



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 8 November 2019 from 10.03 am - 10.55 am**

Membership

Present

Councillor Michael Payne (Chair)
Councillor Andrew Brown
Councillor Jonathan Wheeler
Councillor Sybil Fielding (minutes 12 and 13 inclusive)
Councillor John Clarke
Councillor Toby Neal (minutes 12 and 13 inclusive)

Absent

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

John Buckley - Chief Fire Officer
Charlotte Radford - Treasurer to the Authority
Becky Smeathers - Head of Finance
Malcolm Townroe - Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Authority
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Toby Neal and Sybil Fielding for slight lateness due to exceptionally heavy traffic.

10 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, declared a personal interest in agenda item 4, (minute 12), Principal Officer Pay Review, in so much as it impacted directly on him. John Buckley withdrew from the meeting prior to consideration of the item and only returned once the item has concluded.

11 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2019 were confirmed to true record and signed by the Chair.

12 PRINCIPAL OFFICER PAY REVIEW

Having declared an interest under minute 10, prior to the Committee's consideration of the item, John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer withdrew from the room and did not return until the item was concluded.

Malcolm Townroe, Clerk to the Authority, presented the joint report of the Clerk and Treasurer, summarising that the pay review takes place every two years and is compared to the Chief Fire Officer base salary of 18 similar Fire and Rescue Services nationally. To date the Committee and Authority have been satisfied that the current pay figure, which is within the median of the pay scale, is appropriate.

Members of the Committee commented as follows:

- (a) given the level of responsibility and the important and far-reaching work undertaken by the Chief Fire Officer, it is appropriate for principal pay to remain at the current level, slightly above the median;
- (b) even with consideration of the impact of austerity on the Service, continuation of the current pay level is agreeable.

With the range in Chief Fire Officer pay between £119,748 and £164,020, members of the committee requested further information in future reports on the make-up and responsibilities of the Services listed, to better enable a comparison with NFRS.

RESOLVED for the recommendation to be submitted to the next Fire and Rescue Authority meeting to agree continuation at the current Principal Officer Pay Level, as of 1 January 2020.

13 COLLABORATION UPDATE

John Buckley, Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which provides a formal update on collaboration taking place across the Service. Becky Smeathers, Head of Finance and attendee of the Joint Headquarters Project Management Board, also contributed.

The following points were highlighted:

Joint Control Centre. There have been a few teething issues and the transition period is ongoing, but overall it is working well. There are still differences between the way that Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Fire Services operate, but these are being aligned to best practice with both services working closely to achieve this. It is anticipated that both services will be operating on the same airwave channel by 2022. Overnight flooding in areas across the region have stretched Services but all continue to work well.

Joint Headquarters. Progress is awaiting news on planning permission being granted pending the outcome of a safety review of the A60/ Burntstump Hill junction. Dependent on the findings and if any works are recommended, there may be an additional charge to cover or contribute towards the costs of works. Ian Prichard, Assistant Chief Officer, continues to meet regularly with Police colleagues.

Highfields Fire Station. Police colleagues are now established on site.

West Bridgford Police and Fire Station. It is anticipated that the planning permission required for some adaptations, will be achieved in the New Year.

Hucknall Joint Emergency Services Hub. Work is ongoing but once complete the site of the Hucknall Fire Station will be released.

Joint learning and development. An external provider is being sought for the ILM L5 certificate in management, which will also be accessed by police colleagues. Joint mentoring programs are also being explored. The Fire Service Training Houses at Carlton and Retford Fire Stations are being used regularly for Police training.

Prevention. The joint prevention strategy is being produced with police colleagues including a reinvigorated Road Safety Prevention Strategy, and potentially a Joint Specialist Home Safety Team.

Joint Police and Fire Cadets Programme. One course has been completed and the next is due to start shortly. It is hoped that the cadets programme will appeal to some of the young people who may previously have accessed the Prince's Trust scheme.

Emergency Planning and Resilience. An agreement is now in place allowing the police to access NFRS fuel bunkers. The cost of fuel is recharged, but with a larger volume required a lower price has been achieved and there is a contribution towards bunker maintenance. NFRS has access to two police drones and pilots, which will prove valuable in assessing incident sites.

Access to fire stations for welfare. Police officers now have access to fire stations for rest facilities.

Fire investigation and crime scene investigation (CSI) co-location. It is proposed that to improve information intelligence sharing, NFRS will co-locate with police investigation colleagues at Sherwood Lodge, prior to occupying the joint headquarters. New legislation has been introduced regarding evidence, which the police already comply with, and so will be able to support the fire service in submitting robust evidence acceptable in court.

The following responses were provided to questions from committee members:

- (a) Once the joint emergency services hub at Hucknall is operational, the potential options for the use or disposal of the current Hucknall Fire Station site will be brought to the Finance and Resources Committee for further consideration;
- (b) there have been changes to the apprenticeship levy whereby there may be potential for the cost of some team training courses, such as ILM, to be offset against the levy. The suggestion from a member of the Committee that further collaboration with the County Council may be mutually beneficial will be followed up. Once roles have been accredited, clarification will be provided to members of the Authority;
- (c) The vulnerable people referred to as a focus for the Specialist Home Safety Team include those with mental health issues, alcoholism, living alone and sometimes elderly. It has become apparent that in addition to the shared safeguarding social care element, that Police and Community Protection are also attempting to support these

people with safety and crime prevention advice, so it is of mutual benefit to work together and ensure the first contact with these people really counts and can promptly resolve and address any issues identified. The recent Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report highlighted that the Service needed to increase its home safety presence within the community and target the most vulnerable. However, the Service does not hold the data required to achieve this, so working with partner agencies which maintain such quality data is essential. In addition agencies may assist with tracking the outcomes of such prevention activity;

- (d) A small number of staff are still wary of some elements of collaboration with the Police, including moving to a shared headquarters site, but joint work is ongoing to address this and the majority of staff are engaging well. There is a whole work stream focusing on bringing the two very different cultures together with an understanding and appreciation of each other. To ease the transition to the new headquarters, it is likely that all Police staff will be moved to different areas within the site and at the same time that the Fire Service moves in, to help lessen any tensions regarding perceived ownership;
- (e) With the current severe overnight flooding issues in Worksop, more than 200 properties have been affected and approximately 60 firefighters are deployed within the area, which the Police have declared as a major incident. Partner agencies have requested support but due to capacity and officers working around the clock, requests have unfortunately had to be refused;
- (f) The highways review of the A60 junction and the additional traffic resulting from the joint headquarters, can only be considered as beneficial, but in the spirit of prevention, safety should not be judged by the number of fatalities, but by the ability to prevent incidents and injury.

Members of the Committee commended the excellent work of all staff in ensuring the success of collaboration, including the operation of the Joint Control Centre, particularly during recent incidents of high demand such as flooding, and suggested that a press release to ensure citizens, MPs and the LGA are aware of the positive collaboration work being achieved in the Service, particularly following the negative reporting against the fire crews and individual officers who attended the Grenfell Tower incident.

It was requested by members of the Committee that:

- (i) A Joint Fire and Police Cadets Programme is also operated in the north of the county;
- (ii) With regard to the current Hucknall Fire Station site, disposal includes consideration for achieving a long-term income.

RESOLVED to note the update and prepare a press release on the positive achievements of collaborative working.