and relocating the Command Suite training facility;
- (f) in terms of capital expenditure, the scheme to relocate to the Joint Headquarters with the Police is progressing to timetable and budget, with the move of most staff to take place during February 2022. As such, only expenditure essential for the running of the building will now be carried out at the current headquarters, and the equipment that will be transferred to the new facility is being identified. It has been difficult to replace some old vehicles due to delays caused by Covid-19, but a procurement process is now in hand;
- (g) the project to build a new Fire Station at Worksop is underway, but the tender has come in £239,000 over budget. The scheme will be monitored closely, and there is some flexibility within the capital programme budgets. Sharp increases in the cost of materials can be a risk, but a fixed-price contract has been secured following a full tender process, so any uplift in the materials costs will be borne by the contractor;
- (h) the capital programme is funded largely through borrowing, but it is proposed to allocate part of the underspend to fund some ICT projects within the capital programme, to save the need for future borrowing. This is because the Service is required to invest securely, achieving around 0.5% interest on the fund that it invests, while the interest charged on loans is around 2-3%.

Resolved:

- (1) to approve the creation of £1,051,000 of Earmarked Reserves, as set out in Section 2.23 and Table 4 of the report;**
- (2) to approve the funding of Capital Projects from a Revenue Contribution of £500,000, as set out in Section 2.24 of the report;**
- (3) to approve the slippage of £2,741,000 on the Capital Programme, as set out in Section 2.51 and Table 8 of the report.**

5 Revenue, Capital and Prudential Code Monitoring Report to 30 April 2021

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Fire Authority, presented a report on the 2021/22 financial performance of the Service and Prudential Code monitoring to the end of April 2021. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the monitoring is based on just one month of expenditure, which has made it is very difficult to carry out accurate financial forecasts. An underspend of £88,000 was predicted against the revised budget. However, a national 1.5% pay award was agreed for firefighters last week, while the provision in the budget had been for 1%. Support staff were also offered 1.5%, but this was rejected by their unions and negotiations are ongoing. Nevertheless, the Service will also receive a reimbursement for business rates calculated inaccurately;
- (b) there was a slow start to the spend in the capital programmes. The planned projects are progressing well, but will need to be monitored closely. It is aimed to complete the new Worksop Fire Station by March 2022, so it is proposed to bring the related budget forward from next year to this year. A project manager is working to set out the options for the disposal of the current headquarters site for best value, and these will be presented to the full Authority shortly. In preparation, all issues and anomalies relating to the site's legal title are being resolved, ahead of disposal;
- (c) the Prudential Code sets out the Service's agreed lending and borrowing parameters, to ensure that the capital programme is achievable. It was necessary to review some of the caps during the Coronavirus pandemic, but the controls have remained largely consistent.

Resolved to approve the allocation of £1,258,000 in the 2022/23 budget for the Worksop Fire Station to be brought forward into 2021/22.

6 Business Rates Update

Terry Scott, Head of Procurement and Resources, presented a report on the revised rateable values for the Service's properties and associated rebated business rate charges. The following points were discussed:

- (a) business rates were revalued nationally from 2017. Unfortunately, the Service's rateable value was increased unexpectedly from £1,579,000 to £2,108,000, resulting in a significant pressure on budgets. A commercial surveyor was appointed to review the valuations and an appeal was submitted on the basis of the values being over-rated. The

appeal was successful and the rateable value was amended to £1,832,000. As such, the Service has been overcharged £433,000 since April 2017, and this will be rebated. However, the Service did incur a consultancy fee of £102,000 in pursuing the appeal. The Service had an option of following an internal appeals process, but did not consider that there was the right capacity and expertise within the Service to pursue this option successfully;

- (b) the Committee recommended that the Service should investigate and consider the extent to which it could claim back the costs of pursuing the appeal, and for lost interest.

Resolved to request that a report is produced to set out whether the Authority may seek to recoup the costs and lost interest arising from its successful appeal regarding the business rates valuation, and whether or not it is in the Authority's best interests to do so.

7 Internal Audit Annual Report 2021/21

Rob Disney, Internal Auditor, presented the Authority's annual internal audit report, including the Internal Audit Plan for 2021/22. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the annual internal audit report is required by the current Public Sector financial standards, and constitutes best practice. Although the audit team was able to carry out less assurance work than normal, the provision of an audit opinion of reasonable assurance was not obstructed significantly due to the Coronavirus pandemic;
- (b) a series of reviews were carried out against key performance indicators, including safety reviews from other providers, counter-fraud arrangements, assurance on governance arrangements, risk management and Covid compliance. Action tracking is in place, and an update has been included on how the audit conforms to the latest CIPFA standards;
- (c) three development areas for internal audit have been identified following an assessment against the CIPFA guidance. These are the adoption of an Internal Audit Charter to provide greater clarity on roles, responsibilities and the function of the audit; a revised approach to audit planning, to ensure that the whole audit process is as timely as possible; and strengthening engagement between the internal auditor and Authority leadership through more regular meetings. Work is underway with the internal auditor to achieve these recommendation and to meet the requirements of the new CIPFA Financial Management Code.

The Committee noted the report.

8 External Audit Letter 2019/20 and Audit Update 2020/21

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Fire Authority, presented a report on the external auditors' annual audit letter for 2019/20 and the latest external audit situation for 2020/21. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts was approved in February 2021 and the external auditor, Ernst & Young LLP (EY), has provided their final report, achieving an unqualified sign-off. The deadline for publishing the 2020/21 draft accounts has been extended nationally until 31 July, due to the pressures created by the Coronavirus pandemic. The

deadline for publishing the audited accounts has similarly been extended to 30 September. However, all external audit companies are facing resourcing pressures and increased work levels in order to comply with new audit regulations. EY has indicated that it cannot begin the audit until November, and it is possible that it will be delayed further. The end of the calendar year is a difficult period for the Service to facilitate an audit, as the Finance team will be working on the next budget. As such, this is an area of real risk;

- (b) EY acts as the external auditor on a fixed-term contract. The Authority will need to consider its approach to procuring a new contract, shortly. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has consulted on proposed changes to the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 to seek to broaden the market, but there is reluctance to introduce penalties for late audits, as it may cause more companies to leave the Public Sector audit market. The Authority is not obliged to procure through the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) body but, if it tendered independently, there would be a significant risk of the process resulting in no appointment being made due to lack of availability;
- (c) the PSAA has set the audit fee for both 2019/20 and 2020/21 at £23,909. EY has indicated that it will be submitting a fee increase request to the PSAA for 2019/20, as their estimate of the cost of delivering the audit is £87,816. Delivery was made more expensive due to required testing on the pensions provision being made due to the McCloud judgement, and due to work being carried out in relation to asset valuations during a period of substantial market volatility due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The auditor also spent a great deal of time reviewing the Authority as a going concern, due to the wider sector context, and there was a high level of re-auditing of the narrative and governance statements;
- (d) it is not expected that the PSAA will approve the fee relating to the regulatory changes for 2019/20 (£47,193), so the final fee should be in the region of £40,623, which nevertheless represents a significant increase. It is expected that some level of 'new burdens' funding will be received from the Government to offset some of these costs;
- (e) unfortunately, there is lack of capacity in the current market for the delivery of Public Sector external audits. There is a shortage of people going through the CIPFA training, making it particularly difficult to recruit suitably qualified people across all sectors. As such, a local trainee scheme for Nottinghamshire is under consideration;
- (f) the Committee considered that the sector issues in procuring timely external audits are a significant national concern, and it encouraged Authority members to engage with their MPs on this issue.

The Committee noted the report.

9 CIPFA Financial Management Code

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Fire Authority, presented a report on the Financial Management Code. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) published a Financial Management Code in October 2019 to draw together various codes of practice

in Local Authorities. This Code provides guidance for good and sustainable financial management in Local Authorities, to provide assurance that they are managing resources effectively;

- (b) the Code establishes 6 principles of good financial management, with 17 associated standards for setting out compliance. The Authority has no areas of non-compliance in relation to the Code, but some improvement work is needed against 6 of the standards. It is intended to work more closely with the internal auditor to achieve improvement in these areas, which will be accounted for in the coming Audit Plan, and progress will be reported to the Committee at the end of the financial year.

Resolved to receive an update report on the progress made against the CIPFA Financial Management Code in April 2022.

10 Closure of the 'Areas for Improvement' from the 2019 HMICFRS Inspection

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the Service's response to the outcomes of the 2019 inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services and the closure of the Areas for Improvement (AFIs) that were identified. The following points were discussed:

- (a) AFI 15 set out that "the Service needs to accelerate its plans to improve ICT so that it makes best use of available technology to support operational effectiveness and efficiency." The four actions associated with this AFI have now been completed, so it is now possible to close this AFI. As AFI 16 has been completed and closed previously, all AFIs under the Committee's remit are now discharged.

Resolved:

(1) to approve the closure of Area for Improvement 15;

(2) to discharge the reporting of the two Areas for Improvement aligned to the Finance and Resources Committee (AFI 15 and AFI 16).