



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE & CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY  
POLICY & STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Fire and Rescue Services HQ, Bestwood Lodge,  
Arnold Nottingham NG5 8PD on Friday 12 July 2019 from 10:01am to 11:00am**

**Membership**

Present

Councillor Michael Payne (Chair)  
Councillor Andrew Brown  
Councillor John Clarke  
Councillor Sybil Fielding  
Councillor Toby Neal  
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler

Absent

**Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

John Buckley - Chief Fire Officer  
Connie Green - Solicitor  
Charlotte Radford - Treasurer  
Becky Smeathers - Head of Finance  
Matt Sismey - Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager  
Malcolm Townroe - Clerk and Monitoring Officer  
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None.

**3 MINUTES**

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2019 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

#### **4 SHAPING OUR FUTURE 'ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH' UPDATE 2019**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, introduced Matt Sismey, Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager, who presented the report which provides details on a range of workforce areas including:

- Leadership and Development, including the popular aspiring managers programme, 360° feedback, and mentoring;
- Diversity in the workforce, noting that of the 37 new apprentice firefighters, 13 are female and 8 are Black /Asian/ Minority Ethnic (BAME);
- LGBT Equality and Stonewall;
- British Sign Language Charter;
- Employee engagement, including a staff survey, spring conferences, internal communication and collaboration.

Members' questions were responded to as follows:

- (a) with regard to Stonewall, the work of NFRS is recognised as very progressive and positive but the size of the Service and the numbers of openly LGBT employees, does not feasibly justify providing all the facilities, such as an LGBT network, on which Stonewall grade organisations for listing within the top 100 best supporting organisations. However, LGBT network support is available through the Trade Unions, which overall historically appears to be the preferred option for the majority of openly LGBT employees. It is agreed that the broader Stonewall issues of proactive reform need to be addressed in preference to chasing recognition with facilities, which will not be utilised. NFRS has not withdrawn from Stonewall but ranks at 99/100;
- (b) in response to members' concerns that it may appear that the Service is dis-engaging with Stonewall, it is suggested that the Strategic Inclusion Board is tasked with considering the broader implications and reviewing the current provision to propose recommendations as to how the Service could best proceed.

Members made the following comments:

- (c) Councillor Andrew Brown informed the Committee that he had attended one of the Spring Employee Conferences, found it very interesting and valuable and suggested that all members of the Authority are encouraged to attend at least one conference. Employees had welcomed and were appreciative of his attendance and involvement;
- (d) the City Council purposely opted out of Stonewall for a year to ensure that all identified issues could be suitably addressed, and then re-entered. The whole point of providing appropriate support does not and should not focus in on achieving a ranking. Where capacity may be lacking within NFRS, the City Council, or another local authority, may be able to offer support.

**RESOLVED to:**

- (1) note the progress made in the organisational development and inclusion agenda;**
- (2) task the Strategic Inclusion Board with considering the broader LBGT reform implications and reviewing the current provision to propose recommendations as to how the Service could best proceed;**
- (3) continue to receive the 'organisational health' overview annually.**

## **5 LOCAL FIREFIGHTER PENSION ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19**

Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance, presented the report that updates the Committee on the activities of the Local Firefighter Pension Board and Scheme Manager up to 31 March 2019.

The following points were highlighted and responses provided to members questions:

- (a) an application had been made to the Secretary of State to establish an East Midlands Joint Pension Board consisting of Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire Services. Although delayed, this will now progress in line with the drive for efficiency and collaboration;
- (b) in March 2019, revised employer superannuation rates were announced, which are significantly higher than previously, and will place an increased financial burden on the authority, in the region of £2.5 million, but it is anticipated that some of this cost will be offset by a one-off grant from central government;
- (c) as pensions is a highly complex topic, Board Member training sessions take place after every meeting, with a focus on at least one of the seven main pension areas. Externally provided training on pensions is also available;
- (d) members of the pension scheme are kept informed of activity and any issues identified;
- (e) internal audits of pension scheme governance and the pension scheme itself were undertaken in 2017 and both provided substantial assurance that correct procedures are in place.

## **6 COLLABORATION UPDATE**

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report that provides an overview of collaboration activity.

The following points were highlighted and questions from members responded to:

- (a) the Collaboration Delivery Board, consisting of officers, and Strategic Collaboration Board, consisting of councillors, both report to the Full Fire Authority;
- (b) planning permission has been submitted for the Joint Police and Fire Service Headquarters at Sherwood Lodge, with a decision expected during the autumn or 2019;

- (c) the LLP agreement is ongoing, as is the work on the tender document, but if approved, development could start next year with an anticipated 18 month build period, meaning that the service could move to Sherwood Lodge as early as 2021;
- (d) consideration of the potential of the current NFRS headquarters site is ongoing;
- (e) there are still sensitivities for some staff, but joint Fire and Police Workshops have been held and are proving successful in broadening understanding of each other and building relationships;
- (f) it is apparent that there are common themes within each service regarding managerial and leadership roles. Each service has the opportunity to learn from the other, both on current practices (the Police are particularly good at handling data), and also further developing processes and approaches, particularly in regard to improving performance for future HMICFRS inspections;
- (g) a Joint Police and Fire Service Cadets Program has been established with an eight week course taking place within the city, which is proposed to be rolled out to other areas;
- (h) the jointly branded Police and Fire Welfare unit is working well for major incidents covered by each or both services and has been particularly welcomed by Police colleagues;
- (i) a mutually beneficial collaboration agreement enabling the Police to access bunkered fuel from some NFRS premises is working well and is likely to reduce the cost of fuel for each service. Another potential collaboration may include Police access to jet washing facilities at fire stations;
- (j) the Fire Service now has access to deploy jointly commissioned drones (with professional Police controllers), which would otherwise require capital investment of between £40-50,000 plus ongoing maintenance and training costs;
- (k) the Joint Control Centre based in Derbyshire is working well and it is anticipated to arrange a visit for Fire Authority members following the Full Fire Authority meeting in September;
- (l) although having a small operational border, discussions are ongoing with South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service with regard to a mutual collaborative approach to fire protection and fire investigation learning and support, including potential prosecution;
- (m) Police colleagues are considering the feasibility of reconfiguring the West Bridgford Fire Station site to meet their requirements, and it is anticipated that the joint site will open in the autumn of 2019. A specific briefing by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer can be arranged for local members;
- (n) the additional opportunity suggested by members, of the Police and Fire Services jointly engaging with schools to improve road safety, is welcomed and will be further investigated.

With regard to the increased traffic resulting from the shared headquarters site, members of the committee reiterated safety concerns regarding entry and exit onto the busy A60 and A614 roads. Local Authority highways colleagues had been consulted through the planning

permission process and stated that no action is required. However, the professional opinion of services such as Police and Fire, which attend road traffic incidents, should also be considered and preventative measures to ensure road safety should not be dependent on the potential negative impact to local economy.

Members of the committee welcomed the shared fuel facility, and whilst the Service had been prepared for previous fuel supply disruptions, the provision of further fuel storage capacity would be supported by members, particularly as other public service authorities, including councils delivering crucial services, had approached the Fire Service to request access to its fuel reserves.

## **7 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining items in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.**

## **8 EXEMPT MINUTES**

The Committee confirmed the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2019 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.