



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

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

# HOME OFFICE EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY PLAN

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 16 June 2023

**Purpose of Report:**

To present to members the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Efficiency and Productivity Plan Home Office submission for the FY 2023/24 in response to the Home Office request for an Efficiency and Productivity Plan.

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that Members:

- Note the content of the Efficiency and Productivity Plan for 2023/24;
- Endorse the Service's approach to delivering the plan via the Futures 2025 improvement programme;
- Agree to receive future update reports as necessary.

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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 On the 21 February 2023 Chief Fire Officers and Fire Finance Directors were asked by the Home Office to submit Efficiency and Productivity Plans covering the financial year 2023/24.
- 1.2 The requirement for Fire and Rescue Authorities to produce an annual efficiency plan already existed as part of National Framework requirements, however the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire made a specific request that Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA's) also covered productivity as part of their 2023/24 plans.
- 1.3 This request was made in response to FRA's indicating that they planned to make use of the full £5 council tax precept flexibility in 2023/24 and to seek assurances that due consideration was being given to efficiencies that could be made alongside tax increases.
- 1.4 Through analysis of the plans the Home Office aims to develop a picture of sector wide progress against these goals.

## 2. REPORT

- 2.1 Appendix A to this report contains a full copy of the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Efficiency and Productivity Plan submission. The submission has been formulated based on guidance and templates provided by the Home Office.
- 2.2 The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Local Government Association (LGA) have proposed that across FRS's in England, the sector could create 2% of non-pay efficiencies and to increase productivity by 3% in the spending review period 2021/22 – 2024/25.
- 2.3 The Authority is well placed to contribute towards the national productivity targets due to the stretching aspirations already included within the current CRMP. These include the key performance indicators set out in below.

### Key Performance Indicators

Key Performance Indicator	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Safe and Well Visits	13,000	14,000	15,000
Business Safety Checks	500	1,000	1,500
Fire Protection Inspections	1,200	1,500	2,000

- 2.4 It should also be noted that during the budget setting process for 2023/24 the service found savings of over £1.1m that were either reinvested in CRMP projects or helped towards reducing the deficit. This is well in excess of the 2% target set by the Home Office although it is noted that these savings include pay related savings some of which are one off in nature.

- 2.5 In addition to cashable savings, the return also requested that non-cashable savings be included in the submission. The Service is currently working to enhance the reporting of non-cashable savings as part of routine monitoring and reporting arrangements going forward.
- 2.6 The Authority approved its Futures 25 efficiency strategy in May 2022 with the high level aims of identifying savings within both pay and non pay budgets. The scope of the programme of works associated with Futures 25 is currently being finalised, together with efficiencies and cost savings associated with the programme.
- 2.7 Futures 25 will consider both pay and non-pay spend efficiencies, in addition to generating efficiencies through improved systems and processes. It remains the vehicle through which Home Office targets related to efficiency and productivity will be delivered by the Service.
- 2.8 In addition to the Efficiency and Productivity Plan the Home Office have also recently launched a national survey on how wholtime firefighters spend their time, which aims to measure the capacity of FRS's to increase productivity and to support services to achieve and measure their progress against agreed productivity targets. It is recommended that members agree to receive future reports once the outcomes from these returns are known.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Futures 25 Efficiency Plan remains the vehicle through which savings will be identified and built into the 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Strategy which will be reported to Fire Authority in December 23.

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

There may be human resource and learning and development implications associated with the implementation of efficiency and productivity plans. These will be reported at the appropriate time as part of the delivery of the Futures 25 efficiency programme.

### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because the report does not involve changes to policy or the delivery of services.

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

There are no crime and disorder implications associated with this report.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct legal implications resulting from this report.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The corporate risk register includes risks to the Authority associated with the ability to set a balanced budget. The Futures 25 efficiency programme aims to mitigate these risks, alongside other activities identified within the attached Efficiency and Productivity submission.

## **9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS**

There are no collaboration implications associated with the report. It is accepted however that collaboration opportunities already in place contribute to the ongoing efficiency of the Service, and that, where appropriate further collaboration opportunities that contribute to efficiency, productivity or service improvement will be explored.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Note the content of the Efficiency and Productivity Plan for 2023/24.
- 10.2 Endorse the Service's approach to delivering the plan via the Futures 2025 improvement programme.
- 10.3 Agree to receive future update reports as necessary.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)**

None.

Craig Parkin  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

# Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service

## 2023/24 Efficiency and Productivity Plan

### 1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This submission has been prepared in response to the Home Office request for an Efficiency and Productivity Plan on 21 February 2023. It should be considered alongside the Service's Futures 2025 Efficiency Strategy documents, the Community Risk Management Plan ([CRMP](#)) and its current budget plans.

### 2 EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY INFORMATION

#### **2023/24 Budget Information**

- 2.1 The Authority's 2023/24 budget was approved by Fire Authority on 24 February 2023 and is detailed in Table 1 below. More details can be found in the [Budget Report](#).

**Table 1 – Budget Details 2023/24**

<b>Costs</b>	<b>Revised Budget 2022/23 £'000</b>	<b>Budget 2023/24 £'000</b>	<b>Budget 2024/25 £'000</b>
Employees	37,145	39,939	41,448
Premises	3,345	4,111	4,468
Transport	1,778	2,219	2,247
Supplies & Services	3,938	4,394	4,514
Payments to other Local Authorities	908	950	1,086
Support Services	167	172	172
Capital Financing Costs	2,761	2,692	3,149
Income	(4,036)	(4,512)	(4,359)
<b>Total</b>	<b>46,006</b>	<b>49,965</b>	<b>52,725</b>
<b>Sources of Income</b>			
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	(5,619)	(6,189)	(6,498)
Business Rate Income	(2,925)	(3,649)	(3,685)
Business Rate Top Up Grant	(7,277)	(7,638)	(8,020)
Pension Grant	(2,340)	(2,340)	(2,340)
Council Tax (£5 2023/24, 2.95% 2024/25)	(27,692)	(29,746)	(31,036)
Reserves	(153)	(404)	(1,146)
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(46,006)</b>	<b>(49,965)</b>	<b>(52,725)</b>

## Reserves

2.2 Expected levels of reserves at 31 March 2023 are £10.2m as detailed in Table 2 below.

**Table 2 – Reserve position at 31 March 23 – 31 March 24**

<b>Reserve</b>	<b>Opening Balance* 01/4/22 £'000</b>	<b>Movement During 2022/23 £'000</b>	<b>Closing Balance 31/3/23 £'000</b>	<b>Expected Balance 31/3/24 £'000</b>
Resilience Crewing and Training	36	(1)	35	0
Prevention Protection and Partnerships	245	(103)	142	20
Business Systems Development	59	0	59	59
Transformation and Collaboration	553	(217)	336	259
Operational	444	36	480	270
Covid-19	30	(12)	18	18
ESN Reserve	1,244	(243)	1,001	981
Headquarters move	50	(3)	47	47
Budget Pressure Support	936	190	1,126	722
Efficiency Programme	900	0	900	200
Other	356	0	356	277
Estates	0	62	62	62
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>4,853</b>	<b>(291)</b>	<b>4,562</b>	<b>2,915</b>
General Reserve	5,191	469	5,660	5,236
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>10,044</b>	<b>(232)</b>	<b>10,222</b>	<b>8,151</b>

2.3 The general reserve is predicted to be £5.7m at the end of the financial year, which is above the minimum level of £4.5m general fund reserve agreed by Fire Authority in December 2022.

2.4 Earmarked reserves are expected to be in the region of £4.6m by 31 March 2023. These reserves are earmarked for known projects or items of one-off expenditure. They include a budget pressure support reserve of £1.126m which was created to support the budget in 2023/24 and future years. Earmarked Reserves are reviewed annually as part of the Reserves Strategy included in the [MTFS](#).

## Outline of decision to increase Council Tax by £5

- 2.5 A [Futures 25 efficiency strategy](#) was initially presented to the Policy and Strategy Committee in May 2022, with a [further report](#) being considered by the Authority in September 22. At this point in time there was a significant amount of uncertainty around the firefighter pay award and funding for future years. The budget deficit was expected to be in excess of £3m and the Authority were asked to approve public consultation to save £2m from operational budgets by reducing the number of appliances in the Service from 30 to 28 and reducing the ridership by 44 posts. Savings of £250k were also identified through the disestablishment of support staff posts.
- 2.6 By the time the final budget was approved in February 2023 the 7% / 5% pay award had been offered, the one year funding position was agreed along with the option to increase Council Tax by £5. This placed the Authority in a position where the removal of fire appliances could be avoided, but only if Council Tax were increased by the maximum amount.
- 2.7 The decision to increase Council Tax by £5 was made by Fire Authority on 24 February 2023. More details can be found in the [Budget Report](#).
- 2.8 A comparison of the deficit if Council Tax had been increased by 0%, 2.95% and £5 in 2023/24 and 2024/25 is shown in table 3 below. Future year estimates remain uncertain at this point in time due to the one year funding settlement and the uncertain economic climate, but the deficit is expected to increase beyond £1.1m estimated for 2024/25.

**Table 3 – Comparison of different Council Tax Precepts**

	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000
Budget Requirement	49,965	52,725
Total External Funding	(19,815)	(20,543)
<b>Balance to be met locally</b>	<b>30,150</b>	<b>32,182</b>
Council Tax Yield (0%)	(28,086)	(28,464)
Council Tax Yield (2.95%)	(28,912)	(30,168)
Council Tax Yield (£5)	(29,746)	(31,036)
<b>Budget Shortfall (0%)</b>	<b>2,064</b>	<b>3,717</b>
<b>Budget Shortfall (2.95%)</b>	<b>1,237</b>	<b>2,014</b>
<b>Budget Shortfall (£5)</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>1,146</b>



- 2.9 The Council Tax increase of £5 has raised £1.6m additional funding compared to a Council Tax Freeze and £826k compared to 2.95% increase.
- 2.10 The Authority holds £1.126m of earmarked reserves set aside for budget pressure support. This was not sufficient to cover the projected deficit should Council Tax be frozen or increased by 2.95%. Both options would require significant savings still to be made from the Futures 25 Efficiency Strategy (see also section 4).
- 2.11 A £5 increase still requires £404k to be met from the Budget Pressure Support Earmarked Reserve (£1.126m) which leaves £722k in the reserve to assist in balancing the budget in future years. The service will continue to seek in year savings where possible to minimise the use of reserves. This will be achieved through a mixture of careful budget monitoring and outcomes from the Futures 25 Efficiency Strategy.
- 2.12 Whilst the £5 precept flexibility has allowed the Fire Authority to maintain front line services for 2023/24, there remains a significant deficit in 2024/25 which still needs to be addressed. The Authority have approved the continuation of the Futures 25 efficiency strategy to deliver a wider change and improvement programme designed to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the Service. This will also seek to address future year deficits (see also section 4).

### Efficiency

- 2.13 During the budget process for 2023/24 the service found savings of over £1.1m that were either reinvested in CRMP projects (£150k) or helped towards reducing the deficit. The majority of these were from pay budgets (£911k). £372k of savings were achieved from non-pay budgets. A further £169k of non-cashable savings were achieved through the use of procurement frameworks. More details can be found in Table 4 below.

**Table 4 – Efficiency Savings 2023/24**

Savings	£000s	Comments / Risks	Risk
<b>Pay related Savings</b>			
Vacant posts – Admin (Temporary Savings)	211	7% Vacancy Factor has been built into Green Book Pay Budget.	This is considered achievable and has a low risk level.
Workforce review	250	Disestablishment of posts from Admin Pay (This represents 3.37% of Admin Pay). This will include structural redesign and business process improvement to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the Service.	This has already been achieved.
Delayed recruitment of wholetime staff (temporary Savings)	450	The service has been holding vacant firefighter posts during 2022/23 pending decisions around the	This will be achieved as the Service has insufficient capacity to

<b>Savings</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>Comments / Risks</b>	<b>Risk</b>
		wholetime establishment. Recruitment has now been planned for 2023/24 but the service will remain below establishment until recruits begin training. A temporary saving of £450k (1.71%) has been built into the 2023/24 budget to reflect this.	train more firefighters than have been assumed in the budget.
<b>Total Pay Savings</b>	<b>911</b>		
<b>Non Pay Savings</b>			
Temporary reductions in repairs to buildings.	63	Reducing the costs of the boarding up of the HQ building due to occupancy being maintained for longer.	This has been achieved.
Insurance contract savings	36	Reduction in actual costs from insurance contract.	This has been achieved.
Review of Engineering Equipment budget	29	This was a detailed review of need which resulted in savings in the budget.	This has been achieved.
New ways of working since Covid (reduced travel etc)	14	This is a further reduction in travel / accommodation budgets (savings were already built into 2022/23 budgets)	This is low risk as historical expenditure has indicated that savings can be made.
Decreased usage of supplies and services	53	Reduction in various supplies and services budgets.	
Other Non Pay Savings	30	Various smaller savings.	
<b>Non pay savings</b>	<b>225</b>		
<b>Total Cashable Savings</b>	<b>1,136</b>		
<b>Non Cashable Savings</b>			
Business Rates Appeals against valuations	200	The service has been successful in the past in appealing against BR in the past but there remains a risk that this will not be achieved. This will not be built into the budget until savings are materialised.	Not built in budget yet due to risk factor.
Procurement efficiency Savings using framework	169	Mainly due to the review of new contracts awarded in 2022/23. This has been measured against the average cost of bids and is a non cashable saving	Risk that opportunities may diminish until Kent framework is back up and running
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,505</b>		

### **Productivity**

2.14 The Service has set itself challenging productivity targets within its current CRMP which runs from 2022-25.

The following table sets out the Key Performance Indicators that form the Service's public facing commitment.

**Table 5 Key Performance Indicators**

<b>Key Performance Indicator</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>
Safe and Well Visits	13,000	14,000	15,000
Business Safety Checks	500	1,000	1,500
Fire Protection Inspections	1,200	1,500	2,000

- 2.15 In addition a range of internal metrics are used to monitor and drive efficiency and productivity of Operational Response crews. These include:

**Maintenance and Review of Operational Risk Information**

- 2.16 The service has an expectation that all Level 3 site specific risk information is reviewed on a three yearly basis by operational crews. In addition, where Level 4 tactical plan sites fall within station areas, crews are expected to conduct routine familiarisation visits to these premises.

**Operational Preparedness**

- 2.17 Performance indicators relating to operational training including completion of the quarterly training planner and attendance at a minimum of two operational exercises and two tabletop exercise per year to ensure operational preparedness.

**Community Engagement and Prevention Activity**

- 2.18 Minimum attendance at two Data Intelligence-led Community Engagement (DICE) events per year per Watch per station. In addition crews undertake Community Reassurance and Engagement Activities (CRaE) following all domestic fires.
- 2.19 Delivery of quarterly prevention plan to deliver prevention activity around road, fire and water risks.
- 2.20 A new initiative for 2023/24 is the Community Group Befriending Scheme. Each Wholetime Watch has been asked to befriend a community group in their local area to develop and embed the Fire and Rescue Service as part of local communities, contribute to positive action initiatives and strengthen community trust.

**Review of the Working Day**

- 2.21 During 2023/24 the Service has planned to review the standard working day for Wholetime Fire Stations. The Service acknowledge receipt of the Home Office Productivity Calculator and as a first stage intend to use the content of this to contribute to the working day review. The intention is to integrate the use of the productivity calculator further in line with the next CRMP.

### **3 COLLABORATION**

3.1 The Service has collaborated with a range of organisations to enhance the provision of Service Delivery to the public. Collaboration has been undertaken for a variety of reasons, including in some cases cost saving or financial efficiencies. It should be noted however that this has not been the sole driver for collaboration activities.

#### **Joint Fire Control**

3.2 In October 2011 Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire Authorities submitted a 'Resilience and Efficiency Grant Bid' to DCLG where £5.4m of funding was achieved for the Tri-Control project. As a result of this successful bid the Tri-Control function has been implemented and running since 2015.

3.3 In 2018 the decision was taken to create a Joint Derbyshire Nottinghamshire Fire Control Room, based at Ripley Derbyshire. The aims of the collaboration were to achieve financial savings for both Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service. In addition, the Services aimed to harmonise ways of working to improve interoperability at cross-border incidents, and that the Control Room collaboration would act as a catalyst for future joint working.

3.4 Since the creation of the Joint Control Room a range of operational alignments have been made including:

- Joint implementation of National Operational Guidance;
- Joint consideration of Grenfell recommendations including shared training and ways of working;
- Alignment of operational equipment including Breathing Apparatus sets to allow joint deployment of crews by a single service.

3.5 At the commencement of the project the Service anticipated savings of approximately £350k. Actual realised savings were lower than anticipated due to higher levels of staffing being agreed post implementation to mitigate identified risks. £250k savings were achieved in 2021/22.

#### **Joint Head Quarters (HQ)**

3.6 The Service moved into a jointly owned Head Quarters site with Nottinghamshire Police in 2022. Whilst there has not been any reduction in costs from moving sites, the old HQ was an aging building and would have required a significant amount of work over the medium term. It also has allowed closer relationships with the Police to be developed and enabled other collaboration opportunities to be identified.

#### **Shared Premises**

3.7 The Service owns all of its fire stations except for one On-Call sections which is part of a tri-service blue light station at Hucknall and is owned by East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) to which NFRS have a 25 year tenant lease agreement in place.

3.8 The Service has a range of collaborative partners and arrangements in place on Fire Service owned sites: NFRS shares the following stations with collaborative partners:

- London Road Fire Station – Nottinghamshire Police, Nottingham City Council and EMAS (see 3.9, 3.10 and 3.11)
- West Bridgford Fire Station – Nottinghamshire Police and South Notts Community First Responder (see 3.9)
- East Leake Fire Station - Nottinghamshire Police (see 3.9)
- Carlton Fire Station - Nottinghamshire Police (see 3.9)
- Highfields Fire Station – St Johns Ambulance (see 3.10)
- Clifton Office - Nottinghamshire Police
- Worksop Fire Station – North Notts Community First Responder

3.9 **Lease Agreements with Nottinghamshire Police:** The Service has lease agreements in place to share a number of fire and rescue sites with Nottinghamshire Police. This creates a combined income of Approx. £122k per year (2022/23). The combined rental costs are £75k per year (utility services usage which are recharged at actual costs).

3.10 **St Johns Ambulance and EMAS:** The Service has an arrangement in place for with St Johns Ambulance and EMAS, this generated £16k (2022/23).

3.11 **Nottingham City Council:** The Service has an arrangement in place for with Nottingham City Council for a peppercorn lease and a proportion of the utilities cost, this generated £6k (2022/23)

3.12 **Framework:** The Service has an arrangement in place with Framework for the use of the office accommodation at Mansfield Fire station this generates £500.00 per year.

3.13 In addition to sharing premises, NFRS have entered into collaborative agreements with Nottinghamshire Police for its Patrol Officers to use any NFRS Fire Station for Welfare Facilities, Fuel their diesel patrol cars (through a legal collaborative agreement) and use the stations washdown facilities to clean their patrol cars.

#### **Hydrocarbon Dog**

3.14 The Service has a Regional Fire and Rescue Service collaboration with Lincolnshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire to share the costs associated with the provision of a Hydrocarbon Dog to support the Fire Investigation function.

3.15 This enables costs of the Service provision to be shared 4 ways and ensures 24/7 availability of a Hydrocarbon Dog within the Region. The annual costs of the dog (including vehicle, handlers, food and veterinary costs) are £61k so by sharing costs the service saves £45k.

- 3.16 The total annual costs have been reduced by £10k due to now employing a grade 6 person instead of a watch manager.

#### **Drone**

- 3.17 A collaboration with Nottinghamshire Police is in place where they provide 24/7 drone support for Fire and Rescue Service incidents on a recharged basis. The Police recharge NFRS approximately £15k per year for the shared use of the Drone.

#### **Welfare Unit**

- 3.18 A collaboration with Nottinghamshire Police where Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service provide 24 /7 Welfare Unit to support Police incidents on a recharged basis which provides income in the region of £10k per year.

### **4 TRANSFORMATION PLANS**

- 4.1 The Authority approved its [Futures 25 efficiency strategy](#) efficiency strategy in May 2022 with the high level aims of identifying savings within both pay and non-pay budgets.
- 4.2 Futures 25 consists of 3 main strands:
1. Service Redesign – the reshaping of structures, function, systems and processes to drive efficiency and effectiveness of functions;
  2. Revenue budget review – A scrutiny panel designed to identify further pay and non-pay efficiencies from existing budgets;
  3. Governance Review – A review of governance structures and policy and procedural frameworks and ways of working, designed to reduce bureaucracy and speed up decision making.
- 4.3 A scope for the programme of works is currently being finalised, together with efficiencies and cost savings associated with the programme. Current budget forecasting anticipates that the Service will be operating with a deficit of £1.146m by 2024/25 and Futures 25 is designed to enable plans to be put into place to ensure the Authority is in a position to set a balanced budget.
- 4.4 Futures 25 will consider both pay and non-pay spend efficiencies, in addition to generating efficiencies through improved systems and processes. This will include non-cashable savings to enable to redistribution of resources and drive productivity in some cases.
- 4.5 The Service commits to delivering the 2% of non pay efficiencies over 2 years as committed to at a National Level. The table below illustrates the impact of this on Service non-pay budgets with savings made at a rate of 2% per year for 2 years. The savings achieved figure for 2023/24 includes pay related

savings to be consistent with the Annex B template provided. Some of these are of a one off nature in 2023/24.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Non Pay Budget £'000</b>	<b>2% of budget £'000</b>	<b>Saving Achieved £'000</b>
2022/23	10,161	203	363
2023/24	11,554	231	1,136
2024/25	12,834	257	To be determined

### **Charging Policies**

- 4.6 Charging policies are reviewed annually to ensure they remain current and appropriate. Recharging policies will be reviewed in full as part of the income generation workstream of Futures 25 Programme.

## **5 ASSET MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT IN TECHNOLOGY**

### **Equipment, Appliance and Inventory Checks**

- 5.1 The Service adopts a risk based approach to equipment and inventory checks, with a schedule of handover, daily and weekly checks for items depending on the safety critical nature of the equipment.
- 5.2 An electronic asset management system is in place which uses barcodes to identify and trace equipment. Handheld scanners are used to complete the inventory checks and to raise defects where appropriate. These are automatically reported through to the Engineering Team to arrange repair or replacement.
- 5.3 The asset management system has been in place for over a decade, although handheld scanners have been upgraded in the last 2 years to improve the speed and efficiency of the equipment.
- 5.4 Given the length of time that the automated process has been in place it is difficult to quantify the saving in administrative time or cost savings achieved as a consequence. As an indicative figure a full inventory check of a standard fire appliance will take 2 firefighters circa 1 to 1.5 hrs to complete per week.
- 5.5 Limited more frequent checks are undertaken to safety critical equipment such as Breathing Apparatus checks at the start of each shift. This takes approximately 10-15 minutes per set, with each appliance carrying 4 sets.
- 5.6 As part of the 2022/23 internal audit programme, 2 audits have taken place on the arrangements for maintaining fleet and equipment and asset disposals. Both of these audits have provided Reasonable Assurance.

### **Investment in New Appliances, Fleet and Support Vehicles**

5.7 The proposed 2023/24 to 2026/27 Capital Programme was included in the 2023/24 [Budget Report](#). The service's vehicle replacement programme has been delayed over the last 3 years due to supply chain issues following Covid-19. Over the next 2 years the replacement programme has been increased to take account of this. It includes:

- £5.6m to replace 17 Pumping Appliances.
- £3m to replace the 2 Aerial Ladder Platforms and other specialist vehicles.
- £374k to replace a number of light vehicles, including 5 Hybrid vehicles which will be more efficient to run.
- A rural vehicle to better support forestry fire-fighting activities as a result of learning from the wildfires in summer 2022.

5.8 The vehicle maintenance costs have increased by £35k in recent years partially due to the unexpected delays in the vehicle replacement programme (see section 5.7). It is expected that costs will reduce once the new fleet is operational.

### **Animal Rescue Unit Savings**

5.9 In the FY 2022/23 the Service took the decision to remove the dedicated Animal Rescue Unit which was staffed by On Call Firefighters and deploy the capability via the Wholetime Technical Rescue Unit. This will result in a saving from the on call pay budget.

### **Review of Pre-Determined Attendances (PDAs)**

5.10 The Service is continually reviewing PDA's to reduce the number of appliances that are deployed to unwanted fire signals and ensure that the level of response is appropriate to the risk. Work is ongoing to reduce the number of Unwanted Fire Signals (UFS) at premises with frequent alarm activations. UFS's have reduced from 3,793 in 2017/18 to 3,480 in 2021/22 5 years due to the positive action undertaken by the service to reduce them. This is a reduction of 313 appliance mobilisations per year, allowing crews to allocate time to other activities.

## **6 RESOURCING**

6.1 The Service operates a variety of duty systems from its 24 fire stations to ensure operational resourcing is aligned to risk across the county:

6.2 **Wholetime Duty System (WDS)** – WDS operates at 10 stations with full time cover provided by wholetime firefighters working 2 x 12 hour day shifts followed by 2 x 12 hour night shifts on a self-rostering basis. Two of these stations have 2 wholetime appliances available at any time and two have on call appliances stationed there to supplement cover.

6.3 **On-Call Duty System** – 12 stations are staffed by on-call crews only.



6.4 **Day Shift Crewing Stations** –The Service operates 2 stations on a day-crewed model where one wholetime and one on-call appliance are available between 08:00 and 19:00 and two on-call appliances are available in the evening and overnight.

6.5 Day shift crewing was implemented in April 2019. The change to crewing patterns was anticipated to save £1.2M annually from pay budgets. An evaluation was undertaken in February 2021 and demonstrated slightly lower savings of £1.18M per annum.

#### **Alternative Crewing Vehicles**

6.6 Standard crewing of all fire appliances is a crew of five with minimum crewing being a crew of four. Alternative crewing allows on-call appliances to be made available to a limited number of incident types with a crew of three, where limited personnel availability would otherwise mean that the appliance was unavailable for emergency response.

#### **Fire Cover Review**

6.7 In 2022/23 The Service commissioned sector leaders ORS to undertake a review of fire cover across the County to ensure that assets were appropriately located, and to analyse the impact of changes to fire cover across the County.

#### **On Call Pay and Contracts**

6.8 The Service has reviewed existing on-call contracts with the aim of providing a more flexible offer to on-call firefighters to support recruitment and retention. The new contracts offer variation away from the standard 84 hour on-call requirement of the traditional approach.

6.9 An evaluation if the new contracts has been undertaken at two On-Call fire stations which identified some refinement required prior to a wider roll out. It is anticipated that the new contracts will support recruitment and retention, reducing the burden on recruitment and training teams in Service, and supporting the Equality and Diversity aspirations of the Service.

#### **Dual Contracts**

6.10 The service employs 75 wholetime firefighters who also provide on-call cover when they are off duty. This improves on-call availability and provides benefits in terms of culture and competence. It also provides some efficiencies relating to recruitment and training.

## **7 PROCUREMENT**

7.1 The tendering procedures are clearly set out in the Financial Regulations to ensure that value for money is obtained. This is achieved either by obtaining a minimum number of quotes or the direct award of contracts through frameworks.

7.2 The services direct awards through frameworks where it is thought that efficiencies can be gained through doing so. The exact savings from direct

awards through frameworks can be difficult to quantify but have been estimated to be £169k in 2022/23. ~This has been measured against the average cost of bids compared to the bid that was successful.

## **8 LOCAL INITIATIVES THAT ARE SPECIFIC TO THE FRS AREA**

### **Fire Emergency Support Service (FESS)**

- 8.1 The FESS are a team of volunteers who mobilise following fire incidents to provide welfare support to individuals and families who are displaced or lose possessions as a result of fire. They provide temporary shelter, clothing, toiletries, toys and welfare support post incident.
- 8.2 The FESS allows crews to depart from incidents more quickly once operational matters have been resolved, knowing the welfare of those involved in the fire will be taken care of. There are non-cashable savings associated with this.

### **Lock Pulling and Lock Securing Equipment**

- 8.3 All operational fire appliances now carry lock pulling and lock securing equipment and crews have been trained on its use.
- 8.4 In the event that forced entry has to be made to a property for operational reasons crews are able to remove and replace locks, rather than having to wait for a locksmith or boarding-up Service. This enables crews to be released from scene more quickly and avoids costs associated with third party provision of this service.
- 8.5 The associated costs have reduced by approximately £4k between 2018/19 to 2022/23.

### **Safer Streets**

- 8.6 Safer Streets is a crime prevention initiative, with a specific focus on reducing the risk of harm to women and girls in Nottingham City. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service are a partner of the safer streets initiative and some city based crews have received additional safeguarding training to enable them to best support and signpost victims of crime.
- 8.7 In addition crews drive along red routes in the city when returning from prevention, protection or response activities in that area with the aim of providing a visible reassuring presence and disrupting crime and antisocial behaviour.

### **Pulp Friction – Social Enterprise**

- 8.8 The service was forced to close its canteen provision at its Head Quarters site back in 2015/16 in order to make savings. The service was approached Pulp Friction, a Community Interest Company, who offered to provide a canteen service in exchange for the free use of the existing kitchen and canteen area. Pulp Friction have worked in partnership with Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service ever since to provide lunch time and buffet catering for staff.

Pulp Friction support young people with learning disabilities with employability skills.

- 8.9 Pulp Friction moved with the Fire Service from our old Head Quarters to the Joint Police Fire Headquarters in 2022 to provide a much expanded staff canteen for both police and fire staff.
- 8.10 Pulp Friction have also supported NFRS with operational training and exercising to ensure that plans are accessible and fit for purpose for individuals with accessibility needs.
- 8.11 During 2021/22 the costs were £16k, costs after moving to the Joint HQ the catering costs has reduced by £8k. Prior to using pulp fiction the canteen costs were significantly higher as NFRS employed their own cooks.

#### **Partner Referral Process for Safe and Well Visits**

- 8.12 The Service commissioned an evaluation of the Services Safe and Well process by Nottingham Trent University. The evaluation demonstrated that adoption of the 'CHARLIE' profiling tool by the Service had improved the effectiveness and quality of partner referrals for individuals at risk of fire.
- 8.13 Current metrics show that partner referral levels remain high, and of good quality with 6,500 referrals received annually, of which all align to our person-centred CHARLIE profile and are at least at a Medium risk of fire.

#### **Occupational Therapist – Funded Secondment from the NHS**

- 8.14 The Service funds a full time Occupational Therapist (OT) Secondment from the NHS. The post is embedded within the Prevention Team to provide practical support to those individuals with complex needs and at highest risk of fire to live more safely in their homes.
- 8.15 The OT supports the Service to access health referral pathways and works with multiagency partners to ensure effective risk mitigation for individuals.
- 8.16 Independent evaluation of the OT secondment undertaken by Nottingham Trent University demonstrated that for every £1 invested in the OT Service a benefit of £7.16 was realised through reduced harm and costs to the wider public purse.

## **9 PRODUCTIVITY**

### **Wholetime Productivity Targets**

- 9.1 The Service uses a number of internally derived productivity measures for Wholetime Fighters. These are:
  - Number of Safe and Well Visits
  - Number of Business Safety Checks
  - Number of Data Intelligence Led Community Engagement Events
  - Number of post fire Community Reassurance and Engagement Events
  - Completion rates of Quarterly Training planner

- Attendance at operational exercise
- Community Group Befriending Scheme adherence
- Review of Site Specific Risk Information completion rate

9.2 Since 2018/19 the service has increased the number of Safe and Well visits (SWVs) from 4,461 to 13,742. The vast majority of these are completed by wholetime crews. The completion of Business Safety Checks (BSCs) by wholetime crews commenced as a new activity in 2022/23 and a total of 518 have been completed within the year. The target for 2023/24 is 1,000.

9.3 It is anticipated that productivity as measured by the public facing metrics for SWVs and BSCs as outlined within the Service's CMRP will increase by 15% and 200% respectively by 2024/25.

9.4 As previously stated the Service is conducting a review of the working day in the FY 2023/24 and as a first stage will start to integrate use of the productivity survey data. Further work to integrate the metrics will be undertaken as part of the next CRMP planning cycle.

#### **Tasks Undertaken by Operational Firefighters**

9.5 The following tasks are undertaken by operational firefighters:

- Safe and Well Visits
- Business Safety Checks
- Community Engagement and Positive Action
- Community Reassurance
- Gaining entry to premises to support East Midlands Ambulance Service
- Borderless mobilisation to Leicestershire and Derbyshire as part of a tri-service control collaboration
- Mobilisation of National Resilience Assets including MTA and High Volume Pump
- Food bank and food parcel deliveries (localised)

## 10 SUMMARY

- 10.1 This Efficiency and Productivity Plan is demonstration of the work being undertaken across the service to ensure that NFRS is providing a cost efficient service to the public. The service will continue to identify efficiencies and improve working practices through its Futures 25 Efficiency Strategy and CRMP.

Signed



Becky Smeathers  
Head of Finance and Treasurer  
31 March 2023