



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

REVIEW OF WORKFORCE PLAN 2023-25

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 08 November 2024

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on progress against the Workforce Plan 2023-25

Recommendations:

That Members note the contents of this report.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Workforce Plan 2023-25 forms a fundamental part of the business planning process and supports the delivery of the Service's Corporate Risk Management Plan (CRMP).
- 1.2 The plan is revised each year to ensure an up-to-date position on workforce planning assumptions. This update reflects the mid-year position for the period April to September 2024.
- 1.3 The Workforce Plan is developed in conjunction with Heads of Department, to establish workforce trends, identify potential workforce planning issues and formulate an action plan to address these issues. The plan is based upon projections of anticipated turnover and information received from all departments regarding their workforce needs for the forthcoming year.
- 1.4 The plan seeks to forecast:
 - Workforce reductions through retirement, projected turnover and other factors;
 - Workforce increases resulting from delivery of new Service requirements;
 - The need for succession planning for specialist and managerial roles;
 - Particular areas of concern within the Service;
 - Resource requirements.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 A significant part of the plan anticipates turnover and recruitment requirements based on workforce projections for each work group.

WHOLETIME WORKFORCE

- 2.2 The Wholetime establishment is currently 431. The current workforce is 429, which represents a shortfall of two roles.
- 2.3 There have been 23 new starters to Wholetime roles during the review period, of which 17 are apprentice firefighter roles recruited as part of the 2023 campaign. One Wholetime transferee commenced employment during this period.
- 2.4 The Service also recruited an additional temporary Area Manager to support succession planning within the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) following the retirement of a substantive Area Manager in August 2024.
- 2.5 There have been eight leavers between April and September 2024. Seven due to retirements and one for other reasons. This is below workforce projections.

- 2.6 There have been three promotion processes undertaken since March for Crew Manager, Watch Manager and Area Manager. This resulted in 22 individuals being appointed to higher level roles. These are scheduled as part of succession planning to fill and anticipate vacancies arising, predominantly through retirements, and to provide temporary development opportunities.

ON-CALL WORKFORCE

- 2.7 The number of employees providing On-Call cover currently stands at 242, of which 69 are dual contract.
- 2.8 There have been 13 leavers and 14 new appointments to trainee firefighter roles between April and September 2024. The number of leavers is below workforce projections, however the Service continues its successful work via the On-Call Support Team (OCST) to maintain the number of On-Call firefighters.
- 2.9 Campaigning for On-Call personnel runs constantly throughout the year, with events held at local stations to promote engagement with local communities, and with central support provided by the OCST and human resources teams.

SUPPORT WORKFORCE

- 2.10 The current Support establishment stands at 166 posts (151.93 fte), there are currently 12 full time vacancies, seven of these have been recruited to or are in a recruitment process. There are currently 16 fixed term appointments covering vacancies or providing additional resources.
- 2.11 There have been 14 leavers and 14 new appointments between April and September 2024. The number of leavers is below workforce projections. Of these five have been due to retirement and nine for other reasons.
- 2.12 Changes to the Prevention Team structure were concluded on 1 September 2024 as an output of the Futures 25 efficiency strategy. This resulted in the disestablishment of 12 posts and the establishment of 10 new posts. Seven colleagues have achieved roles at the same grade, two have been promoted to a role at a higher grade and one into a role at a lower grade with pay protection in accordance with Service policy.
- 2.13 There was also one compulsory and one voluntary redundancy as a result of the Prevention restructure, as reported to the Fire Authority in July 2024.

OTHER WORKFORCE ISSUES

- 2.14 The need to make the workforce more representative and diverse continues to be a priority for the Service, with the aim of improving the current workforce profile to better reflect the local population. Equalities monitoring information is contained within a separate report on the agenda.

2.15 A focus on employee well-being and improved sickness absence rates are also identified within the workforce plan. Sickness absence rates (workforce excluding On-Call) saw a decrease in Quarter 1 2024/25 compared to the previous quarter, but an increase in the comparative period in 2023. There was a decrease in Quarter 2 and a decrease in the comparative period in 2023. On-Call saw a slight increase in Quarter 1 and 2 2024, but this was a decrease on the comparative period in Quarter 2 2023 – more detail is set out within the monitoring information contained within the human resources update report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The management of establishment levels is key to the overall management of staffing budgets which constitute 80% of the overall revenue budget. Accurate predictions are always difficult, but are still essential to budget setting with issues such as the overall establishment, the distribution of staff within roles and the numbers of staff in development all having considerable influence on budgets.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

Human resources implications are contained within the report.

5. EQUALITIES AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

As this is a review of the approved workforce plan an equality impact assessment has not been undertaken. However, equalities implications arising from future workforce recommendations will be assessed for any likely impact on the workforce and service delivery.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Workforce planning is key to ensuring that the Service has the requisite number of employees with the skills and competence to fulfil statutory obligations, meet Service objectives and ensure business continuity, within available budgets.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER