

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority



MEETING	Executive Committee
DATE OF MEETING	29 July 2015
OFFICER	Lynne Swift, Director of People & Organisational Development
LEAD MEMBER	Councillor Roger Reed
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Apprenticeship Scheme
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>This report consists of two main strands. The first consists of proposals and recommendations for adopting an apprenticeship scheme in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (the 'Authority') for various Support Services and Service Delivery roles including that of Firefighter (Ff).</p> <p>The second strand proposes the creation of an Apprentice Sponsorship Scheme to support the on-call duty system.</p> <p>The internal apprenticeship scheme would offer a comprehensive programme of learning on which to build a skilled and flexible workforce. Such a scheme would be an efficient, economic and flexible method of recruitment and staff development and will enable the Authority to continue to attract, recruit and develop staff for Service Delivery and Support Services roles whilst maintaining the flexibility not to award regular contracts of employment at the end of the apprenticeship period should the Authority not require those additions to the establishment. Furthermore, by adopting such a scheme the Authority would be supporting the U.K. Government's ambition to create 3 million apprenticeships by 2020, as part of which public bodies are to be set targets for the establishment of apprenticeships within their workforces.</p> <p>The apprentices would be employed by an Apprentice Training Agency partner rather than the Authority giving maximum flexibility for the authority. At the end of the apprenticeship period, individuals may be offered employment with the Authority from the range</p>

	<p>of contracts available to operational staff at that time.</p> <p>If adopted, an apprenticeship scheme would offer an additional route of entry into the Authority however it would not preclude the Authority from recruiting staff by other methods.</p> <p>It is further recommended that the Authority creates and promotes an Apprenticeship Partnership Scheme whereby the authority may give consideration to partially or fully funding apprentice posts within other primary employers. In return, the Authority would expect the primary employer to release the apprentice for service as an On-call Firefighter during business hours.</p>
<p>ACTION</p>	<p>Decision.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS</p>	<p>It is recommended that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An organisational wide apprenticeship scheme which forms part of the resourcing process linking to the workforce plan is approved. 2. The pursuit of partnership arrangements with external training providers is approved. 3. The Authority creates and promotes an Apprentice Sponsorship Scheme to support the on-call duty system, local businesses and young people in the community who are not in education, employment or training (NEETS).
<p>RISK MANAGEMENT</p>	<p>The two main risks to the Authority are resilience and retention:</p> <p>Resilience – In the medium term an apprenticeship scheme could mitigate some resilience concerns by anticipating and addressing foreseeable, potential gaps in the workforce (particularly operational) prior to any detrimental effects being experienced by the Authority. Additionally, the same apprentices would be suitable for mitigation of staffing issues in other Service Delivery or Support Services roles on an ad hoc or planned basis.</p> <p>Retention – Apprentices will be recruited into specific development posts and will not be offered contracts with guaranteed employment beyond the apprenticeship period at the time of appointment. Therefore, if after completion of an apprenticeship the Authority does not require that person’s services in a substantive role, the individual will not be offered a</p>

	<p>permanent contract. However, the individual will have achieved a qualification which will improve their prospects of future employment, either within or outside of the Authority.</p>
<p>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</p>	<p>Government sets guidance on minimum apprentice pay. Salary progression options have been modelled and detailed in Appendix 1. An associated growth bid will be submitted for Firefighter apprentices. Other departments requiring apprentices will need to do so by submitting their own growth bids unless the apprenticeship is being financed by a vacant post on the establishment of that department (as is the case with KIS).</p> <p>Historically, persons joining the Authority in a Firefighter role have attended residential basic training out of county for approximately 3 months. For operational firefighter apprentices, the bulk of the training would be provided in-house on a watch-based basis. Therefore, the traditional costs associated with residential recruit training (approximately £7,500 per recruit) would therefore be negated.</p> <p>Other training costs may be incurred for induction and other short training modules such as B.A. training. It is envisaged that details and costs for these modules would be similar to those provided for On-call employees. Other costs, such as employment checks, medicals, uniform would be the same as for other new employees.</p> <p>For non-operational Service Delivery roles and other Support Services staff roles, e.g. Finance, ICT, the training provided will take place in-house and with a recognised training provider, relevant to the subject matter of the apprenticeship.</p>
<p>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</p>	<p>Under the Deregulation Act 2015 from 26 May 2015 “apprenticeship frameworks” are being phased out and replaced by “approved apprenticeship standards” in respect of English apprenticeships. The Authority has been, and continues to be, involved with other fire and rescue authorities in developing these standards.</p>
<p>CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATION</p>	<p>This apprenticeship model is of interest across the Thames Valley and collaboration will be factored into the detailed implementation plan following approval.</p> <p>Additionally, BMKFA is part of a multi-FRS group that is currently developing the standard for Business Fire</p>

	<p>Safety advisor and will be collaborating with Greater Manchester and Staffordshire FRS' on the creation of a new standard for the firefighter apprenticeships.</p>
<p>HEALTH AND SAFETY</p>	<p>The Working Time Regulations will apply and be adhered to. Normal Health and Safety requirements when recruiting apprentices will also be applicable. Apprentices will work within current Health and Safety legislation and in line with all Authority Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of Work.</p> <p>It is proposed that initially the Authority will not recruit anyone under the age of 18 for operational roles (in line with current operational recruitment criteria). Under 18's may be recruited for Support Services roles however strict work time restrictions will apply.</p> <p>Subject to Authority lone working procedures, Apprentices can work alone once a reasonable level of role related competence is achieved and they are deemed by the employer to be safe to do so.</p> <p>Apprentices can work night shifts (once aged over 18).</p>
<p>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</p>	<p>The recruitment of apprentices would provide an opportunity to refresh the workforce from all members of the community who are eligible for full-time employment in the UK. Despite the recommendation not to recruit under 18's for operational roles, there is no upper age limit for individuals starting apprenticeships. 16 to 18 year olds could be considered for non-operational roles if the Authority chose to do so. Additional funding for training is available for people in this age group. This would be payable to the training provider which for non-ops roles is not likely to be the Authority.</p> <p>An apprenticeship scheme would support central government's drive to reduce the numbers of young people who are not in education, employment or training.</p> <p>An apprentice model of training for firefighter roles could assist with addressing some of the challenges in attracting recruits to Service Delivery from a diverse cross-section of the community. There would be no concerns regarding absences from family life for approximately 3 months to attend residential training, and therefore be more attractive to those unable to</p>

	<p>commit to such an absence due to cultural or family commitments (i.e. caring for children, elderly or disabled family members).</p>
<p>USE OF RESOURCES</p>	<p>Contribution to the achievement of strategic objectives: An organisational apprenticeship scheme would support the Authority in achieving its workforce strategy (2015-20 Corporate Plan, Strategic Enabler 1 – ‘To optimise the contribution and well-being of our people’) by using the opportunity provided by apprenticeship schemes to ‘adapt and refresh the workforce to improve service delivery, resilience and deliver PSP outcomes’ (BMKFRS 2015 – 20 Corporate Plan). This is especially prevalent when considered in regard to the steadily increasing age of the operational workforce and the need to develop new skills in the Authority.</p> <p>Communication with stakeholders: Stakeholder communication (including with Rep Bodies) is a significant element of the success of the apprenticeship scheme. Communication will be via normal channels and will be ongoing with line management to ensure that the system is being implemented consistently across the service.</p> <p>System of internal control: Regular reports will be provided to the Strategic Management Board on the progress and effectiveness of the apprenticeship scheme.</p>
<p>PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS</p>	<p>Frameworks for FRS related apprenticeships are already published or are in development. The links below lead to the existing framework for Firefighter apprenticeships (1.) and a framework in development (2.) in which the Authority is participating in the development of. Staffs FRS already employ apprentices and a link to a case study of one of their Firefighters is available at link 3. Link 4. Redirects to the recent government statement on apprenticeship targets and the public services’ role in achieving these.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Firefighter Apprenticeship Framework: http://afo.sscalliance.org/frameworkslibrary/download.cfm?FRID=FR01263 2. Business Fire Safety Advisor Standard, providing information on the new style framework for apprenticeships: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/

	<p>uploads/attachment_data/file/411722/FIRE RE SCUE - Business Fire Safety Advisor Standard.pdf</p> <p>3. Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service, case study of a firefighter apprentice http://www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/2504.asp;</p> <p>4. Government statement published 14 June 2015 relating to apprenticeship targets and the public services. https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-kick-starts-plans-to-reach-3-million-apprenticeships;</p>
APPENDICES	Appendix 1 – Financial options
TIME REQUIRED	10 Minutes.
REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT	<p>Lynne Swift lswift@bucksfire.gov.uk 01296 744679</p>