



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2022-23

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 14 July 2023

Purpose of Report:

To present the Annual Statement of Assurance 2022-23 to Members for approval.

Recommendations

That Members approve the Annual Statement of Assurance 2022-23 for publication.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Fire and Rescue Service National Framework places a statutory requirement on fire authorities to provide assurance on financial, governance and operational matters, with due regard to the expectations set out in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).
- 1.2 The production of an Annual Statement of Assurance (ASoA) contributes to the requirement for greater public-sector transparency and accountability and through its publication offers and promotes accessibility to information.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The ASoA 2022-23 (attached as Appendix A to this report) provides a review of how the Service has performed against the first year of the six strategic goals of its 2022-25 CRMP.
- 2.2 The ASoA is designed to give the public assurance on performance in key delivery areas. An accessible version will be hosted on the Service's website, providing access to all.
- 2.3 The ASoA signposts other supporting information that can be accessed on the NFRS website or Fire Authority webpages, for example, the CRMP and the Statement of Accounts.
- 2.4 The ASoA 2022-23 gives the public confidence the Service is meeting its stated commitments. Highlights from 2022/23 include:
 - Attended 11,343 incidents (including 4042 fires and 582 road traffic collisions). A 12% increase on 2021/22 largely driven by increases in the number of fires attended during the exceptionally hot summer period;
 - Attended 1,341 incidents which involved rescues and humanitarian assistance from either buildings, vehicles, water, confined spaces, or heights;
 - Delivered 13,913 Safe and Well interventions – supporting a total of 14,489 people. Using a mix of physical visits for those most at risk and virtual visits for others;
 - Delivered 'Safety Zone' events to 2,657 year 5 and 6 pupils, 310 teachers and parents over two weeks from across the City and County;
 - Delivered 33 Data Intelligence Community Engagement (DICE) activities targeting the most vulnerable in our communities;

- Undertook 26 Community Reassurance and Engagement (CRaE) activities throughout Nottinghamshire;
 - Delivered a total of 701 training courses;
 - Completed 1,024 full fire safety audits and 531 business safety checks (short fire safety audits);
 - Recruited to 61 roles, which were: 2 Wholetime firefighters, 33 on-call firefighters and 26 support staff roles;
 - 99.5% of the operational staff successfully passed annual fitness tests;
 - Sickness across all workgroups reduced in 2022-23 compared to 2021-22.
- 2.5 In addition to the services delivered above, the organisation has been working hard to continuously improve and develop. During the last year the Service has achieved the following:
- 2.6 **Launch of New CRMP:** in April 2022 the Service launched its Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), which explains how it will deliver services to communities over the next three years.
- 2.7 **'Good' HMICFRS Inspection:** in July 2022 NFRS received its latest HMICFRS inspection report. HMICFRS rated the organisation as 'Good' in all eleven areas of inspection and stated that 'clear improvements' had been made since the last inspection.
- 2.8 **New Website:** this year a brand-new NFRS website was launched. The website is more secure and boasts more modern features which have helped to make it one of the most accessible fire and rescue service websites in the country.
- 2.9 **Firefighter Apprenticeship Provision:** Ofsted conducted a full inspection of the Service's wholetime firefighter apprenticeship programme and awarded an overall rating of 'Good.'
- 2.10 **New Incident Command Training Facility:** a new facility designed to provide training for our incident commanders has been built at Mansfield Fire Station. The facility exposes incident commanders to simulated scenarios to test decision making in a controlled environment.
- 2.11 **Leading with Pride:** in July, the Service continued its support of Pride and had the honour of leading the parade through the streets of Nottingham. A fire engine, accompanied by staff members and their families showed support for the LGBT+ community at the first event since Covid-19 restrictions were lifted.
- 2.12 **New Fire Station for Worksop:** the official opening of Worksop Fire Station took place in May. The new state-of-the art station has been built with the

latest renewable technology and has the ability to self-generate up to 50% of its energy consumption.

2.13 **999 Calling Made More Accessible for Deaf Community:** a new service has been launched to make 999 calling more accessible for people who use British Sign Language (BSL). 999 BSL connects users to interpreters remotely through the 999 BSL app on their phone or via the 999 BSL website.

2.14 **Longest Ever Incident:** on 6 August, the Service responded to a call of an industrial fire in Ranskill:

- The fire which involved thousands of used vehicle tyres turned into Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue's longest ever incident;
- NFRS, along with colleagues from Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire, were at the scene for a total of 35 days.

2.15 The ASoA details notable achievements which would not have been possible without the combined efforts from staff across the Service, collaboration with partner agencies and support from Fire Authority Members.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources or learning and development implications arising from this report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken due to the nature of this report.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The requirement to produce an Annual Statement of Assurance is a statutory requirement as directed by the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework Document for England.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members approve the Annual Statement of Assurance 2022-23 for publication.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

Annual Statement of Assurance 2022/23

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Introduction

Welcome to our Statement of Assurance

In April 2022 we launched our Community Risk Management Plan 2022-25 (CRMP), which explains how we plan to deliver our services to you over the next three years.

The plan sets out our priorities, focusing on six strategic goals which explain how we will deliver our commitments. The CRMP places a strong emphasis on improving our understanding of communities so we can protect our County's most vulnerable people and identify buildings most at risk from fire.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England requires us to report on our progress against our CRMP every year. We do this through our Annual Statement of Assurance (ASoA). This year's ASoA is the first to report on the current CRMP and gives us the opportunity to explain our progress and highlight the work we continue to undertake to fulfil our core purpose of creating safer communities.



2022/23 has been an eventful year. We were delighted to receive a 'Good' report following our second inspection from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). The report showed that we have made significant progress in our journey towards becoming an outstanding Service.

Last summer brought some exceptionally high temperatures and dry conditions which led to an increase in the number of fires. This posed a significant challenge to our workforce and at times presented a real test of our resources.

The economic and societal challenges caused by events here in the UK and overseas had an impact on the Service throughout the year, particularly in relation to our finances. Increasing costs and uncertainty over future financial settlements meant we had to make substantial in-year savings and consider options for further cost savings to ensure we could meet our statutory obligation to achieve a balanced budget.

The financial climate remains uncertain and we still need to make savings in future years to maintain a balanced budget. However, we will continue to provide you with the very best service possible with the resources we have available.

We hope that you find our Annual Statement of Assurance interesting, and it gives you confidence that we continue to serve you in the best way possible.

"Fire and rescue authorities must provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and show how they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their integrated risk management plan and the requirements included in the Framework. To provide assurance, fire and rescue authorities must publish an annual statement of assurance."



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

During 2022-23



We attended **11,343** incidents, an increase of **12%** on 2021/2022



We attended **104** fire, road and safety initiatives



We attended **4,024** fires, an increase of **19%** on 2021/2022



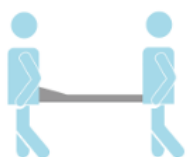
Fitness tests were passed by **99.5%** of our operational staff



We attended **582** road traffic collisions, an increase of **3%** on 2021/2022



We conducted **13,913** Safe and Well visits to **14,489** people



There were **2,111** incidents which involved rescues and humanitarian assistance



100% Site Specific Risk Information was in review date for the first time



We attended **4,626** false alarms, an increase of **12%** on 2021/2022



We completed **1,024** full fire safety audits and **531** Business Safety Checks



We provided **701** training courses for our staff



Accidents in the workplace fell by **17%**



Our on-call appliance availability was **87%**, this was above our **85%** target



We attended emergency incidents in an average of **8 minutes and 15 seconds**

2022/23 in Focus

Launch of our new CRMP

In April 2022 we launched our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), which outlines our ambition for the Service and explains how we will deliver our services to you over the next three years.



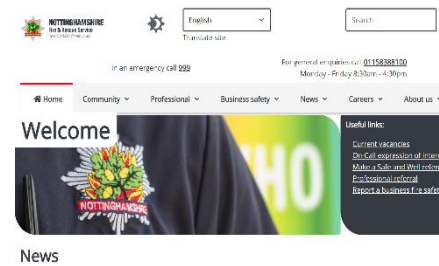
'Good' HMICFRS Inspection

In July 2022 we received our latest HMICFRS inspection report. HMICFRS rated us as 'Good' in all eleven areas of inspection and stated that 'clear improvements' had been made since our last inspection.



New Website

This year we launched our brand-new website. The website is more secure and boasts more modern features which have helped to make it one of the most accessible fire and rescue service websites in the country.



Firefighter Apprenticeship Provision

Ofsted conducted a full inspection of our wholtime firefighter apprenticeship programme and awarded us an overall rating of 'Good'.



New Incident Command Training Facility

A new facility designed to provide training for our incident commanders was opened at Mansfield Fire Station. The facility exposes incident commanders to simulated scenarios to test decision making in a controlled environment.



Leading with Pride

In July we had the honour of leading the Pride parade through the streets of Nottingham. A fire engine, accompanied by staff members and their families showed support for the LGBT+ community at the first event since Covid-19 restrictions were lifted.



New Fire Station for Worksop

The official opening of Worksop Fire Station took place in May. The new state-of-the-art station has been built with the latest renewable technology and has the ability to self-generate up to 50% of its energy consumption.



999 Calling Made More Accessible for the Deaf Community

A new service has been launched to make 999 calling more accessible for people who use British Sign Language (BSL). 999 BSL connects users to interpreters remotely through the 999 BSL app on their phone or via the 999 BSL website.



Our Longest Ever Incident

On the 6th August we responded to a call of an industrial fire in Ranskill.

The fire which involved thousands of used vehicle tyres turned into Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue's longest ever incident.

Along with our colleagues from Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire, we were at the scene for a total of 35 days.



Annual Delivery Plan 2022/23

Our annual delivery plan outlines the work we will do during the year towards delivering the commitments set out in our CRMP 2022-25.

It focuses on our six strategic goals:

- Strategic goal 1: We will help people stay safe from fires and other emergencies
- Strategic goal 2: We will improve fire safety in the buildings people live and work in
- Strategic goal 3: We will respond immediately and effectively to emergency incidents
- Strategic goal 4: We will continue to support and develop our workforce and promote an inclusive Service
- Strategic goal 5: We will continue our improvement journey to deliver an outstanding Service
- Strategic goal 6: We will manage and invest in our Service to ensure it is fit for the future

In this ASoA we will present information about our performance and the work we have been doing to achieve the objectives outlined in the annual delivery plan.

Strategic Goal 1: We will help people stay safe from fires and other emergencies

This goal focuses on our statutory duty to prevent fires and other emergencies from happening

In 2022/23 our key objectives were:

- Deliver Safe and Well Visits to 13,000 homes to provide advice, install smoke alarms and other safety equipment, targeting people at higher risk with a particular focus on those over 65 years old or who consider themselves to have a disability
- Develop our understanding of communities and the people who live in them, to help target and engage with those most at risk in an inclusive way
- Ensure all staff complete the mandatory safeguarding training needed for their roles, and that we make safeguarding referrals in line with the various Safeguarding Boards expectations
- Deliver fire, road and water safety education activities to those most at risk in the community
- Provide training and education to our partners on how to recognise the risks of fire and make appropriate referrals to us in line with our CHARLIE profile

Our focus on improvement included:

- Upgrading our computer systems to improve our ability to target our activities towards those people at the highest risk
- Improving our methods and processes for evaluation, to ensure our activities are delivering the greatest benefits

During the year:

- We conducted 13,913 Safe and Well interventions supporting a total of 14,489 people
- 47.15% of our Safe and Well interventions were delivered to people over 65 and 39.59% were delivered to people who considered themselves to have a disability
- We delivered 33 Data Intelligence Community Engagement (DICE) activities targeting the most vulnerable in our communities. We also undertook 26 Community Reassurance and Engagement (CRaE) activities following serious fires in locations across Nottinghamshire. Through these activities, our crews and prevention teams visited a total of 7055 properties
- We delivered Safety Zone events to 2,657 year 5 and 6 pupils, 310 teachers and parents from across the City and County
- We delivered 104 fire, road or water safety initiatives
- We supported 64 national safety campaigns
- We continued to deliver our Firesetter programme and conducted 128 interventions with young people who had shown an interest in setting or playing with fire

Other Highlights

We explain in our CRMP how our prevention work is vital to reducing the number and impact of emergency incidents. Through 2022/23 we have used our understanding of our communities to target our efforts where they are needed most.

Supporting Vulnerable Individuals

Our targeted Safe and Well visits offer advice on factors which increase vulnerability to fire and injury. This includes advice on stopping smoking, alcohol addiction, preventing falls, keeping warm in winter and general fire safety.

We have continued to educate and train our partners to recognise the risks of fire and make appropriate referrals, using the 'CHARLIE-P' profile.

Community Engagement

Our community engagement activities help raise awareness, reduce risk and prevent incidents.

In communities which have experienced a serious fire we carry out Community Reassurance and Engagement (CRaE) visits. We offer Safe and Well visits to residents alongside general fire safety advice to help prevent similar incidents from occurring.

We also proactively target communities most at risk from having a fire through our Data Intelligence Community Engagement (DICE) visits.

Integration and Collaboration

We have continued to work closely with a wide range of partners and community organisations to identify those most at risk and keep them safe. This included being an active member of the Safeguarding Board and the Violence Reduction Partnership.

We have supported the 'Safer Streets' programme led by Nottinghamshire Police in the city of Nottingham. Using funding provided by the police, we have assigned two fire appliances as 'safe spaces' for women if they feel vulnerable while out at night. The vehicles carry messaging which highlights them as 'safe spaces'. Enhanced safeguarding training has been provided to crews of the designated appliances.

We continue to play an active role in the Nottinghamshire Road Safety Partnership where we work with partners to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads. These intervention activities include the 'Biker Down' and 'Operation Highway' initiatives.

Similarly, we work as part of the Nottinghamshire Water Safety Partnership to help keep people safe near water.

As part of a schools-based education programme we participate in an initiative called 'Safety Zone'. The programme is held at Ashfield fire station, Ranby House and Holme

Pierrepoint and involves partners including Nottinghamshire Police, British Transport Police, Western Power, The Dogs Trust, Royal National Lifeboat Institution, VIA (County road safety team) and East Midlands Ambulance Service. Safety Zone delivers a range of interactive education sessions based on:

- Fire safety in the home
- First aid and CPR
- Knife crime
- Railway safety and safe travel
- Water safety and drowning prevention
- Electrical safety

Fire Investigation

Our fire investigation team works alongside the police and forensic experts to collect and examine evidence and determine the likely origin and cause of a fire. As well as providing expert opinion to the coroner, police and insurance companies the team also provide advice to property owners on future safety measures.

During 2022/23 we recruited two specialist fire investigation dogs and their handlers to detect the use of ignitable liquids at fire investigations. The Dog Unit is based in Nottinghamshire, but also provides support across Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire.

The Dog Unit also provides mutual support and training to the West Midlands Fire Service Dog Unit.

Our specialist fire investigators investigated 157 serious fires across the County during 2022/23.

Strategic Goal 2: We will improve fire safety in the buildings people live and work in

This goal is focused on our statutory duties to enforce fire safety regulations

In 2022/23 our key objectives were:

- Complete 1,200 fire safety audits, targeting high risk buildings
- Complete 500 business safety checks on business premises
- Continue to work as part of the Joint Audit and Inspection Team with Nottingham City Council staff, to inspect multiple-occupation residential buildings
- Promote fire safety through business engagement and networks
- Proactively work with building owners to reduce call outs to false alarms and people trapped in lifts

Our focus on improvement included:

- Updating our systems and processes in line with changes to new fire safety legislation
- Implementing the new high-rise residential building audits for buildings over 11m tall
- Completing the training of operational staff to enable them to carry out business safety checks

During the year:

- We completed 1,024 full fire safety audits and 531 business safety checks (short fire safety audits)
- We carried out 306 follow-up inspections to ensure compliance following an initial fire safety audit
- We issued 30 statutory enforcement notices, and 8 prohibition notices to premises where safety standards were unacceptable and people were being placed at risk
- Our Joint Audit and Inspection Team conducted 22 inspections and 25 re-inspections of higher risk residential buildings, covering a total of 4,105 flats
- We undertook 1,074 specific activities which include responding to complaints and providing advice to businesses
- We completed 766 statutory building consultations and 320 statutory licensing consultations
- We conducted 123 shadow inspections of staff being developed in fire safety
- We experienced an increase of 11% in the number of requests to attend fire alarm activations which resulted in the cause being a false alarm. We are continuing to work proactively with building managers to understand and address the causes of such incidents
- We achieved a reduction in attendances to persons trapped in lifts, attending 177 incidents, which is 7% fewer than in 2021/22

Other Highlights

Our Protection activity is focused on keeping people safe in buildings that are protected by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. This includes business premises, hospitals and care homes, high-rise buildings and apartment blocks.

Business Education and Engagement

As part of our statutory duty to educate and advise businesses, our business support team have used a range of activities and methods to engage with local businesses to provide guidance, support and advice on fire safety matters. Following serious fires, the team undertake Business Reassurance and Engagement (BRaE) activities to provide reassurance and support to local businesses, including fire risk assessments, business continuity guidance and information on keeping their premises safe from fire. The team undertook 9 engagements following a large fire at Ranskill and a further 13 engagements following the fire at the County Council offices.

We have continued to provide advice to companies who have business premises within more than one fire and rescue service area through the Primary Authority Scheme.

We have continued to focus on reducing attendances at false alarms, providing support and engaging directly with the businesses and industries where statistics indicate higher rates of attendance.

Fire Safety Inspections

Our Protection department is responsible for auditing and inspecting non-domestic premises as part of our statutory duty.

We work with landlords, business owners and those with responsibility for the management of non-domestic premises to ensure that they comply with fire safety regulations designed to keep the public safe from fire.

Our inspections are undertaken by suitably qualified staff who provide advice and educate, and where necessary, issue advisory and statutory enforcement notices to make sure buildings are managed and maintained in line with the law.

We have continued to fulfil our duty as a statutory consultee for fire safety in new developments as part of building control process.

We continue to develop the skills of the specialist staff within our teams to help ensure that we are prepared to meet the challenges that new legislation will bring in the future. This includes the development of staff in fire engineering, smoke control, sprinkler systems, external wall cladding and fire door safety checks.

Throughout 2022 / 2023, we have continued to work hard to increase our capacity to inspect a broader range of non-domestic premises.

We continue to deliver our externally accredited fire safety qualification to our operational managers, who become warranted to inspect low risk, non-complex buildings such as

offices, shops and commercial premises. This qualification aligns to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Competency Framework. To date we have 76 fully qualified operational managers, of which 45 are fully warranted to inspect premises and 31 are being supported through the warrant process.

Consultations

Our work has continued to improve fire safety standards across the County in non-domestic premises as we engage and consult with other regulators including Building Control, Environmental Health, the Health and Safety Executive, Nottinghamshire Police, the Care Quality Commission, Ofsted, and the Food Standards Agency.

We are consulted on licensing applications and part of the consultation process for all planning applications.

Collaboration

Since August 2019, we have worked collaboratively with Nottingham City Council to make high-rise residential buildings safer.

Our Joint Audit and Inspection Team (JAIT) have used powers afforded by each authority's respective legislation to continue to inspect and assure safety standards across entire buildings using a risk-based approach.

We expected the Fire Safety England Regulations 2022, which became law on January 23rd, 2023, to include within its scope, a statutory obligation to inspect high-rise buildings over 11 metres tall. This requirement was not included; however, these buildings have naturally fallen within the scope of the work being completed by the JAIT who have inspected over 190 multi-occupied residential buildings within the Nottingham City Council boundary.

We have continued to work closely with the NFCC's Protection Reform Unit, to help implement nationally recognised guidance and changes made as a result of the tragic Grenfell Tower fire in 2017.

We have engaged with and monitored a range of major construction projects across Nottinghamshire, with most recent examples relating to a number of new student accommodation blocks in and around the Trent Basin and Railway Station area of Nottingham City Centre.

We continue to support the National Fire Sprinkler Network and British Automatic Fire Sprinkler Association to help promote and provide guidance on the installation or retrofitting of sprinkler systems.

Strategic Goal 3: We will respond immediately and effectively to emergency incidents

This goal focuses on our statutory duty to respond to emergencies.

In 2022/23 our key objectives were:

- Deliver routine training and revalidation to maintain the skills and competence of operational staff
- Respond to incidents within an average time of eight minutes
- Work collaboratively with regional partners to improve the effectiveness of our response to incidents

Our focus on improvement included:

- Reviewing our initial firefighter training programme
- Implementing a new computer system to manage the rostering of operational staff
- Implementing the recommendations of the Special Appliances Review conducted in 2021
- Assessing the findings of the ongoing pilot to test alternate contracts for on-call firefighters and make recommendations for future implementation

During the year:

- We attended 11,343 incidents, an increase of 12% on 2021/22. This included 4,024 fires – an increase of 19% on 2021/22. Of these, 1,141 fires involved vegetation such as wildfires, woodland and grassland
- We attended 1,341 incidents which involved rescues and humanitarian assistance from either buildings, vehicles, water, confined spaces, or heights. In 2021/22 this figure was 1,347
- We attended 582 road traffic collisions – an increase of 3% on 2021/22
- We responded to 2,111 special service calls such as assisting East Midlands Ambulance Service and responding to flooding. This was an increase of 5% on 2021/22
- We delivered 701 training courses, attended by 3083 delegates, from a portfolio of 149 different training courses
- We implemented Fire Service Rota, our new rostering system
- We made changes to the location of some of our specialist capabilities, following our special appliances review

Other Highlights

In 2022/23 you continued to be served by 30 fire engines and a range of specialised vehicles at 24 fire stations across our County.

Our stations are made up of:

- Eight stations with wholetime crews
- Four stations with a mix of wholetime and on-call crews (two with a mixed crewing model)
- 12 stations with on-call crews

When we receive a 999 call for help, we respond immediately with the nearest appropriate fire engine and specialist equipment for the size and type of incident.

The exceptionally hot weather experienced in July and August 2022 led to a 136% increase in fires when compared to the same months in 2021, and to the declaration of three major incidents. This busy period meant our fire engines were busier than usual and sometimes had to travel further or stay longer at incidents than we would normally expect. This led to an increase in the average time that it took for response crews to attend some incidents. Overall, our average attendance time was fifteen seconds over our eight-minute target for 2022/23.

Local Resilience

We have continued to work collaboratively with our regional partners to receive and provide operational assistance. We have maintained our agreements to ensure that we can provide mutual resilience, particularly at times of increased demand.

Using the Joint Emergency Services Operating Principles (JESIP), we work alongside other emergency services. Using these common operating principles, we deal with incidents effectively and minimise impact to our communities.

Many larger incidents require multiple partners to work together to resolve the incident. We are an active member of the Nottinghamshire Local Resilience Forum. This statutory partnership of emergency services and other key partners, works together to share skills, information, and expertise to build, test and exercise the Community Risk Register. This ensures that all partners are ready for an effective response when needed.

National Resilience

The National Resilience Capabilities Programme (NRCP) is the government's central programme to increase the capability to respond to major incidents. As part of this we can be called upon to provide assistance locally, or if required, regionally or nationally.

Training and Competence

We have around 650 firefighters who are trained to deal with a variety of incidents, to a high standard through:

- Practical and face-to-face training at our Service Development Centre
- Station based training
- Training exercises for different types of incidents
- E-learning

This year, we have conducted a review of our initial firefighter training programme. The focus of the review was to ensure that we continue to provide safe and effective firefighter training and support.

From the review, key changes have been made to the programme. These include:

- Improved provision of pre-course and induction information
- Enhanced EDI content
- Integration of the Core Code of Ethics
- Additional course content on hazardous materials, building construction and command support awareness

Command Training

In 2022 we developed an accredited command course for middle managers which allowed us to deliver this training internally for the first time. This allowed us to focus our training on local risks. It also generated significant cost savings.

Exercises

To ensure we are prepared and to test our response to emergencies we have an exercise programme. Exercises range from small district level exercises, to large multi-agency scenarios that test how we work collectively with our emergency service partners to resolve incidents

In 2022/23 we conducted:

- 34 practical exercises and 83 Tactical Decision Exercises (TDEs) that tested our capability in a range of emergency scenarios including, high rise buildings, major road traffic collisions, water rescues, terrorist attacks, and hazardous material releases
- 19 other specialist training events specifically to test our effectiveness in working with other emergency partners

Among these exercises were some specifically aimed at testing the changes to procedures implemented as part of our response to the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. For example, we held TDEs based on fires at Victoria Centre flats and Nottingham Arena.

In March, we held a practical exercise at Highfields Fire Station and Joint Fire Control, based on a scenario which involved a fire in a high-rise building with several people inside. The exercise tested a number of systems in place to support people who may otherwise

have difficulty making emergency calls. These included the SMS system, Pegasus (a service aimed at people with learning difficulties), the BSL999 service (a translation service for BSL speakers), and the language translation service (for people who do not speak English). The exercise involved members of Pulp Friction, a social enterprise working with people who have learning difficulties and /or autism to develop their social independence and work readiness. Some of their members were asked to play the role of callers reporting a fire, which gave them practical experience of using 999, and highlighted to them the value of the What3Words application.

Productivity

Despite the increased number of incidents, the performance of response crews in other areas has continued to improve. In 2022/23 response crews delivered 12,554 Safe & Well Visits (enabling the Service to exceed its target for the year), undertook 531 Business Safety Checks (surpassing the annual target), supported community safety education events, maintained operational competence through engagement in a full training and exercise programme, and ensured that all 527 documents relating to Site Specific Risk Information were kept up to date.

On-call Availability

We have worked hard over the past year to further develop the sustainability of the on-call workforce, including the ongoing recruitment and training of additional employees.

During 2022/23 we trialled variations to the traditional on-call contract of employment, with the aim of making the on-call role attractive to more people, and enhancing retention. The outcomes of this trial are being considered and further work will be undertaken in 2023/24 with a view to enabling the introduction of alternative contracts in the near future.

With the assistance of our on-call support team throughout 2022/23 our on-call appliance availability averaged 87.07%. This exceeded our target of 85%.

Rostering

A roosting capability is an essential tool for planning the deployment of response staff, and for maximising the availability of our fire engines. In 2022/23 we introduced Fire Service Rota, a new roosting system that greatly improves the quality and auditability of the data we hold and provides new reporting mechanisms to support the performance and welfare management of all operational personnel.

Specialist Appliance Review

During 2022/23 we began to implement the recommendations of the special appliance review that was conducted in 2021/22. The review considered the efficiency and effectiveness of our special appliances fleet; how they meet the needs of our communities,

where they are located, how they are crewed, and how they contribute to the mitigation of risk.

Changes have been implemented as a result. Our animal rescue provision is now based at Newark and our technical rope rescue capability is at Highfields. Projects to replace our aerial ladder capability, command support unit and welfare unit, and to introduce a new rural firefighting vehicle are underway.

Contingency Planning

During much of 2022/23 the national bodies representing employers and the workforce were in dispute over pay. This presented a significant risk to the Service of industrial action by operational staff. To ensure that we were able to continue to meet our statutory obligations and provide the best possible service in the event of any such action, we channelled resources into contingency planning and preparations. This involved a significant amount of resource, to create new ways of working, provide contingency staff with additional training, and ensure core systems and other logistical arrangements were in place to cope with a range of eventualities. Thankfully, the disputes were resolved without any industrial action; however, the work undertaken and learning points from it have been embedded within our business continuity plans.

Strategic Goal 4: We will continue to support and develop our workforce and promote an inclusive Service

This goal focuses on inclusion and the development and wellbeing of our workforce.

In 2022/23 our key objectives were:

- Undertake community engagement and positive action to improve the diversity of applicants and appointees for roles at all levels of the Service
- Reduce sickness absence and promote employee health and wellbeing
- Deliver a range of learning opportunities to increase understanding of inclusion issues across our workforce

Our focus on improvement included:

- Undertaking a strategic workforce review, across all departments, to determine the skills and capacity we need to deliver effective services
- Enhancing support and promotion of healthy lifestyles and wellbeing initiatives
- Reviewing our Service's standards of dress and replacement of duty rig uniform to ensure that it is inclusive and fit for purpose for all our staff

During the year:

- We undertook a range of positive action activities to support our wholetime firefighter recruitment campaign. The majority of those successful in the process (62%) had previously attended positive action events
- An absence review group was established, chaired by an Assistant Chief Fire Officer to undertake scrutiny of absence figures on a quarterly basis. There was an overall reduction in staff absence of 11.6% compared to 2021/22
- We undertook a review of post-incident support and as a result we will be introducing an enhanced programme of support during 2023
- We have delivered a range of training courses to improve understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion, reaching over 150 members of staff
- As part of our future efficiency planning we conducted a workforce review across our internal support services. The review identified efficiencies which have resulted in savings of £250k per annum
- We have undertaken a review of our duty rig uniform, engaging staff and employee networks to understand requirements and to trial new items of workwear

Other Highlights

Our people are the heartbeat of our fire and rescue service. We are committed to ensuring that they have the skills, professionalism and flexibility to deliver our goals and provide the best possible service we can to the communities we serve.

Workforce

At the end of 2022/23 we had a workforce of 812 people, compared to 842 in 2021/22. This is made up of 653 staff in operational roles and 159 staff in support roles.

A total of 89 people left the Service during the year, of whom 27 were wholetime firefighters, 26 were on-call firefighters and 36 were support staff.

During 2022/23 we conducted an internal workforce review of our internal support services, with a view to identifying efficiencies which could lead to savings that would help balance the budget. The review was part of the first phase of our longer-term Futures 25 improvement programme, and it delivered a saving of £250,000 from the annual pay budget.

Recruitment

During 2022-23, we recruited to 61 roles: 2 wholetime firefighters, 33 on-call firefighters and 26 support staff roles. In addition, nine of our on-call firefighters transferred to wholetime roles.

We also conducted a wholetime firefighter recruitment campaign, to ensure the staffing establishment is in a sustainable position to meet demands and to deliver on our commitments.

As part of our commitment to improve the diversity of applicants to roles within the Service, particularly for operational roles, we undertook a series of positive action activities within our local communities during 2022 to encourage people to apply for a career as a Firefighter and to support them through the application process. This had a positive impact, with 62% of those successful in the process having engaged in positive action during 2022. Twenty-four new apprentice firefighters will commence their training in April and September 2023.

We are aware that the current workforce is not representative of the population of Nottinghamshire as reflected in local census figures. For instance, women in operational roles and employees from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds or those who declare a disability across the workforce are all under-represented in our workforce. Whilst there has been some improvement in the diversity of applicants over the last year, we will continue to promote the Service as an employer of choice and through engagement with our communities, in order to encourage the widest range of applicants to consider a career with the Service across all parts of our workforce.

Health & Wellbeing

We promote employee health and wellbeing through a dedicated Occupational Health team, including a fitness advisor who provides fitness testing and rehabilitation programmes to maintain fitness and support those recovering from injury or illness,

workplace gyms, on-line fitness programmes and access to counselling support. All of our operational staff are required to undertake annual fitness tests. Sickness absence was reduced in 2022-23 compared to the previous year. The main reasons for sickness absence relate to Musculo-skeletal conditions (28.4%) and Mental Health issues (23.1%).

In 2022/23:

- 99.5% of our operational personnel passed their annual fitness test
- 35 accidents were reported in the workplace, compared with 42 in 2021/22
- 38 near misses were reported, compared to 33 in 2021/22
- Sickness absence accounted for the loss of 5.33% of working time for wholetime operational staff, which is below the national sector average of 6.25%. Sickness absence within support roles equated to 4.97% of working time, which was higher than the national sector average of 3.7%

We have made improvements to the way we signpost and promote the wide range of health and wellbeing support available to staff, and continue to seek ways of enhancing our provision.

All staff have access to an Employee Assistance programme, including a 24/7 helpline and a Cash-back plan to help toward the cost of routine health screening, treatments and consultancy and therapy fees. A Peer Support scheme is also available to employees through a network of trained facilitators.

The Service also supports the Blue Light Together programme, which provides access to on-line support to combat mental health issues for those working in the emergency services.

Values & Culture

Our Service Values are clearly defined and well understood by staff. They ensure that our staff put communities first and at the heart of what we do, and they are aligned to the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services in England. During the last year we have been working to adopt and embed the Core Code of Ethics Fire Standard into our ways of working. We updated our Behavioural Framework, which underpins our values and sets out expectations about conduct to ensure that the expected standards are upheld.

During 2022/23, values and culture within the fire sector, and the wider public sector, have become topics of national debate and concern.

In November 2022, an independent cultural review of the London Fire Brigade raised serious concerns about that service. In March 2023 HMICFRS presented its own critical assessment of values and culture across all the fire services in England, based on evidence collected from inspections since 2018. Both reports highlighted examples of behaviours which are unacceptable.

As a Service we acknowledge those reports and reaffirm that there is no place for discrimination, harassment or bullying in the fire and rescue service. Whilst our own inspection report from HMICFRS, found that we had improved in all areas related to our people, we recognise that there is no room for complacency. We have studied both the

LFB and HMICFRS reports to consider where their recommendations can be applied to our Service, and we will take actions where they are necessary.

We are strongly committed to maintaining a positive, inclusive workplace and ensuring our staff have the skills to meet the needs of our community when delivering services.

During 2022/23 we have been working to deliver our 12-point EDI Action plan, which resulted from an independent review of equality, diversity and inclusion within our Service conducted in 2021.

As part of this work, we have delivered a range of EDI training involving over 150 members of staff. Courses have included:

- Introduction to EDI
- Disability Awareness
- Learning Differences (neurodiversity)
- Faith training
- Diversity in Employment
- Working with Vulnerable People
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Deaf Awareness

In addition, an Inclusive Leadership training course has also been piloted during 22/23 aimed at middle managers, with plans in place to roll this out to all middle managers in 2023/24.

We also provide a range of eLearning to staff on subjects such as Religion and Faith, Trans awareness, Unconscious Bias and EDI best practice and legislation.

We continue to raise awareness of EDI and personal identities through our staff networks and promote opportunities to attend events and conferences such as Women in the Fire Service and the Asian Fire Service Association conference.

Uniform Review

During 2022/23 we have undertaken a review of our duty rig uniform. A working group was formed to consider uniform options and report on a survey which was open to uniformed and non-uniformed staff across the Service. The results of the trial have been recorded and will inform the procurement process for the new workwear. As part of the review, it has been agreed that all officers will be wearing navy blue uniform in the future, in line with other uniformed staff. The new uniform is expected to be in Service in 2024.

Employee Networks

Supporting our employees and promoting a positive workplace culture is central to our ambitions of being an employer of choice and becoming a more inclusive service. Our employee groups and networks provide a voice for those who are under-represented in our workforce and the fire sector as a whole.

Women's Network

This year our Women's network celebrated its first anniversary. In an eventful first year the network has made great strides in promoting and celebrating the role women play within the Service. Regular meetings and events have contributed to our commitment to improving the representation of women in our workforce. These have included involvement in the uniform review process and inviting guest speakers who are role models within the sector to network meetings.

LGBT+ Network

The LGBT+ Proud Friends Network is open to all members of staff who are part of the LGBT+ community and people who are allies. The Network is a space for people to get support and learn more about different aspects of the LGBT+ community.

We attended Worksop Pride and were once again honoured to lead the Notts Pride parade, with the biggest turnout of staff that we've ever had marching at the event. For LGBT+ History Month in February 2023 we worked alongside Nottinghamshire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner to put on an event at Broadway Cinema, focussed on local Nottinghamshire LGBT+ history and films about different identities in the community.

Ethnic Minority Alliance Network (EMA)

Our EMA provides a platform for open, confidential, and supportive discussions for all employees. The alliance helps to create and support a culture where all members can participate and feel valued while informing the Service's approach to ethnic minority issues. Throughout the year we have provided opportunities for networking and support through a variety of multi-cultural initiatives. These have included Eid ul-Fitr, Easter, Vaisakhi, Eid-Al-Adha, Black History Month, Diwali/Bandi Chhor and Lunar New year. We are also sponsoring the Young Leader of the Year Award at the 2023 'Live our Best Life' Awards organised by Nottinghamshire Police. We aim to sponsor this award each year, in memory of Stephen Lawrence.

Disability Matters Network

Our Disability Matters Network contributes to all disability related outcomes within the Service and plays a significant role in helping to achieve an inclusive workplace. This year, our members and allies have contributed to many initiatives including consulting on building access and corporate plans, improving the accessibility of eLearning and assisting

in the development of our new website. The network has also helped to provide training on deaf awareness and reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

Veterans Network

During 2022/23 our Veterans Network held its first meeting at Joint headquarters. The network brings together like-minded individuals who have served their country to offer a friendly environment for social events, conversations, particularly looking at how we can improve Service support for our armed forces and veteran members.

Strategic Goal 5: We will continue our improvement journey to deliver an outstanding Service

This goal focuses on the continuous improvement of our services, systems and processes.

In 2022/23, our focus on improvement included:

- Using our Strategic Assessment of Risk and Fire Cover Review to prioritise our services and align our resources to best effect
- Developing an online repository of information about risks and communities for our public-facing teams
- Developing our management information capability to better support performance management and decision making
- Ensuring Service information is readily accessible to all service users including those with different needs or access requirements
- Evaluating the consultation approach used in the development of our CRMP, to identify areas of improvement
- Responding to the recommendations of public inquiries, sector learning and new fire standards as they are published
- Improving the availability of key systems to increase the scope for mobile working

During the year:

- We commissioned a fire cover review to explore options for providing the best possible service within a balanced budget. We carried out a public consultation on proposals arising from the review
- We continue to improve the quality and availability of our site-specific risk information (SSRI). At the end of 2022/23 100% of our SSRIs were reviewed and up to date. This is the first time that we have achieved this
- We have continued to develop our data management infrastructure to improve our reporting capabilities
- We implemented a new website to give our communities improved access to information and services that we provide. It is independently rated as one of the most accessible fire and rescue websites in the country
- We have implemented the recommendations of the Grenfell Tower inquiry and are continuing to progress our actions for the Manchester Arena inquiry
- Work has continued to improve the reliability of the mobile data terminals on our fire engines

Other Highlights

We are focused on providing the best possible services to our communities and becoming an outstanding fire and rescue service.

To achieve this, we know that we must strive to continually improve our efficiency and effectiveness, across all areas of our service.

Community focus

Futures 25 Improvement Programme

At the start of 2022/23, we set up our Futures 25 Improvement Programme. The overall aim of the programme is to ensure that the Service can continue to improve its service delivery to communities, whilst at the same time creating a more agile, responsive workforce, and driving productivity and efficiency gains. This programme will involve cross-department redesign of activities and investment in improvements to systems over a number of years.

Phase 1 of the programme was shaped by the immediate need to set a balanced budget for 2023/24, which is a statutory duty. By the summer of 2022, our financial forecasts predicted a multi-million pound budget deficit, driven by a range of factors including escalating inflation and uncertainty around pay awards. To address this risk, we commissioned a fire cover review, to identify options which could achieve the necessary level of savings whilst minimising the impact on service delivery. As well as identifying how best to make the savings, the fire cover review also highlighted a deficit in fire cover in the north of the County, which could be addressed by reinstating wholetime cover at Ashfield fire station.

A public consultation was carried out on these proposals and on the appetite for a £5 increase in council tax as a way of mitigating cuts in services. There was significant support for the increase in council tax and for increasing fire cover at Ashfield, both of which were approved by the Fire Authority in February. As a combined result of the increase in council tax, savings we made during the year and some increases in other government funding, the Authority was able to set a balanced budget for 2023/24 without needing to implement the proposed cuts to fire cover in the city.

However, the financial picture remains challenging and further savings will need to be achieved to ensure our future financial sustainability. This will be a key objective for the next phase of our Futures 25 Improvement programme.

A review of flexi-duty officer cover was also initiated. However, competing demands for resource, including for contingency planning for industrial action and to support the fire cover review, meant this workstream had to be suspended.

Site-Specific Risk Information (SSRI)

Fire and Rescue Services need effective arrangements for gathering accurate, relevant and timely information of identified hazards and known risks to a premises/site and making this available to ensure the safety of firefighters. Information gathering and analysis of that information is of critical safety importance as it can be used to deliver appropriate training for personnel exposed to specific risks.

We gather information about the use of the building, the hazards and risks, construction, operational and environmental considerations and information to assist in fighting a fire.

We have continued to update and review site-specific risk information (SSRI) for high-risk sites, which is accessible to our crews when needed. Throughout the year we have been developing our systems to improve the way our crews see this information.

We have 527 high-risk sites across the County. At the end of 2022/23, 100% of our SSRIs were in date for their review. This is the first time we have achieved this. Our SSRIs are shared with neighbouring fire and rescue services, and access to their risk information is available to our crews via the mobile data terminals on our fire engines.

Understanding and Meeting the Needs of Service Users

We continue to engage with our service users to ensure that we meet their needs, that our services are accessible and that we strengthen our relationships with our communities. We have maintained our commitment to driving equality through our work with external agencies such as the Disability Confident scheme, British Sign Language Charter and the Armed Forces Covenant.

In June we held an event at Joint Headquarters to launch a new service which makes calling 999 more accessible for people who use British Sign Language (BSL). 999 BSL remotely connects users to interpreters through the 999 BSL app or via the 999 BSL website. In an emergency situation, the interpreter will appear on the caller's screen and relay the information to the control operator.

In April 2022 we launched our new website. The website, which was developed by an 'in-house' team, gives our communities better access to information and services we provide and is one of the most accessible fire and rescue websites in the country. By developing the website 'in-house' we provided development opportunities for 'upskilling' to our staff and avoided the expense of commissioning a third-party supplier.

Quality, Efficiency and Effectiveness

Evaluation

Developing our use of evaluation techniques to routinely assess the impact of our activities has become a focus during the year. To improve the way we do this we are developing an evaluation framework to highlight areas of good practice which will inform future projects.

We have particularly been evaluating the effectiveness of:

- Safe and Well visits
- Building inspections risk methodology
- Our use of data in fire cover reviews
- The move to joint headquarters

Public Inquiries and Sector Learning

Grenfell Tower Inquiry

Following the Grenfell Tower inquiry, an action plan was produced to ensure that we learnt from this tragic event. All 47 recommendations have been adopted and all procedures have been updated. New procedures have been adopted at high-rise incidents to ensure better coordination if evacuation is required. New equipment has been purchased, including smoke hoods and smoke curtains which have already been used to rescue people from buildings.

Manchester Arena Inquiry

In November 2022 the Manchester Arena Inquiry, Volume 2, was released. This report focused on the response by emergency services on the night of the attack. The report makes a number of recommendations to improve the way that emergency services respond to and resolve an incident of this type. We are committed to improvement and working with partners in the Nottinghamshire Local Resilience Forum and have developed an action plan to deliver the required learning.

Emerging Risks

An emerging risk is that presented by electric vehicles, specifically electric vehicle fires. We have a Service and regional fire service working group looking at ways to best mitigate the risk that this type of incident presents. A training plan has been developed to ensure our crews are able to effectively deal with this type of incident.

National Fire Standards

The Fire Standards Board oversees the identification, organisation, development and maintenance of professional standards of fire and rescue services in England.

They have published six new standards through 2022/23 which we continue to work towards embedding into our ways of working.

Digital Technology and Innovation

Information Repository for Staff

We have been developing a digital resource for staff which explains what we do, why we do it, how we do it and our ambition and goals. The 'living' resource will provide our workforce with an up-to-date repository of information which will help them to do their work more effectively and efficiently.

Information and Data Management

Over the past year we have successfully transferred all of our ICT systems and reporting databases into the cloud, moving away from the need to have site-based servers.

We have been working hard on developing our data management infrastructure, which will improve our reporting capabilities and allow us, in the future, to become a fully digital organisation, able to deliver operational data to our workforce in real time. This work is expected to be completed by 2024/25.

Mobile Working

We have introduced the ability to access key systems directly via the internet, enabling staff to work from any location with an internet connection. Operational staff have also been issued with modern internet capable devices enabling a connection whilst mobile or at an incident.

Information Security

We understand the importance of protecting personal data and demonstrating the steps we take to protect people's rights.

Our data protection officer supports our data protection duties across the Service, and we continue to train all employees in their data protection responsibilities.

As a public authority, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service provides information about what services we provide, how we spend money, and how we make decisions. The list here includes information we routinely make available and includes links wherever possible.

- Who we are and what we do
- What we spend and how we spend it
- What our priorities are and how we are doing
- How we make decisions
- Our policies and procedures
- Lists and registers
- The services we offer

Cyber Security

Maintaining the security of our systems and data is a priority. The threat of cyber-attacks is a constant risk for all organisations, particularly in the public sector.

Updating our practices and monitoring these threats is vital to ensure that we can deal with current and future risks.

In 2022/23 we counteracted 437,322 threats, which included spam, malware and viruses.

Strategic Goal 6: We will manage and invest in our Service to ensure it is fit for the future

This goal is focused on financial and environmental sustainability.

In 2022/23, our key objectives were:

- Move into the new fire station at Worksop
- Complete the move out of Bestwood Lodge
- Complete an options appraisal for the replacement of Eastwood fire station
- Relocate the incident command training facility to Mansfield fire station
- Procure new vehicles to replace those which have reached the end of their serviceable life

Our focus for improvements included:

- Reviewing our 10-year Capital Programme in the light of our Strategic Assessment of Risk
- Revising governance and decision-making processes to take account of environmental sustainability considerations
- Re-tendering the cleaning and grounds maintenance contract

During the year:

- We moved into the new fire station at Worksop and completed the sale of the old station site
- Completed the move out of the old headquarters and progressed work to sell off the site at Bestwood Lodge
- Completed substantial refurbishments at Mansfield fire station, to install an up-to-date incident command training facility, improve welfare and meeting facilities and provide office space for the Fire Protection North team
- Progressed the procurement of 17 new fire appliances and a number of specialist vehicles
- Successfully retendered our cleaning and grounds maintenance contract and multi-activity maintenance contract
- Reviewed and refocused our capital expenditure programme
- Started work on the project to retender for our mobilisation system, in collaboration with Derbyshire Fire Service and Joint Fire Control colleagues

Other Highlights

Financial Sustainability and Capital Expenditure

Throughout 2022/23, events in the UK and abroad had a significant impact on the economic climate, resulting in the highest rate of inflation in a generation and rising interest rates.

Against this backdrop, we reviewed our capital expenditure plans for the next ten years. Our capital programme is funded through borrowing, and in light of the increasing rates of interest and the other financial pressures on our revenue budgets, we took the decision to minimise our capital expenditure as far as possible. This means we have decided to delay plans to build a new fire station at Eastwood. Instead, we will make essential improvements to our existing estate to improve accessibility and provide an inclusive environment for staff and visitors.

We will always try to provide the best possible service to our communities with the financial resources available. Providing value for money is a priority when planning for the future. As part of those plans, we work hard to ensure that the service we provide is both financially and environmentally sustainable. This means ensuring that our buildings, vehicles and equipment remain fit for purpose and cost effective and allow us to provide an effective and efficient service.

Managing and Developing our Premises

We have continued to develop more modern and energy-efficient buildings that provide operational response bases and community hubs. This year crews moved into the brand-new station at Vesuvius Way, Worksop, which was officially opened in May 2022 and is now fully operational.

The move to Joint Headquarters is now complete, with all teams relocated from our previous site at Bestwood Lodge.

Sharing of resources continues to play an important part of our plans. Co-location with colleagues from other services will continue to be considered where financial and operational benefits can be realised.

During 2022/23 support staff continued to work hard across our Service delivering projects which developed our buildings, vehicles and systems to make sure they remain fit for purpose.

These projects included:

- Building alterations to allow the relocation of Fire Protection North and members of our Prevention team at Ashfield station
- Relocation of Stores to Highfields station from the Bestwood Lodge site
- Utilities upgrades were carried out at several sites including Highfields, Mansfield, Ashfield, Stockhill and Bingham stations
- Resurfacing of Collingham drill yard and hard standing areas

- Surveys of training towers were undertaken to inform minor works and lifespan expectancy

Investing in Equipment

Work to change some of our operational vehicle fleet is underway with a new appliance tendering process being conducted this year. 17 new fire appliances will replace aging vehicles over the next few years, with the first of them coming into service in 2024. They will feature a 'clean cab' design which will help keep our firefighters protected from products of combustion and other contaminants following incidents.

A tender for our new Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) vehicles is underway. The new vehicles will have the capability to reach further than our existing ALPs, from 32 metres to 45 metres, which will give more versatility, particularly at incidents involving high-rise buildings. The vehicles will also provide greater assistance at incidents involving the rescue of bariatric casualties. The new vehicles are expected to come into service during 2026.

Upgrading operational equipment is essential for us to maintain our operational capabilities. During 2022/23 we have:

- Procured new thermal imaging cameras to assist our incident commanders
- Purchased new lay-flat hose to replenish stock
- Replaced gas-tight suits which provide chemical protection for our crews
- Procured new 'fall-arrest' lanyards for safe working at height equipment
- Purchased new lamps for our breathing apparatus sets, which will replace existing ones as they become defective
- Procured new operational surcoats for role identification at incidents

Investing in our Systems and Processes

As part of ensuring the Service is financially sustainable and fit for the future, we have continued to make improvements to existing ways of working and to invest in our ICT systems.

A key area of focus is the procurement of a new mobilising system. This is a critical system that allows our Joint Fire Control function to receive 999 calls and mobilise fire engines, specialist vehicles and officers to incidents. We currently operate with a system procured within our tri-service arrangement with Derbyshire and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Services (FRS). The contract for this system is due for renewal. In January 2023, Leicestershire FRS informed us that they intend to withdraw from the tri-service arrangement at the end of the current contract. We are therefore working in collaboration with Derbyshire to jointly procure a replacement system for our two Services. This project will continue into 2025.

Also in 2022/23:

- Work has continued to improve the reliability of mobile data terminals on our fire appliances, to ensure up-to-date risk information is available at incidents
- We have continued to improve our fire hydrant maintenance process which allows improved reporting, efficiency and productivity
- We have procured numerous ICT contracts to maintain and upgrade our systems

Financial Performance

Under the Local Government Act 1999, fire and rescue services are responsible for ensuring that their business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

We provide financial assurance through the publication of an Annual Statement of Accounts. This is a statutory requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, and the accounts are prepared following the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. The financial statements are subject to review by independent auditors.

Our appointed external auditor is Ernst Young LLP. The auditors are responsible for auditing two key areas:

- Financial statements
- Use of resources – concluding on the arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness (the value for money conclusion)

Internal audit forms part of the wider system of internal control which deals with our exposure to financial, and to some extent, non-financial risk.

Our internal audit function is provided by Nottinghamshire County Council. The 2022/23 Internal Audit Annual Report provided a judgement of Substantial Assurance around the Service's arrangements for corporate governance, risk management and the control environment.

The full report was considered by Finance and Resources Committee in June 2023. This allowed members to see the work of the internal audit and the contribution that it makes to the overall system of internal control.

2022/23 Financial Budget

The 2022/23 budget was set at £46.006m. We underspent by £236k (0.5%) during this year which was transferred into Earmarked Reserves, mostly for future use on the replacement mobilisation system.

Capital expenditure for the year totalled £2.265m. This was lower than expected due to some supply chain issues relating to the purchase of fire appliances. The majority of expenditure (£1.5m) was spent on our buildings which included the completion of a new Command Training Suite.

Reserves at the end of March 2022 were £10.3m.

Governance Statement

The Annual Governance Statement publicly explains how we manage our governance and internal control measures. It is a transparent account of how we ensure our financial management system is adequate and effective. It also ensures a sound system of internal control, assuring the utmost integrity in all of our work.

The Fire Authority also has a Code of Corporate Governance in which it reaffirms its duties and responsibilities. In this document officers support each of the code's principles with documentation or existing practices, demonstrating how the Fire Authority complies with the principles that make up the code.

We recognise the importance of transparency over how public money is spent.

The Local Government Transparency Code 2015 has been used as the foundation for organisational transparency. In deciding what information we should make available, as a starting point we have used the recommended data sets as defined by this code.

Governance, Monitoring and Assurance

Various governance bodies and systems are required to deliver an efficient fire and rescue service to our communities.

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority

This is often referred to as the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) and is responsible for ensuring we have the people, equipment and training needed to carry out our duties in relation to fire prevention; fire safety; firefighting and rescue; road traffic collision extrication and rescue and other emergency rescue activities such as responding to flooding or terrorism.

The authority consists of 18 elected councillors from Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council. There are six committees that report to the Fire Authority. These are:

- Appointments
- Community Safety
- Finance and Resources
- Human Resources
- Personnel
- Policy and Strategy

Collectively these committees and the authority make decisions on key matters such as policy, strategy and budget.

Meetings of the CFA and its committees are open to the public. Further information can be found on the city council's website.



Strategic Leadership Team

The Strategic Leadership Team is responsible for implementing the strategy and policy decisions taken by the CFA.

Under the direction of the Chief Fire Officer, the team meets to discuss Service priorities, collectively understand emerging issues and determine whether additional formal reports or business cases are required for consideration.

CRMP Assurance Board

The CRMP Assurance Board focuses on the progress being made against the strategic goals in the CRMP. It meets monthly and is chaired by the Chief Fire Officer. It scrutinises performance reports and key performance indicators from all areas of the Service and oversees significant corporate projects.

Area Managers Team (AMT)

AMT consists of all uniformed and non-uniformed Area Managers. The team meets fortnightly and is responsible for monitoring progress towards the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP), managing resources required to deliver the ADP, providing direction for Service departments and reporting progress to CRMP Assurance Board.

Operational Learning Board

The Operational Learning Board meets to ensure that we can effectively learn from the operational incidents and exercises that have taken place.

This board also considers learning that has come from other fire and rescue services to ensure an efficient, safe and effective operational response and to support the goal of delivering an outstanding service. This board meets every two months.

Service Delivery Evaluation and Assurance Group

It is important to oversee the performance of our Prevention, Protection and Response departments to monitor our progress against the standards we set.

Risk and performance matters are considered, with the aim of addressing any areas of concern and highlighting and learning from areas of good practice. The Group meets on a quarterly basis.

Collaboration Board

We facilitate a Strategic Collaboration Board that looks for opportunities to work with Nottinghamshire Police and oversees current collaborations. The membership of the group includes the Chair of the Fire Authority, the Chief Fire Officer, the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

We also have a Collaboration Board which facilitates governance and reporting of our Joint Fire Control with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service and explores areas for continued collaboration. This is attended by Fire Authority members and senior officers of both services.

External Assurance

HMICFRS Inspection

All fire and rescue services are subject to inspection from HMICFRS. The aims of the inspection programme are to encourage improvement in the fire sector and to provide the public with accessible information about how their local service is performing.

We received our latest report, which rated us as 'Good', in June 2022 following an inspection in the autumn of 2021. We are inspected every 2 years and we are expecting our next inspection in the autumn of 2023.

Assurance Declaration

The Combined Fire Authority functions within the clearly defined statutory and policy framework.

The key documents setting this out are:

- The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007
- The Localism Act 2011
- The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority is satisfied that it has met government expectations and responsibilities expected of fire and rescue services with regard to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

It is satisfied that it has shown due regard for public money and that it was properly accounted for and used efficiently and effectively.

It has adhered to the commitments set out in the CRMP for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael Payne".

Councillor Michael Payne Chair of
the Combined Fire Authority



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

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