



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

FUTURES 25 – UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 23 February 2024

Purpose of Report:

To provide an update to members on the Futures 25 efficiency and improvement program including planned activity for the financial year 2024/25

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- Members note the current and future activities planned as part of the Futures 25 programme;
- Endorse the approach to strategic collaboration with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service as set out in Paragraph 2.20.
- Agree to receive future updates on the Futures 25 Programme.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Futures 25 is the Service's efficiency and improvement programme. Phase 1 of Futures 25 commenced in May 2022 and was primarily concerned with efficiencies to enable the Authority to set a balanced budget for the financial year 2023-24.
- 1.2 The budget for the financial year 2024/25 forecasts a deficit of circa £255K with £200K of efficiency savings being built into the base budget. The forecasted deficit for the financial year 2025/26 increases to circa £1.9 million. Futures 25 remains the vehicle through which these efficiencies will be delivered.
- 1.3 It should be noted that the focus of Futures 25 is not solely one of efficiencies. The programme also aims to deliver service improvement workstreams including those relating to culture and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) associated with the updated People Strategy.
- 1.4 The report aims to set out in broad terms the work delivered to date within Phase 2 of the programme, and to set out the priorities which will be delivered within the final year of the 2022-25 Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) planning cycle.

2. REPORT

PHASE 1

- 2.1 Phase 1 of the Futures 25 programme commenced in May 2022 and encompassed activities designed to present a range of options for consideration by the Strategic Leadership Team and the Authority to set a balanced budget for the financial year 2023/24.
- 2.2 Higher than anticipated Council Tax collection rates meant that the deficit was lower than originally forecast. The workforce review involved a review of all support staff posts Grade 5 and above. £140K of support staff efficiencies were identified as part of this process, in addition to several other workforce changes designed to improve the resilience of support services and ensure resourcing supports the Service's ambition to be outstanding.
- 2.3 The Fire Cover Review undertaken as part of Phase 1 has resulted in a change to the crewing model at Ashfield Fire Station from day crewing to wholetime to support a resourcing to risk approach. Implementation of these changes also liberated four firefighter posts from the wholetime ridership which have been deployed to support resourcing of key workstreams including EDI and community engagement activities.

PHASE 2

- 2.4 The broad aims of Phase 2 of the Futures 25 programme are to deliver service improvement in the context of a challenging financial operating environment. The programme continues to identify opportunities for both pay and non-pay efficiencies, as well as supporting increased productivity through investment in systems and process improvements.
- 2.5 The workstreams which form part of Phase 2 have been grouped under four key areas:
1. Governance Review.
 2. Revenue Budget Management.
 3. Service Redesign.
 4. Culture, EDI and Leadership.

GOVERNANCE

- 2.6 Governance workstreams are designed to support the efficiency and effectiveness of meeting structures and decision making within the Service. Efficiencies achieved through a reduction in the number of strategic leadership posts means that money can be reinvested into functional delivery roles elsewhere in the organisation, enhancing skills and delivery capacity where it is most needed.
- 2.7 The governance review aims to streamline meeting structures, ensuring proportionate control and assurance arrangements are in place.

REVENUE BUDGET MANAGEMENT

- 2.8 The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Local Government Association (LGA) have proposed that across fire and rescue services in England, the sector create 2% of non-pay efficiencies and to increase productivity by 3% in the spending review period 2021/22 – 2024/25.
- 2.9 Non-cashable savings continue to be identified. Investment in system and process improvement as part of Service redesign workstreams aims to continue to support benefits realisation in these areas.

SERVICE REDESIGN

- 2.10 The Service redesign workstreams form the most significant portion of the improvement programme. The overarching aim is to ensure that the Service has appropriate resources deployed in the correct place to support its ambition to be an outstanding fire and rescue service.
- 2.11 Work is continuing to improve the Community Fire Risk Management Information System (CFRMIS) database, which supports prevention and protection activities. Improvements, including the introduction of the NFCC

Online Home Fire Safety Check Tool (Safelincs), supports members of the public to reduce risks in their home, and at the same time improves the efficiency of referrals for those at higher risk of fire to receive specialist safe and well services.

- 2.12 Work scheduled for the financial year 2024/25 includes a review of the business processes and mobile devices used by crews to complete safe and well checks with improvements aimed at enhancing the efficiency and quality of this high volume process.
- 2.13 A review of the prevention function is underway, with an updated structure due to be implemented in the financial year 2024/25. The structure has been co-designed with the workforce to support ambitions to deliver an enhanced community engagement and specific youth engagement offer as well as responding to predicted increases in the numbers of vulnerable people at high and very high risk of fire in their homes through the identification of additional dedicated resources.
- 2.14 Key areas of focus for workforce redesign for the financial year 2024/25 are people and ICT functions as the Service responds to risks in these areas and continues to drive service improvements.

CULTURE, EDI AND LEADERSHIP

- 2.15 People are key to the successful delivery of outstanding service to communities. National reports, including the HMICFRS spotlight report on values and culture in fire and rescue services, and the London Fire Brigade independent culture review, have rightly focussed public attention and expectation on improving the culture, behaviour and leadership within fire and rescue services. Priority must be given to ensure everyone is treated with dignity and respect, and that fire and rescue services are inclusive, both for employees and those the Service works with and delivers services to.
- 2.16 The Service has committed additional resources to this area, including specialist organisational development and leadership posts. In addition, firefighters are supporting positive action, workforce diversification and community engagement activities.
- 2.17 These specialist posts will support the Service's ambitions around cultural improvement through enhanced workforce engagement, team coaching and broadening leadership competencies at all levels. The posts will also provide additional capacity to support the ongoing embedding of the National Core Code of Ethics and service values across the workforce.
- 2.18 In December 2023, the Strategic Inclusion Board supported the concept of longer-term planning for workforce diversification, and a paper on the 10 year workforce diversity plan is due to be presented to Policy and Strategy Committee in May 2024. This aims to improve and co-ordinate positive action activities over the longer term with the aim of improving the pace of change of workforce diversity.

- 2.19 The Service is working with data experts from Nottingham Trent University to use updated census and other data to effectively target engagement and recruitment activities, and more effectively measure success in these areas going forwards.

STRATEGIC COLLABORATION

- 2.20 Strategic collaboration is one of the identified priorities of the Futures 25 programme. Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service is a valued collaboration partner with several high profile collaborations already in place, most notably the Joint Fire Control and joint procurement of the new mobilising system.
- 2.21 At a recent joint members event of the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Fire Authorities it was agreed that work would commence to align CRMP and Fire Cover Review planning cycles with the aim of fully aligning planning cycles and community risk analysis methodologies by 2028. This will enhance shared understanding of risk for both Services and support the future identification of potential further opportunities for joint working.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Futures 25 Programme is funded through a dedicated earmarked reserve. Circa 700K remains to support ongoing service improvement work, including funding of transition costs relating to workforce redesign as well as investment in systems, processes and ICT improvements.
- 3.2 The programme supports the identification of cashable and non-cashable savings as proposed by the National Fire Chiefs Council and the Local Government Association.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

As with any change programme, there will be human resources and learning and development implications associated with a number of workstreams which sit within the Futures 25 programme. The risks associated with these will be mitigated by ensuring effective workforce engagement, as well as dedicated reporting via governance structures where required.

5. EQUALITIES AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

Equality impact assessments will be completed for individual workstreams within the programme where it is appropriate to do so.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental or sustainability implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Authority is legally required to set a balanced budget. In addition, the publication of an annual efficiency plan is required by the National Framework. Futures 25 will contribute to the delivery of this efficiency plan.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are a range of current and emerging risks which Futures 25 aims to mitigate, including the ability for the Authority to set a balanced budget, and to ensure that resources are effectively allocated to risk.
- 8.2 It is recognised that, as with any change programme, there is the potential to create uncertainty which may impact employee relations. However, the Service aims to mitigate this by adopting an organisational development approach with a clear prioritisation of employee engagement.
- 8.3 Futures 25 aims to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, therefore supporting wider risk reduction aims in communities.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

Strategic collaboration is an identified priority of the Futures 25 programme. Opportunities for strategic collaboration with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service are outlined in the report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 10.1 Members note the current and future activities planned as part of the Futures 25 programme.
- 10.2 Endorse the approach to strategic collaboration with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service as set out in Paragraph 2.20.
- 10.3 Agree to receive future updates on the Futures 25 Programme.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER