



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

UPDATE ON SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY FOR 2020

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 24 February 2017

Purpose of Report:

To provide an update to the Authority on the progress made against the Sustainability Strategy for 2020.

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1. BACKGROUND

At the meeting of the Authority on 26 February 2016, Members approved a number of recommendations presented by the Chief Fire Officer in a report titled Sustainability Strategy for 2020. This report put forward a number of proposals to explore options to increase the resilience of operational resources, engage in collaboration and deliver savings within the anticipated financial constraints.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The Sustainability Strategy for 2020 identified five main areas of work to be explored to ensure the Service remains focused on effective delivery of services whilst addressing anticipated financial constraints.
- 2.2 This report considers the recommendations, provides an update on progress made within the strategy and identifies the areas of focus for 2017/18.
- 2.3 **Alternative Crewing:** models have been explored which have the ability to utilise crew numbers of less than four to deal with certain incidents types, or be used to provide additional resources at larger more protracted incidents. This is not a move away from existing minimum crewing arrangements, but an opportunity to maximise the use of all retained resources that would alternatively be unavailable.
- 2.4 **Mixed Crewing:** systems have been considered which would enable the maintenance of all front line appliances, however costs would be reduced by converting appliances crewed by wholetime personnel to retained personnel during time periods of low activity.
- 2.5 There is potential to implement this concept at any of the stations where both wholetime and retained duty systems are in place. This has the potential to realise significant savings whilst having minimal impact on operational outcomes.
- 2.6 Both systems have the potential to enhance the earnings capacity of retained personnel due to an increase in their deployments at times which correlates with their availability and by reducing periods where the appliance is off the run due to crewing deficiencies. This could support recruitment and retention activity and enhance overall retained resilience and availability.
- 2.7 Alternative and mixed crewing approaches mentioned above have the potential to impact on the service delivery function and require a broader public consultation process. Therefore, detailed proposals will be included in a future report to the Fire Authority during 2017 to enable full and in-depth consultation to take place prior to any decisions being made.
- 2.8 **Crewing Collective Agreement:** negotiations are ongoing with workforce representatives which have identified the potential to remove a number of wholetime posts from within the operational ridership without affecting the availability of appliances and the standard crewing model. This has the

potential to generate significant savings in the region of £600k and a report will be presented to the Authority for consideration and decision.

- 2.9 **Voluntary Secondary Contracts:** this area has been explored and it has been identified that there is not the need to introduce a second contract as this can be entered into by volunteers through local agreement. This would be termed 'Voluntary Arrangements'
- 2.10 This flexible approach allows for individual members of staff to register their interest in working additional hours to support deficiencies. These arrangements would enable the Service to provide short term resources to maintain fire cover, particularly at retained stations, and engage in other activity without affecting the approved establishment.
- 2.11 Individuals who engage in the voluntary arrangements will be paid at the normal hourly rate for the work undertaken. All costs would be contained within existing pay and overtime budgets as the concept would be deployed where cover is required due to vacancies or lack of critical availability at retained stations. Where the concept is deployed for ad-hoc work in areas such as positive action for recruitment, or job related testing etc, project budgets will reflect the financial requirements.
- 2.12 Safeguards will be required to ensure that availability of resources are not affected due to individuals undertaking additional hours elsewhere, and a system will be required to manage deployments equitably.
- 2.13 This approach will provide flexibility through transitional periods and allow time for the Authority to make critical decisions on the future of the permanent establishment whilst maintaining effective fire cover and undertaking other essential activities.
- 2.14 The Chief Fire Officer intends to fully develop a process to support the introduction of 'Voluntary Arrangements' consult with staff and implement a system during 2017.
- 2.15 **Collaboration:** a report titled 'Collaboration Update' was presented to the Policy and Strategy Committee on 03 February 2017. That report identifies the current collaboration work ongoing and potential opportunities for the future. An outcome of the report is that the Chair of the Authority has responded to Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Authority's integrated risk management plan consultation to express an interest in engaging in greater collaboration with them.
- 2.16 Reports will be presented to Members to ensure they are fully aware of the development of existing collaboration, and to identify further opportunities. Additionally, all future reports will contain specific a collaboration implications section to support the expectations of the Policing and Crime Act 2017.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, however it is a key aim of the Sustainability Strategy to identify and secure savings to meet the anticipated financial constraints for the period to 2020, as set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

There are no direct implications arising from this report, however each strand of work will need to fully explore the relevant implications and respond accordingly within the existing policies of the Authority.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There will be a likelihood of some equalities implications arising from such a period of change. These will be managed by the Service to ensure that no particular sector of the organisation or community is disadvantaged by any decisions made.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

Fire and rescue authorities have a duty to exercise their functions in a way that prevents crime and disorder in their area.

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. Going forward this will also include the Policing and Crime Act 2017. Any proposals will be assessed to ensure the Fire Authority will not be in breach of these legal duties.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The primary risk to the Fire Authority arising from this report is one of finance and being able to balance a diminishing budget. The work ongoing within this area is part of a short, medium and long term strategy that will keep the Service viable and continue to meet public expectations.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of the report.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER