



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

RESOURCING TO RISK

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 14 July 2023

Purpose of Report:

To present Members with proposals relating to the deployment of resources to address current and future requirements in the Service.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members:

- Support and endorse the approach of the Chief Fire Officer in the deployment of resources to risk.
- Agree to receive further updates at full Authority meetings relating to this workstream.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At the Fire Authority meeting in February 2023, Members voted to “*task the Chief Fire Officer to swiftly work up and implement proposals at Ashfield Fire Station to address the identified gap in resourcing to risk faced by the community.*”
- 1.2 The Service’s Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) details how the Service will aim to make the best use of resources to deliver its commitments to communities.
- 1.3 The February budget report to the Fire Authority identified that the Service faces a predicted shortfall in revenue budgets in the region of £1.2m for the financial year 2024/25.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 In 2021, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) commissioned an independent review of Fire Cover by a sector leading expert, with over 30-years' experience of working with emergency services around the world. This review explained how resources could best be optimised to ensure the most efficient and effective response to emergencies throughout the county.
- 2.2 The review highlighted that the reinstatement of a 24-hour provision of wholetime crewing at Ashfield fire station would decrease attendance times by an average of 48 seconds in that area and support the Service’s CRMP commitment to attend all incidents within eight minutes on average.
- 2.3 In response to the review, and the decision of the Fire Authority, the Service proposes to reinstate wholetime crewing arrangements at Ashfield that mirror all other 24/7 wholetime stations. This will ensure that crewing and resilience arrangements for the station are as simple, efficient, and effective as possible.
- 2.4 To facilitate the required approach to crewing, an additional 12 posts are required. These posts would consist of two Watch Managers, two Crew Managers and eight firefighter posts.
- 2.5 Increasing the wholetime establishment to provide additional roles for Ashfield would cost circa £600k and is not viable due to anticipated budget deficit over the medium term.
- 2.6 It is therefore necessary to facilitate the required changes at Ashfield within the current establishment and without affecting the level of fire cover provided elsewhere.
- 2.7 The proposed approach to providing 24-hour wholetime cover at Ashfield station is to amend the current ridership levels, within the existing

establishment figure of 356. This would require ridership levels of 24 personnel across one appliance stations and 44 personnel across both two appliance stations, with some deviation to this at some stations due to the crewing of specialist appliances. This would enable a minimum crew of four to be maintained on all wholetime appliances.

- 2.8 This approach may lead to a greater number of occasions where appliances are crewed with four personnel, however it is noted that in 2022/23, appliances were crewed with four personnel 65% of the time (with a higher frequency during the busier summer periods). It is also noted that this approach does present a greater risk in relation to the impact of sickness and other abstractions from the ridership, however steps will be taken to address this, as is common practice, in line with the Service's current policies and procedures.
- 2.9 In addressing this proposal, the Service has reviewed the time it takes for a second appliance to attend incidents, where more than one appliance is required, across each district. Across all districts, whilst those in rural areas show the highest secondary attendance time, the longest average wait time for a second appliance remains under six minutes. This is reduced to nearer one minute in the City of Nottingham.
- 2.10 To support this approach, the Service will incorporate the new crewing levels into incident command training, awareness for operational crews, and exercises. It will also conduct a review of pre-determined attendances (PDAs) to incidents, and current operational practices (eg: the application of 'rapid deployment' of breathing apparatus resources).
- 2.11 The proposed changes to the approach to ridership presents a number of benefits including; an increase in 'productive' hours for the delivery of services to communities; training and maintenance of competence at Ashfield; greater flexibility for all operational personnel in relation to self-rostering; a reduction in 'stand-by' moves required to maintain availability; and an increase in capacity for off-shift training, sickness cover, and development time for personnel.
- 2.12 The proposed approach to crewing also releases four current operational posts to support the resourcing of Service priorities, resource the current Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) commitments, and support the mitigation of current corporate risks.
- 2.13 These posts will be reallocated within the Service to ensure the continued delivery of high-quality services to communities, improve community engagement and support the Service's continued cultural journey.
- 2.14 The implementation of the changes will take a project-approach to delivery, ensuring proactive engagement with all key stakeholders. The timelines for implementation aim for a return to 24/7 wholetime cover in Ashfield by the end of November 2023, however this will be subject to review as detailed plans are developed.

- 2.15 The Service will implement evaluation and monitoring measures for the implementation of this change, including the monitoring of response times, availability and key workforce metrics.
- 2.16 It is proposed that the Authority receives further updates on the progress of this workstream at future full Fire Authority meetings, including the reporting of evaluation of any changes post-implementation, at appropriate intervals.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The proposal for the reallocation of resources at firefighter level would be cost neutral. The cost of uplifting firefighter posts to two additional Watch Managers and two Crew Managers would be £36,310, including on-costs.
- 3.2 This can be contained within current year budgets given the current vacancy level. Future year costs will be picked up as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to be considered by Fire Authority in December 2023 which will bring together updated budgets and savings identified through the Futures 25 programme.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report presents proposals that impact upon teams and individuals in relation to their future places of work. The Service will engage fully and proactively with its workforce, and representative bodies, to ensure a transition that maintains staff well-being and engagement, through a well-established consultation and policy framework.
- 4.2 The proposals within this report do not present any permanent changes to the establishment.
- 4.3 There are no learning and development implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has been completed for the proposed changes within this report and highlights the below impacts:

Protected Characteristic	Impact	Rationale
Age, Disability (communities)	Potentially Positive	As characteristics of the Service's CHARLIE profile for those most susceptible to death or injury from fire, these groups may be positively impacted in communities through greater provision of response to communities in the Ashfield area where these demographics are present.
Rurality	Potentially Positive	The return of Ashfield fire station to 24/7 wholetime crewing means that response times to rural areas within the District will be reduced during nighttime hours.
Age, Primary Care Providers (workforce)	Neutral	The provision of day-shift crewing (DSC) provides options for personnel to not work night-shifts and the return of Ashfield to 24/7 wholetime crewing reduces the number of opportunities for this, however personnel do still have access to DSC at Retford fire station and day duty roles in other departments.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Fire and Rescue Services Act (2004) places a statutory duty on authorities to make provisions for firefighting, fire safety and responding to road traffic collisions and other emergencies.
- 7.2 The Secretary of State, under Section 22 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act (2004) has the power of intervention if the Secretary of State considers that a fire and rescue authority is failing, or is likely to fail, to act in accordance with the Framework prepared under Section 21 of the Act.
- 7.3 Sections 10 to 13 of the Local Government Act 1999 (c. 27) (best value inspections) apply in relation to a fire and rescue authority's compliance with Section 21(7) of the Act as they apply in relation to a best value authority's compliance with the requirements of Part 1 of that Act. Fire and rescue authorities must have regard to the Framework in carrying out their functions.
- 7.4 The Authority has a statutory responsibility to consult on changes to fire cover. Consultation was conducted in accordance with HM Government Code of Practice on Consultation and the outcomes of this consultation were reported to the Fire Authority meeting in February 2023.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The Service's corporate risk register highlights risks that are associated with the contents of this report:

Risk	Implications
Inability to Set a Balanced Budget	The proposals in this report present additional costs to the Service. This does not present a risk for the 2022/23 financial year, but presents an ongoing risk that will be managed through the delegated powers of the Chief Fire Officer through the management of the establishment within the existing allocated budgets.
Employee Engagement	The changes to duty systems and the proposals to change crewing models, present the risk of damaging employee engagement and industrial relations. Early, proactive engagement with affected personnel and representative bodies, along with an effective communications plan and a consultative approach will assist in mitigating this risk.
Preventable Deaths	The Service is reallocating risk, based on independent modelling and feedback from consultation that will aim to ensure that the right resources are prioritised in the right location, ultimately with an aim of creating safer communities.
Availability of Resources	This risk is mitigated in part by the proposals in this report by ensuring the best use of resources across the Service and ensuring a 24/7 wholetime response is available in the Ashfield area.
Corporate Reputation	This risk is presented through the proposals for change and public interest in these changes. A full communications plan and proactive engagement with this workstream will assist in mitigating this risk.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

Any proposed changes to the crewing at Ashfield fire station will be fully communicated with colleagues from neighbouring fire and rescue services ahead of implementation.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Support and endorse the approach of the Chief Fire Officer in the deployment of resources to risk.
- 10.2 Agree to receive further updates at full Authority meetings relating to this workstream.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER