



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Community Safety Committee

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE CONTRIBUTION TO HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 02 October 2015

Purpose of Report:

To provide Members with an overview of the current and potential role of the Service in health and wellbeing

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The role of the Fire and Rescue Service has transformed over the last 30 years. The number of incidents attended by Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) has seen a substantial decrease year on year. The latest figures from the Fire Cover Review indicate the Service attended a total of 13,135 incidents in 2010, against 9469 incidents in 2014, which represents a 27.9% decrease in operational activity since the last review.
- 1.2 This decrease in demand has seen the role of Service personnel evolve, with operational fire fighters spending less time responding to incidents and using the increased capacity to proactively prevent demand by targeting specific communities, vulnerable groups and businesses.
- 1.3 The prevention role undertaken by the Service is enabled by its reputation as a trusted profession which is an important aspect, specifically in identifying and targeting the most vulnerable in the community. Nationally 39% of home safety checks were targeted at the elderly and 16% at the disabled.
- 1.4 Within NFRS the budget estimate for 2016/2017 is indicating a shortfall of £1.8m and if unaddressed, becomes £3.5m by 2017/2018. The prospects are for this deficit to rise further in future years, strengthening the case for the Service to better utilise its existing resources.
- 1.5 A number of publications have been released suggesting a reform in the working practises of the fire and rescue service (FRS), namely the Bain Report and the Facing the Future Review by Sir Ken Knight. Both reports outlined the value that prevention activities bring to local communities alongside the areas of improvement required for Services to increase efficiency.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 A recent report by New Local Government Network, Fire Works, details the opportunities for the future utilisation and function of the FRS. The report highlights that the operational priority of the Service remains the need to respond to incidents and in order to retain capacity to respond to these incidents, staffing levels should be maintained.
- 2.2 In keeping an establishment of operational personnel, opportunities to utilise fire fighters in varied innovative ways to support the prevention agenda can be explored, including the role of health and wellbeing.
- 2.3 The Fire Works report outlines a vision for the FRS that views it as an integral part of local public services, using the skills in prevention and early intervention to help facilitate community wellbeing. The report recommends a number of actions to achieve that vision:

- Legislation should be rewritten to ensure FRS are organisations of community intervention and promote standardised practises for intervention across FRSs;
 - The Joint Strategic Needs Assessments of Health and Wellbeing Boards should be used to develop partnerships and support health and wellbeing;
 - DCLG explore the possibility of a national organisation that would create efficiency by sharing functions, whilst maintaining autonomy and local decision making for front line services;
 - Greater collaboration with other emergency services, including co-responding with the ambulance service.
- 2.4 A recent presentation was delivered to the County Health and Wellbeing Implementation Group providing board members with an overview of the current and potential role of the Service in health and wellbeing.
- 2.5 The Service is represented on the Health and Wellbeing Implementation Group, contributing activity to wider social health inequality within the County. Recent examples of Service initiatives include the introduction of the Hoarding Framework, funding of Telecare systems for the elderly and working with occupational therapists in delivering home safety checks to vulnerable groups.
- 2.6 The Service's Community Safety Strategy 2015-18 sets four priorities – persons at risk, older persons, youth and education and road safety. These priorities are aligned to the objectives and priorities of the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure that the prevention activities undertaken contribute to the wider health agenda.
- 2.7 With the Service's community safety priorities reflecting those of health, there are numerous opportunities for the Service to broaden its prevention role which would assist in reducing the wider health burden on the public sector. The Service has an established Community Safety Team and a valuable resource in the capacity of operational crews.
- 2.8 Currently a scoping exercise is taking place exploring the potential opportunities for collaboration. This could be to build on established links and existing initiatives with health relieving some of the pressure that acute care places on the providers. An example of this is for the Service to deliver holistic 'safe and well' assessments, identifying and signposting the requirements for short term care, in place of the standard home safety checks.
- 2.9 There are also opportunities for the Service to collaborate on larger projects which would focus on early intervention to address some of the preventable diseases demanding resources for chronic long term care. An example of this could be an education programme for delivery to the key stages in schools about healthy living to address the obesity and diabetes problem in young children.

- 2.10 The trusted reputation, image and experience of successfully driving down demand through targeted early intervention and prevention campaigns, has long been recognised, commended and held as best practise by partners. This experience should be shared and opportunities for collaboration explored with other health agencies to improve the wellbeing of the communities of Nottinghamshire and reduce the demand on health services.
- 2.11 The Chief Fire Officer is scheduled to address the Nottinghamshire County Council Health and Wellbeing Board in October, with a view to hosting a 'Health Summit', encouraging all key stakeholders to examine how the FRS can add greater value going forward.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The financial implications of this report are currently at the conceptual stage and will require further detailed analysis when collaborative projects and work streams are agreed.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources or learning and development implications arising from this report

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because the information contained in this report does not relate to a change in policy or procedure.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Beyond the statutory prevention duty under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (which is aimed specifically at fire prevention) there are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Management of community safety is a statutory duty within the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and specifically the Fire and Rescue National Framework and locally the IRMP. Furthering the contribution of fire into health and social care builds on the prevention work currently undertaken and indirectly supports improved fire safety whilst collectively reducing the risk and burden to the wider public sector.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the content of the report and support a broadening of the Service's prevention function to include health and wellbeing

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER