



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

NEW CROSS PROJECT

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 08 January 2016

Purpose of Report:

To provide Members with an overview of the New Cross Project and detail the Service's involvement in supporting the multi-agency approach.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name :	Wayne Bowcock Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Tel :	0115 967 0880
Email :	wayne.bowcock@notts-fire.gov.uk
Media Enquiries Contact :	Bridget Aherne (0115) 967 0880 bridget.aherne@notts-fire.gov.uk

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The New Cross pilot area in Nottinghamshire covers a small community of 1,200 homes within Sutton-in-Ashfield. The area was chosen because it is of significant interest to many local service providers: for Nottinghamshire Police, the area is a hotspot for crime and anti-social behaviour, for Ashfield District Council there are environmental concerns due to high clean-up rates in the area, whilst for local health services the area has above average levels of under 18 pregnancy, high levels of mental health problems and is a significant number of call outs for Fire and Ambulance services.
- 1.2 At the heart of these multi-faceted social problems are the 'troubled families'. The area has the highest proportion of 'troubled families' in the district, with complex needs and service requirements that depend upon multi-agency intervention to tackle many of the issues outlined above.
- 1.3 It was in this context that the Prevent Strategy was established in 2014 by Nottinghamshire Police with funding from the Police Innovation Fund. The aim of the project is to take a cross sector approach to more effectively supporting local communities, bringing together the resources of different agencies, improving information sharing and taking an integrated approach with all frontline staff.
- 1.4 Within the Preventing Demand Partnership, Ashfield District Council has played a lead role in establishing a small multi-agency team, tasked with better understanding the needs in the area and to co-produce ways of preventing social problems within the local community. The move from 'doing to', to 'doing with' is fundamental to this approach. The multi-agency team includes a full time secondment of a Risk Reduction Officer alongside representatives from the local authority, police, Jobcentre Plus and voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sectors.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The vision for the New Cross pilot is twofold. First, to release service providers from overly prescriptive service models so as to better support families with complex needs which results in both a significant reduction in the amount of demand but also improves quality of life by creating a more stable lifestyle. Secondly, for the residents and the wider community to become more engaged and active citizens which contribute to their own neighbourhood; creating the conditions where a resident-led partnership can thrive.
- 2.2 Our Place funding and support formed a critical part of this wider vision. With expertise around youth and community engagement vital to the success of the project, Our Place enabled an expert from Catch 22 to be funded to work directly with young people, the wider community and engage with other VCSE

organisations operating in the area. The funding also enabled additional integrated training to be provided across the team.

- 2.3 The project commenced in December 2014, drawing upon the skills of all members of the team to map service pathways for residents. This work has identified as a key target those families who are not yet troubled but are at risk of falling into this category. By working closely with these groups to assist in changing their current circumstances, the project will be largely preventative whilst also actively engaging the community at large.
- 2.4 The forecasted public value of the programme based on cost/benefit analysis stands at a net public value of £5.7m, taking into account all project costs. To date, the programme has handled 35 cases. Anecdotal evidence suggests the programme has been well received by the community due to the focus on helping families and individuals turn their lives around in a collaborative and problem solving way, rather than a confrontational or top-down approach.
- 2.5 The multi-agency approach and appetite of the local authority has been essential to this approach being possible. The commitment and contribution from all partner agencies has been fundamental in developing the programme, proving relevant staff, funding and expertise to enable the project to happen.
- 2.6 The 18 month project has been subject to periods of review and academic evaluation by Nottingham Trent University. To date, the Risk Reduction Officer seconded to the team has been assigned as a case worker to 4 cases. The findings of one particular case involving a young female resident has been used as an example of the success of the approach and shared with partners within the county.
- 2.7 The approach is new for this area, however it has been based on the previous work within Stoke City Council and other areas of the country. Within Nottinghamshire, the police have previously looked at localised work in areas of high deprivation. However, whilst these have included some multi-agency work, in practice it has been difficult to achieve.
- 2.8 The mid-point evaluation evidenced that the formal multi-agency approach is a clear direction of travel for all preventative programmes of this nature: working to tackle multiple barriers and engaging communities to intervene early before problems become critical. By doing so, there is potential to transform communities and achieve significant savings for the public purse. The ultimate measure of the project will be its ability to create stronger, more resilient communities: ones that are better connected, have higher aspirations and are willing to do more for themselves.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of seconding a Risk Reduction Officer to the project team on a full time basis, for a period of 18 months, has been met from existing budgets (financial period of 2014-2016)

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

The secondment to the project team has been met by existing resources in the Community Safety Team.

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

Working in partnership within the New Cross Project directly supports the Authority's statutory duties under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 The commitment to the project satisfies the requirements of multi-agency approach and information sharing of the Care Act 2014 and the Antisocial Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014.

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 the multiagency New Cross initiative 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 continue to support the New Cross Project.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER