



**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:** 25 February 2022

**Purpose of Report:**

To report to Members the business and actions of the Fire Authority committee meetings which took place between December 2021 and February 2022.

**Recommendations:**

That Members note the contents of this report.

## CONTACT OFFICER

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Chief Fire Officer

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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:

Appointments Committee	02 December 2022
Community Safety Committee	14 January 2022
Finance and Resources Committee	21 January 2022
Human Resources Committee	28 January 2022
Policy and Strategy Committee	04 February 2022
Appointments Committee	04 February 2022

## **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  
Appointments Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service  
Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge Drive, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD  
on 2 December 2021 from 10.30am - 3.20pm**

**Membership**

Present

Councillor Michael Payne (Chair)  
Councillor Robert Corden  
Councillor Bethan Eddy  
Councillor Tom Hollis  
Councillor Patience Ifediora (substitute)  
Councillor Toby Neal

Absent

Councillor John Clarke

**Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

John Buckley - Chief Fire Officer  
Malcolm Townroe - Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority  
Nick Linthwaite - Human Resources Manager (Operational)  
Christine Walker - MPCG HR & Recruitment Consultant

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Councillor John Clarke (Councillor Patience Ifediora substituting)

**2 Declarations of Interests**

None.

**3 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2020 were confirmed as a true record and will be signed by the Chair.

**4 Exclusion of the public**

**Resolved to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item in accordance with Paragraphs 1 and 2 of 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 outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.**

**5 Selection process for the post of Chief Fire Officer**

Two candidates were assessed and interviewed for the post.

**Resolved to recommend to the Full Fire Authority that Craig Parkin be appointed to the post of Chief Fire Officer.**



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

**Minutes of the meeting held at the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service  
Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge Drive, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD on Friday  
14 January 2022 from 10.00 am - 10.50 am**

**Membership**

**Present**

Councillor Toby Neal (Chair)  
Councillor Scott Carlton  
Councillor Eddie Cubley  
Councillor Nicola Heaton

**Absent**

Councillor Nick Raine  
Councillor Jason Zadrozny

**Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

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

**15 Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Nick Raine  
Councillor Jason Zadrozny

**16 Declarations of Interests**

None.

**17 Minutes**

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2021 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

**18 Service Delivery Performance Report**

Mick Sharman, Area Manager for Response, presented a report on the performance of the Service Delivery Directorate during the year to date at 4 December 2021. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the current incident numbers profile is very similar to that of the previous two years, though there was a spike during April and May due primarily to the

deliberate lighting of secondary fires in the Mansfield area, during the warmer weather following a period of Coronavirus lockdown. Largely, these represented low-risk cases. The numbers of incidents that have posed the highest risk to life and the wider environment have remained stable over the past five quarters;

- (b) a key target for the Service is that all emergency incidents are attended within 8 minutes, on average. Attendance times do fluctuate across a given year due to seasonal impacts, but the target is being achieved, with an average attendance time of 7 minutes and 59 seconds;
- (c) to ensure that operational incidents are managed effectively and safely, with the right command structures in place, active monitoring is carried out for 10% of cases to make certain that the response is conducted properly and well, and that any learning arising is taken into account applied to future operations. Training exercises have now resumed following the easing of Covid restrictions;
- (d) currently, the average on-call availability is 84%, which falls below the Service target of 85%. The performance of most sections is consistent and above the attainment target of 85%, reflecting a very good community commitment. The strongest on-call availability is at Warsop, at 97%. Availability is improving both at Ashfield and Retford, which achieved 77% and 86%, respectively. However, there are significant challenges in some areas such as Southwell, where on-call availability fell below the Service's 70% minimum standard. Coverage for the area is maintained though support provided by neighbouring stations and the on-call support team, though the local need for operational services remains relatively low;
- (e) a great deal of on-call recruitment work is being carried out, but continues to be a significant issue both locally and nationally. The part-time, additional work that being an on-call firefighter represents presents challenges for the demographic living in that station catchment in Southwell. However, the Service is always seeking to raise its profile through community engagement to encourage volunteerism;
- (f) the joint handling of emergency calls by the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Services is progressing well, with the targets for call answering and handling times being met. However, a review has shown that there has been a steady decline in the mobilisation system availability. Steps are being taken to address this to manage mobilisation more effectively, working closely with the system supplier to both identify and address faults and concerns. A hardware restructure and replacement programme was undertaken in December 2021, with a software upgrade planned for in the early part of 2022, to improve both performance and stability;
- (g) although the number is reducing, false alarms still constitute around 40% of incidents attended. Many false alarms arise from large sites such as hospitals and prisons. The Service works closely with the people responsible for the management of these facilities to raise standards, as they are significant and complex sites that can be expected to contain a large number of vulnerable people. A close working relationship is also required with the Joint Control centre to ensure that the right details are gathered and provided to inform the correct

operational response to a given incident. Currently, two appliances are sent to a hospital in the event of an unconfirmed fire, but engagement is underway with hospital management on whether it would be suitable to send only one appliance in these cases;

- (h) the Prevention and Protection team seeks to work closely with repeat false alarm offenders on education, but the Service can use legal enforcement processes, if necessary. A Fire Safety Inspector will carry out a full audit after three false alarms, to ensure that fire detection systems in use are appropriate and compliant;
- (i) the Service has put in measures that have reduced false alarm incidents by 30%, which is important because it enables the Service to spend more time on prevention and protection activity. The number could be reduced further, but a balance must be struck to control the risk of the Service not responding to an alarm when an operational response is required. The Service has a focus on site-specific risk to inform how it mobilises in the event of incidents arising from certain properties;
- (j) the Service has continued to deploy staff in support of Coronavirus vaccination centres, but the demand is now reducing. The Committee thanked Service staff for the vital contribution of their time given to responding to the Coronavirus pandemic;
- (k) the Service is on track to meet its targets in relation to fire prevention, and has supported a number of national prevention campaigns. It is also taking proactive measures through Data Intelligence Community Events to engage directly with communities on specific risk areas;
- (l) fire protection is a growing area and provision continues to be increased. The Protection team is carrying out further development and education with frontline firefighters on fire protection, to help them be more effective in their role and ensure that buildings are safe. A great deal of work is carried out with Nottingham City Council on the audit of measures for high-rise premises, with 120 inspections of high-rise buildings carried out. The team reviews its working practice continually to identify further developments that will improve the service that it provides;
- (m) currently, the National Fire Chiefs' Council is discussing proposals to bring buildings of 11 meters in height into the fire protection remit, which could mean a significant increase in the buildings the Service will become responsible for auditing. A review is being carried out to consider how any further responsibilities might be resourced. There is growing demand for fire protection work, and this has associated staffing and financial pressures. It takes time to train Fire Inspectors and, as this is an area of growth, the market is currently extremely competitive.

The Committee noted the report.

## **19 Safe and Well Visits**

Bryn Coleman, Area Manager for Prevention and Protection, presented a report on the delivery programme for 'safe and well' visits. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the 'safe and well' visits are the primary prevention tool used to target those people most at risk from a fire in their home. The last inspection of the Service asked for improvement in this area, so a great deal of work is being carried out to seek to ensure that every contact counts in supporting the safety of the most vulnerable. It is important that the right balance is struck between Service availability both for response and for prevention and protection activity. It is a long-term challenge at the national level to invest more in protection work, but the Service is developing strong foundations in this area;
- (b) the Service is on track to deliver 13,250 safe and well visits this year, which exceeds the national average and the commitment made in the Safer Communities Strategy, and represents a 200% increase in productivity since 2018/19. However, it is important to ensure that referrals to the Service are appropriate, so that the right resources are provided to the people most at risk – the current target set in the current Community Safety Strategy is for 80% of visits to be medium risk or above. As such, the Service works closely with its partners across the health and social care sector and refreshes its training regularly, to ensure that other organisations can refer fire concerns appropriately when they are in contact with vulnerable people. As a result, the number of visits to at risk-groups is above the national average;
- (c) 10% of safe and well visits are data-led and are used to specifically target at-risk individuals, areas, and communities for direct engagement – particularly when referral numbers from these areas are low. Recipients are identified through a Risk Stratification Index, which utilises a number of datasets aligned to the CHARLIE profile, and arising from local knowledge. 1% of visits are follow-ups for the households at greatest risk, which are revisited after a period of time to determine if the situation has changed and if there is anything more the Service can do to lower the risk of fire. Normally, this forms part of a multi-agency engagement with the household;
- (d) an independent assurance process has been carried out to ensure that the CHARLIE profile used by the Service is robust and fit for purpose. The National Fire Chiefs' Council continues to develop a 'person-centred framework' for prevention and protection, and the Service is working to this model already. Officers aim to give as much time as possible to households when attending and, following a visit, the Service will refer a household on to other partner organisations where appropriate, as part of a multi-agency approach to supporting vulnerable people;
- (e) reactive delivery accounts for approximately 25% of all visits and includes post-incident visits to households and wider community reassurance and engagement activity. Approximately 21% these visits are delivered immediately following an incident by the attending Response Crews, at the premises involved and in the very local vicinity. Following a serious incident, larger-scale engagement may be

used to target a wider area around the scene of the incident a few days after it has occurred. This activity takes advantage of the greater fire-consciousness of a community following an incident, and has a strong impact;

- (f) the Equality Impact Assessment for safe and well visits is kept under review to ensure that all communities are being engaged with effectively, and that the right people are being reached. The elderly and people with certain disabilities are at the greatest risk from fire in the home – particularly if mobility issues mean that they are not able to escape easily in response to a fire alarm. In these cases, it is important that the visits help to develop a tailored escape plan. Proactive work is carried out to identify and engage further with communities that are under-represented in the safe and well visits being carried out;
- (g) the unattended charging of electric vehicles is being reviewed nationally as a potentially increasing area of fire risk and Service demand, in the future. Currently, there have not been many incidents of electric vehicle fires, but the approach to putting out such a fire safely (particularly if the fire occurred where there was a large concentration of electric vehicles – in a multi-storey car park, for example) will need to be managed differently to incidents involving fuelled vehicles;
- (h) a survey carried out in 2019/20 found that customer satisfaction following a safe and well visit was extremely high, which is very positive. A new survey will be commissioned at the end of 2021/22. The Committee noted that its members had also received good feedback from residents on the Service's performance and its positive impact in communities, and thanked staff for their very hard work.

The Committee noted the report.



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

**Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service  
Headquarters - Bestwood Lodge Drive, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD on 21 January  
2022 from 10.05am - 10.55am**

**Membership**

Present

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

Absent

Councillor John Lee

**Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

Candida Brudenell	- Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Becky Smeathers	- Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Fire Authority
Catherine Ziane-Pryor	- Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council

**18 Apologies for Absence**

Councillor John Lee

**19 Declarations of Interests**

None.

**20 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2021 were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

**21 Revenue, Capital, and Prudential Code Monitoring Report to 30 November 2021**

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Fire Authority, presented the report which informs the Committee of the financial performance for the 2021/22 financial year to the end of November 2021.

The following points were highlighted and responses provided to members' questions:

- a) To the end of November 2021, the Service has overspent revenue by £116,000, which although significant, is not substantial in the scope of the overall budget of £46.703m;
- b) £84,000 of the overspend can be attributed to wholetime pay associated with supporting partner agencies with the COVID-19 response, including administering vaccinations. However, once secondment costs are recovered, there is an underspend 0.7% against the wholetime pay budget;
- c) There has been an overspend of £293,000 on on-call pay, with contributing elements, including on-call staff being more widely available due to furlough from their full-time roles, and accepting additional, modified duties to support communities through COVID-19, which then also had impact on the average cost of sick pay which is based on average earnings;
- d) There is an underspend £92,000 on non-uniformed pay. This is mostly due to a current vacancy level of 11%, when only 3% is predicted. The most significant vacancies are within the IT and Finance Teams where recruitment has been difficult, possibly due to the wages available for the skill level required (being significantly lower than the private sector) and the ongoing reduction of Service benefits which had previously made roles attractive. This is an issue which affects the whole of the public sector. A new approach is required and this may include the provision of training to professional qualification levels, or approaching graduates who require experience. One of the main Service benefits is the pension, which is generally of lower interest to younger potential applicants;
- e) Although within the transport budget savings have been achieved, maintenance issues have been ongoing for several years. The Service needs to ensure that the budget is adequate for the work required;
- f) Within the Capital Programme, the contract for the construction of the joint headquarters was £150,000 below the initial budget, but further costs have been identified regarding the alterations and refurbishment of the existing buildings;
- g) The 2022/2023 budgets will be revised to reflect the additional costs associated to the construction of Worksop's Fire Station;
- h) Additional water rescue equipment has been specified by DEFRA and will cost more than predicted, but can be funded from underspend in other areas;
- i) The rise of inflation, now at 5.4%, is obviously having a negative impact on the majority of budgets;
- j) As set out on table 4 of the report, the Service is operating within all agreed Prudential Indicators.

Members of the committee suggested that with regard to recruitment consideration should be given to the City Council's approach, and that's when advertising posts, the focus is not

merely on the pay, and that's the terms and conditions and benefits of the role are promoted, as these are often far better than the private sector offers.

## **Resolved**

- 1) to note the report;**
- 2) to approve a £13,700 addition to the Capital Programme for the purchase of equipment required for the National Inter-agency Liaison Officers (NILO) activity. The equipment will be funded using a capital grant;**
- 3) to approve the £25k increase in the water rescue equipment capital budget to be funded from underspends on the Fire Gloves project (£11k) and the Vehicle CCTV Project (£14k).**

## **22 Budget Proposals for 2022/23 to 2025/26 and Options for Council Tax 2022/23**

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Fire Authority, presented the report which provides the Committee with the background to the budget, including current pressures, and options for Council Tax for 2022/2023 to recommend to the Authority for acceptance.

In addition to the detailed information provided in the report, the following points were highlighted and responses provided to members' questions:

- a) The information provided in the report was based on the inflation rate of 5% at the time of publication, this has now risen to 5.4%, and is predicted to reach 6% by April. This will have huge impacts on the budget with regard to pay awards (agreed on a national basis);
- b) The 50% price rise of utilities, such as gas, electric and fuel, is estimated to have an impact of costing the Service an additional £0.5 million;
- c) The Draft Local Government Finance Settlement has provided draft grant figures for 2022/2023 only. No figures for future years have been provided - it has been presumed that future grants will be of a similar level;
- d) The revenue support grant has increased by 3%, but is also required to cover the National Insurance increase of 1.25%;
- e) The Section 31 revenue grant of £2.3 million partly covers the cost of increased employer superannuation rates, but the grant has not increased (even with inflation) in the past four years, resulting in an effective loss of £50,000 per year to the Service;
- f) The additional service grant was anticipated to be £500,000, but it is welcomed that the allocation is £750,000;
- g) Savings will be achieved from moving to the joint headquarters with the Police, as parts of the current Fire Service headquarters are old and will soon require substantial work. At the new headquarters, the Service will contribute a maintenance

- charge, but savings are predicted to be longer term. The capital receipt from the sale of the current headquarters site will fund the Capital Programme, which will help save on future longer term borrowing. The outcome of the Planning Application for the site of the current headquarters, which will affect the value of the land should be known by mid-February and members will be informed;
- h) With additional costs, the Service continues to look for savings. So far £1 million in savings per year has been identified, although some are only temporary and a longer term view is required. Response and prevention continue to be a focus for the Service, particularly around road safety messages as road traffic incidents are currently high which has resulted in road safety promotions;
  - i) Due to the unknown future, the Service will work to maintain the current reserves which are anticipated to be £9.3 million;
  - j) Savings which have been built into the 2022/2023 budget include a reduced increase in the on-call budget, an increase in the vacancy factor for non-uniformed staff, a reduced training budget to reflect current need, transport (including officer car leasing and travel expenses which were reduced as a result of online meetings and training), and non-essential repairs and maintenance;
  - k) Collection of Council Tax has been slightly better than expected but funding from business rates will not be known until later in the month;
  - l) The report sets out the impact on the Service of a nil Council Tax rise, which will result in a budget deficit, and also the impact of a 1.95% Council Tax increase and level grant funding, which also results in a budget deficit, although much lower;
  - m) If the Committee were to agree a 1.95% Council Tax increase, this would provide the Service with additional funding of £528,000 for 2022/2023, and result in an increase of £1.62 per annum to a Band D household Council Tax bill.

Members of the committee made the following comments:

- n) There is no option for the Service other than to set a 1.95% increase in Council Tax;
- o) Pressures are too unpredictable at the moment and 1.95% increase is clearly justifiable;
- p) All public sectors are in the same position every year, but the Council Tax contribution to the Fire Service overall is quite small. If it is decided not to implement a 1.95% increase then there will potentially be cuts to Services. For the benefit of greater good, a rise in Council Tax is required;
- q) The Council Tax should be raised for this budget, but careful consideration should again be given in future years when it is clearer how savings can be made;
- r) Although not a big increase, it is an increase and members of the Authority are mindful of the impact on citizens who are also experiencing multiple rising costs, but the necessity of the Fire and Rescue Service is unquestioned;

- s) Not only will moving to the joint headquarters provide savings, it also opens up significant opportunities and potentially further savings including investment in people.

**Resolved to recommend to the Fire Authority a Council Tax increase of 1.95%.**

### **23 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, on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining an exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.**

### **24 Exempt Minutes**

**The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2021 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.**



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

**Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service  
Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge Drive, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD on Friday 28  
January 2022 from 10:00am to 10:56am**

### **Membership**

#### **Present**

Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora  
(Chair)  
Councillor Bethan Eddy  
Councillor Roger Jackson  
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan  
Councillor Toby Neal

#### **Absent**

Councillor Tom Hollis

### **Colleagues, partners and others in attendance**

Tracy Crump - Head of People and Organisational Development  
Adrian Mann - Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council  
Craig Parkin - Deputy Chief Fire Officer

### **22 Apologies for Absence**

None.

### **23 Declarations of Interests**

None.

### **24 Minutes**

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2021 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

### **25 Human Resources Update**

Tracy Crump, Head of People and Organisational Development, presented a report on the key Human Resources metrics for the period of 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the number of whole-time firefighters is above the approved establishment level currently, due primarily to trainees having started their training now so that they are

ready to fill upcoming vacancies in the whole-time establishment, as set out in the Workforce Plan. On-call staffing (which is measured in units of time, rather than on a full-time equivalent basis) is below target, and this represents a significant challenge at both the local and national level;

- (b) positive action for recruitment is being carried out in all areas. The Service is a relatively small organisation, so it is vital that the offer to staff is competitive and encourages them to stay in the sector, within the context of the nationally-set terms and conditions of employment. An updated staff benefits package is in place, and an agile working policy has been adopted;
- (c) it is also important that staff have access to relevant development and progression opportunities, wherever possible. A training needs matrix is in place to support staff in their broader development. The Service works hard to retain the people that it trains, with significant investment in continuing professional development, including the offer of bursary schemes;
- (d) absence levels have risen in comparison to both the previous quarter this year and the same quarter last year, and are being monitored closely. However, the current absence figures do now reflect sickness levels pre-Covid. Members of staff having to self-isolate due to Coronavirus is not recorded as a sickness absence, though a sick note from a doctor will be required for more than seven days' absence. Coronavirus accounted for around 34% of absences at its height, but this figure is now decreasing. Both Covid and winter pressures are affecting absence levels, so a full assessment of the trends will be carried out in the spring. Unfortunately, there is not a standardised measure of absence across the sector, so it is not always possible to compare performance directly with other Fire and Rescue Services;
- (e) long-term absence due to musculo-skeletal injury remains a significant challenge. Appropriate care support is in place, including a dedicated Occupational Health team. As much communications work is carried out as possible to ensure that all staff are aware of the full support offer, which also includes mental health provision. The Service works to provide early assistance to staff in as proactive a way as possible, to seek to address physical and mental health issues before they develop into more significant problems requiring long-term sickness absence. A 'return to work' support process is also in place, including assistance in rebuilding fitness levels;
- (f) most staff injuries do not occur at work, and there is a very close focus on preventing injuries in the workplace. Many issues leading to long-term sickness can also arise through personal circumstances, so managers should seek to be aware of any problems that might affect a member of staff's work life and provide support where needed. Due to teams being relatively small, long-term absence can have a significant work impact on colleagues, so all reasonable steps are taken to provide early support to prevent sickness absence. Absence amongst firefighters on dual contracts can present particular challenges in covering the affected shifts;
- (g) the process of moving staff to the new Joint Headquarters is now starting. There are some anxieties amongst staff regarding this change, and the return to an office space in light of the Coronavirus pandemic. Managers are working hard to ensure that effective occupational support is provided, and a policy for agile working has

been introduced to enable as much flexibility for the workforce as possible. It is important that staff continue to be kept fully informed about the move to the Joint Headquarters, and there is a desire to return to a more 'normal' way of working – though to a slightly different structure to that pre-Covid. It is vital that the Service resumes its face-to-face engagement work with communities as soon as possible, and tailored risk assessments are carried out for those staff who have particular concerns so that they can carry out their work safely;

- (h) there has been one dismissal due to capability and ill health issues. In these cases, support work is carried out with the individual for a long period of time before a dismissal process is considered. An employment tribunal case has now been completed where the Service was successful in defending a claim. The case did attract media coverage, and an appropriate communications was put in place;
- (i) the Committee considered that it is important to set out how workforce productivity is measured, in order to be able to identify when productivity has returned to normal levels following the Coronavirus pandemic – particularly in the context of face-to-face community engagement work, such as 'safe and well' visits. It noted that it will also be important to monitor how staff respond to the return to a more 'normal' way of working, and how they are affected by new working structures.

The Committee noted the report.

## **26 Updated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statements and Review**

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the updates made to the Service's Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and the Joint Commitment on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity statements. The following points were discussed:

- (a) a great deal of progress is being made to bring about organisational cultural change through EDI activity, with a range of staff networks now established and more conversations taking place to make sure that everyone's voice is heard. It is vital that effective communications work is carried out to ensure that staff are aware of and understand the associated policy documents, and embed inclusion in everything that they do. It is important that staff are not just trained in EDI, but also enact it in their work;
- (b) an external evaluation has been carried out for the Service's EDI framework. A draft report has been produced and a paper on the actions arising from it will be presented to the members of the Authority in due course. The strategic leadership team is working hard to define what EDI means for the organisation, and that the Service listens effectively to the voices of under-represented groups;
- (c) the Service has a commitment to understanding all of the communities that it serves and to learn about them, to identify effectively where the greatest risks are. Positive action is carried out as part of all recruitment, and it is important to give people from all groups the confidence that a role in the Service is something that they could do. This has resulted in trainees coming into the Service from a wider range of backgrounds and groups. However, EDI must be embedded in everything that the Service does, and so needs to be resourced in a sustainable way, going forward;

- (d) a disability and neuro-divergency network is in place, and it has a strategic champion. The Service has encouraged more people to come forward for support with issues in this area, which can often be hidden, and is providing assistance in areas such as literacy and numeracy. The Committee requested that more information on the work being carried out in this area is brought to a future meeting, for discussion.

**Resolved to endorse the updates to the Service’s Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and the Joint Commitment on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity statements.**

## **27 Apprenticeship Update**

Craig Parkin, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the apprenticeships available within the Service. The following points were discussed:

- (a) there are 27 apprentice firefighters progressing through the two-year programme, for which the Service is drawing down funding from the national apprenticeship levy. There are no fixed age requirements for becoming a firefighter apprentice. Currently, the apprenticeship scheme is for whole-time firefighters, and does not extend to on-call roles;
- (b) the Service also has 5 current apprenticeships in support roles, which are primarily focused towards younger people seeking to gain starting vocational qualifications through a two-year course. In the current period, 14% of all new starters were apprentices, making up 2% of the total staffing. Ultimately, apprenticeships are a good means of introducing more people to the Service and managers are being encouraged to consider apprenticeships for entry-level roles;
- (c) apprentices carry out an end-point assessment and are being successful in passing their courses. The Service’s apprenticeship provision has also been inspected by Ofsted, which returned a good report. Although there is a good gender balance for apprenticeships in support roles, there are more male apprentice firefighters than female – primarily due to there being more male applicants. As such, more work is required to engage with women to build their confidence in applying for a role as a firefighter.

The Committee noted the report.

## **28 Exclusion of the Public**

**The Committee resolved to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining items in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, under Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraphs 1 and 3, on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining an exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.**

**29 Exempt Minutes**

The Committee confirmed the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2021 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.



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

**Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters - Bestwood Lodge Drive, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD on 4 February 2022 from 10.03 am - 10.25 am**

### **Membership**

#### Present

Councillor Michael Payne (Chair)  
Councillor Toby Neal  
Councillor Roger Jackson

#### Absent

Councillor Sybil Fielding  
Councillor John Lee

### **Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

John Buckley - Chief Fire Officers  
Becky Smeathers - Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Authority  
Malcolm Townroe - Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority  
Emma Powley - Governance Officer

### **16 Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Fielding  
Councillor Lee

### **17 Declarations of Interest**

None

### **18 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 12 November 2021 were agreed.

### **19 Adoption of National Fire Standards**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which provided an update on the work of the National Fire Chiefs Council Fire Standards Board and outlined the Service's strategic intent and progress on the adoption of National Fire Standards.

The following points were highlighted and questions from members responded to:

- a) The Fire Standards Board (FSB) has been established by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) to oversee the identification, development, and maintenance of professional standards for fire and rescue services in England.
- b) A Standards Board had been established with an Independent Chair and Vice-Chair with representations from the Home Office and National Fire Chiefs Council.
- c) Eight fire standards have been produced with a further seven standards planned to be released in 2022.
- d) The Standards that have been created are based on legislation and best practice are not dissimilar to how the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service currently operates and will therefore, be easy to embed.
- e) The adoption of the National Fire Standards is not mandatory however the standards are considered to be best practice and there is an expectation from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) that Services are using them as a tool to promote continuous improvement. The standards will be used as part of the inspection criteria.
- f) The NFCC have created an implementation group of officers who will be providing additional support and capacity.
- g) Although the adoption of the standards were not mandatory, Fire and Rescue Services who do not adopt them would need to have credible reasons for not doing so. As Standards were strongly based on best practice and having considered industry and sector knowledge there would be more clarity on some of the standard's requirements.

## **Resolved to endorse the Service's approach to the adoption of National Fire Standards**

### **20 Collaboration Update**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which provided Members with an update on the Service's Joint Headquarters Programme.

The following information was highlighted:

- a) Early January 2022 the Fire Investigation Team relocated to Sherwood Lodge now shared with the Crime Scene Investigation team in the refurbished accommodation.
- b) On 17 January 2022, the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) People and Organisational Development (POD) team moved from Bestwood Lodge to Sherwood Lodge. They now occupy the ground floor of the new building, along with colleagues from the Police Human Resources team.
- a) There has been a short delay in the project due to supply chain issues and subsequent impacts on development and at present, there are a number of issues with parking which will be resolved once the contractors are finished.

- b) Open-plan working has been positively adopted by staff and the facilities are considered to be of a very high standard.
- c) The financial costs of the Programme are monitored closely and are currently within budget and due to complete within the predicted spends. Members are reminded that the Service has a capped liability for contributions to the programme and therefore there is no risk of an over-expenditure for the Authority.
- d) The first 'significant' meeting of the Fire Authority held at Sherwood Lodge would be the Annual General Meeting; prior to this, members will be given an induction and written brief about the facilities.

The Chair echoed the comments of Members offering praise to everyone involved in getting the project completed on budget and commented that it was a positive demonstration of collaborative working between Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Authority and Nottinghamshire Police.

**Resolved to note the contents of this report.**



**Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority  
Appointments Committee**

**Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service  
Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge Drive, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD on 4 February  
2022 from 11.30 am - 3.25 pm**

**Membership**

Present

Councillor Michael Payne (Chair)  
Councillor John Clarke  
Councillor Bethan Eddy  
Councillor Tom Hollis  
Councillor Roger Jackson (substitute)  
Councillor Toby Neal

Absent

Councillor Robert Corden  
Councillor Tom Hollis

**Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

Craig Parkin - Deputy Chief Fire Officer  
Malcolm Townroe - Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority  
Tracy Crump - Head of People and Organisational Development

**6 Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Robert Corden (Councillor Roger Jackson substituting)  
Councillor Tom Hollis

**7 Declarations of Interests**

None.

**8 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 02 December 2021 were confirmed as a true record and will be signed by the Chair.

**9 Exclusion of the Public**

**Resolved to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item in accordance with Paragraphs 1 and 2 of 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 outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.**

**10 Selection process for the appointment of a temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer**

Two candidates were assessed and interviewed for the post.

**Resolved to recommend to the Full Fire Authority that Mr Michael Sharman be appointed to the post of temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer.**