



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

ON CALL REVIEW

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 08 January 2016

Purpose of Report:

To inform Members of the current work that is taking place as part of the On Call Review.

CONTACT OFFICER

Name : Wayne Bowcock
Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Tel : 0115 967 0880

Email : wayne.bowcock@notts-fire.gov.uk

Media Enquiries Bridget Aherne

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

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Service operates the Retained Duty System (RDS) from 16 stations, providing operational fire cover with over half of the Service's appliances. The RDS is critical to the delivery of services to the community
- 1.2 The 'Facing the Future' report by Sir Ken Knight (2013) details how savings in excess of £200 million could be realised with a 10% increase in RDS fire fighters nationally. The Service needs to ensure that the delivery of services to communities are the best that they can be within the current financial constraints.
- 1.3 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) continues to explore opportunities to improve and deliver high quality services, and the Service has committed to ensure that the retained duty system is fit for purpose to deliver effective services to the community in future years. The review will cover all areas of the RDS and is specifically looking to improve outcomes in the key areas of recruitment, retention and competence.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The On-Call Review (OCR) was commissioned in 2015 with an aim of providing a long-term, sustainable solution for an on-call provision of emergency response in Nottinghamshire. The RDS, in conjunction with the Wholetime Duty System (WDS), is seen to provide a cost-effective approach to deliver services based upon risk and demand.
- 2.2 Whilst the current model employed by NFRS does provide an appropriate level of cover, the Service recognises that there may be more efficient ways of working and/or a different approach that could be adopted.
- 2.3 The RDS, both nationally and within Nottinghamshire, has historically faced a number of challenges around the recruitment and retention of personnel. Changes in demographics, fewer local employers and increased work demands on individuals employed on the RDS have affected the Service's ability to recruit, retain and ensure availability.
- 2.4 The number of incidents attended by the fire and rescue service nationally and locally within Nottingham and Nottinghamshire has reduced, which directly affects demand on individuals, individual remuneration, (RDS personnel are paid an annual retainer and then for each call out) and therefore retention.
- 2.5 The scope of the OCR covers three key principles which are – safe and competent workforce; availability; and value for money. Within these three principles, the OCR specifically focuses on improvements around three required outcomes of recruitment, retention and competence.

- 2.6 The OCR has been structured with the support of the Service's Projects Manager, and has identified nine constructs of the review, these are:
- The role of on-call fire fighters;
 - Policy and procedure;
 - Training;
 - Progression;
 - Support;
 - Recruitment;
 - Retention;
 - Good practice.
 - Availability management.
- 2.7 The OCR will be an on-going process in order to ensure that the provision of response to risk and demand is continually improved. The scoping indicates that the initial projects will be completed within 24 months.
- 2.8 From the outset, there has been an absolute desire to ensure that all the proposals from the OCR are based on sound rationale and evidence. Therefore a report has been compiled detailing all RDS stations' data, which has produced station profiles that will inform future decisions and proposals.
- 2.9 Targeted recruitment with additional support for 'priority' stations has seen a sustained increase in establishment figures with a further five trainee courses planned for 2016/17. This support has seen substantial increases in the establishment figures at a number of stations previously showing lower levels of cover.
- 2.10 The Service is currently leading on a project to amalgamate the initial training programs for RDS across all five East Midlands fire and rescue services.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The budget for the RDS over the next three years has been adjusted to take account of an increase in establishment and RDS delivery activity. It is proposed that the retained pay budget increases over the next three years as a result of the changes outlined in this report.
- 3.2 These proposals will be considered by the Fire Authority in February 2016 when the budget for next year is approved. The retained pay budget in the current year is £2.5m and it is proposed that will increase by £325k in 2016/17, by £239k in 2017/18 and then by £80k in 2018/19 as employees are recruited over the three year period. In addition there will be a total additional sum of £136k required over the three years to fund the purchase of uniform and protective equipment for the new retained employees.
- 3.2 Any financial implications that arise as a result of the review will be progressed through the current appropriate decision making arrangements.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

Any changes to the current RDS provision that would have implications of a contractual nature and have learning and development impacts for the Service will only be implemented following due process. The scale and impact will vary dependent upon the changes made, further details will be presented at a future Fire Authority.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment (EIA) has not been undertaken at this stage because a final decision has yet to be made on the options available and therefore the impact if any cannot be assessed.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Fire Authority has to satisfy its legal obligations under various legislation, but primarily the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Any proposals contained within this report will be assessed to ensure the Fire Authority can adequately discharge its statutory functions.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There is a risk that any changes to the current RDS provision will impact upon the services ability to meet its statutory duties. 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.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 9.1 Note the content of the report.
- 9.2 Support the on-going review.
- 9.3 Request a more detailed report on progress at a future Community Safety Committee meeting.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER