



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Fire & Rescue Service

Creating Safer Communities

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

UPDATE ON THE PEOPLE STRATEGY

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 05 April 2019

Purpose of Report:

To provide an update to Members on activities undertaken since the previous review in November 2018.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting on 21 April 2017, the People Strategy was presented and endorsed by the Human Resources Committee.
- 1.2 As part of monitoring arrangements, it was agreed that an update would be submitted to the Committee on a six-monthly basis to keep Members advised on progress. The last update was considered by this Committee at its meeting on 9 November 2018.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The People Strategy aligns closely with the Service's Organisational Development and Inclusion (ODI) Strategy and supports the Service transformation and improvement programme. The key areas identified in the ODI Strategy are service improvement, employee engagement, harnessing technology, strong and visible leadership and inclusion and equality. Progress against these objectives is reported through the Policy and Strategy Committee.
- 2.2 The focus for the People Strategy is set below:



- 2.3 **Delivering Our Services:** ensuring that the organisation has the optimum number of personnel to deliver effective and quality services to communities: this encompasses workforce planning and the way in which resources are managed to maximise efficiency and impact. Many of the aims inherent within this part of the strategy relate to work being undertaken by the Shaping Our Future Team, and are being implemented by Service Delivery. The main impact of any agreed outcomes for human resources, to the way that services are delivered, will be at the point of implementation, with anticipated changes to individual roles and training implications.

- 2.4 Following the firefighter selection process which completed in July 2018, with the appointment of 44 new entrants to the Service, two courses of trainees have now completed their initial training and been transferred to stations as firefighters (development). They will continue the second stage of their development programme and will be formally assessed over the next 18-24 months. Alongside the four firefighters who transferred from other fire and rescue services in September 2018 and the transfer of three competent firefighters from on-call sections, the Service has increased its operational strength by 33 firefighters in recent months, creating further resilience within the ridership. This has resulted in a reduction in overtime payments since the beginning of the year.
- 2.5 The final trainee course from the 2018 recruitment process, is currently due to commence in September 2019. The progress of all the trainees through their initial training is a testament to the quality of candidates selected and to the hard work of SDC trainers who have managed back-to-back trainee courses, alongside their other training commitments.
- 2.6 Since November, the Service has also recruited 22 on-call firefighters, with 10 trainee firefighters completing their training at the end of March, and 12 commencing their initial training in April 19. The next on-call recruitment campaign has already been undertaken, with 41 applications received to start training in August.
- 2.7 As set out in the previous update, this new intake of firefighters will fill existing and projected vacancies to 2021, which will mean initial front-loading of posts and over-establishment of operational roles for a brief period. This will ensure that the Service will be able to substantiate to firefighter vacancies as they arise, in accordance with the Workforce Plan.
- 2.8 Since November, the Service has recruited to middle management roles including three Station Managers and two Group Managers, and to strategic roles including two Area Managers and a Deputy Chief Fire Officer role. As well as filling existing vacancies, these processes have identified those with potential for future development as part of succession planning.
- 2.9 The next phase of progression for supervisory manager roles (Crew and Watch Manager) commenced during March and will be completed week commencing 8 April 2019. At the end of this final phase of selection, a full complement of appointments to operational roles will have been completed to ensure maintenance of the operational establishment to the financial year 2020/21.
- 2.10 The number of personnel in their development phase and working toward competence during this period will be significant and will require dedicated support from both the Learning and Development department and workplace managers over the next year.
- 2.11 **Shaping Our Workforce:** the Sustainability Strategy, agreed by the Authority in 2016, is the focus for planned changes and includes re-negotiation of the rostering collective agreement, alternate delivery models to enhance on-call firefighting cover, flexible on-call firefighter contracts, alternative crewing arrangements for RDS sections, and mixed crewing at designated stations.

- 2.12 In February 2018, the Fire Authority agreed proposals to implement mixed crewing at Ashfield and Retford fire stations, and to roll out alternative crewing to on-call sections. Significant work has been undertaken to recruit and transfer to the new whole-time day crews and on-call sections at both locations, and the implementation of the mixed crewing model will commence from April in line with projected timelines. The impact of this will be to further release capacity to support the ridership and to affect the savings outlined in the Sustainability Strategy, which will be reported to the Fire Authority in September.
- 2.13 The decision taken by the Fire Authority in December 2018 to create a joint control room with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service has seen significant work undertaken by a joint project team to progress the technical, legal, operational and human resource implications ahead of the implementation date of July 2019. From a human resource aspect, this has involved detailed consultation with the Fire Brigades Union and with those individuals affected by the transfer. This has been managed under the requirements of the Transfer of Undertakings and Protection of Employment Regulations (TUPE).
- 2.14 The new Joint Control Structure has 35 established control roles, which is a reduction of 15 posts across the two control rooms. Reductions in workforce will mainly be achieved through voluntary redundancy, voluntary early retirements and redeployments to other roles within the Service. Whilst there are still some workforce issues to be resolved, it is anticipated that there should be no compulsory redundancies.
- 2.15 Those who will be leaving the Service have been supported by Human Resources, and have had access to out-placement facilities, pensions advice and welfare support. Those individuals who will be transferring to the new control room will be supported throughout the transition process. The HR team will continue to support this work, and work closely with Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service to enable a smooth transfer of personnel and functions from July.
- 2.16 The decision by the Fire Authority in February to end its association with the Prince's Trust Programme will lead to the potential redundancy of four employees at the end of the final programme in July 2019. Formal consultation has commenced with the representative bodies and with the individuals themselves to avoid the need for compulsory redundancies, although this may be a consequence of the decision. The process will be managed in line with statutory requirements and a report will be presented at the next meeting of this committee.
- 2.17 The decision to implement a Joint Headquarters with the Nottinghamshire Police at Sherwood Lodge from October 2021 will have significant workforce implications related to the transfer of employees. A programme board has been established and a People Workstream will consider and manage the transfer process. This will require consultation with representative bodies and employees currently based at Service Headquarters, although it is not anticipated that there will be any redundancies arising from the transfer. A Communication Strategy will be developed to ensure that employees are kept informed and engaged throughout the project, and visits to the Sherwood

Lodge site will be arranged so that employees can become familiar with their new colleagues and working environment as part of transition arrangements. There is no doubt that this will constitute a significant change for Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) staff and will require a huge commitment to logistical and workforce planning over the next 30 months.

- 2.18 **Outstanding Leadership:** as an accredited Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) centre, the Service continues to offer development for its existing and future managers through the ILM programme at levels 3 and 5. The latest ILM3 Award programme commenced in April with the next scheduled for June, with a higher-level certificate due to commence in May. Altogether training 25 participants at First Line Supervisory level.
- 2.19 Recent discussions have commenced with Nottinghamshire Police to establish joint leadership development opportunities, with the aim of offering joint workshops and access to learning events.
- 2.20 The Aspiring Leaders Programme has recruited its next cohort of prospective leaders, with 20 participants commencing the programme from December 2018. The programme is aimed at employees considering their first leadership role and, whilst participation is voluntary, this is a way of identifying and developing future leaders and providing participants with the tools to become effective managers. This includes access to workshops, a personal coach, profiling and 360-degree feedback, distance learning and self-development resources which opens up access to those who are unable to commit to an academic course, such as on-call or part-time employees.
- 2.21 **Workforce Development:** as a result of the requirement to implement the National Operational Guidance (NOG) over the coming year, which will include a re-evaluation of existing training and development of new training packages on a regional basis, responsibility for operational training will move to the Risk, Assurance and Operational Training team from April 2019. This will ensure that an integrated approach is taken to review, develop and deliver operational training in line with the new guidance whilst, at the same time, delivering the annual training plan.
- 2.22 Workforce development, leadership and learning systems, including e-learning products, will continue to be managed through the Head of People and Organisational Development. This will include developing new e-learning to support operational training and a focus on enhancing development at supervisory level.
- 2.23 In addition to the agreement to provide Nottinghamshire Police with driver training for D1 Police drivers (multi personnel vehicles), as reported in the last review, the Service is currently assessing the potential for the Police to provide funded driver training provision to fill an existing NFRS vacancy.
- 2.24 A project to review the current personal development review scheme and to develop formal one-to-one meetings has recently commenced as part of enhancing performance management and engagement across the service. This work aligns to the feedback from the employee survey and the Organisational Development Strategy.

- 2.25 **Workforce Engagement:** preparations are currently ongoing for this year's employee Spring Conferences. Four one-day conferences will be held in May/June and will focus on the new Strategic Plan, future budget and bring employees up to date on current issues for the Service. The format has been refreshed this year to include speakers and smaller break-out groups in the afternoon to facilitate more interaction with delegates. It is expected that in the region of 200 staff will attend.
- 2.26 Information about the Joint Headquarters has recently been shared at a staff briefing with those who likely to be affected by the move. Plans of the proposed building design were made available and a question and answer session held. A dedicated email has been made available for staff to pose questions, and information about preparations will be shared and pro-active engagement will be maintained with staff throughout the project.
- 2.27 An action plan from the employee survey has been published, with five key improvement areas, these are: review the current PDR scheme, improve internal communications, improve the intranet search facility, review ICT/systems training and develop a competency/behavioural framework. These items will now be built into future work plans and progress reported through the Strategic Leadership team.
- 2.28 **A Safe and Healthy Workplace:** mental health issues are increasingly recognised as a contributor to sickness absence and can lead to long periods of absence from the workplace and have a detrimental impact on quality of life for those affected. The Service is a MIND mental health champion and has a number of support mechanisms in place for its employees, including counselling, peer support, and workplace interventions. A mental health workshop has recently been held to highlight mental health issues, provide information about maintain mental well-being and ways in which the service can support those directly and indirectly affected by mental health issues. Due to the high level of engagement, a further workshop will be held in the summer by our Employee Assistance Programme provider.
- 2.29 It is the intention for employees who have attended the workshops to act as Mental Health Ambassadors, with the aim of acting as a "listening ear", removing some of the stigma attached to mental health issues, and directing colleagues toward mental health support.
- 2.30 **Inclusion:** the Service has been recognised in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2019 for its work in supporting and advancing sexual orientation equality in the workplace and in the delivery of its services. The Service undertook several actions during 2018 including a Proud Friends and Trans masterclass, reviewed its policies for inclusive language, promotion of its development opportunities for LGBT staff and the introduction of options to monitor gender identity within the workforce. An action plan to further improve our promotion of LGBT issues will be published following formal feedback from Stonewall.
- 2.31 As the People Strategy is aligned to the delivery of the Sustainability Strategy 2020, it will be reviewed over the coming year to reflect the new challenges

and priorities for the Service. This will include the strategic plan, fire cover review, outcomes from the HMICFRS inspection and national sector issues.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

Human resources and learning and development implications are contained within the report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken as the People Strategy does not directly affect policy or service delivery, however proposals arising from individual work-streams will be subject to an equality impact assessment at the development and implementation stages.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. However, some of the proposed workstreams may have contractual and employment law implications which will form part of the specific proposals. The Human Resources team will work closely as an integral part of project teams to ensure that all contractual and legal implications are highlighted and addressed.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 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 the workforce.
- 8.2 Evidence of effective workforce planning and commitment to equality and inclusion will form part of any future inspection undertaken by the HMICFRS.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 As set out in the report, the Service is actively seeking collaboration opportunities with the Nottinghamshire Police and neighbouring fire and

rescue services in several areas of service activity, most notably learning and development activities. Current activity is set out within the report.

- 9.2 The decision to collaborate with the Nottinghamshire Police to share a Joint Headquarters from October 2021 will have significant workforce implications for the Service. These will be addressed and managed by the Head of People and Organisational Development as the project lead for the Human Resources and People workstream.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of the report.

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

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER