



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**  
**Fire & Rescue Service**  
*Creating Safer Communities*

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham  
Fire and Rescue Authority

# GOVERNANCE UPDATE

## Report of the Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority

**Date:** 16 December 2022

### **Purpose of Report:**

To provide a further update to members on the Authority's governance arrangements, the operation of the revised scheme of delegation since approval at the July 2022 meeting and on the work being undertaken by the Independent Remuneration Panel in respect of Members' Allowances. It also provides an update on the business continuity arrangements that it is recommended should be put in place in the event that the Chief Fire Officer is unavailable to fulfill their duties and on a move to a digital only strategy for agendas.

### **Recommendations:**

It is recommended that Members:

- Note the proposals with regard to further reviewing the Authority's Governance arrangements.
- Note the activity undertaken by the Chief Fire Officer under the revised scheme of delegation following consultation with the Chair of the Authority.
- Note the update on the work being undertaken by the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- Approve the business continuity arrangements recommended to be put in place at paragraph 2.4 in the event that the Chief Fire Officer were to become incapacitated or unavailable to the Authority for any length of time.
- Approve the adoption of a digital first approach to Authority reports.

## CONTACT OFFICER

**Name :** Malcolm R Townroe  
Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority

**Tel :** 0115 8764332

**Email :** malcolm.townroe@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

**Media Enquiries  
Contact :** Corporate Communications Team  
0115 967 0880 corporatecomms@notts-fire.gov.uk

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 At the July 2022 Fire Authority meeting, Members commented on the need for a more frequent schedule to review governance, and as such the CFO has been working with the Clerk to the Authority and the Chair of the Authority in order to develop a regular schedule to present items to Members at future meetings. That work remains ongoing.
- 1.2 The changes to the CFO's scheme of delegation, which were agreed at the July meeting of the Fire Authority, have enabled greater flexibility to the Service, particularly shortening timescales in managing the approved establishment. Since July, and following consultation with the Chair of the Authority, decisions have been taken around Phase Two of the workforce review which are intended to drive out savings of £250k. As previously agreed, a report setting out changes to the permanent establishment will be provided to the Authority on an annual basis.
- 1.3 The Independent Remuneration Panel have now concluded that, with the previously agreed amendment that the allowance paid to Opposition Spokesperson/Minority Groups Spokesperson (Groups of 4 or more) should be amended so as to apply to Groups of 2 or more, that their initial work is now complete and that the scheme as otherwise previously approved should continue. However, the inflator applied to Members' Allowances, which references a percentage increase, requires further consideration given that the recently agreed pay award for 2022 was based on a flat rate cash increase as opposed to a percentage settlement. As a consequence, the inflator provisions included in the scheme do not fit in with the reality of what has happened in practice and require further consideration. It is anticipated that a further report on this element will be brought to the February meeting of the Authority.
- 1.4 Since the appointment of the current Chief Fire Officer (CFO) and deletion of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer post, consideration has been given to the potential business continuity implications should the CFO be unavailable for any length of time. Such circumstances would impact upon clarity of leadership for Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and support to the Fire Authority. It is therefore proposed that, should such circumstances arise, the Policy and Strategy Committee would be convened, without delay, as the recognised committee to consider urgent items with a view to putting such temporary arrangements in place as are deemed necessary.
- 1.5 Currently Members are given the option of receiving Authority agendas in either a digital or print format. As part and parcel of the Governance improvement journey it is recommended that the Authority move to digital only provision with effect from a date to be agreed.

## **2. REPORT**

- 2.1 Work remains ongoing in relation to a number of governance areas as outlined in the background section of this report. Initial re-reviews have been undertaken of a number of core governance documents and these will form the subject of later reports to the Authority with a view to updating them. In the meantime, Members can be assured that they remain fit for purpose.
- 2.2 The changes to the scheme of delegation agreed at the July 2022 Authority meeting have enabled the Chief Fire Officer to make speedier decisions around the staffing establishment following consultation with the Chair of the Authority. Details of those changes will be brought to the Authority in an annual report.
- 2.3 The work of the Independent Remuneration is, as outlined in the background section to this report, almost complete save for the element relating to the inflator. It is anticipated that a report on this aspect will be brought to the February 2023 meeting of the Authority.
- 2.4 Following the deletion of the post of Deputy Chief Fire Officer there are business continuity issues that need to be addressed in the event that the Chief Fire Officer were to become incapacitated or unavailable to the Authority for any length of time. Measures to address this possibility involve convening a meeting of the Policy and Strategy Committee, without delay, as the recognised committee to consider urgent items. This would then enable the Authority to put such temporary arrangements in place as are deemed necessary.
- 2.5 Currently Members are given the option of receiving Authority agendas in either a digital or print format. As part and parcel of the Governance improvement journey it is recommended that the Authority move to digital only provision with effect from a date to be agreed. This will help reduce printing costs and will also assist in moving to a more paper lite environment.

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications arising out of the proposals in this report.

## **4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

It is important that as the Constitutional Framework evolves that users are fully aware of its contents to ensure that good governance is maintained. This may give rise to the need for further training.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because the proposals do not lead to any new policies or changes in existing policies.

## **6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no crime and disorder implications arising out of the proposals in this report.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Having a sound and up to date Constitutional Framework contributes to overall good governance and ensures that decisions are made in a timely manner and at the right level. Equally, the Authority must have an up to date, fit for purpose, remuneration scheme for elected Members.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk management implications arising out of the proposals in this report other than the one relating to business continuity.

## **9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS**

There are no collaboration implications arising out of the proposals in this report.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Note the proposals with regard to further reviewing the Authority's Governance arrangements.
- 10.2 Note the activity undertaken by the Chief Fire Officer under the revised scheme of delegation following consultation with the Chair of the Authority.
- 10.3 Note the update on the work being undertaken by the Independent Remuneration Panel.
- 10.4 Approve the business continuity arrangements recommended to be put in place at paragraph 2.4 in the event that the Chief Fire Officer were to become incapacitated or unavailable to the Authority for any length of time.
- 10.5 Approve the adoption of a digital first approach to Authority reports.

<b>11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)</b>
--

None.

Malcolm R. Townroe  
**Clerk AND MONITORING OFFICER TO THE AUTHORITY**