

7 October 2015

Agenda Item: 4

## **REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH AND PUBLIC PROTECTION AND THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

### **THE ROLE OF THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE IN HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with an overview of the current and potential role of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service in health and wellbeing.

#### **Information and Advice**

2. The role of the Fire and Rescue Service has changed over the last thirty years. The number of fires has decreased in Nottinghamshire from around 30,000 per year in the 1990's to around 10,000 per year today. This decrease has been the result of changes to the service which has shifted from responding to demand to focussing on prevention.
3. The decrease in the demand for the service has resulted in changes in the way that the workforce are utilised, with staff spending less time responding to incidents and with more capacity to support prevention and improving community wellbeing.
4. The Fire and Rescue Service is a trusted profession which has respect across all age groups and in a diverse range of communities. This has been an important aspect of the prevention work undertaken by the service. Nationally around 39% of home fire safety checks were targeted at elderly people and over 16% at disabled people.
5. Nationally there is a debate about the future utilisation and function of the Fire and Rescue Service. The operational priority of the service remains the need to respond to fire and rescue incidents. In order to retain capacity to respond to these incidents, staffing levels need to be maintained. Minimising staff turnover is also essential in order to retain skilled and experienced staff which requires remuneration to be upheld.
6. The position in Nottinghamshire mirrors the national situation. Staffing levels must be maintained in order to respond to incidents but there are opportunities to utilise firefighters in different and innovative ways to help support the prevention agenda, including health and wellbeing.
7. There may also be opportunities to learn from the experience of the service in changing its focus from reacting to demand to that of prevention.

8. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service would welcome opportunities to work collaboratively with other public services, utilising skills around prevention and early intervention to improve health and wellbeing.
9. Capacity is available within the firefighter workforce as well as other functions such as call handling.
10. Options to support other emergency services are being considered, including co-responding with ambulance services.
11. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service would also welcome opportunities to work with wider partners to improve health and wellbeing. Nationally the service undertake over 670,000 home safety checks with a focus on vulnerable groups such as the over 65's or disabled people. Visits in other areas already include some health interventions like hearing tests to check fire alarms can be heard, to assessing risks of falls and trips and fitting equipment if necessary.
12. Some areas have extended these checks into 'safe and well' visits to identify wider health and care support needs that the Fire and Rescue Service can provide or through referral to wider public services.
13. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service would welcome an opportunity to develop a plan to work collaboratively with wider public services in Nottinghamshire to make the most efficient use of the available workforce and to utilise the experience and success of the service in prevention.

#### **Other Options Considered**

14. None.

#### **Reason for Recommendation**

15. Not applicable.

#### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

16. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1) That the Board note the contents of the report and the changes in the demands on Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

- 2) That the Board supports a workshop to be held with Board members and wider partners to discuss a plan for the service to work collaboratively in Nottinghamshire to improve health and wellbeing.

**David Pearson**  
**Corporate Director**  
**Adult Social Care, Health**  
**And Public Protection**

**Dr Chris Kenny**  
**Director of Public Health**

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### **Constitutional Comments (LMC 18/09/15)**

17. The recommendations in the report fall within the terms of reference of the Health and Well Being Board.

### **Financial Comments (KAS 17/09/15)**

18. There are no financial implications contained within the report.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- [Fire works: a collaborative way forward for the fire and rescue service](#)  
New Local Government Network
- [Beyond fighting fires: the role of the fire and rescue service in improving the public's health](#)  
Local Government Association

### **Electoral Divisions and Members Affected**

- All