



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**  
**Fire & Rescue Service**  
*Creating Safer Communities*

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

# **SERVICE IMPROVEMENT – FUTURES 25 CLOSURE REPORT**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 15 November 2024

**Purpose of Report:**

To provide a closure report on the Futures 25 change and improvement programme, setting out the achievements and next steps to incorporate service improvement as part of business as usual activities.

**Recommendations:**

That Members note the contents of this report.

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 In May 2022, the Chief Fire Officer sought permission from the Policy and Strategy Committee to commence a programme of work to identify both pay and non-pay efficiencies to ensure the Authority was in a position to set a balanced budget for the financial year 2023/24. This scheme of work was titled as 'Futures 25'.
- 1.2 In July 2023, Phase 1 of the Futures 25 programme was completed and Members were presented with a report in July 2023 detailing the outcomes of the three areas within Phase 1 and the proposed focus areas for phase 2 of the programme.
- 1.3 At the Fire Authority meeting In February 2024, the final update report was presented to Members, detailing the current and future activities within the Futures 25 programme.
- 1.4 This report summarises the results of both phases of the Futures 25 programme to Members and formally closes the workstream.

## **2. REPORT**

- 2.1 Phase 1 ran from May 2022 – March 2023 and identified three workstreams, primarily to identify both pay and non-pay efficiencies to ensure the Authority was in a position to set a balanced budget for 2023/24:
  - A workforce review of Green Book posts at Grade 5 and above;
  - A fire cover review;
  - A review of the flexi duty officer collective agreement.
- 2.2 In February 2023, Members were presented with a report summarising the outcome of the workforce review and the confirmation of savings of £250k from Green Book pay budgets being made permanent through the disestablishment of posts across several departments and the removal of vacant posts where these were no longer required.
- 2.3 This report also summarised the work completed with the fire cover review, most notably the proposals for consideration if £2m was required to be saved from the operational response model. Of the options presented, the Authority approved the conversion of Ashfield Fire Station from day shift crewed to wholetime fire cover. This was completed as part of Futures 25 Phase 2 in November 2023.
- 2.4 The Flexi Officer Review set out to review the Flexi Officer Collective Agreement to ensure that the command group structures were efficient and provided the levels of resilience of specialist functions required to mitigate operational risk. On commencing the review, it became clear that competing priorities including fire cover review and industrial action preparation, meant

that there was insufficient capacity, both organisationally and within the Officer cohorts, to deliver the changes required. This workstream has therefore been paused to be restarted at a future date.

- 2.5 Phase 2 of Futures 25 was outlined to Members in February 2023, based on the identified need for wider service improvement to support the ambition to be an outstanding fire and rescue service by 2032.
- 2.6 Specifically, the Phase 2 scoping options that were being considered were presented to Members, including the requirement for the completion of an annual efficiency and productivity plan requested by the Home Office. Work for Phase 2 was summarised into four key areas:
- Governance review;
  - Revenue budget management;
  - Service redesign;
  - Culture, EDI and Leadership.
- 2.7 The following sections set out a high level overview of the key outcomes from each part of the programme.

## **GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

- 2.8 The strategic leadership structure has been reviewed, which has seen a reduction in substantive membership of the strategic leadership team from ten posts to nine. This has enabled investment into other functional delivery roles to respond to risk in other areas of the Service.
- 2.9 At the same time, governance structures have been reviewed and meeting structures streamlined. The review is estimated to have saved 600 hours per year of administrative time through more efficient business processes and systems.

## **REVENUE BUDGET MANAGEMENT**

- 2.10 In February 2023, Chief Fire Officers and Fire Finance Directors were asked by the Home Office to submit annual efficiency and productivity plans. The National Fire Chiefs Council and the Local Government Association proposed that across fire and rescue services in England, the sector could create 2% of non-pay efficiencies and to increase productivity by 3%.
- 2.11 The productivity plan for financial year 2023/24 set out £1.1m savings plus £169k non cashable savings, well in excess of the 2% efficiencies required. For the financial year 2024/25 the plan identified a further 2% cashable savings totalling £219k.
- 2.12 The Service continues to develop improved ways of capturing and reporting cashable and non-cashable savings, and these are now embedded as business as usual within corporate and finance teams.

- 2.13 Changes to procurement thresholds have been implemented as part of the review of financial regulations to streamline procurement arrangements and reduce the bureaucracy associated with low risk low level spending. The full review of financial regulations will be completed by the end of 2024/25.
- 2.14 Within the finance team, the use of Star chambers to scrutinise departmental budgets is to be implemented as part of the budget setting process for 2025/26. In addition, as part of the functional review of the Service's Digital team, a zero-based budgeting exercise will be undertaken to drive non-pay efficiencies in this high-spend area.

## **SERVICE REDESIGN**

- 2.15 As reported in the February 2024 report, the service redesign workstreams have formed the most significant portion of the service improvement programme.
- 2.16 The review of the prevention function was completed and the workforce changes enacted on 1 September 2024. The review has realised £102k of substantive savings, in addition to securing substantive funding for key roles including the Occupational Therapist and a dedicated community engagement team.
- 2.17 The delivery principles set by the prevention functional review are now being replicated in other areas, including people and organisational development and digital services, to ensure workforce resourcing aligns to risk and future business need in these areas. A digital maturity assessment has been commissioned as part of the Futures 25 programme to inform future capability requirements in this area.
- 2.18 Service redesign also encompassed a number of system and process improvements designed to drive efficiency and improve staff satisfaction with digital systems and processes. Of note, the Futures 25 programme funded a fundamental improvement programme of the CFRMIS database system, which is a core component of service delivery data management.
- 2.19 The CFRMIS workstream has delivered an improved partner referral process for safe and well visits. Work is ongoing to enhance mobile working arrangements for staff conducting safe and well visits and this element has been transferred to the ICT team for oversight and management through to closure.
- 2.20 The CFRMIS project has also delivered an electronic system that allows the Service to meet its statutory duties under the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, where responsible persons are required to provide information to fire and rescue services to assist them to plan and, if needed, provide an effective operational response.
- 2.21 Relating to the CFRMIS project, a review of the mobile devices used by crews has also identified areas for improvement and new devices are currently being procured to roll out to appropriate teams within the Service.

## **CULTURE, EDI AND LEADERSHIP**

- 2.22 The Service's focus on people, culture and leadership pre-dated the national reports from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), which have rightly focussed expectation on improvements in the areas of culture and misconduct within the sector.
- 2.23 The deliverables from the Futures 25 programme have included the commissioning of a comprehensive qualitative data analysis project to inform the Service's understanding of communities, and to ensure the Service is effective in engaging with those who have not yet been reached by the prevention and protection services.
- 2.24 The interactive mapping tool, designed with support from Nottingham Trent University and the Office for National statistics, is currently being evaluated by the Community Safety and Community Engagement Team, and the Fire Protection Team, and will be embedded as part of business as usual to ensure the Service is effective in targeting activities for best effect.
- 2.25 The Service has established a dedicated Organisational Development Business Partner to support aspirations around cultural and leadership improvement. In addition, resources have been made available through the redeployment of firefighters into the Community Engagement Team to ensure there is a sustainable delivery model for positive action to ensure the workforce reflects the communities of Nottinghamshire.
- 2.26 This long-term approach to workforce diversity planning is currently being integrated into medium term planning via the People and Culture Strategy 2025-27. This work has been supported by a listening and learning exercise commissioned as part of Futures 25 Phase 2 to gain insight and understanding of community perception towards Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 Futures 25 had an allocated earmarked reserve of £910k, of this £362k has been spent against this reserve. £93k of costs in relation to the Future 25 workstreams have been contained against existing revenue budgets.
- 3.2 There are further costs due to come from the earmarked reserve in 2024/25, this totals £179k. This consists of costs associated with the access and inclusion work at Ashfield fire station, and consultancy fees for the digital maturity assessment.
- 3.3 This leaves a balance on the reserve of £368k, which will be utilised to fund future efficiency work streams.
- 3.4 The cashable savings and efficiencies achieved by the Futures 25 workstreams are identified in the main body of the 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 AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This report outlines the work that has been undertaken to ensure that the Core Code of Ethics is at the heart of the Service's work, specifically around putting communities first in the delivery of services and achieving value for money, and ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion is considered throughout the Service's business as usual.
- 5.2 An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because this is a closure report.

#### **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**

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 note the contents of this report.

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

None.

Craig Parkin  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**