



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: 22 July 2022

Purpose of Report:

To report to Members the business and actions of the Fire Authority committee meetings which took place between April and July 2022.

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	01 April 2022; 17 June 2022
Finance and Resources Committee	22 April 2022; 24 June 2022
Human Resources Committee	29 April 2022; 01 July 2022
Policy and Strategy Committee	13 May 2022; 24 June 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.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



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

**Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Joint
Headquarters - Sherwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PP on 1 April 2022 from
10.06 am - 11.15 am**

Membership

Present

Councillor Jason Zadrozny (Chair)
Councillor Scott Carlton
Councillor Eddie Cubley
Councillor Nick Raine (minutes 23-25 inclusive)
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora

Absent

Councillor Nicola Heaton
Councillor Toby Neal

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Craig Parkin – Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Mick Sharman - Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Bryn Coleman - Area Manager- Head of Prevention and Protection
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

20 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Toby Neal - other City Council business
Councillor Nicola Heaton (Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora substituting)

21 Declarations of Interest

None.

22 Minutes

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

23 Service Delivery Performance Report

Prior to consideration of the item, representatives of the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) were invited to present the following questions:

- 1) The availability figures for appliances such as Hucknall and Eastwood to name a few may appear to be high according to this report. However, on an ever-increasing frequency, these appliances are being used to provide standby cover at Ashfield fire station leaving Hucknall and Eastwood along with other areas without any fire cover. If an incident occurs in their own station area, then the public will have a delayed response to any incident, putting lives at risk. Are the Fire Authority prepared to continue taking this risk to support a failing Day Shift crewing model at Ashfield?

To which the Chair responded:

Operational response for the city and county is balanced across and provided by all stations and further supported through cross border mutual assistance and is therefore not reliant upon the closest station in isolation. The Service is well practiced in routinely deploying its resources flexibly to ensure that appropriate cover is maintained. This may be to deal with the unavailability of Whole-time as well as On-Call appliances, or indeed large and protracted incidents. Management continues to work with the workforce and representative bodies to ensure that all response appliances, including the 18 On-Call, are as available as is practicable, but recognises the national as well as local challenge for the On-Call system.

- 2) When Day Shift Crewing (DSC) was implemented by this authority, the residents in the affected areas were told that this would not result in a reduction in fire cover.

The figures published by the service show that where there used to be a whole-time appliance at Ashfield & Retford, which provided almost unbroken 24hour cover, 365days of the year. This has now been replaced by an on-call appliance, providing an inferior level of fire cover.

In simple terms, both of Ashfields appliances are unavailable between the hours of 18:00-08:00 for an accumulative total of over 562 hours or 40, 14 hour shifts over the course of a year.

Both of Retford's appliances are unavailable between the same times for a total of over 970 hours or 69, 14-hour shifts.

Given the recent Fire deaths in Ashfield, the statistics provided by the service, and the recent recommendations set out in the fire cover review, specifically in relation to DSC stations. Will this authority commit to reversing the changes at the affected DSC stations, fulfilling its commitment to the public as agreed by consultation to maintain and not reduce the level of fire cover at DSC stations?

To which the Chair responded:

The introduction of day shift crewing was implemented in response to continued reductions in the Services budget and followed a public consultation exercise. Those financial pressures continue for Nottinghamshire as it implements the 2022-2025 Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). The On-Call system covers the majority of the United Kingdom land mass and is underpinned by the great dedication of all those who work for Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service. The majority of response cover in Nottinghamshire is provided by the On-Call model, which is recognised as challenging, but not considered as inferior.

It must also be recognised that the recent tragic incidents in the area were responded to within the standards set by the Authority, and once again underpins the strong need to focus upon prevention activities to drive down risk.

Operational Response, through the Strategic Assessment of Risk, is just one element of the services delivered to communities, alongside Prevention and Protection aimed at keeping them safe from fire.

Any future changes to the delivery model will need to balance all those community services and be delivered within the financial resources available to the Authority. Given the global economic climate, this will no doubt be a challenge, and the Authority will continue to work with the workforce and communities to drive down risk and makes communities safer.

In a personal capacity, as a resident and elected representative for Ashfield, the Chair reminded the committee that in 2018 he had voted against the On-Call crewing of Ashfield Fire Station, and his opinion has not changed. The area experiences bespoke challenges and it is his belief that Ashfield and the wider service is best served by whole-time crew. However, the pressure on budgets is recognised. During the summer he is due to meet again with the Chair of the Authority, Chief Fire Officer, Ashfield Station firefighters and representatives of the FBU to discuss the outcome of a review of the Response capability of the Service, including Ashfield, a report on which will be submitted to the Fire Authority meeting in the Autumn.

Mick Sharman, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, and Bryn Coleman, Area Manager- Head of Prevention and Protection, presented the report which provides an overview of performance for the year to date from 28 February 2021.

The following points were highlighted:

- a) performance and activity are within expected parameters;
- b) there has been reduction in unwanted fire signals (UwFS), but incidents are still too frequent so there is a challenging target to reduce numbers by 33%;
- c) the Service is performing well with an average attendance time of 7:49 minutes;
- d) On-Call availability averaged 81.6%, which is below the Service's target of 85%. Recruitment issues remain at Southwell Fire Station, which achieved 67% availability, whilst firefighters at Bingham and Eastwood Fire Stations left the service so recruitment in these areas is underway. Warsop, Stapleford and Hucknall Fire Stations achieved an impressive 97% availability;
- e) paragraph 2.7 of the report provides a summary of performance for 999 calls answered within seven seconds, and shows a drop in performance, but all of the highest priority calls were responded to within the target;
- f) a hardware restructure of the mobilising system is predicted to improve mobilising system availability;
- g) in excess of 13,000 Safe and Well visits have been completed as of yesterday and the fixed term contracts of five additional safe and well operatives have now finished;

- h) the offer of Safe and Well visits has will be expanded beyond vulnerable person for persons to include every person in a property;
- i) 82% of all properties visited did have a smoke/ fire alarm;
- j) prevention approaches are tailored to respond to the community needs with individual Community Safety Area Prevention Plans;
- k) safety education packages are available for presentation within mainstream schools, and work is underway to identify 'risky schools' which will be directly targeted with intervention activity during 2022/23;
- l) for the period 1 April 2021 to 28 February 2022, the protection department undertook the following activities:
 - i. 509 pre-planned inspections of non-domestic premises with 106 follow up inspections;
 - ii. 105 Business Safety Checks (Short Audits);
 - iii. 223 Specifics;
 - iv. 196 post fire inspections;
 - v. 210 Complaints against buildings;
 - vi. 11 Enforcement Notices served;
 - vii. 7 Prohibition Notices served;
 - viii. 715 Building regulation consultations with local authority building control or approved inspectors;
 - ix. 309 Licencing consultation;
 - x. 94 other consultations with agencies including Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission.
- m) where unwanted fire signals (UwFS) happen, the Service writes to the establishment and will visit in person after 4 instances and a require a full audit of the premises after 6 incidents. There was a significant drop in UwFS during COVID lockdown, but incidents have now returned to their pre-covid levels;
- n) hospitals are the worst offenders for UwFS but are also the biggest risk, so Fire Protection Officers work closely with hospitals to reduce occurrences;
- o) this Service was highlighted as an example of best practice for its collaborative work with Nottingham City Council with the Joint Audit and Inspection Team (JAIT) which currently examines high rise buildings for safety issues, and is aiming to include medium rise (11-18 meter) properties;
- p) it is anticipated that realistically, at current capacity, it will take several years of work to safety audit all current medium and high-rise residential properties within the city and county;
- q) Nationally, building safety issues are a legacy which will take time to resolve;
- r) as a result of the Grenfell Tower fire, the Building Safety Act is anticipated to come into force in mid-to-late 2023 and will place further burdens of fire safety and prevention responsibility on the Fire Service;

- s) there needs to be a holistic approach across all partners to fire safety and prevention.

Committee members' questions were responded to as follows:

- t) the number deliberate fires peaked during an especially warm period just as COVID restrictions were lifted. This included secondary fires of grassland, particularly on Oaktree Lane Estate in Mansfield. Any extreme weather increases Fire Service activity but the Service will also be promoting the 'Fire Stoppers' confidential reporting lines if people are aware of those who are purposely setting fires;
- u) COVID appeared to have a positive impact on availability, which may have been reflection of society's changes in priorities and the need to be flexible;
- v) there are challenges for daytime On-Call cover during normal working hours so the Service needs to be more flexible. This is an issue nationally for which solutions are being sought. Historically on-call staff need to be within five minutes travelling time of the station, but with current pressures, consideration is being given to expand this timescale. The Fire Cover Review may offer solutions to this issue;
- w) with long-term On-Call recruitment issues for the Bingham and Stapleford Fire Stations, an employment terms trial is taking place with the support of staff and the FBU. The trial offers reduced contracted hours from 84 to 62 or 48 within these areas to hopefully make the role more appealing and attractive to eligible residents. Once evaluated in the Autumn, if successful, then this offer may be rolled out;
- x) it is a real concern that current construction legislation has systematic fire safety failings, the results of which will become very apparent within the next 20 years. The construction industry needs to deal with existing safety issues and take the risk to life seriously;
- y) the Fire Service is a statutory consultant for proposed developments of 18m and above but not below this height;
- z) JAIT Inspections of 120 existing inspection eligible buildings has found that only 2 required no further work. Identified issues included compartmentation, glazing issues and missing fire shafts;
- aa) 23 high-rise buildings were identified as being of concern within Nottingham and some still have flammable cladding, which is yet to be removed. The Service is working with management companies and partners, but progress can be slow and Fire Service powers can be limited;
- bb) with regard to fire safety there needs to be a cultural change in Central Government and within the building sector as some developers do building the to 17.99m to achieve as much capacity as possible, but without the need to comply to high rise (18m) residential building requirements. However, buildings need to be safe and compliant and not just compliant. These issues have been highlighted by the National Fire Chief's Council to the LGA and other bodies;
- cc) the National Fire Chief's Council has a dedicated 'Protection Policy Reform Unit' which is working closely with Government and the LGA to get the Fire and Rescue view of

best practice on safety on what building safety requirements should be. Systemic failings need to be designed out;

- dd) the city has a significant number of dwellings which provide broader risks, but the Service is working with partners to prevent further incidents in the future. Given some of the issues identified during audits, it should not be presumed that another incident like Grenfell Tower won't happen again;
- ee) the refurbishment and re-purposing of buildings regularly provides additional fire safety complications, often due to hidden compartments and unknown materials;
- ff) with regard to houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), local authorities rely on Environmental Health to enforce safe living conditions, but with different inspections taking place, better coordination and a holistic approach from all partners continues to be required;
- gg) regeneration and business is important, so the Service needs to work closely with contractors to identify and address issues and look closely at the standards;
- hh) with the additional pressures of the additional work attached to the new legislation, more fire safety inspectors are required to accelerate current and future inspections, but this will be a challenge with reduced funding. Nationally it has not been possible to recruit the number of qualified inspectors and so the Service recruits unqualified people to train in the required competencies;
- ii) changes in legislation are ongoing and whilst significant progress has been made, there is still work to be done.

Members of the committee commented;

- o following Covid many people are re-evaluating the lives so the opportunities available within the Fire Service, particularly On-Call fire fighter, needs to be communicated and promoted more broadly with in our communities, including by elected members;
- o it needs to be highlighted to planning authorities across the city and county that the new legislation of the Building Safety Act will require further governance but NFRS is here and is supportive;
- o HMOs are getting bigger, more prevalent and includes new build properties so with increasing density of population and the repurposing of buildings, standards of construction need to be controlled.

Resolved to note the report.

24 2021 Fatal Fires Review

Bryn Coleman, Area Manager and Head of Prevention and Protection, presented the report which provided an update to the committee on fatal fire incidents attended by the Service between 1 January and 31st of December in 2021.

The following points were highlighted:

- a) not all incidents referred to in the report have been subject to a coroners review yet so there are further details to be provided;
- b) there's been an increase in fatalities from 3 in 2020 to 7 in 2021, with 7 as the average;
- c) the report provides general information on where the fatal incidents took place, the dates, and the gender and age range of the fatalities. It is noted that all 7 fatalities lived alone, the youngest was 53 years of age but only one met the 'CHARLIE P' profile;
- d) three of the seven addresses were known to the Fire Service, and one had declined a Safe and Well visit and one was engaged 12 times and additional alarms fitted;
- e) the Serious Event Review Group of relevant internal partners including the incident commander, fire control and colleagues in Prevention, examines what had happened and what level of Service or partner intervention there had been (if any) and what could have been done to help prevent the incidents. This approach improves learning for the Service and supports preventative work;
- f) where fatalities occur, the Service undertakes Community Reassurance and Engagement (CRaE) to highlight the necessity to take home fire safety seriously, including having working fire alarms and to be able to exit the property in an emergency. In total, 788 properties were visited and advice provided;
- g) an Occupational Therapist was seconded to the service in 2020 and works 50/50 with the NHS and is proving a vital asset, working closely with the prevention and fire investigation officers to identify trends and areas for collaborative working between the Service and the NHS, with a view to preventing further incidents;
- h) prevention activity planned for 2022 is outlined within the report and includes re-educating partners, particularly with regard to the 'CHARLIE P' profile of those most vulnerable to fatal fires, further promoting the fire safety message and continuing the work of the Arson Reduction Investigation Team, which works in partnership's with Trading Standards to identify trends in fires caused by electrical goods to enable manufacturers to recall consistently faulty products;
- i) it's easier to identify individuals at higher risk of an incident who are known to partner agencies, but the real concern is those who are completely unknown, often quite reclusive and often choosing to live in austere conditions. These people often don't want to be known to the wider establishment.

Committee members welcomed the engagement of an Occupational Therapist and noted that further engagement with Adult Social Care will be valuable.

Resolved to note the report.

25 An update on the Areas For Improvement from the 2019 HMICFRS Inspection

Mick Sharman, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which provides an update on the Service's response to the outcomes regarding the 2019 inspection of the Service by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

The following points were highlighted and responses provided to members questions;

- a) the report seeks closure of 'Area For Improvement' 9, which was 'to ensure that mobile data terminals are reliable to allow staff to access risk information' as this work has now been completed;
- b) this is the last AFI to be completed from the 12 areas relevant to community safety;
- c) there are longer term objectives to further improve access to information for fire crews.

Resolved to agree the closure Area For Improvement 9.



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

Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Joint Headquarters, Sherwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PP on Friday 17 June 2022 from 10:00am to 11:06am

Membership

Present

Councillor Jason Zadrozny (Chair)
Councillor Robert Corden
Councillor Nicola Heaton
Councillor Nick Raine
Councillor Dave Trimble
Councillor Roger Upton

Absent

None

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

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

1 Apologies for Absence

None.

2 Declarations of Interests

None.

3 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2022 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

4 Service Delivery Performance Report

Bryn Coleman, Area Manager for Prevention and Protection, and Andy Macey, Area Manager for Response, presented a report on the performance of the Service Delivery Directorate. The following points were discussed:

- (a) as at 31 May, the Service has attended 1,916 incidents. This represents an 8% increase overall when compared to the same period in the previous year, with 8.8% more false alarms, 5.7% more fires and 11.1% more special service calls (such as road traffic collisions). However, lockdown restrictions were still in place during April and May 2021, so this will have reduced the number of incidents during that period – meaning that incidents are now returning to pre-pandemic levels. Proportionally, the incident numbers per month remain largely consistent to those recorded for the preceding three years, with the highest levels in the City of Nottingham;
- (b) the number of fires continues to follow a pattern of peaking in the spring months, remaining relatively high throughout the summer, and then dropping down again during the autumn and winter. However, most of the fires that occur during the peak periods are of a relatively low level of severity. The instances of more dangerous fires (which represent a serious hazard or immediate threat to life) have remained stable across the period;
- (c) the number of special service and false alarm cases remained relatively constant across the last 12 months. The Service is considering its response to false alarms carefully, and has a target to achieve a 3% reduction in incidents. A risk-based approach has been taken to seek to ensure that the response to false alarms is as efficient as possible, to ensure that the best use can be made of the Service's limited resources. So far, the Service has responded to 418 false alarms (a 0.48% decrease on the same period last year), and is working closely with businesses to reduce the number of incidents further;
- (d) a key performance target is that all emergency incidents are attended within 8 minutes on average, from the time when the first fire appliance is mobilised. To date, the Service is achieving an average attendance time of 7 minutes 59 seconds overall, and the target has also been achieved in the majority of the previous 12 months;
- (e) to ensure that operational incidents are managed appropriately and safely, and for the purpose of continuous improvement, there is a performance target for the active monitoring of 10% of all operational incidents (which reflects the sector standard). The Service has consistently outperformed this target over the last 12 months, with active monitoring carried out for around 20% of incidents. This monitoring is important as the involvement of senior officers at operational incidents helps to improve preparedness at all levels, and the target for monitoring levels is reviewed annually. The Committee requested that the detail of the next review processes for the target levels of active monitoring for operation incidents is reported to the appropriate meeting;
- (f) in the year to date, twelve out of the sixteen on-call sections are performing above the target of 85% appliance availability, which represents an overall improvement (reaching 87.39% availability overall, on average). On-call availability at the Day Shift Crewing stations has been strong. However, availability at Southwell is below the Service's 70% minimum standard;
- (g) on-call recruitment and retention continues to be a challenge both in Southwell and across the sector, and this has a direct impact on availability. However,

people's working patterns have changed following the Coronavirus pandemic, and targeted recruitment activity is underway to seek to take advantage of this. A pilot scheme intended to improve retention through more flexible on-call contracts is also progressing well. The Committee requested that a report is provided to a future meeting to illustrate how the current recruitment activity is targeted and carried out;

- (h) the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service Joint Control Centre has three key performance measures. The first is that 96% of 999 calls are answered within 7 seconds. While performance slipped slightly in quarters 1 and 3 of 2021/22, the target has been met in four of the last six quarters. The second performance measure is that calls for the highest-risk incidents are handled within 89 seconds, on average. There was strong improvement in this area during 2021/22, with call handling times being as low as 82 seconds in the last two completed quarters;
- (i) finally, there is a performance measure that the availability of the computerised mobilisation system is 99%. Unfortunately, the performance of this ICT system has fallen short of the target for the last five quarters. Mitigations are in place and work is ongoing to address and manage the issues that this creates for effective mobilisation, and the Service is working closely with the system supplier to both identify and address the faults and concerns. The mobilising system is due for replacement in 2024, and a project to manage this began in March 2022. The Committee noted that, as a number of new members joined the Authority in May, it would be beneficial for a briefing note to be produced for all members on the background to any long-running issues such as this that are affecting the Service, currently;
- (j) a full training scheme is in place, with the 2022/23 exercise programme now underway. This includes practical exercises in the field, covering a wide range and scale of incidents, and all firefighters are expected to undertake at least one of these exercises each year. In addition, there is a new requirement for firefighters to complete two table-top training exercises per year;
- (k) 13,018 Safe and Well Visits were carried out in 2021/22, which exceeded the target of 12,000. The people most at risk during a fire are those with reduced mobility, so there is a particular focus on carrying out visits to those aged over 65 and those who consider themselves to have a disability. As part of the Service's person-centred approach, a new 'Vulnerable Persons' module has been added for teams carrying out Safe and Well Visits to record the details of each vulnerable person within a given residence, and this new system is being bedded in. An Occupational Therapist is in place to help engage with the people most at risk, and has helped to create strong links with the NHS and its databases. Work is underway with the NHS to help at-risk people improve their mobility;
- (l) 'Safety Zone' events for Year 6 school pupils are being developed as part of the engagement process with children and young people, with a particular focus on areas where incidents are high. The events are arranged for locations that are of a suitable size, but are also affordable and as easily as accessible as possible to the target attendees. The events will be multi-agency based and, as well as focusing on fire safety, will address rail safety, cyber safety, electricity sub-station

safety and stranger danger. The Service is also actively engaged in a multi-agency delivery of road safety awareness and intervention;

- (m) the Building Safety Act has now passed into law and expected to be fully operational by October 2023. This is likely to have resourcing implications as there is a requirement for the Service to support the new Building Safety Regulator. The Health and Safety Executive is investigating the establishment of multi-disciplinary teams across the country to support the Regulator, and the Service will make the case that Nottinghamshire would be a good location for one of these. However, although there will be a greater onus on Fire and Rescue Services to ensure that building fire safety is improved, there are a great deal of elements involved in the process of constructing a building that are outside their control. Ultimately, more investment is required in Fire Protection now, in order to be able to meet the likely future resourcing requirements – though this need sits within the context of reducing budgets, presenting significant challenges;
- (n) the Government is starting a consultation with the sector on the implementation of the Building Safety Act, and a response will be returned through the National Fire Chiefs' Council. The Committee suggested that a notification system to Local Authorities should be considered for property schemes falling under permitted development, as Local Authorities can often be unaware that the nature of a premises has been changed, which could have implications for fire safety;
- (o) 156 Fire Safety Audits have been carried out, so far. Inspectors review all non-residential premises where a fire has occurred, respond to complaints from the public, carry out any required safety enforcement activity, and engage in the Planning consultation process for new buildings. Ultimately, there are around 45,000 business premises that should be inspected over the next three years, and the number of premises subject to inspection is also likely to increase during this time;
- (p) a great deal of work is required to carry out the inspections, as part of ensuring that the built environment does comply with fire safety standards. As such, inspections must be targeted effectively and the top 10% of buildings of highest risk have been identified as a priority. Ensuring that all required buildings are inspected within the needed timeframe represents a significant challenge, but the current performance trajectory is moving in the right direction;
- (q) to support the inspectors' workload, training is underway for Crew and Watch Managers in Fire Protection so that crews can carry out Business Safety Checks for the lower-risk premises. A large number of business were closed during the Coronavirus pandemic, so it was not possible to inspect them during this time. However, the number of audits is now returning to normal levels. Overall, it is vital that all firefighters are trained to have experience in basic Fire Protection so that the specialist inspectors can focus on the most complex cases, and this will also increase the knowledge base available in responding to incidents. More investment is also being made in the training of Fire Engineers, and it takes at least two years to train staff in these specialist roles;
- (r) the Service has conducted 36 premises inspections (and 27 re-inspections) as part of the Joint Audit Inspection Team (JAIT). This is a collaboration with

Nottingham City Council whereby Environmental Health Inspectors and Fire Safety Inspectors work together to review high-rise residential buildings. These JAiT inspections have covered 59 buildings and 6,447 units of accommodation, but there are still 84 buildings over 18 meters high and 62 buildings below 18 meters high left to inspect – many of which are complex and resource-intensive, in the context of Fire Protection. It will take a number of years to complete these inspections, including any new buildings that are constructed in the meantime. As only the Service has the authority to carry out the relevant enforcement action where required, all inspections must be completed using internal staffing. However, it is possible that JAiT activity will form part of the work of the new Regulator, going forward;

- (s) many students live in complex, high-rise building and, although students often do not fit the CHARLIE profile for those most at risk in a fire, proactive work is carried out at their accommodation on what residents should do in the event of a fire. Work is also taking place with students on limiting the number of false alarms;
- (t) the Committee considered that developers have a responsibility to ensure that their buildings are constructed and operated safely. Ultimately, Fire and Rescue Services nationally must be funded sufficiently to achieve the right level of resourcing to address the important area of Fire Protection as effectively as possible.

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 22 April 2022 from 10.01am -
11.00am**

Membership

Present

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

Absent

Councillor John Lee
Councillor Toby Neal

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Craig Parkin – Chief Fire Officer
Becky Smeathers – Treasurer and Head of Finance
Leila Henry – Head of Risk, Assurance and Operational Training
Phil Dent – Internal Audit, Nottinghamshire County Council
Catherine Ziane-Pryor – Governance Officer

25 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Toby Neal -Leave
Councillor John Lee
Rob Disney – Head of Internal Audit NFRS

26 Declarations of Interests

None.

27 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2022 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

28 Revenue, Capital, and Prudential Code Monitoring Report to February 2022

Becky Smeathers, Treasurer to the Authority and Head of Finance, presented the report which informs the Committee of the financial performance of the Service and Prudential Code Monitoring to the end of February 2022.

It is noted that within table 4, Prudential Code Monitoring, that the figure stated for Actual Borrowing should read £32,932 and not £28,932. This is a typing error and does not impact on the other figures provided.

Highlighted points included the following:

- a) a projected overspend of £116,000 was reported to the Committee in January so the Service has worked hard to draw that money back and is now predicting an underspend of £234,000, in part as a result of holding some vacant posts;
- b) Appendix A to the report outlines the areas of under and overspend;
- c) transport costs are forecast to overspend by £106,000 although underspends are predicted from the following:
 - i. Vehicle equipment £65,000
 - ii. Officers car leases £86,000
 - iii. Mileage and public transport costs £61,000
 - iv. Vehicle insurance £54,000
- d) reserves are slightly higher than anticipated at £9.993m;
- e) the Capital Programme 2021/22 expenditure is anticipated to be £6.161m, £4.845m relates to estates work. Although the contribution from the Service towards the new Headquarters has been capped, the cost of the work has risen significantly and so expectations of what can be provided may have to be revised;
- a) to take advantage of the low rates for borrowing during January, planned borrowing was brought forward from later in the year as this made good financial sense;

Committee members' questions were responded to as follows:

- b) initially there were proposals for the new Eastwood Fire station to also host a base for East Midlands Ambulance Service, but this has changed and following a feasibility study, the station will still be built with the facilities to host partners or community facilities but any external occupation will require formal approval;
- c) with regard to pension costs, following the outcome of the McCloud case, the Service is holding funds to the known level required but as the final cost has not yet been determined and is unlikely to be known before October 2023. The creation of a £200k Earmarked Reserves is recommended for this purpose;

- i) the Policy and Strategy Committee has agreed that the arrangements set out within the initially issued and then withdrawn McCloud statement can be followed until alternative arrangements are announced by Central Government. This will reduce the detriment to staff who have already or are about to retire. There is a risk that if the Service makes payments prior to any formal guidance, then the Service will be liable to carry any costs which differ from the later issued procedure. However, without this provision, there is potential for the Service to be legally challenged, which would be costly to the Service, added to which waiting until the legislation is enacted would not be fair to retired and retiring staff. In support of the Service's action, the FBU have provided a letter stating that they would take the Service to court on age discrimination if staff were not financially supported, which further strengthens the Service's position;
- j) every year there is a shortfall of pension income in the region of £8-10 million which is met from Central Government. As a result, the new pension scheme was introduced with a view to reducing the overall cost met by Central Government. The transition from the old scheme to the new is what has been challenged with regard to age discrimination;
- k) the pension issues also effects On-Call employees who are now able to backdate their membership to the scheme to their start date with the service. This does result in additional pressures on the Service with regards to implementation as data is not readily available going sufficiently far back.

Resolved

- 1) to note the contents of the report;**
- 2) to approve slippage of £1.166m for the rescue pumps to be slipped into 2022/23;**
- 3) to approve the creation of a £200k earmarked reserve to mitigate the financial risks arising from the McCloud pension remedy.**

29 Internal Audit Report 2021/22 Update

Becky Smeathers, Treasurer and Head of Finance, introduced the report which provides the following 3 complete and 1 nearly completed of the 7 Internal Audit reports for 2022:

- i. Payroll Controls
- ii. Financial Management Code
- iii. Asset Disposals
- iv. Performance Management

In the absence of Rob Disney, Phil Dent, Internal Auditor for Nottinghamshire County Council, was in attendance to respond to member's questions.

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

- a) to date a minimum of limited assurance (for asset disposal) has been issued up to substantial (for payroll);

- b) as there have been some issues for concern regarding the asset disposal of some other Fire Services, an audit was requested by NFRS and whilst no specific issues have been identified, it is noted that there hasn't always been compliance to the approved procedures, particularly regarding fleet and IT assets. An update report will be submitted later in the year;
- c) the performance management audit is incomplete as the information couldn't be tested but most procedures and policies seem to be in place but are yet to be examined;
- d) an audit of ethical policies and procedures has been drafted and will be reported to a future meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee;
- e) audits on pensions and property and premises are in progress;
- f) action tracking is yet to be completed;
- g) the final Audit report is scheduled to be submitted to the Finance and Resources Committee meeting on 24 June 2022;
- h) a total of 70 decommissioned Fire and Rescue vehicles from across the country have been sent to the Ukraine. Some will be light vehicles such as cars and vans, not just appliances;
- i) the used vehicle market is quite buoyant at the moment so the Service may consider early disposal of some vehicles;
- j) vehicles are rotated between busy and less busy sites to ensure that usage and wear is averaged;
- k) the majority of vehicles are expected to last between 10 and 15 years with specialist equipment such as aerial ladders lasting 15 years, but this will depend on usage;
- l) an annual audit plan will be submitted to a future meeting and members contribution and feedback would be welcomed;
- m) achieving value for money is important and audits can identify where there are areas for improvement, so are a valuable resource.

Members of the Committee requested further information on the policies determining when and how assets are disposed of.

Resolved to note the report.

30 CIPFA Financial Management Code Update

Becky Smeathers, Treasurer and Head of Finance, presented an update report which informs the Committee of progress made against the implementation of the CIPFA Financial Management Code

Of the 17 standards identified to ensure sustainable and effective financial management, following an internal review by Becky Smeathers, 6 were recognised as 'amber'. In order to verify the position, Internal Audit were requested to undertake a formal audit.

The 6 areas requiring improvement are outlined in the appendix to the report with all but one, 'Governance and Financial Management Style' now resolved and issues being addressed. Work is ongoing on the remaining area for improvement, with the Monitoring Officer reviewing Governance, and the revised website is being launched, which once both are completed, will satisfy the requirements and a further report will be submitted to the Committee.

Resolved to note the report.

31 Corporate Risk Management

Leila Henry, Head of Risk and Assurance, presented the report which highlights areas of significant risk and includes the most up to date risk register for the Service.

The following points were highlighted and committee members' questions responded to:

- a) there are currently significant global issues which impact on the potential risk to the Service such as rising inflation, the war in Ukraine and leaving the European Union, all of which are impacting on the Service, particularly with regard to supply chains;
- b) under current arrangements risk management is working well;
- c) significant areas of risk which have already been discussed in the meeting include pensions and the as of yet to be determined by Central Government actions resulting from the McCloud case;
- d) the report recommends that 2 risks are removed from the register although these could be re-escalated if ever necessary:
 - i. use of vehicles on Authority business (risk 10) as incidents have significantly reduced and types of incidents are low impact; and
 - ii. COVID-19 (risk 14) have seen less disruption to the workforce;
- e) insurance renewal has been based on an inflationary increase so some costs have increased;
- f) cyber risk insurance has increased as a result of home working and general increasing risk but work is ongoing to mitigate risk and reduce premiums;
- g) direct contact with some suppliers in the European Union is no longer possible although this is not a critical impact on the Service at this time, it needs to be recognised and it may impact on other factors;
- h) vehicles can still be bought from EU suppliers but it's taking longer and costs may rise but it is vital to maintain reliable vehicles;

- i) there is no immediate critical need but the Service needs to adapt in future years, including possibly ordering earlier, which can also reduce the final cost;
- j) the Service lifetime of vehicles has been reassessed and extended from 10 years to 12 and 15 years for most vehicles to gain the best value for money;
- k) the impact of COVID continues to be monitored and it is not considered high or very high risk to the Service so wouldn't be reported to the Committee, but if this situation were to change, the Committee would be informed.

Resolved

- 1) to note the most recent version of the Corporate Risk Register and the work ongoing to mitigate risks to the Authority;**
- 2) to note the slight change in format of the Corporate Risk Register to assist with readability and visibility of the changing risk landscape of the Service;**
- 3) to remove Risk 10 (use of vehicles on Authority business) and Risk 14 (Covid-19) from the Corporate Risk Register.**

32 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.

33 Disposal of Surplus Land at Worksop Fire Station

Becky Smeathers Treasurer to the Authority and Head of Finance, presented the report.

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



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

**Minutes of the meeting held at Joint Fire / Police HQ, Sherwood Lodge, Arnold,
Nottingham, NG5 8PP on 24 June 2022 from 10.06 am - 10.54 am**

Membership

Present

Councillor John Clarke (Chair)
Councillor Callum Bailey
Councillor Sybil Fielding
Councillor Mike Quigley MBE
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler
Councillor Dave Trimble

Absent

Councillor Steve Battlemuch
Councillor Eddie Cubley
Councillor Nicola Heaton
Councillor Michael Payne

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Craig Parkin - Chief Fire Officer
Becky Smeathers - Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Authority
Phil Dent - Internal Audit Supervisor
Andrew Howarth - Senior Internal Auditor
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Eddie Cubley, Councillor Jonathan Wheeler substituting
Councillor Nicola Heaton, Councillor David Trimble, substituting
Councillor Steve Battlemuch
Simon Lacey, Interim Chief Internal Auditor

2 Declarations of Interests

None.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2022 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

4 2021-22 Revenue and Capital Outturn

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Authority, presented the report which provides an update on information provided at the last meeting.

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

- a) there is very little difference from the figures presented to the last meeting with exception of £194k underspend which represents less than 0.5% of the overall budget;
- b) most spend has been as predicted;
- c) table 3 of the report details earmarked reserves and the spend of £855k of earmarked reserves from ongoing projects and grant funding of previous years, not ongoing expenditure;
- d) there has been some slippage in capital outturn, which is detailed within the report, and is mainly due to projects such as the new Worksop Fire Station and the Joint Headquarters Site with invoices, including for snagging work, being presented in this financial year;
- e) capital slippage of £1,166k is attributed to the delay in receiving rescue pumps, which is a national issue, but there are proposals to prevent further delays and therefore slippage with a new approach to ordering which will be discussed later in the agenda;
- f) there is still uncertainty regarding ICT projects including how long the national project will take to implement and in what form. Initially the completion target was within the 2019/20 year, but there have been several delays and work is ongoing. A new Central Government completion date is now anticipated of 2026. The ongoing reduction in funding for the current system will mean that eventually the Fire Service will be wholly responsible for funding, which provides an additional risk;
- g) all approved projects where slippage has been identified are still considered necessary and are underway. In the scheme of the projects, the slippage is not significant for any site. Items such as the rescue pumps don't have any expenditure yet but have been ordered and the Service won't pay until the work is completed and the appliances are delivered;
- h) budgets are reviewed in-year, including to ensure that all budgeted works are still necessary;
- i) no debts have been written-off. Sometimes it can be a small overpayment of pension when someone has died, but as the Service doesn't provide many services for which a charge is made, there are very few opportunities for bad debts to accrue.

Committee members commented:

- j) it's sensible to monitor the capital programme and check that at the end of the year that if projects which are yet to commence are still required and necessary;

- k) there's minimal slippage and overall the capital and revenue budgets appear very well managed;
- l) on paper there is a large underspend and whilst this is now understood to be only temporary, attention needs to be paid to negating a negative impression.

Resolved

- 1) to note the contents of the report;
- 2) to approve the creation of £163k of Earmarked Reserves relating to unspent spent grants as follows:

Earmarked Reserve Amount	£'000
WiFi Enhancement – LRF funding	7
Fire Protection funding	19
Redmund Review Audit grant	12
Fire Pension Admin Grant	125
Total	163

- 3) to approve the slippage of £2.104m on the capital programme as detailed in Section 2.35 and Table 5 of the report;
- 4) to approve a £400k revenue contribution to fund ICT capital projects.

5 Revenue, Capital ,and Prudential Code Monitoring Report to May 2022

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Authority, presented the report which updates the Committee on the 2022/23 financial performance of the Service and Prudential Code monitoring for the 2 months of this financial year to the end of May 2022.

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

- a) there is still no update available on the pay award for which 3% has been budgeted. Anything higher will need to be funded by the Service from this year's budget potentially from reserves. Any further increase represents £270k impact on the Service per 1%, which rises to £350k ongoing per year;
- b) the Service is trying to control all expenditure due to the current national financial position and the known reduction in funding for future years and is actively seeking savings;
- c) vacancies across the public sector are proving difficult to fill. The Service had anticipated a generous vacancy rate of 7% but this has now reached in excess of 10%;
- d) recruitment of Whole-Time firefighters has been delayed pending outcomes of the cover review work. With higher than anticipated vacancies and some sickness, ridership has been affected and action to counteract these issues are being

- investigated, including introducing temporary Whole-Time contracts for On-Call firefighters, including those working for other Services;
- e) vacancy rates amongst support staff are also having a negative impact on remaining staff, which needs to be monitored;
 - f) the underspend on staffing will continue to rise until posts can be filled;
 - g) with regard to the capital programme, issues around the purchase and provision of fire appliances within the 2022/23 financial year are distorting the figures in that appliances have been ordered but as they have not yet been received due to ongoing manufacture delays, they have not been paid for. However, the Service has the opportunity to now order further appliances which were scheduled for purchase in 2023/24, to secure better value. This is contrary to financial regulations as the budget has not yet been set for the future years in question, but these are assets which the Service requires to enable it to meet its statutory duties, are scheduled for purchase at a later date but if ordered now, the Service will benefit from a greater discount. Delaying an order may delay delivery. If the Committee approve the placing of the order, it can be placed at the end of the month. It should be noted that spend will still occur as scheduled, in the relevant years. If necessary, it will be possible to cancel or amend the order;
 - h) with regard to prudential monitoring, borrowing is at £36.9m but the Service has taken advantage of the low interest rates and borrowed an additional £2m;
 - i) the Service has not taken any variable rate borrowing and all borrowing is fixed rate;
 - j) now that East Midlands Ambulance Service has declined the opportunity to have a base at Eastwood Fire Station, feasibility studies on the proposed station are ongoing regarding what the Service can realistically provide for the funding available;
 - k) there is a retention figure for the completion of the new Joint Head Quarters which is accounted for in this year's budget;
 - l) recruitment and retention of staff is an ongoing issue across the public sector, mainly due to the difference in pay compared to the private sector. Options to negate the movement of staff and/or attract new staff have been considered, including market supplements, but this would prove complicated and may be seen as unfair to existing staff who may be undertaking the same level of work but for less pay, which does not provide a level playing field and may raise equality issues. Temporary agency staff have been engaged where necessary, the cost of which has been greater than permanent staff.

Members of the Committee welcomed the flexible approach to purchasing appliances and requested that the financial benefits of pre-ordering in other areas of inevitable spend are investigated.

Resolved

- 1) to note the report;**

- 2) **to approve the ordering of fire appliances relating to the 23/24 capital programme in advance of the 23/24 budget being agreed by Full Fire Authority.**

6 Internal Audit Annual Report 2021/22

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Authority, introduced Phil Dent, Internal Audit Supervisor, and Andrew Howarth, Senior Internal Auditor who will be taking over from Phil Dent when Phil retires, were in attendance to present the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2021/2022.

The following points were highlighted:

- a) Reasonable Assurance has been issued to date;
- b) 7 audits have been completed, with 4 presented in April and 3 further reports (Ethical Policies and Procedures, Pensions Administration, Facilities Management) attached as appendices to the report, with all 3 achieving Substantial Assurance;
- c) other additional Audits outside of the Audit Plan have included 'water rescue' and 'working at height', for which recommendations have been made and the Service is in the process of implementing;
- d) the Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23 has been discussed with the Strategic Leadership Team and will be made available for members to make comments. It will not be requested for approval as flexibility is required during the year to undertake audits where issues or concerns arise;
- e) approval is sought for the Audit Charter which was developed last year to strengthen the internal audit function and the governance around that, and is attached as appendix E to the report;
- f) access to and of Internal Audit has been increased by attending some meetings of the Strategic Leadership Team;
- g) there was no impairment to internal audit independence and no limitation of scope which means that there was full coverage although covid did have an impact on timings;
- h) the overall Annual Audit Opinion is concluded as Reasonable Assurance;
- i) the overall arrangements of Corporate Governance and Risk Management were undertaken which focused on the assessments other bodies', with both being issued with Substantial Assurance;
- j) action tracking is done by the Service and reported to the Strategic Leadership Team. There has been good progress but some recommendations have not yet been implemented.

It is requested that the section 14 heading of the Audit Charter is amended to 'Actioning of Internal Audit Recommendations'.

Resolved

- 1) **to note the contents of the report;**
- 2) **to approve the adoption of the Internal Audit Charter, as attached at Appendix E to the report;**
- 3) **to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the late Internal Auditor Rob Disney, on behalf of the Service;**
- 4) **to thank Phil Dent for his work in difficult circumstances and wish him well in his retirement;**
- 5) **to thank the Becky Smeathers and the Finance Team for their ongoing exemplary work.**

7 Future meeting dates

Resolved to note the future meeting dates as agreed by the Authority at its AMG as:

14 October 2022, 20 January 2023, 31 March 2023.



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

**Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters -
Bestwood Lodge Drive, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD on 29 April 2022 from 10.00 am -
10.56 am**

Membership

Present

Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora (Chair)
Councillor Bethan Eddy
Councillor Tom Hollis
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
Councillor John Lee

Absent

Councillor Roger Jackson
Councillor Toby Neal

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Candida Brudenell – Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Tracy Crump - Head of People and Organisational Development
Matt Sismey - Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager
Catherine Ziane-Pryor – Governance Officer

30 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Toby Neal
Councillor Roger Jackson (Councillor John Lee substituting)

31 Declarations of Interests

None.

32 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2022 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

33 Human Resources Update

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which provides a detailed update on key human resources metrics for the Quarter 4 period from 1 January 2022 to 31 March 2022.

The following points were highlighted and Committee members' questions responded to:

- a) whilst the Whole-Time approved number of posts is 431, there are currently only 427 in post. This is in line with planning forecasts;
- b) the number of vacancies within the On-Call and support cohorts are higher than anticipated but is a reflection of a national trend;
- c) excluding Covid related illness, the sickness rates for Quarter 4 are higher than anticipated by 65% on the same period last year, although last year's figures were particularly low, and work is underway to address this trend. Comparison with 2016-20 (pre-Covid) figures are a more accurate benchmark and represent an increase of 2.4% and a reduction of 3.1% for On-Call staff.
- d) last year 28% of absences were due to Covid related illness, but since the change in national guidance, this figure has reduced significantly;
- e) during the pandemic, absence rates were significantly reduced, but now that staff are mixing there has been a rise in sickness absence;
- f) in terms of national absence figures for the sector, whilst NFRS are relatively high in comparison to other services, this is partly due to the way that different services have recorded Covid related illness. This should be addressed in next year's figures;
- g) Appendix A to the report provides sickness figures for the period between 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022 to illustrate how absence has fluctuated for all work groups over the past three years;
- h) absence rates are closely monitored with a focus on tracking and addressing muscular-skeletal and mental health issues which can result in longer term absences of 28 days and over;
- i) internally and externally provided preventative support and mechanisms are in place for staff to assist recovery and return to work, including a helpline for mental health and physio therapy;
- j) the higher rate of absence amongst retained/ On-Call staff may be a reflection of them often having a second job, but they still have full access to all support mechanisms.
- k) the recruitment of Whole-Time staff has been paused, but is provisionally scheduled for August 2022, and will include a concerted effort to promote the Service in areas likely to attract applications from those who are currently under-represented in the operational workforce, such as women and BAME;

- l) recruitment to support roles has been difficult and is a national issue across the whole of the public sector;

Committee members commented that it's important to closely monitor retained firefighters and ensure that the Service understands their needs and can respond to them.

Resolved to note the report.

34 Equalities Monitoring

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which provides an update on the breakdown of the workforce and applicant analysis by protected characteristic the period 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022.

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

- a) the number and variety of protected characteristics recognised by the Service has changed to reflect characteristics more representative of the broader communities across the whole county, but there is still work to be done as the Service continues to rely on 2011 information until recent census data is published;
- b) On-Call communities may often be less diverse than those of the City and so it may be more difficult to recruit staff with protected characteristics;
- c) one of the benefits of this type of committee is that it further empowers members to promote the Service within their communities;
- d) of the 61 Service leavers, 5 were BAME which is broadly in line with the workforce profile;
- e) whilst operational roles require a specific minimum level of fitness, if a member of operational staff then becomes ill or disabled whilst in service, the Service do try to support them in their role, or seek to redeploy them to a non operational if this is not possible.. The Service would work through all options with staff to help them return to the work place, but if that's not possible, then retirement is considered;
- f) if the Service is of aware of potential problems like dyslexia, mechanisms can be put in place to help individuals cope and/or address the issue. Software is available on all systems and can be accessed by everyone for speech to text and also document summaries. These functions are particularly helpful for those with dyslexia, and the Service may consider funding workplace dyslexia assessments;
- g) staff are encouraged to declare disabilities and illness and a lot of work has gone into creating a culture in which they can feel comfortable to come forward. 'Disability Matters' is a new employee network which highlights the range of support available with the aim of improving confidence of staff. Where staff are identified as needing support or adjustments the Service will ask what is required and what is needed by the employee;

- h) the Service is currently reviewing its reasonable adjustments process including the use of a disability passport;
- i) the power of employee networks is phenomenal. Employees being open and speaking out about their issues has made a big and impact and is helping influence culture;
- j) the new website will be fully compliant with disability needs, is public facing and hopefully will help with recruitment, even with the ability to translate documents. It will also include religious/faith pod casts;
- k) there is an opportunity to celebrate religious festivals and landmarks with Police colleagues at the new Joint Headquarters;
- l) with regard to recruitment, substantial improvements have been made with the introduction of incremental training to improve the attractiveness of On-call posts. 'Have a go' days will be trialled at different sites across the county;
- m) female recruits can be supported through positive action such as helping build fitness and upper body strength in preparation for the application fitness tests. Social media and radio raising the profile of the role and that it is not just for men;
- n) applications are shortlisted in a process where managers do not see anything to identify the applicant. This process has been independently assessed and the Service is confident that it works well.

Members of the committee welcomed the work Inclusion and Diversity Team and noted the level of social deprivation within an area does impact on the ability to recruit.

Resolved to note the content of the report and support the Service's continued commitment to attracting, recruiting and retaining a more diverse workforce.

35 People Strategy

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which informs members of the progress of the People Strategy 2020-2022 a copy of which is attached as Appendix A to the report.

The following points were highlighted:

- a) in spite of a couple of challenging years due to the pandemic, the Service has achieved progress against all the following key criteria;
 - i. delivering our services;
 - ii. shaping our workforce;
 - iii. inclusion;
 - iv. outstanding leadership;
 - v. workforce development;
 - vi. workforce engagement;
 - vii. positive workplace and culture;
 - viii. employee well-being;

- b) the Service needs to ensure it has a workforce that is robust and able to respond;
- c) a revised rostering and collective agreement to improve efficiency within Whole- Time shifts has been introduced along with new crewing arrangements;
- d) the move to the new Joint Headquarters is ongoing and won't be complete until the end of summer, but is proving successful and very positive so far, despite initial employee concerns;
- e) agile working practices for office-based staff, for which Covid acted as a catalyst, are making the workplace more flexible and having a positive impact on employee well-being;
- f) engagement forums have been set up to help better understand the needs of the BAME, LGBT+ workforce, along with women's issues, and will continue to be developed;
- g) the Workforce Survey of 2020 highlighted that a notable number of employees wanted the opportunity to advance within the Service. This is being addressed, but there is still further work is to be done;
- h) the Firefighter Apprenticeship Programme, to which five support staff are committed, passed an OFSTED inspection in 2021;
- i) the Leadership Programme has been refreshed and expanded;
- j) the Well-Being Strategy reflects the Service's commitment to supporting the physical, mental and emotional health of the workforce.

Resolved to note the report and the progress made against the objectives of the People Strategy 2020-2022.

36 Change to Permanent Establishment

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report, which proposes the creation of six new roles as part of the budget setting process which supports the delivery of the Community Risk Management Plan.

Resolved to support the following changes to the permanent establishment, subject to Fire Authority approval:

- i. the creation of a new role of Fire Investigation Dog Handler;**
- ii. the creation of two Equipment and Fire Hydrant Technician roles;**
- iii. the creation of a Rostering Manager role;**
- iv. the creation of a Pensions Officer role;**
- v. the dis-establishment of a HR Business Partner role and creation of an HR Officer as a career-graded post.**

37 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.

38 Regrading of Posts

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which details the regrading of posts as a result of the Job Evaluation process.

Resolved to note the report.



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

Minutes of the meeting held at Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Joint Headquarters, Sherwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PP on Friday 1 July 2022 from 10:03am to 10:40am

Membership

Present

Councillor Dave Trimble (Chair)
Councillor Robert Corden
Councillor Tom Hollis
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora
Councillor Gul Nawaz Khan
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler

Absent

None

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Candida Brudenell - Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Tracy Crump - Head of People and Organisational Development
Adrian Mann - Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council

1 Apologies for Absence

None.

2 Declarations of Interests

None.

3 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2022 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

4 Human Resources Update

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the key human resources metrics for the period of 1 April to 31 May 2022. The following points were discussed:

- (a) a successful on-call recruitment campaign was carried out earlier in the year, with ten new trainees starting in April and a further 11 beginning in July, with recruitment ongoing for the following training course to start in January 2023. A whole-time firefighter recruitment campaign will begin in the summer for a training start date in April 2023;
- (b) staff turnover rates have been higher than forecast, particularly amongst support staff, with a number of leavers in early April due to retirement and the completion of fixed-term contracts. However, it is expected that the rate of departures should now slow. Vacancy rates in the sector nationally increased significantly during 2021-22, so a review of recruitment and retention processes is underway to identify and address the issues that may be impacting recruitment and retention levels;
- (c) a working group has been established to engage with staff and consider why people have moved on from the Service, and has been offering structured exit interviews to leavers. Following the Coronavirus pandemic, many people have been reviewing their lifestyles and making changes. The move to the joint headquarters has had an impact on some staff and, as the public sector is currently under a high level of strain, development opportunities can be more limited. However, the response to the new system of agile working has been positive, and steps are underway to establish a clearer development framework for support staff;
- (d) sickness absence is tracked carefully, and is currently running at slightly above the target level. The Service's sickness rates are higher than the national average, but not all Services record their absence statistics in the same way, so it can be difficult to draw like-for-like comparisons. Sickness absence levels vary across different areas of the workforce, with higher rates amongst on-call firefighters. A review is being carried out to identify the trends and address the current issues, to ensure that the right support is in place for staff who are ill, and so seek to reduce the levels of both short and long-term absence. Once the data for the complete quarter is available, a full breakdown will be provided on the particular reasons for sickness absence across all work areas. A 'return to work' interview process is in place, in addition to a 'trigger and review' system for members of staff who have a series of sickness absences;
- (e) the Service's reasons for sickness broadly reflect the national trends, with musculo-skeletal and mental health issues being the main causes of absence. There is strong support available to employees during any period of sickness or injury, and in returning to work. This includes assistance in re-developing physical strength, and the need to sustain core strength throughout a firefighter's career is becoming more and more important as the retirement age increases, so a new programme for regular physical conditioning is being started. There is also a high level of mental health and wellbeing provision in place to support staff across a wide range of areas, particularly as a number of mental health issues can arise due to circumstances outside the workplace. A joint scheme is underway with other emergency services to set a standard of access to mental health support across the sector;
- (f) one grievance case has been heard and one harassment complaint has been received, and is currently under investigation.

The Committee noted the report.

5 Workforce Plan 2022-24

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the review of the Workforce Plan for 2021-23 and the updated Workforce Plan for 2022-2024. The following points were discussed:

- (a) forecasting is underway on the Services' likely overall workforce over the next two years. The whole-time firefighter establishment has been reviewed in detail to ensure the right future provision is in place to mitigate against staffing turnover. Continual work is being carried out to make sure that the on-call establishment is properly staffed, and to address the current high turnover amongst support staff. The sector nationally is facing significant financial pressures and, given that the bulk of the Service's budget is spent on staffing, it is likely that there will be an associated savings requirement in this area. The current funding trends are being reviewed that the impact of any potential costs reductions are being forecast;
- (b) it is vital that the Service reflect the communities that it services, so actions are in place to establish a more representative workforce. Progress is being made, with steps in place to develop diversity through positive action and support wherever possible – but more work is still required. The publication of the most recent national census data is awaited so that the Service can gain a clear picture of the nature of its communities. Positive action has been very effective in the recruitment of whole-time firefighters, but further work is needed to show that there are a wide range of roles within the Service requiring different skills and experience, such as in the expanding areas of fire prevention and protection. The Committee suggested that the visual media used in advertising roles should be designed to be as reflective and engaging as possible;
- (c) a whole-time recruitment campaign starting at the end of July is intended to address any potential gaps in operational capacity both now and in the future. Firefighter training takes two years to complete and, as the retirement age of firefighters has increased, more support is needed for firefighters in maintaining physical conditioning throughout their careers;
- (d) all trainee firefighters are taken on as apprentices, and there is the potential to use more apprentices and graduate trainees amongst support staff, particularly in ICT and Finance. The Service aims to make full use of the Apprenticeship Levy, while balancing the fact that the Levy pays for training costs, but not trainees' salaries. The Committee noted that public sector organisations are able to transfer unspent Levy allocations between themselves, so the Service could seek to benefit from this, if needed;
- (e) following training, development programmes are in place for firefighters to grow leadership skills, and a strategic leadership programme is in place so that frontline managers can develop further into strategic roles. A great deal of work is in place to ensure that the right number of staff are developed and ready for management roles, to mitigate against the impacts of turnover amongst senior staff. A national scheme is also being trialled to support direct entry into certain roles, to seek to broaden the sector's pool of candidates.

The Committee noted the report.

6 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.

7 Regrading of Posts

Candida Brudenell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented a report on the outcomes of a recent job evaluation process that has resulted in a permanent change to the non-uniformed support establishment.

The Committee noted the exempt report.



6

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 13 May 2022 from 10.00 am
- 10.45 am**

Membership

Present

Councillor Toby Neal
Councillor John Lee
Councillor Nicola Heaton
Councillor John Clarke
Councillor Tom Hollis

Absent

Councillor Michael Payne
Councillor Sybil Fielding,
Councillor Roger Jackson,
Councillor Jason Zadrozny

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Craig Parkin – Chief Fire Officer
Becky Smeathers – Treasurer to the Authority and Head of Finance
Malcolm Townroe – Monitoring Officer and Clerk to the Authority
Catherine Ziane-Pryor – Governance Officer

25 Chair

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Michael Payne, the Vice-Chair of the Authority, Councillor Toby Neal, Chaired the meeting.

26 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Michael Payne (substituted by Councillor John Clark)
Councillor Roger Jackson – other County Council business
Councillor Sybil Fielding (substituted by Councillor Nicola Heaton)
Councillor Jason Zadrozny (substituted by Councillor Tom Hollis)

27 Declarations of Interest

None.

28 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2022 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair presiding.

29 Futures 2025 Efficiency Strategy

Craig Parkin, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which provides an overview of the proposed approach to the efficiency savings required by the Fire and Rescue Authority.

The following points were highlighted:

- a) this report marks the start of a strategic process which will report back to the Committee later in the year and has emerged against a background of austerity and global issues which are compounding the issues around reduced funding;
- b) this year's funding gap has been eased with temporary measures and in year savings, but there are significant ongoing issues and so a longer term efficiency strategy is required to ensure the Service can continue to balance the budget, meet its statutory duties and support communities to the best of its ability;
- c) table 1 of the report sets out the budget requirements for the years 2021/22 to 2024/25, in line with the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) timeframe;
- d) in addition to reduced funding and external negative influences, the Fire Reform white paper will potentially see further change in the sector whilst maintaining the expectation that the Service continues to operate as required and improve, under the influence of the HMICFRS;
- e) 2 areas which will need further focus are the Service's pay budget and service non-pay budgets, with it being noted that 75% with the Service's entire budget is spent on pay and staffing;
- f) as an increase in funding is highly unlikely and the pressures on budgets are increasing, it is inevitable that cuts will be required and these will include cuts to the workforce which has already reduced 25-30% during the past ten years;
- g) it is people who provide the Service to our communities and the Service does its level best to ensure that they are capable of doing the job required of them, whilst aiming to look after its workforce with regard to terms and conditions and their physical and mental health, so Managers will need to work hard to manage the change process;
- h) as is common across the whole of the Public Sector, the Service has been struggling to recruit and has an ongoing 11% vacancy rate which, although providing in year savings, isn't sustainable and does impact on the staff who are then relied upon to cover the work of the vacant posts. This also results in less capacity to deliver against the CRMP;
- i) as part of compiling the CRMP, the Strategic Assessment of Risk has considered the operational response demands City and County. An assessment of where fire

appliances need to be placed with regard to where the greatest response needs are, is underway;

- a) a staffing review has also started and is currently considering management numbers, levels and responsibility. There will also be consideration of the level of ridership required to meet the needs of the potentially revised appliance numbers and siting, and also a review of support staff requirements;
- b) prevention and protection work is key and the Service will have to be realistic when considering the competing needs of the CRMP. Although the Fire Service Reform heavily focuses on prevention and protection, as does the HMICFRS inspections, it is anticipated that further demands will be placed on Services as the focus expands within the built environment, so a balance will have to be met if foreseeable future issues are to be avoided;
- c) a report with further detail will be submitted to the full Fire Authority and any recommendations to amend fire cover will be subject to public consultation. Any required consultation is likely to last up to Christmas, the outcome of which will then inform budget and council tax setting in the new year;
- d) recruitment of Whole-time firefighters was already pushed back but advertising for On-Call firefighters continues.

Members' questions were responded to as follows:

- e) Members comments that Whole-Time firefighters should be the very last area to be considered for changes are noted, but realistically, at this point it is not possible to say where any red lines/protected areas will be as Central Government are placing more focus on protection and prevention. The best possible advice will be provided to members in the report to the Autumn meeting of the Authority;
- f) with regard to collaboration of support services, introducing shared services had previously been investigated and although providing more resilience, it will provide little cost benefit. However, it will be considered again within the review;
- g) the non-operational pay bill, including public facing service delivery roles, cost £2.5 million a year. It should be noted that some prevention work is also undertaken by operational staff, and that support services work on the frontline. One of the areas to consider to find savings is management capacity where a saving of £250,000 per year will be sought;
- h) with 12 of the 30 appliances staffed by Whole-Time firefighters, 18 appliances staffed by On-Call firefighters at night, NFRS is predominantly an On-Call Service;
- i) the suggestion of an emergency summit, to which all MPs are invited is welcomed and will be further discussed with the Chair of the Authority. Plans were already in place for the CFO and Chair to lobby MPs regarding local funding settlements, but combining this with an introduction to the new Joint Headquarters is a good idea. Councillors, staff and MPs need to work together in all directions to support the Service;

- j) with regard to recruitment and retaining staff, public-sector pay as a whole is not keeping pace with the private sector, so is not as attractive. It is acknowledged that the public sector needs to look at pay scales and/or benefits to try and retain and attract staff;
- k) in addition to lobbying from the Chief Fire Officers Council, local MPs have been lobbied by the Service as it is recognised that in these times of austerity and the rapidly increasing cost of living, many hard working staff are struggling financially;
- l) the suggestion for the Authority to show its appreciation of staff taking on additional duties to cover vacant posts by providing additional support and/or pay is welcome and can be discussed further with Chair of the Authority;
- m) the request for members to have sufficient time to consider the Efficiency Strategy report prior to its submission to the autumn Fire Authority is noted and time will be allocated at the 6 September Member's Seminar to ensure that members are fully briefed and able to freely discuss the paper and its implications;
- n) the ambition of the Service is to be outstanding by 2032 is very much a decision of the staff attending Staff Workshops. The Inspection's focus is on how well the Service knows, understands and reacts to our communities, how the Service uses resources, use of regulations, and what we say to citizens that we'll achieve, and being clear to the public. The Service does need to strive for ambition to be outstanding. The level of funding determines the range of choices available but the Service can't lose the ambition to improve, even during difficult times;
- o) last year 13,000 Safe and Well visits took place and the Service is on working to achieve 13,000 this year even with fewer staff. The Service needs to look at how things are done to achieve the best outcomes. The level of success of the Service's work to prevent situations and minimise risk is difficult to capture, whereas Police have a different quantifiable demand against their resources;
- p) Service staff are very much better informed than previously and most disagreements revolve around how change is made, rather than the actual change. The Service needs to be sure that it looks after staff along the way, but the change process will be a challenge;
- q) the Service will work with trades unions and undertake staff briefings and middle managers will be briefed on what changes may mean. The forthcoming challenges will be fully explained to, and discussed with, union representatives, ensuring they are informed. Communications will be maintained as work progresses.

Comments from members of the Committee included:

- r) looking forward, the Service will be in a lot of financial trouble if nothing changes but if our Service doesn't do what we know we need to do/provide, citizens will die;
- s) it is important to bring MPs together and for them to fully understand what this paper highlights is coming. Also, the additional risks due to rising cost of living, particularly home heating, needs to be understood, such as people opening up old fireplaces in

their homes and the dangers and increased incidents around that needs to be taken into consideration;

- t) the current difficult financial position is affecting staff and citizens, but also increasing demands on the Service, including needing new strains of preventative work.

Resolved

- 1) to support the proposed approach detailed within the report;**
- 2) to receive a further report at the Fire Authority meeting in September 2022, preceded by a Member's Seminar to discuss the paper in advance of the meeting;**
- 3) to note the intention of the Chief Fire Officer and Chair of the Authority to lobby MPs regarding:**
 - i. Service funding levels;**
 - ii. the need to increase public sector pay to ensure that staff are retained and can be recruited.**



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

**Minutes of the meeting held at Joint Fire / Police HQ, Sherwood Lodge, Arnold,
Nottingham, NG5 8PP on 24 June 2022 from 11.30 am - 12.11 pm**

Membership

Present

Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora (Chair)
Councillor Sybil Fielding
Councillor Mike Quigley MBE
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler
Councillor John Clarke

Absent

Councillor Michael Payne
Councillor Jason Zadrozny

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Craig Parkin - Chief Fire Officer
Becky Smeathers - Head of Finance and Treasurer to the Authority
Mick Sharman - Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Leila Henry - Head of Risk, Assurance and Operational Training
John Mills - Executive Support Station Manager
Catherine Ziane-Pryor – Governance Officer

1 Chair

In the absence of Councillor Michael Payne, Chair of the Committee and the Authority, as Vice-Chair of the Authority, Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora Chaired the meeting.

2 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Michael Payne, Councillor John Clarke substituting
Malcolm Townroe
Candida Brudenell

3 Declarations of Interest

None.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2022 were confirmed as true record and signed by the Chair presiding.

5 Future Meeting Dates

Resolved to note the following future meeting dates agreed by the Authority at its AGM:

11 November 2022,
27 January 2023,
28 April 2023.

6 Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item 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 outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

7 Resilience Update

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Fire Officer.

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