



Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority - Policy and Strategy Committee

**Minutes of the meeting held at Joint Fire / Police HQ, Sherwood Lodge, Arnold,
Nottingham, NG5 8PP on 2 February 2024 from 10.00 am - 10.24 am**

Membership

Present

Councillor Michael Payne (Chair)
Councillor Callum Bailey
Councillor Sybil Fielding
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler

Absent

Councillor Nigel Turner

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Craig Parkin -Chief Fire Officer
Leila Berry - Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Mick Sharman -Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Damien West - Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Malcolm Townroe - Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

8 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Nigel Turner (Councillor Callum Bailey substituting).

9 Declarations of Interest

None.

10 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2023 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

11 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, Areas For Improvement

Leila Berry, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which informs the committee of the progress against the areas for improvement (AFI), and seeks the committee's approval to close AFI 3, relating to provision of well-being support.

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- a) This report would normally be submitted to the Human Resources Committee for scrutiny, but as the last meeting was cancelled, the report is submitted to the Policy and Strategy Committee;
- b) AFI 3 required that 'the Service should assure itself that staff understand how to get well-being support';
- c) The report sets out the action taken to address the HMICFRS concern, and whilst it is recognised that the Service already provided substantial well-being support, concern had been expressed that not all staff were aware of the facilities and support available and how to access them;
- d) Following the initial highlighting of this AFI, the Service undertook an evaluation and acted on the results, the success of which will be gauged through the staff survey;
- e) The following is a summary of some of the actions taken to improve and more broadly promote the support available:
 - i. A review of post-critical incident support (PIS), with a dedicated PIS Liaison Officer from the Crisis Team overseeing activity;
 - ii. Trauma awareness and support training will be provided to all duty officers;
 - iii. Face-to-face psychological assessments and psychological therapy will be available where appropriate, alongside confidential counselling provided by the Employee Assistance Programme;
 - iv. The Occupational Health team have been promoting the wide range of support available through a dedicated site on the intranet, including a 'walk and talk' initiative specifically targeted to improve men's mental health and combat loneliness. This initiative is considered particularly valuable as it originated from the workforce;
 - v. Managers will be mandatorily briefed on an annual basis on their role in supporting mental health awareness for their teams and themselves;
 - vi. The expertise of the University of Derby Mental Health Hub was engaged to help improve current provision, including the establishment of the Mental Health Network of employees willing to support the mental health of colleagues, and other peer support mechanisms as alternatives to accessing clinical routes;
 - vii. Developed through a joint collaboration of the National Fire Chiefs Council and the Firefighters Charity, the Service is a funding partner of the Suicide Prevention Crisis Line;
 - viii. Employees have access to the review of the Well-Being Policy which also includes family friendly provisions such as maternity and menopause advice and support;

- ix. 'Your Care' is a personal health portal providing access to a broad variety of personal health and fitness plans, support, and tools.

Craig Parkin, Chief Fire Officer, praised the work undertaken in developing and establishing an overall staff wellbeing strategy, stating that the last couple of years had been difficult for all staff and that he was very proud of what had been achieved to support staff wellbeing, including for out-of-work issues, but emphasising that staff needed to self-motivate to access the support available.

Members comments included:

- f) This is an excellent piece of work with a broad response including a range of support and shows that the Service takes the well-being of staff very seriously in a job where staff can experience trauma;
- g) It's reassuring to see the workforce ownership of some elements, and particularly the staff initiation and shared responsibility of some schemes;
- h) Thank you to everyone who has worked on improving staff well-being support, which provides members with reassurance that staff are supported;
- i) This is an excellent report illustrating excellent work, which is endorsed;
- j) The broad variety of support mechanisms available is welcomed, including those which are family focused and those which recognise the need for managers and colleagues to be aware of potential delayed trauma response to fatal and distressing incidents, both in themselves and colleagues.

Resolved to approve the closure of Area For Improvement 3, relating to the provision of staff well-being support.

12 People Strategy Update

Leila Berry, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which provides an update on the People Strategy 2023-2025.

Highlighted points and responses to members' questions included:

- a) The People Strategy forms part of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and sets out key workforce issues, recognising that people are the Service's greatest asset in delivering the Service's strategic objectives;
- b) The report summarises progress against the following areas:
 - i. Shaping our workforce to deliver our services (including the workforce plan, and the Futures 25 agenda);
 - ii. Leadership and employee development (including training to ensure that core skills and knowledge are maintained, emerging challenges can be dealt with, and developing leadership qualities and abilities;

- iii. Positive workplace and culture (ensuring a positive working environment where all staff feel engaged, valued and listen to);
 - iv. Inclusion (understanding and respecting the equality and diversity of all communities);
 - v. Health and well-being (ensuring the physical, emotional and mental health of the workforce);
- c) Feedback received, including from the staff survey, is assessed, and so far has been very positive.

Craig Parkin, Chief Fire Officer, added that although there is a perceived cultural issue across the sector, but there is a focus on leadership actively addressing what's right and what isn't. The quality of the People Strategy continues to improve but there is no complacency and it's recognised that there is still work to be done. It is important that member's and employees have confidence that staff are supported going forward.

Members commented that it was a thorough report containing a lot of helpfully articulated information.

Resolved to note the report.

13 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the following item in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (under Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraphs 3) on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

14 Exempt Minutes

Exempt minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2023 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.