



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM
FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

COMMUNITY SAFETY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 8PD on 22 June 2018 from 10.30am - 11.37am

Membership

Present

Councillor Eunice Campbell-Clark (Chair)
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora
Councillor Parry Tsimbiridis
Councillor Jason Zadrozny
Councillor Francis Purdue-Horan

Absent

Councillor John Handley

Councillor Brian Grocock was also in attendance

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Wayne Bowcock - Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Dan Quinn - Area Manager and Head of Service Delivery
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor John Handley – Leave
Councillor Vaughan Hopewell (as proposed substitute)

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2018 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

4 SERVICE DELIVERY PERFORMANCE JANUARY - MARCH 2018

Dan Quinn, Area Manager and Head of Service Delivery, presented the report which updates the Committee on the Service Delivery Performance between 1 January and 31 March 2018.

The report contains details of incident categories and numbers and Retained Duty System availability data by station.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) during the final quarter of 2017/18, 2,245 incidents were responded to which is a decrease of 370 compared to the same period last year. This reduction is mainly due to the First Responder Trial termination in September 2017;
- (b) an average of 83.2% availability was achieved across the Retained Duty Stations, with East Leake achieving an impressive 98.2% availability;
- (c) 138 deliberate secondary fires (non-structural property) were responded to. Where arson is suspected, the Police are informed and if they feel appropriate, the incident is followed up but NFRS do not receive an update of whether the arsonist has been caught but the Police may seek assistance to investigate the fire further.

The Chair recognised the complexity of incidents to which the Service responds and asked that the Committee's thanks to all concerned was recorded.

RESOLVED to note the report.

5 SERVICE DELIVERY PERFORMANCE ANNUAL OVERVIEW

Dan Quinn, Area Manager and Head of Service Delivery, presented the report which provides an overview of Service Delivery during the year period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

A detailed summary of incident categories and numbers is provided in the report.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) as per the reference in the previous minute, the year comparison incident totals provide a clear reduction in incidents responded to, from 11,012 to 10,577 due to the termination of the 'First Responder Trial' in September 2017;
- (b) the Service has no legal power to prevent land owners storing flammable materials such as tyres but can highlight fire risk and advise safety precautions. Concerns can be passed to Environmental Health;
- (c) of the 13 animals rescued, this generally relates to domestic pets which are rescued from house fires. The stereo-typical 'cat up a tree' is generally remedied by citizens;
- (d) due to revised methods of reporting to the Committee, it is now easier to identify specific geographical areas of concern for incidents such as deliberate fires, which can then be targeted with preventative engagement;
- (e) the variance in retained duty availability is closely monitored and retained recruitment is targeted at stations with the most vacancies (currently Ashfield and Retford). However, it takes 12 months to recruit and train firefighters. Whilst the ideal availability would be 100%, procedures are in place to ensure that appropriate appliance responses are

provided. An availability target of 70% or over for retained stations is not uncommon in other F&RS's. The Service is investing in improving retained duty staffing;

- (f) retained duty staff availability is closely monitored by each District Leadership Team who will ensure that staff are complying with their contractual duties. Higher level intervention can be called upon if necessary.

Members of the Committee welcomed the revised report format and requested that more geographic detail on where incidents occurred, either by district or Fire Station is available for future reports, along with year on year comparative information on retained duty availability.

RESOLVED to note the report.

6 REDUCING THE NUMBER OF UNWANTED FIRE ALARM SIGNALS THROUGH COLLABORATION

Wayne Bowcock, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which informs the Committee that during 2017, the Service responded more than 3,000 unwanted, automated fire detection alarms. The automated alarm systems in question are generally fitted to industrial units which are not connected to domestic/residential properties. These alarms are commercially maintained and are often triggered as a result of heat/ dust / by accident and without fire or smoke, or as a result of incorrect installation.

Unwanted alarm signals are most prevalent within the City area due to the density of industrial premises. Other Fire and Rescue Services across the country have reacted to these unwanted calls by requiring that the need to attend is confirmed in addition to an automated alarm, but NFRS had continued to respond without this confirmation.

The Service does not have any role in approving or recommending installations, maintenance and replacement of such alarms, and although Building Control does have limited involvement, only a 'named responsible person' is required for an automated alarm system to be connected (via Alarm Receiving Centres) to the emergency Services. There is currently no penalty for consistent unwanted alarms and therefore no deterrent to ensure that systems are correctly installed and maintained.

The National Fire Chief's Council has issued guidance to try and reduce unnecessary call-outs to these alarms. The Regional Implementation Team has also issued guidance as three of the five services in the region have differing approaches. The amended policy complies with the guidance from both organisations and is proposed to be operated by Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Services, initially as a trial during which Fire Control Staff will continue to gather information on the alarm and ask further questions to challenge whether there is any evidence that an alarm has been appropriately activated. This may include requiring the 'responsible person' to attend the premises and confirm that the Service's attendance is required.

The new approach will include the following changes from the current policy:

- (i) Move from call challenging between the hours of 07:00 and 18:00 to 24 hours, 7 days per week;

- (ii) Hotels will be call challenged during the day, but not during night time hours, 21:00 – 08:00;
- (iii) A standard level of attendance after call challenging to AFD calls of one appliance.

The several premises types which will be exempt from these changes and trial are listed within the report.

There are unlikely to be any direct savings as a result of this trial as the crews will be on duty anyway, but there are broader productivity implications regarding the ability to provide Home Safety Checks, the ability to respond to other incidents and fuel usage.

A member of the Committee expressed concern that the report did not provide comprehensive information on the number of appropriate automated alarms and call-outs during the period in question, there is no mention of the direct risk to citizens and what the implications may be if the Service does not respond when its attendance is necessary. In addition, the cost implications are purely notional and there is not enough information about the proposed call-challenge process. Due to the risk factors and potential cost implications of a building and business lost through fire, NFRS should continue to dispatch at least one appliance to all call-outs, possibly with the exception of empty properties.

Members' questions were responded to as follows:

- (a) it can very difficult to schedule safety engagement sessions with schools, and Home safety Checks with some individuals. Whilst responding to a call will take priority, it is not always possible to rearrange sessions which result in a lost opportunity for valuable preventative work;
- (b) the guidance by which the trial will operate has been provided at a National level following evidence provided by other Fire and Rescue Services showing a benefit as a result of call challenging. NFRS aim to move towards adopting the National guidance, whilst Leicestershire will participate in the trial except for one minor variation until the trial results are available before considering their position;
- (c) Nationally, schools are not included on the exempt list as by their nature they are excellent at evacuating buildings and safety management when occupied;
- (d) the 3,000 unwanted alarms have consisted of malicious calls, calls of good intent and false alarms, of which NFRS attended nearly 1,000 routinely with 3 appliances whereas other Services only send one appliance;
- (e) if approved by this Committee and the Tri-Service Board, the trial could start within the next 6-8 weeks. A start date can be provided to members of the Committee.

The Chair acknowledged that there were risks but that broader consideration of the issue is required, including the requirement of a co-ordinated approach within the Tri-Service group. The trial should not be dismissed due to the hesitant approach of the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service. However, with the majority of Committee members supporting a trial, it was agreed that further, more detailed information should be provided to members of the Committee when the outcome of the trial is reported to the committee six months after its implementation.

RESOLVED

- (1) to approve the participation of the Service in a joint 'Unwanted Fire Alarm Response Trial' with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service, for a period of 6 months subject to the agreement of the Tri-Service Board;**
- (2) for a report providing the outcomes of the trial to be submitted to the Committee for consideration prior to the continuation or adoption of the proposed revised policy.**

Councillor Jason Zadrozny requested that his vote against the resolution is recorded.

7 RURAL COMMUNITY SAFETY

Dan Quinn, Area Manager and Head of Service Delivery, presented the report which updates the Committee on the preventative activity and wider service delivery to the rural community of Nottinghamshire.

Whilst 80% of the county is considered rural, during 2017/18 NFRS attended 93 fires at agricultural type premises which are considered particularly vulnerable to arson and businesses can be seriously impacted by a significant fire, with 40% never able to trade at the same level again.

Following the introduction of a revised 'Farm Fires Procedure' and with advice from the Rural Crime Partnership Group, NFRS and Nottinghamshire Police have jointly produced a new guidance folder for farmers on how to protect themselves from arson and rural crime. The folders were recently promoted at the County Show and have been well received by the rural community, complementing the joint activity by the District Neighbourhood Police Teams and local NFRS crews which visited farms and rural properties to promote the 'Operation Bifocal' campaign which focuses on preventing the prevalent theft of farm and heavy machinery. The 'Focus on Farms' campaign will start shortly.

Members of the Committee queried as excessive the cost of producing the folders but were assured that the folders are of very good, robust quality and that the required procurement procedure of obtaining three quotes was followed.

RESOLVED to note the report.

8 PRINCE'S TRUST HOUSE: STOCKHILL FIRE STATION

Wayne Bowcock, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which informs the Committee that the former fire service house, which has stood vacant for many years, attached to the Stockhill Fire Station, has been renovated and is now in use as the County Hub for the Service's Prince's Trust activity.

Pete Hales, the Partnership Manager, has led on the refurbishment project with Prince's Trust Team 33 who raised funds, approached local businesses for materials and asked for support from local residents to complete the renovation. NFRS provided financial support of £1,200 towards the renovation and will continue to meet the cost of utility services to the property.

Members welcomed the use of the building to benefit the young people engaged in the Prince's Trust Programme hosted by NFRS and commended everyone involved in the Stockhill House project, particularly the young people and contributors of resources.

The Prince's Trust Programme is appreciated as a successfully engaging some particularly troubled and vulnerable young people to build their self-confidence and encourage them to achieve positive outcomes.

RESOLVED to note the report.