



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Human Resources Committee

PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 08 November 2024

Purpose of Report:

To provide an update on the priorities for the People Strategy 2022-25.

Recommendations:

That Members note the content of this report.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A People Strategy forms part of the delivery mechanism for the Authority's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), setting out key workforce issues and commitments to ensure that the Service can deliver on its strategic objectives.
- 1.2 The people elements of the CRMP are set out within Strategic Goal 4: "We will continue to support and develop our workforce and promote an inclusive service" and are inherent in the four pillars of the Service's approach. Specifically, those of equality, diversity and inclusion and a professional and committed workforce.
- 1.3 The People Strategy is underpinned by national standards and workstreams developed through the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) People Culture and Leadership Hub. A revised strategic approach is currently being developed by the NFCC with a finalised version anticipated by March 2025 to reflect emerging national learning.
- 1.4 This report provides an overview of the activities underway to support delivery of the People Strategy 2023-25, including those activities which form part of the Service's Annual Delivery Plan (ADP).
- 1.5 The focus areas for the People Strategy are:
 - Delivering our services;
 - Shaping our workforce;
 - Inclusion;
 - Outstanding leadership;
 - Workforce development;
 - Workforce engagement;
 - Positive workplace and culture;
 - Wellbeing.

2. REPORT

DELIVERING OUR SERVICES

- 2.1 This section of the strategy sets out the Service's commitment to effective workforce planning. Ensuring that recruitment and progression processes are sequenced to ensure sufficient workforce numbers to deliver against the CRMP. The workforce plan update provides more detail in a separate report on the agenda for this Committee.

SHAPING OUR WORKFORCE

- 2.2 The priorities set out within this section of the strategy ensure that the Service is well placed to meet current and expected future demands.

- 2.3 Work to date has been centred around the Prevention function review completed as part of the Futures 25 change and improvement programme. The outcomes included identification of dedicated resources to deliver community engagement and positive action activities in a sustainable way, as well as creating clear progression pathways for both Green and Grey Book staff through the department.
- 2.4 In addition to this, a digital maturity assessment has been commissioned to support the Service to shape its approach to delivering effective digital and ICT functions, which is seen as being key to delivery of aspirations relating to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Service going forward. This is underway now and due to report early in the new year.
- 2.5 Recommendations from the recent report into the Standards of Behaviour in Fire and Rescue Services from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) relate to delivery of people functions, including learning and development and human resources.
- 2.6 Following receipt of this report, the Service is reviewing its people functions to ensure that it is suitably structured and adequately resourced to deliver the stretching goals set, both by HMICFRS, as well as the ambitions of the Authority and the Service relating to people and culture.

INCLUSION

- 2.7 A positive workplace has inclusion at its heart. It is important that employees understand different communities and service users, that the Service welcomes those from different backgrounds, beliefs, genders, sexual orientation or those with disabilities into the workplace.
- 2.8 Alongside training and development for staff, the Service has commissioned research to understand the public perception from minoritised communities. The key findings of this research are set out in more detail in a separate report on this agenda.
- 2.9 The Service continues to prioritise understanding of communities through a dedicated project to enhance the use of census data in decision making, both to enhance the targeting of prevention and protection activities, as well as supporting aspirations around workforce diversity planning.
- 2.10 The project is being delivered with the support of Nottingham Trent University and the Office for National Statistics and has resulted in the creation of an interactive mapping tool which is currently being trialled across departments to support the targeting of community engagement and positive action activities.

OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP

- 2.11 Effective leadership is key to organisational success. The Service's leadership framework is based on the NFCC framework and is underpinned

by structured development pathways for aspiring, supervisory, middle and strategic managers.

- 2.12 The annual Personal Development Review (PDR) supports colleagues who are aspiring for promotion, through dedicated time with their line manager to discuss career aspirations. This is supplemented by a range of development opportunities, including incident command taster sessions, and positive action events targeted at those who are currently underrepresented in the leadership cohort.
- 2.13 The Service has recently supplemented its leadership and organisational development function, and is seeking to maximise opportunities for coaching, mentoring and reverse mentoring to support colleagues who are already in leadership roles alongside those who are aspiring to be.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- 2.14 Workforce development includes the delivery of high quality learning and development to all colleagues.
- 2.15 Throughout the life of the current strategy, the Service has invested heavily in operational training capabilities, including the creation of a state of the art incident command training suite, alongside significant investment at the Service Development Centre in Ollerton. The investment enhances the training offered at these sites, alongside dignity at work improvements for all colleagues.
- 2.16 The CRMP Assurance Board routinely reviews compliance rates for operational revalidation training, alongside other mandatory training for all staff to ensure the workforce is competent and effective. The Service has continued to invest in digital learning where appropriate to support the accessible learning and development for colleagues.
- 2.17 The firefighter apprenticeship programme continues to be delivered successfully, offering an accredited, high quality entry level route into the Service. The Service also has four funded apprenticeship posts aligned to national standards within support functions.

WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT

- 2.18 The importance of effective communication, including listening and learning from staff, is key to creating a positive workplace culture. The Service has a variety of communications channels to ensure staff are kept informed.
- 2.19 Throughout the life of this strategy the Service has continued to support staff networks at a strategic level to cultivate a culture of trust. Staff networks and other staff groups are regularly engaged to support projects where the employee voice is paramount. Recent examples include the Uniform Review Working Group, and the access and inclusion estates project.

- 2.20 The Service undertook a staff survey between June and July this year. A 68% completion rate was achieved, alongside an improvement in satisfaction rates in almost all aspects of the previous survey.
- 2.21 The results are very strong, with an overall staff satisfaction score of 72.2%. Areas of strength were individuals felt their experience at work including their connection with others, and enjoyment, purpose and autonomy at work. Focus areas continue to be work environment, including systems and processes.

POSITIVE WORKPLACE AND CULTURE

- 2.22 Central to delivery of the People Strategy is to ensure that all colleagues are living by the Service values and embedding the Core Code of Ethics into their daily work.
- 2.23 During the strategy period, the Service has successfully completed a dedicated project to ensure that the Core Code of Ethics is understood by staff, as well as being embedded into policy, procedures and ways of working. The project closure report indicated high levels of understanding from staff, as well as a range of departmentally led activities to integrate the core code into daily life in the Service.
- 2.24 Nationally, culture remains a key priority, with several HMICFRS reports setting out recommendations to Chief Fire Officers to ensure culture and values are reflected within the workforce, alongside arrangements to ensure that misconduct is dealt with swiftly and fairly.
- 2.25 The Service has implemented a confidential reporting line, to provide an alternative route for colleagues to report issues anonymously. Between December 2023 to date, 13 concerns have been raised for a range of issues including reporting instances where staff and management behaviour has fallen below the expected standard.

WELLBEING

- 2.26 The Service continues to invest heavily in well-being provision for all staff. The most recent HMICFRS inspection found a positive direction of travel relating to staff understanding and confidence in well-being provision.
- 2.27 Two dedicated staff networks, the Disability Matters and Healthy Minds networks provide peer support to colleagues relating to both physical and mental health, alongside other staff led initiatives including the Men's Walk and Talk Group supporting men's mental health.
- 2.28 The Service has seen staffing deficiencies within its Occupational Health Unit due to staff turnover, however the team is now back to full establishment. A review of current well-being and support available to staff is being undertaken to ensure the provision continues to be fit for purpose, meets the needs of colleagues and is supporting reduction in sickness absence levels being seen corporately.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from the report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

The human resources and learning and development implications are set out within the report.

5. EQUALITIES AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

An initial equality impact assessment has been undertaken and has not identified any adverse impacts from the strategy. The commitment to improving the diversity of the workforce and supporting employee wellbeing is likely to lead to positive outcomes for employees and potential employees with protected characteristics.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental or sustainability implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from the report. However, a range of the activities above demonstrate continued fulfilment of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The development and implementation of a People Strategy forms part of a suite of strategies which underpin the effective leadership and governance arrangements of the Service, establishing a clear direction and priorities for workforce development.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

There are no collaboration implications arising from this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report.

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

None.

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