

APPENDIX A

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 30 MARCH 2023 QUESTION TO CHAIRMAN OF THE NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AUTHORITY

Question from Councillor Jason Zadrozny

On 24 February, the Fire Authority unanimously backed a recommendation which read: "To instruct the Chief Fire Officer to swiftly work up and implement proposals at Ashfield fire station to address the identified gap in resourcing to risk faced by the community in Ashfield." Could the Chairman please give this Council an update on progress to return Ashfield Fire Station to a 24 hour, full-time service?

Response from the Chairman of the Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire Authority, Councillor Michael Payne

Can I just take a couple of seconds to put on record, my and I hope the whole of the County Council's thanks to the heroism and diligence of the fire service personnel who responded to the fire on 18 March 2023 on Forest Road in Mansfield at Savanna Rags. The debris and damage that was caused as part of that fire was felt not only by those that work there Mr Chairman, but also by the wider community, and my heartfelt thanks to everybody who responded to that incident.

At the February 2023 Fire Authority meeting an update report was presented by the Chief Fire Officer on the Services Futures 25 Programme which seeks to address the financial challenges that significant government cuts over the last decade continue to place on the fire service in future years. This also, as you're aware Councillor Zadrozny, included the public consultation exercise on the potential need to reduce the number of fire appliances within Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service as a result of ongoing government cuts. This exercise was data and evidence based and there was a public consultation on it. I am pleased, Mr Chairman, to report that the Labour led Fire Authority have been able to mitigate the extent of cuts required for the coming financial year, with no cuts, I repeat, no cuts in the number of fire engines at London Road or Stockhill Stations, nor any cuts at West Bridgford; maintaining a 24 hour service at West Bridgford Station and congratulations to Councillor Penny Gowland who spearheaded the campaign in that neck of the woods to protect that service.

The Chief Fire Officer and wider management team are now working through possible options to resource to risk identified by independent experts in the Ashfield area. Work to identify options has already started and the Chief Fire Officer envisages that they will be reported over the next few weeks and certainly, Councillor Zadrozny, prior to this summer.

I should say it is likely given the ongoing severity of government cuts that any option will require the redistribution of existing service resources, unless Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service sees an end to the ongoing cuts that it has received in recent years.

Let me finish Mr Chairman by saying this, we and certainly I as the Chairman of the Labour led Fire Authority are keen that the good people and good communities of Ashfield get their fair share of fire resources even if the resources that we receive continue to dwindle year on year as a result of this right wing pernicious Tory Government.