

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD – 25th November 2015

Title of paper:	The Role of the Fire and Rescue Service in Health and Wellbeing	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	Alison Challenger, Director of Public Health (Interim)	Wards affected: All
Report author(s) and contact details:	Wayne Bowcock, Deputy Chief Fire Officer 0115 9670880	
Other colleagues who have provided input:		
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)		
Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:		
Cutting unemployment by a quarter		<input type="checkbox"/>
Cut crime and anti-social behaviour		<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City		<input type="checkbox"/>
Your neighbourhood as clean as the City Centre		<input type="checkbox"/>
Help keep your energy bills down		<input type="checkbox"/>
Good access to public transport		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham has a good mix of housing		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham is a good place to do business, invest and create jobs		<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events		<input type="checkbox"/>
Support early intervention activities		X
Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens		X
Relevant Health and Wellbeing Strategy Priority:		
Healthy Nottingham: Preventing alcohol misuse		X
Integrated care: Supporting older people		X
Early Intervention: Improving Mental Health		X
Changing culture and systems: Priority Families		X
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users and contribution to improving health & wellbeing and reducing inequalities):		
<p>The Fire and Rescue Service holds a trusted position within society allowing access and interaction with broad and diverse communities. Through our long standing experience of prevention work, early intervention is at the heart of our service delivery and vision to ‘create safer communities’. Our services do not discriminate and our targeting focuses on those most vulnerable and at risk in our communities. We know that addressing root cause health inequalities leads to a reduction in demand for the responsive element of fire and rescue services. There are more opportunities available for the fire and rescue service to contribute to improving health and wellbeing and reducing inequality. This paper outlines the effective prevention work to date, 30000 down to 10000 calls in around a decade. The capacity to support more partnership working and nationally the 670000 engagement opportunities per year which can be broadened further to support a range of health and wellbeing objectives to create safer, healthier communities and further reduce demand on public services.</p>		
Recommendation(s):		
1	That the Board note the report and comment on or question the content.	
2	That the Board supports a workshop to be held with Board members and wider partners to	

	discuss a plan for the service to work collaboratively in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to improve health and wellbeing.
	<p>How will these recommendations champion mental health and wellbeing in line with the Health and Wellbeing Board aspiration to give equal value to mental health and physical health ('parity of esteem'):</p> <p>Through being positive role models, and effective ambassadors for the public sector fire and rescue staff can help address early low level mental health and wellbeing concerns and appropriately signpost more serious concerns in a timely and compassionate way.</p>

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To Provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with an overview of the current and potential role of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service in health and wellbeing

2. BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)

- 2.1 The role of the Fire and Rescue Service has changed over the last thirty years. The number of fires has decreased in Nottinghamshire from around 30,000 per year in the 1990's to around 10,000 per year today. This decrease has been the result of changes to the services which has shifted from responding to demand to focussing on prevention.
- 2.2 The decrease in the demand for the service has resulted in changes in the way that the workforce are utilised, with staff spending less time responding to incidents with more capacity to support prevention and improving community wellbeing.
- 2.3 The fire service is a trusted profession which has respect across all age groups and in a diverse range of communities. This has been an important aspect of the prevention work undertaken by the service. Nationally around 39% of home fire safety checks were targeted at elderly people and over 16% at disabled people.
- 2.4 Nationally there is a debate about the future utilisation and function of the fire and rescue service. The operational priority of the service remains the need to respond to fire and rescue incidents. In order to retain capacity to respond to these incidents staffing levels need to be maintained. Minimising staff turnover is also essential in order to retain skilled and experienced staff which requires remuneration to be upheld.
- 2.5 The position in Nottinghamshire mirrors the national situation. Staffing levels must be maintained in order to respond to incidents but there are opportunities to utilise firefighters in different and innovative ways to help support the prevention agenda, including health and wellbeing.
- 2.6 There may also be opportunities to learn from the experience of the service in changing its focus from reacting to demand to prevention.
- 2.7 In order to continue to deliver effective services and the downward trend in demand for a responsive Fire and Rescue Service whilst at the same time support the City Council's forward plan; Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service recognises the opportunity of even greater collaboration and support for partners.

- 2.8 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service would welcome opportunities to work collaboratively with other public services, utilising skills around prevention and early intervention to improve all aspects of health and wellbeing.
- 2.9 Capacity is available within the fire fighter workforce as well as other functions such as call handling.
- 2.10 Options to support other emergency services are being considered, including co-responding with ambulance services.
- 2.11 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service would also welcome opportunities to work with wider partners to improve health and wellbeing. Nationally the service undertakes over 670,000 home safety checks with a focus on vulnerable groups such as the over 65's or disabled people. Visits in other areas already include some health interventions like hearing tests to check fire alarms can be heard, to assessing risks of falls and trips and fitting equipment if necessary.
- 2.12 Some areas have extended these checks into 'safe and well' visits to identify wider health and care support needs that the fire and rescue service can provide or through referral on to wider public services. Particularly areas such as mental health, childhood obesity, smoking cessation, isolation, fuel poverty and health inequalities associated winter pressures.
- 2.13 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service would welcome an opportunity to develop a plan to work collaboratively with wider public services in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to make the most efficient use of the available workforce and to utilise the experience and success of the service in prevention.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

None

4. FINANCE COMMENTS (INCLUDING IMPLICATIONS AND VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

None

5. LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT COMMENTS (INCLUDING RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES, AND LEGAL CRIME AND DISORDER ACT AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS)

- 5.1 This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of fire and rescue services act 2004, crime and disorder act, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment.
- 5.2 The contents of the report outline how the role of the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service continues to meet statutory requirements, which includes prevention, and can add further value to the citizens and communities of Nottingham by supporting the objectives of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, including mental health and Sustainable Community Strategy.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Has the equality impact been assessed?

Not needed (report does not contain proposals or financial decisions)

No

Yes – Equality Impact Assessment attached

Due regard should be given to the equality implications identified in the EIA.

7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

None

8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

[Fire works: a collaborative way forward for the fire and rescue service](#)

New Local Government Network

[Beyond fighting fires: the role of the fire and rescue service in improving the public's health](#)

Local Government Association