



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

REALIGNMENT OF OPERATIONAL RESOURCES

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 22 September 2017

Purpose of Report:

To recommend to Members the realignment of operational staff numbers to match the crewing requirements following previously agreed changes to the operational cover.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members received reports in 2014 and 2015 regarding the future financial position and following consultation tasked the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) with the reduction of operational fire appliances and the reintegration of standalone Specialist Rescue Teams (SRT) to traditional watches within the operational establishment.
- 1.2 The reports detailing the proposals made reference to the fact that there would be an 'over-capacity' in the wholetime operational establishment which would support the transition to the new ways of working.
- 1.3 The changes, including the removal of 2 wholetime appliances and reintegration of SRT to traditional watches have been in place for some time and are now well embedded. The CFO is confident that the current levels of activity and performance have enabled the Service to assess the impact of the changes and can therefore provide assurance to Members that the changes have not had an adverse impact on service delivery or effectiveness.
- 1.4 The Authority approved recommendations in the Sustainability Strategy for 2020 report in February 2016 which asked the CFO to 'release surplus capacity within the ridership'. This report provides details on how this can be achieved.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 Members will be aware that the wholetime workforce operate under the contractual terms within a 'collective agreement for the rostering of staff'. This agreement was put in place in 2009 and despite changes to service delivery has remained unaltered. The collective agreement details a number of two pump and one pump wholetime stations and SRT. It then goes on to detail the required numbers of personnel to adequately crew the pumps and SRT.
- 2.2 As the collective agreement no longer reflects the current working arrangements, it is prudent to revise the numbers of staff in the wholetime establishment to realign them with actual operational requirements. This approach will assist with the achievement of efficiencies as planned, as the establishment can be reduced without redundancy or any impact upon the terms and conditions of those staff who will remain within the current collective agreement.
- 2.3 Changes to the Service's delivery model since 2010 have contributed to this overcapacity in the wholetime ridership. In real terms, this means that 16 vacant firefighter posts may be removed from the current establishment without affecting the optimum capacity required to continue to support the current annualised hours and self-rostering principles, and maintain the

current level of operational cover and crewing. This position was also recognised in a joint statement issued by the Service and Fire Brigades Union in December 2016.

- 2.4 The proposal to remove 16 vacant firefighter posts from the establishment will contribute in the region of £590,000 to the necessary savings required within the sustainability strategy for 2020.
- 2.5 If approved, consultation with staff and their representative bodies on implementation will commence, with an expectation that the changes will be in place by January 2018.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 A reduction of 16 vacant posts from the wholetime establishment will realise an ongoing pay budget saving of £590k. This saving is based on July 2016 pay rates and includes employer's national insurance contributions and contributions to the 2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme. The 2017/18 revenue budget already includes temporary wholetime pay savings of £673k, so the deletion of these vacant posts will allow for £590k of these temporary savings to be made permanent.
- 3.2 The Authority's sustainability strategy and efficiency plan identified the need to consider operational resources to contribute towards the required savings of either £1.7 or £2.1m depending on what the Authority decide in respect of the precept.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Service has robust and tested policies and procedures relating to the removal of posts and transfer of staff. These have been used to good effect with positive feedback from staff and representative bodies.
- 4.2 Whilst there are no redundancy implications or changes to employee terms and conditions, full consultation will take place with the workforce regarding implementation.
- 4.3 Due to the anticipated annual turnover of staff, as reported to the July 2017 HR Committee in the workforce plan, no staff will be at risk of redundancy, only vacant posts will be deleted.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because there are no changes to policy, procedure or the working arrangements of staff as a result of this proposal.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising as a result of this recommendation.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The risk exists that the Authority cannot meet its financial efficiency programme if these vacant posts are not deleted as part of the wide-reaching sustainability strategy for 2020.
- 8.2 If these efficiencies are not realised the Authority will need to make efficiencies elsewhere within the Service and it is unlikely that any other area of the Service can release this amount of efficiency without a reduction in effectiveness. Therefore, maintaining this overcapacity could raise questions regarding value for money.
- 8.3 The Authority will be subject to inspection in the next few years. The first areas of inspection include efficiency. Not realising this efficiency is likely to be highlighted for consideration by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies Fire and Rescue Service particularly considering that it will have no impact on service delivery, public safety or firefighter safety.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct collaboration opportunities arising as a result of this proposal as it is a realignment of resource levels to meet current and anticipated demand.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members agree to delete 16 vacant firefighter posts from the operational establishment.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER