



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**  
**Fire & Rescue Service**  
*Creating Safer Communities*

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham  
Fire and Rescue Authority  
Policy and Strategy Committee

# SHAPING OUR FUTURE ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 21 July 2017

**Purpose of Report:**

To update Members on organisational development and inclusion activities taking place within the organisation.

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

On 22 April 2016, the Human Resources Committee agreed to a revision to the way in which Members receive performance updates on equality-related activity. A bi-annual report is produced for Human Resources Committee on workforce and recruitment data and it was agreed that the Service would provide a more narrative-based report to Policy and Strategy Committee on the organisational development and inclusion activity taking place across the organisation. The first report of this type was presented to this committee in November 2016.

## **2. REPORT**

2.1 During the last eight months, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) has made further progress in moving forwards its workstreams held within its Organisational Development and Inclusion Strategy and its Sustainability Strategy for 2020. This paper seeks to provide Members with an update on progress and appraise them of future objectives.

2.2 The Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) have three key areas which they focus on in order to ensure that the organisation maintains high levels of commitment and prioritises work in the appropriate way. These three areas are:

- An engaged and motivated workforce;
- High quality services;
- Good governance and financial responsibility.

### **AN ENGAGED AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE**

2.3 A significant element of the Shaping our Future journey is in ensuring that employees feel engaged in the development of the organisation's future. The 'command and control' method of managing is effective in an operational environment, but is being developed to reflect more values based, transformational leadership style for day to day activity across the organisation at all levels.

2.4 The 'Little Acorns' staff suggestion scheme has developed further in recent months and employees' suggestions are being considered and taken forwards. Wherever possible the person making the suggestion is involved in the development of the idea. If an idea cannot go forwards, the employee will always get a reply thanking them for the suggestion and explaining the reasons why.

2.5 Following on from 2016's successful winter conferences, this year's three spring conferences have now finished with approximately 200 staff attending. This has presented an opportunity for all staff to attend and hear the Finance, Learning and Development and Strategic Leadership Teams, as well as the

Chief Fire Officer, speak on a range of topics. The Service used a downloadable App during the conference called 'Slido' which enabled attendees to ask questions and respond to polls which were being held during the day. This proved to be a very effective way to engage staff who may not ordinarily feel comfortable asking a question or airing their views in an open forum.

- 2.6 Watch Manager development days and Service Delivery forums have also been successful additions to the development calendar this year for staff, building on the success of the Institute of Fire Engineers continuous professional development days which started in 2016. The Service is also hosting its second Springboard leadership programme for women and is again participating in the multi-agency Future Leaders programme led by Nottingham City Council. The Service is an active member of the steering group and selection process for this programme.
- 2.7 The Service will continue the roll-out of its new values launched last year. Facilitated sessions have been taking place across the Service and a poster campaign will be delivered to work locations during July.
- 2.8 The Service's progress on its Coaching and Mentoring Strategy is good with a cohort of coaches achieving ILM Level 5 in January of this year. Employees are being matched with trained coaches internally as well as externally via the East Midlands Coaching Network. Coaching with teams has also taken place, which has helped to improve morale and communication. Coaching practice is also being improved on a more informal basis by developing skills in the workplace.

## **INCLUSION – EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

- 2.9 The Organisational Development and Inclusion Team have instigated the formation of a Tri-Service Dyslexia Network with Derbyshire and Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Services. This will lead to greater uniformity of policy and approach and improved support for staff. The Service is rolling out assistive software – 'TextHelp Read and Write Gold' – to all staff in a bid to improve accessibility to written material for all staff in the organisation. It is hoped that this will help improve declaration rates of disability.
- 2.10 The Service has again maintained its Stonewall Top 100 employer status and will be seeking to extend this in 2018. The Service worked with Stonewall Top 100 employers based in Nottinghamshire in order to develop a role models resource, DVD and held a conference promoting LGBT+ equality.
- 2.11 In terms of workforce diversity, NFRS continues to have challenges. The percentage of female firefighters, employees from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds, employees declaring that they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans+ and disability remain relatively low. The Workforce Plan 2017, which was presented to Human Resources Committee at its July 2017 meeting, highlights these issues, amongst them the low success rate of BME applicants.

- 2.12 The Service did not appoint any applicants from BME backgrounds to roles (out of 58 new entrants) during 2016-17. This is a disappointing outcome when considered against the local BME working population of 11.2%. This is despite the fact that the Service received 59 applications from BME applicants out of a total of 576 applications (10.1%), with 13 progressing to the interview stage. Positive action is taking place across the Service area to encourage underrepresented groups to apply for vacancies. This will include support to understand the application, testing and interview stages.

## **HIGH QUALITY SERVICES**

- 2.13 The 'Working Together' document produced by Public Health England and NHS England and the subsequent 'Health Summit' held at NFRS HQ has led to NFRS working more closely with its partners in the health sector.
- 2.14 This 'Fire as a Health Asset' work has led to the development of the home safety check in to a safe and well visit. In essence NFRS will continue to deliver the traditional fire-related home safety check along with asking key questions relating to the health and wellbeing of the residents. These questions will directly relate to health issues which result in a poor outcome in the event of a fire in the home. NFRS will then make a referral, with the resident's consent, to healthcare professionals to take further action.
- 2.15 NFRS is also looking at ways the Service could become a 'health asset'. A trial programme at Edwinstowe fire station has recently taken place where teenagers with concerns about their weight and self-esteem did the 'FireFit' programme which looked to increase their physical fitness and confidence.
- 2.16 The Prevention Team has recently developed new ways of working which further embeds them in to the communities of Nottinghamshire. The District Prevention Officers are now working more closely with the operational crews in the districts and engaging with partner organisations in the new Community Safety Hubs. The secondment of an Occupational Therapist and Environmental Health Officer in to the Prevention Team will also improve multi-agency collaboration and co-operation in 2017.
- 2.17 The Service Delivery Department continues to evolve and develop and is focusing on three areas in the short to medium term in order to improve community safety. Training and upskilling the workforce, understanding and managing risk and developing a stronger performance culture are all integral to improving services whilst maintain firefighter safety. These will remain a focus during 2017-18.
- 2.18 Operational Crews at Collingham, Harworth and Edwinstowe continue to deliver the Emergency First Responder (EFR) trial in their areas, providing an initial response to members of the community who have suffered a medical emergency. In the year to date, crews have attended over 350 incidents where they have administered emergency intervention, including CPR, to casualties prior to East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) arriving. These

interventions have saved lives and continue to be welcomed by local communities with numerous positive feedback comments being received.

## **GOOD GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

### **Sustainability Strategy 2020**

- 2.19 The Sustainability Strategy workstreams continue to be progressed with a concerted effort being made to ensure that employees are engaged in the change process via a range of methods.
- Alternative crewing (mobilising with fewer than four firefighters on a retained duty system (RDS) appliance in order to improve availability) – This project is progressing well with recommendations due to go to the Fire Authority in September of this year;
  - Mixed crewing (utilising retained firefighters at periods of lowest demand on wholetime stations to maintain appliance availability and reduce costs) – internal development of this concept is ongoing. Recommendations are due to go to the Fire Authority in September;
  - Crewing collective agreement – negotiations regarding the revision of the collective agreement continue to progress positively and recommendations are expected at the Fire Authority in September;
  - Voluntary secondary arrangements – the introduction of voluntary secondary arrangements will provide support for retained appliances at periods of highest demand. This has been agreed in principle and is expected to be implemented by the end of this year.
- 2.20 Middle manager briefings and workshops are taking place and are improving lines of communication in the organisation. These are opportunities for the Chief Fire Officer and SLT colleagues to update middle managers on key changes taking place in the organisation with a view to ensuring that messages are cascaded to the workforce. This complements the Executive Delivery Team and Strategic Leadership Team briefings and the publication of minutes of those meetings. This helps to promote the Service's commitment to greater openness and transparency.

### **Next Steps**

- 2.21 The Service's new learning management system, 'NFRSLearn', is now live and there are more opportunities to embed e-learning in the organisation in the second half of 2017.
- 2.22 Employee engagement is key to organisational development and the staff survey will be a useful way of measuring progress made in this area along with other topics which will be covered.

- 2.23 The Aspiring Leadership Programme aimed at employees looking to move in to their first management position will be launched in the autumn alongside new content for current supervisory and middle leaders.
- 2.24 The Service's new SharePoint intranet site 'MyNet' is currently being developed with the full engagement of stakeholders across the organisation. Phase one of this project should be completed by the end of 2017.
- 2.25 Recruitment for wholetime firefighter positions is expected to take place early in 2018. This represents a real opportunity to undertake some effective positive action in order to address the workforce diversity issues highlighted in Paragraph 2.11 above. This summer the Service will be participating in Nottingham City Council's 'Tap the Gap' Scheme aimed at young people from BME backgrounds, disabled young people and young people in care.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### **4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Human resources and learning and development implications for the workstreams outlined above are addressed by the owners of each project, workstream or initiative.

### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because this is not a policy, function or service. This report is a part of the agreed reporting arrangements for equalities activities.

### **6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

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

### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Some of the work described above will help the organisation to meet its obligations held within the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act (2010)

### **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

## **9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Opportunities to collaborate are sought wherever possible. The tri-service Dyslexia Network, LGBT+ Stonewall role models work, Future Leaders programme and 'Fire as a Health Asset' work all demonstrates the Service's high level of commitment to working with partners.
- 9.2 Discussions are ongoing with other fire and rescue services to identify if there is the opportunity to undertake a joint wholetime firefighter recruitment process

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

To note the contents of this report.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)**

None.

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**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**