



**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 10:00am to 10:50am**

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.