



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

ADJUSTMENTS TO SERVICE DELIVERY PROVISIONS

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 18 December 2015

Purpose of Report:

To seek approval to adjust the disposition of operational provisions and delete 34 posts from the whole-time uniformed establishment.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name : John Buckley
Chief Fire Officer

Tel : 0115 967 0880

Email john.buckley@notts-fire.gov.uk

Media Enquiries Bridget Aherne
Contact : (0115) 967 0880 bridget.aherne@notts-fire.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members will be fully aware of the financial pressures that are facing the Service, and over the past few years a number of work-streams have been undertaken to identify opportunities for efficiencies to be realised, whilst at the same time protecting and if possible improving front line provision of services.
- 1.2 In November 2013, Members of the Policy and Strategy Committee approved the concept of enhanced crewing by utilising the capacity of the ten notional posts at Workshop to pursue a new hybrid duty system to support retained sections.
- 1.3 In February 2014 the 'Balancing the Budget in Future Years' report was presented to the Fire Authority as part of a long term strategy to realise savings in the region of £2.4million. This work has already secured savings of £1.3million and this paper brings forward proposals to finalise aspirations that were identified at that time.
- 1.4 The balancing the budget report also tasked the Chief Fire Officer to bring up to date the methodology used within the Fire Cover Review 2010 to provide a current evidence base to consider future decisions. This has resulted in the 'Fire Cover Review 2015' that is currently being considered by the Community Safety Committee. Furthermore, one area of potential savings has emerged through this work and a report was supported by the Authority at its meeting in September 2015 to review the current provision of the Specialist Rescue Team (SRT).

2. REPORT

OFFICER REVIEW

- 2.1 The Service maintains an officer cadre of forty, ranging from Station Manager to Chief Fire Officer. This is distributed as follows:
 - 28 Station Managers
 - 6 Group Managers
 - 3 Area Managers
 - 3 Brigade Managers
- 2.2 This cadre of flexi-duty officers provides a continual availability of command competencies for incidents and other emergencies, whilst at the same time discharging a range of general managerial duties during their day to day roles.
- 2.3 A review of officer numbers has identified the potential to delete three station manager posts entirely and convert one further station manager to a non-uniformed manager. The impact of the changes will be absorbed through changes to duties and rationalisation of activities.

- 2.4 These changes will be discharged in the following way:
- 2.4.1 The Fire Investigation and Fire Protection Enforcement teams will be integrated under one Station Manager enabling the deletion of one post.
 - 2.4.2 The Business Risk Manager will join the Resilience Team enabling the deletion of one post.
 - 2.4.3 The Community Safety Team restructure has enabled the deletion of one post.
 - 2.4.4 The Station Manager post within the equipment section has been identified as suitable for conversion to a non-uniformed role.
- 2.5 To facilitate the reductions the operational rota will be adjusted from a 7-week cycle to a 6-week cycle therefore maintaining the current number of Station Managers available for immediate operational response.
- 2.6 The review has also identified that there is very little scope for any further reductions to the officer cadre due to the very lean structure that already exists within the Service, and secondly, the parameters of the Grey Book Flexi-duty national conditions of service would significantly reduce the available managerial time should the rota be compressed further.
- 2.7 The proposals will be implemented from April 2016 as current vacancies are being filled by temporary promotions, and savings will be achieved in the region of £265k, however £35k will be transferred to the non-uniformed pay budget to fund the converted role resulting in a net saving of £230k

ENHANCED CREWING

- 2.8 Since the decision to consider the concept of enhanced crewing in November 2013, work has taken place with workforce representatives to try and secure a local agreement on working arrangements. This has not been possible, and after further consideration alternative approaches have been taken to support retained sections.
- 2.9 This has resulted in increased recruitment and improved availability levels at targeted retained locations, and although there is still much to be done to improve resilience, the Chief Fire Officer believes that there is no merit in pursuing the concept of enhanced crewing.
- 2.10 Enhanced crewing was planned to be funded by the use of the 10 firefighter posts allocated to Worksop and this report proposes that those posts are deleted creating a total saving of £335k, with £200k being re-invested into the retained pay budget resulting in an actual saving of £135k.

- 2.11 The proposals will be implemented from 01 April 2016 and the posts absorbed within the natural turnover of whole-time staff.

SPECIALIST RESCUE TEAM

- 2.12 In 2007 the Specialist Rescue Team was formed following a review of the Service's response to non-fire related incidents. As part of the steps taken to improve the rescue provision, all front line appliances were provided with an upgraded capability through the provision of both enhanced equipment and training.
- 2.13 Specialist rescue capability is provided by the team of 44 personnel and deploys Service-wide skills from two locations, namely; Highfields and Tuxford fire stations. Furthermore, Service-wide competence has increased significantly since the implementation of medium rescue capability equipment on all front line appliances.
- 2.14 A review has been undertaken and an alternative delivery option has been identified that maintains all of the current capabilities and also realises significant savings in the region of £790k.
- 2.15 The proposal is to integrate the SRT on to firefighting watches and create two technical rescue stations that crew both a pumping appliance and a Specialist Response Unit. These would be at Highfields and Newark fire stations therefore maintaining north and south provision.
- 2.16 To ensure that firefighters at Highfields and Newark are able to maintain the broader range of competencies, animal rescue capability will be relocated to two retained sections. Discussions are ongoing with staff at East Leake and Warsop with regards to the additional commitment required as these are the preferred locations.
- 2.17 The proposals in the north of county will be in place by 1 April 2016. To create capacity at Highfields, the aerial ladder platform will be relocated to the new fire station on London Road when it comes in to operational use, therefore this phase of the transition will take place during the Autumn of 2016.
- 2.18 By reintegrating the SRT on to firefighting watches the whole-time establishment will be reduced by 20 posts saving £826k. To support the transfer of Animal Rescue, £36k of this saving will be moved to the retained pay budget, resulting in an actual saving of £790k.

IMPACT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT

- 2.19 The current approved establishment of whole-time uniformed posts is 510 and this report proposes the reduction of 34 posts therefore resulting in an approved establishment of 476. Current strength is 500, and this is expected to fall to 494 by 1 April 2016.

- 2.20 The phased approach to the SRT proposals will be supported by the over-establishment in the ridership ensuring the opening of the London Road fire station can be accommodated.
- 2.21 Turnover during 2016/17 is anticipated to be approximately 25 posts, therefore all savings will be secured by March 2017 and any overspends within the whole-time pay budget will be supported from the Organisational Transition earmarked reserves.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Total reductions within the whole-time pay budget will be £1.426m, however £35k will be transferred to the non-uniformed pay budget and £236k will be transferred to the retained pay budget resulting in a total net saving of £1.155m.
- 3.2 It is estimated that at 01 April 2016 the whole-time strength will be 18 posts above the approved establishment and that natural turnover during the following months will result in the strength falling under the approved establishment. This creates the potential for an overspend within the whole-time pay budget which will be met from the Organisational Transition earmarked reserves and is anticipated to be in the region of £350k subject to the actual profile of the retirements during 2016/17.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Current vacancies and the predicted turnover of staff means that these changes can be implemented without the need for compulsory redundancies.
- 4.2 Changes to the officer cadre and Specialist Rescue Team provision will require changes to working practices and the mobility of staff. This will be dealt with sensitively following Service policy and in conjunction with representative bodies.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has been undertaken and it has not identified any negative impacts on areas of protected characteristics.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Fire Authority must satisfy its legal obligations under various legislation, but primarily the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Proposals contained within this report do not change the level of service delivered to the community, and therefore does not cause the Service to breach either of these legal duties.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There is a risk that any changes to the current specialist rescue provision will impact upon the Service's ability to meet its statutory duties to provide a rescue capability. This risk will be mitigated by ensuring that any changes to the current delivery model will be fully risk assessed to ensure the current level of service provided by NFRS will reflect the risk and demand that currently exists or can be reasonably expected to exist in the future.
- 8.2 Implementing changes to the organisation that both satisfy the demands of austerity and take advantage of natural turnover of staff, secure financial stability and reduce the risk of compulsorily redundancies and the inevitable deterioration of industrial relations.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 9.1 Approve the deletion of 34 whole-time uniformed posts.
- 9.2 Approve the creation of a non-uniformed manager post within the equipment section.
- 9.3 Support the adjustments to the service delivery provisions as outlined within the main body of the report.

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

None

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER