



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

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham  
Fire and Rescue Authority

# **SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2020 OUTCOME REPORT**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

**Date:** 27 September 2019

**Purpose of Report:**

To present Members with the closure report regarding the outcomes of the Sustainability Strategy 2020 objectives, and seek approval for permanent amendments to be made to the staffing establishment.

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

**Name :** John Buckley  
Chief Fire Officer

**Tel :** 0115 967 0880

**Email :** john.buckley@notts-fire.gov.uk

**Media Enquiries Contact :** Therese Easom  
(0115) 967 0880 therese.easom@notts-fire.gov.uk

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In response to reductions in grant funding and subsequent pressures on finances, the Chief Fire Officer presented a report to the meeting of the Fire Authority in February 2016 entitled 'Sustainability Strategy for 2020' (SS2020) to consider and mitigate the long-term implications. See Appendix A for ease of reference.
- 1.2 The strategy was a key component of the efficiency plan submitted to government to secure a three-year deal on grant settlement, and enabled the Authority to take a longer-term view of the savings required over the spending review period.
- 1.3 In the intervening period much work has been undertaken, including substantial public and employee consultation, and various elements of the strategy have already been given full approval by the Authority: for example, alternative and mixed crewing models were approved in 2018; Joint Control with Derbyshire was also approved in 2018 and implemented on 01 July 2019.
- 1.4 This report brings together all the changes undertaken through the Strategy, and also identifies issues that have arisen since February 2016 which have also been accommodated.
- 1.5 The total level of savings is identified within the report, and Members are asked to approve the final staffing establishment as recommended by the Chief Fire Officer.

## 2. REPORT

- 2.1 The Sustainability Strategy 2020 (SS2020) has been a driver of extensive activity over the past three years and has ensured that the Authority has been able to meet the challenges of a declining grant settlement from Government. The strategy was both aspirational and challenging, with a number of recommendations covering a wide area of work detailed below:
  - **Alternative Crewing** – crew fire appliances with less than four personnel to increase On-Call availability;
  - **Mixed Crewing** – a combination of Wholetime and On-Call crewing;
  - **Surplus Capacity** – within the shift based ridership;
  - **Collaboration** – explore all options for collaboration;
  - **Secondary Contracts** – to be considered for increasing capacity.

- 2.2 There has also been other significant changes which have arisen over the three-year period which the Service has had to accommodate. These areas of work have also been considered within the changes made and are reflected within the proposed overall establishment.
- 2.3 The Policing and Crime Act 2017 has enabled the fire reform agenda to move on at pace and has drawn focus on changes to governance arrangements, and created the statutory responsibility to continually consider the opportunity for collaboration across emergency services. The Act has also enabled the creation of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, and a separate item on this agenda draws forward the outcomes of the recent inspection of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- 2.4 The tragic fire at Grenfell tower in 2017 has also created focus on Fire Protection, and as learning takes place across the sector and the wider built environment, the Service needs to respond to this changing landscape. This will ensure that high density residential and open public access buildings are safe for communities, and for firefighters who may be required to respond to incidents within them.
- 2.5 The continual difficulties in providing a robust and resilient On-Call crewing model is also a factor that the Service has been required to respond to, and will remain an area of focus going forward. The overall reduction of the operational fleet over the past decade means that the reliance of On-Call crews has increased and work continues to address shortfalls.
- 2.6 All original objectives within the SS2020 have now been concluded and the main outcomes are detailed in the sections 2.7 to 2.12 below.
- 2.7 Alternative Crewing was consulted upon and approved by the Authority in 2018. On-Call crews of three are now able to respond to low level incidents alone, or to larger incidents in addition to the full attendance where their presence is likely to provide a quicker response. There are no direct savings from this activity, however it does improve On-Call availability, response times and ultimately organisational effectiveness.
- 2.8 Mixed Crewing was also consulted upon and implemented in April 2019 at Ashfield and Retford fire stations. This has delivered savings in the region of £1.2m per annum, resulted in the reduction of 28 wholetime operational posts and required an uplift in the number of On-Call units by 12. The new working arrangements, named as Day Shift Crewing, are being monitored closely to ensure anticipated outcomes are being achieved.
- 2.9 Surplus capacity within the operational ridership was a result of operational changes implemented over the preceding years. This has been resolved through the renegotiation of the shift based collective agreement and has resulted in the removal of 14 posts. This has created savings in the region of £600k.
- 2.10 Multiple avenues of collaboration have commenced; however, this report will focus upon the Joint Command and Control Centre now in place in

Derbyshire. This joint venture has led to the closure of the Nottinghamshire control room delivering savings in the region of £350k per annum for each Service, and resulted in the removal of all 25 Control staff posts.

- 2.11 Secondary contracts have now been implemented, (termed as Secondary Voluntary Arrangements), however it is acknowledged by the Chief Fire Officer that take up by the workforce for these arrangements has been very low, and the initiative has not provided the anticipated capacity to increase on-call availability.
- 2.12 In addition to the salary savings resulting from the initiatives, there are also consequential savings which will flow for items such as uniform, personal protective equipment and training etc. These are more difficult to predict but are expected to be in the region of £50k per annum.
- 2.13 Gross savings are in the region of £2.2m per annum, however there has been a small number of additional posts that have been required to provide capacity in the wake of the changes and respond to the areas of work identified earlier in the report.
- 2.14 These additional posts are a Watch Manager and two Crew Manager posts to provide additional support to On-Call stations in terms of recruitment, training and operational cover. This results in a cost of £145k per annum. A further post is also required to cover ICT project work in relation to the Emergency Services Network national project and radio maintenance which was previously covered by Control staff. This post will cost £43k per annum. Finally, to provide managerial capacity to enable focus on Fire Protection, the HMICFRS process and the wider reform agenda, a departmental head post is required at a cost of £77k per annum.
- 2.15 These additional costs will require re-investment of £265k resulting in an overall net saving of £1.935m per annum.
- 2.16 In terms of Governance, the Fire Authority is required to approve the proposed changes to the permanent staffing establishment as detailed in the table below:

<b>Workforce group</b>	<b>Previous Establishment</b>	<b>Proposed Establishment</b>
Wholetime Firefighters	470	431
On-call Firefighters	192 units	204 units
Control Operators	25	0
Support Staff	156	158

- 2.17 The £1.935m savings generated over the life of the SS2020 have been phased in over the financial years 2018/19 to 2020/21, however there is still an anticipated deficit of approximately £500k predicted for 2020/21. Following

guidance from Members, the Chief Fire Officer and his team are determined to deliver a balanced budget, without the reliance on general reserves, for approval at the February 2020 Fire Authority meeting.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The Sustainability Strategy 2020 aimed to deliver savings in the region of £2.5m over the period of the spending review 2017-20. Gross savings of £2.2m have been achieved, however additional costs have been generated since the strategy was written resulting in overall savings of £1.935m being achieved.
- 3.2 Planning assumptions for 2020/21 identify a deficit of approximately £500k, however work is taking place within all budget areas to identify savings to ensure a balanced budget can be presented to Members of the Authority in February 2020.

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

- 4.1 There are no direct human resources implications arising from the staff reductions within this report, as all decisions on the changes have previously been agreed by Members and implemented following appropriate consultation.
- 4.2 The additional posts identified in 2.14 of the report have been filled temporarily, however when these are formally approved, the appropriate processes will be followed to fill them permanently. These will be conducted inline with normal service policy and procedures.

### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

Equality impact assessments were undertaken for each of the areas implemented and presented to Members at the time of the reports. Therefore, there are no equality implications arising from this report.

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

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

### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this report

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

## **9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS**

This report identifies where one area of collaboration has generated savings in the region of £350k for each partner. Collaboration remains a key strategy for the Authority and future reports will bring forward outcomes from other areas of work currently being pursued.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members approve the proposed establishment figures identified in the table at 2.16 within the report.

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

None.

John Buckley  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**



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

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham  
Fire and Rescue Authority

# SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY FOR 2020

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

---

**Date:** 26 February 2016

**Purpose of Report:**

To present proposals, highlight strategies and seek approval for actions to ensure Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority is in the best position possible to meet the financial pressures within the anticipated constraints to 2020.

## CONTACT OFFICER

**Name :** John Buckley  
Chief Fire Officer

**Tel :** (0115) 967 0880

**Email :** john.buckley@notts-fire.gov.uk

**Media Enquiries  
Contact :** (0115) 967 0880  
Therese Easom therese.easom@notts-fire.gov.uk

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Authority must consider the future financial pressures facing the Service and engage strategies to enable a balanced budget to be set in each financial year, as required by statute.
- 1.2 The indicative grant funding and estimated revenue available to be collected through council tax for the years 2016/17 to 2019/20 is likely to lead to shortfalls in the budget in the region of £4.5million if no adjustments to the establishment and service delivery are made. Government's prediction on spending power is making the assumption that local authorities will use the opportunity to raise revenue through increases in council tax during the term of this Government. Therefore, subject to local decision by the Authority, this deficit could be reduced to £2.5million if the current cap limit remains at 2%.
- 1.3 This report serves to outline the initial decisions that the Fire Authority may need to make in terms of addressing this financial shortfall, along with making recommendations regarding future strategies which should be considered in order to maintain an acceptable level of service delivery.

## **2. REPORT**

- 2.1 Since 2010 the budget requirement for NFRS has decreased from just over £48 million to the outline requirement predicted in 2019/20 of circa £43 million. This has been due to a number of cost reduction strategies which have been employed, including reducing the number of operational appliances, voluntary and compulsory redundancy processes, contract negotiations and Service restructures. With the expected budget available due to only reach £39 million in 2019/20 the Service will have to find another round of savings equivalent to around £4 million (subject to the approval of the proposed council tax increases elsewhere on this agenda) over the period to 2020.
- 2.2 Prudent levels of balances have been utilised to manage through the transition to date and it is proposed that this strategy continues. By planning early and looking at options during 2016/17, decisions made will have the opportunity to be fully implemented or have commenced by the time each subsequent budget has to be set.
- 2.3 The number of incidents attended during 2015 has remained under 10,000, and previous actions taken to reduce resources at Mansfield and Highfields stations has had no discernible impact on the community. This is in part due to a multi-faceted approach to reducing risk by effective use of community safety and protection strategies as well as operational response.
- 2.4 However, the ability to continue to reduce capacity is not unlimited and recommendations within this report will seek to guide the Fire Authority over how the budget requirements could be met, but also future strategies on utilising and deploying resources to maximise effectiveness and manage risk.

## OPERATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

- 2.5 Members will be aware that since 2010 the Service has reduced the number of front line appliances. This has not significantly affected the risk profile, however it does drive the need to ensure that the maximum number of resources are available at periods of highest demand.
- 2.6 Significant steps have been taken to increase retained fire fighter recruitment and retention, and this is having a positive impact on the availability of appliances. However, the issue remains that the predominant times that retained appliances are unavailable are during the hours of peak demand (15:00hrs – 21:00hrs) and the times of highest availability are during the night which is the period of lowest demand (00:00hrs to 08:00hrs).
- 2.7 Another factor to consider is that each front line appliance is of a similar type designed to tackle a whole range of incidents, but primarily crewed to respond to structural building fires. These fires, although critical in their nature, make up only a small percentage of the actual incidents attended (10%). Alternative technologies and delivery methods have been developed nationally that enable reduced crew numbers to deal with a large proportion of incidents in a safe and effective manner.
- 2.8 The Chief Fire Officer firmly believes that the most appropriate crewing numbers for appliances tackling structural building fires should remain at the traditional levels of 'five and four' and there is no desire to actively move away from this model with wholtime crews. However, current practice means that where a retained appliance has less than four crew members available it is unable to respond to any type of incident, regardless of proximity or scale, or in support of other appliances.
- 2.9 Each wholtime appliance is crewed continually, 24hrs a day, every day of the year. With reducing demand this has led to some of those appliances responding to less than an average of one call per week during the hours of low demand. With the increased availability of retained fire fighters at night it is possible to maintain the same level of resources available by flexibly crewing between wholtime and retained fire fighters dependant on the time of day.
- 2.10 The changes to the distribution of wholtime appliances since 2010 has increased the number of single-pump stations and decreased the number of two-pump stations. This has progressively skewed the numbers in the wholtime ridership and in effect created an over capacity due to the current calculations on which the collective agreement regarding crewing of appliances is based. Furthermore there is no flexibility to move away from a traditional 24hr crewing model.
- 2.11 There are many positive facets of the existing collective agreement that enable local control and flexibility for staff, and high levels of certainty and resilience in terms of appliance availability. It is clear that the agreement must be revised, however any changes must safeguard these important outcomes.
- 2.12 Current employment practices are based on the traditional wholtime or retained contracts with a permanent establishment maintained to deal with all

anticipated abstractions – eg: annual leave, training, sickness and staff turnover. This traditional model is rigid and provides little flexibility and a number of alternative methods through the provision of voluntary secondary contracts have been developed in other Services. These have proven to be very useful in coping with the continual transformation of services, and provided positive benefits for staff.

2.13 Removing surplus capacity within the current ridership and applying a flexible model of crewing with both wholetime and retained staff will create savings, some of which could be reinvested to support the availability of retained appliances through the provision of secondary contracts. This blended model has the ability to maintain the current fleet of appliances, increase availability of resources at times of highest demand and create savings.

2.14 Therefore, giving due consideration to operational activity and risk outcomes, the need to improve resilience and create savings, it is proposed that the Chief Fire Officer undertakes the following actions:

- Explores the use of alternative crewing models and emerging technologies to maximise the availability of appliances where crew numbers are less than four.
- Identify opportunities where a mixed crewing approach utilising retained fire fighters at periods of lowest demand could be implemented to maintain appliance availability and reduce costs.
- Enter into negotiations with workforce representatives to revise the current crewing collective agreement to release the surplus capacity within the ridership and create the opportunity to crew appliances for less than the full 24hr period.
- Consider the use of voluntary secondary contracts to provide support for retained appliances at periods of highest demand and ease the transformation of the service through the change process.

2.15 If approved, work in these areas will be undertaken during 2016 with timely reports back to the Authority for decision before any changes are made. Furthermore, there may be the requirement to enter into public consultation if there is a direct impact on any aspect of service delivery.

## **COLLABORATION**

2.16 On 26 January 2016 the Government articulated the next steps after considering the consultation responses to 'Enabling Closer Working Between the Emergency Services' and the full document is attached at Appendix A. In summary the Government intends to legislate to:

- Introduce a high level duty to collaborate on all three emergency service, to improve efficiency and effectiveness;
- Enable Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to take on the functions of fire and rescue authorities (FRAs), where a local case is made;

- Where a PCC takes on the responsibilities of their local FRA. Further enabling him or her to create a single employer for police and fire personnel;
  - In areas where a PCC has not become responsible for fire and rescue services, enabling them to have representation on their local FRA with voting rights, where the local FRA agrees; and
  - Abolish the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and give the Mayor of London direct responsibility for the fire and rescue service in London.
- 2.17 This clear intention from Government will drive collaboration between the emergency services within the local area. There are no definitive timescales for when the legislation will be in place, however indications are that it will be before the end of the year.
- 2.18 There are also opportunities to build on collaborations with other local organisations and neighbouring fire and rescue services. Work is already taking place in some areas – eg: Control, Procurement, Finance Systems, Training and Pension Administration – however there is scope to do more.
- 2.19 Collaboration has the potential to deliver both efficiency and effectiveness, however there is also the potential for collaboration leading to compromises or challenges that are not favourable to the Authority. Notwithstanding that full engagement of the Authority will be required to deliver against the legislative requirements, caution must also be exercised to ensure the outcomes are appropriate for the community.
- 2.20 In this regard it is proposed that the Chief Fire Officer engages with partners to explore all opportunities that may exist for collaboration and provide informed reports to future meetings of the Authority when appropriate.

## **FURTHER OPTIONS**

- 2.21 In addition to the above proposals and recommendations, a number of other work streams will be looked at by Officers to establish what further savings can be achieved. These include sharing of specialist operational advice and provisions, reviewing the property strategy for rationalisation, re-build or disposal, and reviewing current contracts and arrangements for further efficiencies.
- 2.22 There is no doubt that given the reductions already made by the Service, the challenge to make further savings could appear daunting. However, the community is as safe from fire today as any other period in the history of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service. By taking a measured approach, over the period to 2020, the transition can be managed through with as minimal impact on staff and the community as is possible. The implementation can also be regularly and safely monitored.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The financial implications of this report are the need to find approximately £4million in further savings by the end of the 2020 financial year, and to develop a strategy to address potential reductions beyond this point

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

- 4.1 There are significant human resources implications arising from this report from redundancy to contract negotiations with the representative bodies. The Service has a number of procedures in place which it has already used to good effect to minimise the impact upon staff. All of this will be managed by the internal human resources department to reduce any external costs.
- 4.2 In terms of learning and development implications, the Service will need to ensure its staff are appropriately trained and equipped with the requisite skills to perform their role.

### **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. 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 proposals and recommendations contained within this report are part of a short, medium and long term strategy that will keep the Service viable and continue to meet public expectations.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Fire Authority consider the contents of this report and ask the Chief Fire Officer to:

- 9.1 Explore the use of alternative crewing models and emerging technologies to maximise the availability of appliances where crew numbers are less than four.
- 9.2 Identify opportunities where a mixed crewing approach utilising retained fire fighters at periods of lowest demand could be implemented to maintain appliance availability and reduce costs.
- 9.3 Enter into negotiations with workforce representatives to revise the current crewing collective agreement to release the surplus capacity within the ridership and create the opportunity to crew appliances for less than the full 24hr period.
- 9.4 Explore the use of voluntary secondary contracts to provide support for retained appliances at periods of highest demand and ease the transformation of the service through the change process.
- 9.5 Engage with partners to explore all opportunities that may exist for collaboration.
- 9.6 Provide reports on the outcomes of recommendations 9.1 – 9.5 to future meetings of the Authority to inform the decision making process.

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

None.

John Buckley  
**CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**