

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Consolidated Feedback

**Following the internal consultation of the revised People Strategy 2016/2020
carried out between July and August 2015**

Section	You Said....	Response/Action/Improvement made....
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General	Measuring success. How will we measure staff satisfaction?	This strategy will now provide a link to a number of key critical success factors i.e. safety stats, sickness levels, staff turnover and retention levels, well-being and culture surveys, top 100 not-for-profit companies, resilience/critical skill gaps etc.
Well-being	Ensure the utmost well-being of our people- What is the plan for this?	This is part of the employee proposition and the well-being section of the strategy. This will set the direction for future plans. BFRS will set frameworks and encourage staff. Staff will also be expected to take responsibility.
Employee Relations	Develop procedures to specifically support diversity- What does this mean?	Strategy amended to provide more clarity
Well-being	Support Women Fire-fighters- Needs to be clarified	The strategy now provides more clarity. This relates to supporting female staff through the Menopause
Talent Management	I think there should be an additional bullet point along the lines of 'develop a robust programme for those who require further development to improve their performance	This is part of all manager responsibilities as part of the Appraisal and Performance Management processes and is captured in these procedures. Strategy will link to these.
General	The only change that needs to be changed as far as I can see is the general description of the Employee Proposition. I'd be grateful if you could replace the statement	Amended

Section	You Said....	Response/Action/Improvement made....
General	May want to clarify that "top 100 best organisations to work for" is in the not-for-profit category rather than overall	Now clarified in strategy
General	Under 'Assumptions' it would be good to refer to the recently signed MOU regarding collaboration with partners (I really like the fact you have linked and referred to the PSP, Corporate Plan and MTFP in the previous section)	The MOU is now referred to in a key strategic statement on collaboration opportunities
General	Under 'The 4 pillars of our People Strategy' you will need to reference the source of the diagram	Source to be included in final version
Well-being	Under 'Well-being' we state "Support employees who may have to care for sick or elderly relatives". I think we also need to extend this to young and/or disabled dependents.	To be included
Employee relations	Do we have any desire to move towards performance related pay? I recognise we do this to some extent with ARAs and honoraria, but does this topic need a mention in this document, or is this covered within "Reward and recognise our best performing people"?	Performance related pay is already part of the reward process and this theme could be developed upon within "Reward and recognise our best performing people"

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Employee relations	Under 'Employee Relations Strategy' I would recommend avoiding the use of the term "meritocracy" as it comes with political and theological connotations. We may simply want to say openness here (to go with trust) as the principle of employee development and advancement is already well covered in this document	Removed
General	Personally, I think the diagram at the end would be better at the front so people can see at the start how the framework hangs together (although accept a number of people would argue the opposite). It also needs to be rotated and the page orientation set to landscape to make it more easily readable on screen.	Re-orientated, will consider whether it goes at the front or back in final version
General	<p>There is an amount of overlap in the statements</p> <p>Resourcing Strategy –</p> <p>Refresh the workforce through new ways of working; including new employment schemes links with Assist with the future design and shape of the service in line with demand, risk and longer term financial planning</p> <p>Provide a wider range of services with less staff links with Develop procedures to specifically support diversity and Explore collaboration and secondment opportunities with other organisations and look for ways to diversify our brand</p> <p>Develop flexible working practices where appropriate, to support the organisation and our</p>	Noted, these statements will be reconsidered to minimise overlap

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	<p>employees links to Provide alternative working arrangements for employees where appropriate</p> <p>Wellbeing Strategy – Periodically survey the welfare of our staff and make improvements from our findings links to Manage workplace stress and Analyse trends and implement initiatives to improve outcomes.</p> <p>Employee Relations Strategy – Develop employee retention schemes links to Reward and recognise our best performing people Develop a culture of employee involvement links to Ensure BFRS remains a great place to work</p>	
Talent Management	Need to think about Development Centres and Acceleration programmes for best performing staff as a lot of support staff have no means of achieving promotion due to their line management being ops staff.	Noted. Appropriate elements of future ADC's will be opened up for support services staff in 2016.
Talent Management	Is the intention to programme robust, fair and timely development centres for support staff?	Development centres will be run for Support services staff
Talent Management	For ops staff within the organisation there is a very clear development structure within the ranks system – is there the same for support staff? For example are support staff aware of the different levels of roles within the organisation that they can develop into i.e. job role/grade etc.	Although Operational employees have separate technical knowledge requirements, there will be development opportunities for a range of support services functions, including technical/specific roles.

Section	You Said....	Response/Action/Improvement made....
General	Measuring success- I agree that the document should give some insight into how we are going to measure these initiatives and that progress on the initiatives should be able to be tracked.	Strategy now links to progress and provides an opportunity for all employees to contribute to translating this strategy into practice.
General	This is a great, aspirational document and is a good basis for discussion. I felt that some of the observations that were made in the briefing this afternoon centred around communication with some of the middle managers in the room feeling that communication wasn't cascading down and/or they were not aware of outcomes when they had fed up on issues. I think we do need to be mindful that if we ask for engagement by way of suggestions from the front line staff that we close the loop and ensure that we give the rationale if suggestions are not taken forward.	The document will be amended to include that line management will, if they get information fed upwards from employees or they have made suggestions that these are acknowledged and responded to with rationale.
General	I whole heartedly support the aspiration of entering the top 100 not for profit companies. The one thing that was missing from the Strategy/proposition was detail. Too much of a high level document to be taken to the floor.	The strategy has been developed further to include access to more relevant detail. The strategy will promote the role of managers to translate the strategy into tactics and will ask for regular updates on initiatives to be provided.
General	As well as group consultation sessions, I think it is important to give individuals the opportunity to reflect on the document / proposition and feedback through an individual portal.	This will be included in the next round of consultation in addition to the planned focus groups

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General	I believe we still have a lot of silos with in the service, and not all Managers (at varying levels) are displaying the behaviours that will be required to take this forward. For example the recent (on-going) Managers workshops, some middle managers have had to be dragged along kicking and screaming. Recently an expression of interest was circulated to all those currently working the Bank/Ops Pool. Station Commanders were not included in this circulation but apparently we have to give permission for our staff to take part.	Noted. Perhaps wider than People Strategy. Suggest some facilitated discussion with the right group of managers will lead to improvement.
General	Perhaps the one thing I would put forward as feedback is that, can additional work be put in to helping raise manager awareness about the important role they play in leading their teams, and explaining why things happen, or proactively trying to improve things, rather than just hearing their issues and passing them on.	Line Managers responsibilities need to be made more explicit in the strategy so we are proposing that there is a focus in all 4 strands that responsibility is explicitly embedded within line management. We will also enhance the section on leadership.
General	Granting of TOIL would go a long way to providing flexibility for our members. Some employees would like to take off part of a shift through TOIL to pick up kids from School etc.	This will be considered for the future. A specific option being considered is a formalised approach to exchanging duty with another member of staff for part of a shift.
General	The buying and selling of leave is a very important current topic that needs progressing as a priority.	Head of HR is in the process of designing how this works and is working with management for future proposal

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Well-being	Mental Health is a growing concern could there be more focus on prevention of workplace stress?	<p>We are now involved in the MIND Blue Light Programme and managers are actively encouraged to attend and to encourage and facilitate the attendance of their own staff.</p> <p>PAM Assist is already on offer and has been for several years.</p> <p>Mental Health awareness training for managers will be coming into the Service in December with the initial focus being on Watch and Station Commanders and Support Staff equivalents.</p> <p>More initiatives will follow the People strategy</p>
General	Not strong enough can an initiative name be devised something like "365 Alive" as it would aid buy in. the title needs to be more tangible.	Suggestions for an improved title are welcome.
Resourcing	Could there be included more focus on collaboration with other services and shared working practices and how this affects different members of staff i.e working in different cultures.	This will be included as a specific item in the strategy and the engagement process. It will also be added to our TNA for 2016
General	Don't like the title needs more impact.	Suggestions welcome

Section	You Said....	Response/Action/Improvement made....
General	Support for people with literacy issues who have no confidence in writing.	<p>Functional skills will be included in the Talent Management strategy.</p> <p>One example of such support is the availability of an e-learning package to improve spelling, punctuation and Grammar available to all employees now.</p> <p>Confidential dyslexia assessments are available for any member of staff who thinks they may have dyslexia. Reasonable adjustments can and have been made to assist staff with identified difficulties.</p>
Well-being	<p>Need to focus on:</p> <p>1 in 10 people being carers 1 in 4 people who suffer from mental health issues.</p>	<p>Will be included</p> <p>As part of the wellbeing strategy consideration may be given to setting up a Carers Support Group (Kent FRS and Kent Police do this). Alongside (or instead of) this the service could signpost staff to existing support groups such as Carers Bucks.</p> <p>In December the Authority will be signing the Blue Light Pledge which recognises the Service's efforts to reduce stigma around mental health. The Mind Blue Light Programme, Mental Health Awareness Training for managers, the employment of a welfare officer and the availability of a confidential stress helpline (PAM Assist)</p>

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General	As we move forward and need to work with other organisations more we need a wider range of accreditation and qualifications to enable this.	Will be included in the Talent Management section
General	Employee proposition. This is a dated phrase that has been dropped by other organisations.	Any suggestions for an alternative would be welcomed. We would welcome examples of where this has been dropped as our research suggests this is a term in common usage across many industry sectors.
Resourcing	Is this representing communities or representing a proportion of the community as they mean different things? What are we trying to achieve?	We will maintain our diversity aims, so far as is possible. Strategy amended to clarify
Resourcing	The last bullet point "with less staff" this sets a negative tone, does it need to be in the document if it is obvious? Suggest delete with less staff	Removed
General	There is an opportunity to give something back to the community and put our money where our mouth is such as allowing staff to work a number of days a year working for a charity on pay. Possibly sponsoring a charity and providing them with free labour to help them.	Consider for brand establishment. The charitable work already carried out will need to be evidence for top 100 also. It has been suggested that with the diversity of skills that we already possess (i.e. ICT, finance, procurement, H&S, etc...) we could as an organisation concentrate on one particular charity for a year at a time and make a very strong impact on that one organisation. Timberland and M&S for instance have taken this approach in the past as do some military units.

Section	You Said....	Response/Action/Improvement made....
Well-being	Medium term retirement planning could be improved.	As this progresses include in strategy. Good example of current initiative: Following feedback from last year's pre-retirement courses we have added an additional course this year aimed at staff with 5-10 years of service remaining before a potential retirement date.
Resourcing	Potential for changing the rules on abatement to retain and not lose essential skills.	The Authority will not be considering changes to the rules on abatement at this time, as it would be at odds with our Talent Management Strategy.
General	The content of the document is sufficient and easily readable for people to understand although there will undoubtedly be project plans resulting they do not need to be in a strategy document such as this. An aims and action plan saying what is planned to be completed by 2016 should be sufficient to compliment the strategy.	An aims and action plan saying what is planned to be completed by 2016 will complement the strategy.
General	Could we identify some quick wins and deal with these first so to get some 'buy in' and therefore enthusiasm for the initiative.	Taken on board. Will explore quick wins
Talent Management	If acceleration programmes are included then I have concerns that employees may not be able to operate at a high level for over 30 years. We need to make sure the supports are in place before we move to that level.	Noted
Talent Management	There needs to be more emphasis on succession planning.	Noted

Section	You Said....	Response/Action/Improvement made....
Talent Management	Suggest change the wording from Talent Management to succession planning as Talent Management has connotations of elitism.	Noted
General	Meritocracy. This noun means different things to different people and is not a good word to use for this reason.	Removed
Talent Management	Direct entry to management .This is a concern; will it be part of the initiative?	The Authority will look at entry beyond single point to see if it is appropriate as part of strategic workforce planning.
Talent Management	Recommend that Managerial and Operational skill sets are recognised separately in the organisation as lack of match ups currently make the organisation a bit rigid and the wrong people can end up in the wrong job.	Consider recommendations for future Org Design in line with demand / risk and financial planning as part of the engagement. Strategy is being developed around future demand and risk plans and diversified services.
General	Getting people involved, engaging with staff. One thing we are doing already is tiered managerial workshops.	Noted Staff engagement to continue during the Autumn with a series of departmental, team and watch visits.
General	Getting people involved engaging with staff Watch Commanders as they know their teams.	Noted

Section	You Said....	Response/Action/Improvement made....
General	Getting people involved engaging with staff Focus Group Facilitators as a development opportunity from any level in the organisation advertise and train to be facilitators in focus groups.	This has been adopted as an approach. Please help by promoting this within your teams. As above, this is being rolled out in the Autumn. Managers are actively encouraged to nominate staff members to be part of this process.
General	Getting people involved engaging with staff - No consultants	Noted
General	Getting people involved engaging with staff Ensure feedback is provided in some form of live document and responses communicated.	Noted. Feedback will be communicated.
Talent Management	Succession planning. Need to be conscious of retaining knowledge and managing the knowledge of support staff.	Ensure that retention and succession planning is included in engagement and strategy
Talent Management	External accreditation for health and well-being	Noted. One example is the recent decision to train all managers in identifying, mitigating and dealing with workplace stress, facilitated by the charity MIND.
Resourcing	Add "older employees" to last bullet point	Noted
Resourcing	Need procedures to support an ageing workforce	Included
Well-being	Add mental health	Included
Talent Management	We should consider entry at all levels	Noted

Section	You Said....	Response/Action/Improvement made....
Resourcing	Corporate brand. We make a great deal of emphasis on our brand, yet we are inconsistent with advertising our brand logo.	Noted
Resourcing	RE reflecting the diverse communities we serve as far as possible. Say what it is we are seeking as an outcome, as opposed to what we are trying to do; a subtle difference!	Diversity policy refers. Strategy amended.
Talent Management	Equip managers with skills to manage a multi-generational workforce. Up-skilling and e-learning. Change the focus to highly skilled staff, not up-skilled. Not convinced we should detail delivery method e.g. e-learning.	Amended. Enhance the skills of staff when appropriate and develop a blended approach to learning
General	Getting people involved engaging with staff. It is important that the Rep Bodies are kept updated on the initiative.	<p>At the Joint Consultation Forum on 30 July 2015 the Rep Bodies were appraised of the intention to roll out this initiative including the fact that facilitators will be trained in order to fully engage and involve staff in focus groups to inform and consult. UNISON, FOA and FBU provided their support and wish to be kept updated and involved. The Workforce Strategy will become a standing item at the Consultation Forum to keep rep bodies updated.</p> <p>Comments from rep bodies who attended the September Consultation Forum are included in this feedback</p>
General	How are we going to retain and recruit top talent when most of the support staff have had a pay cut in the last few years?	The Authority introduced a revised pay and reward model in 2014. The objective was to ensure a fair and equitable pay structure for support staff across the Authority to attract and retain the right calibre talent.

Section

You Said....

Response/Action/Improvement made....

		<p>As part of the work the Authority carried out an equal pay audit, which included departmental line managers reviewing Job descriptions which were then re-evaluated.</p> <p>The outcome of the equal pay audit was: 17% of posts increased in grade 45% remained the same 38% were too highly graded and work was subsequently undertaken with Line managers and staff to rectify the situation in line with agreed procedures.</p> <p>This re-evaluation was a snapshot in time and those employees who saw a reduction in salary were pay protected for 2 years</p> <p>The new system now includes mechanisms to support the aim of recruiting and retaining the right calibre talent; including if appropriate market supplements or appropriate changes to career grades.</p> <p>Through our relevant procedures, managers are encouraged to review roles and responsibilities regularly to ensure any changes are reflected appropriately in grading.</p> <p>There are several examples of roles being upgraded, resulting in an increased reward package since the equal pay audit.</p>
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Section	You Said....	Response/Action/Improvement made....
		Our support staff turnover rate does not support a view that we have difficulty retaining talented staff.
General	<p>Timelines for delivery and engagement - The biggest issues on Station are related to trust, morale and motivation.</p> <p>There is a large amount of mistrust. We need to give crews more information, the figures part is easy but when it comes to the future options on shifts it is unclear what is needed as we don't have a starting point. Staff are scared of coming up with something new because the trust just isn't there. Therefore the timelines of delivering a new employment offer with a projected timeline of 3 years reduced to 2 is very optimistic.</p>	<p>Will provide more information and promote ownership of strategic aims.</p> <p>Senior management to be visible and transparent. Middle managers to confirm support needed Encourage shadowing managers. Managers to maintain briefings, 1:1's, Appraisals etc. Encourage ideas. Employee involvement and engagement. Good Rep Body relations. Ensure All line managers are engaged and committed to org goals. Work systems will be driven by risk/demand once data available – opportunity for employees to shape this. The vision can be realised with a commitment from all. The corporate plan contains detail on objectives.</p>
General	Engagement Expect difficulties because FF's won't go round the rep bodies, they will only go through them	Rep bodies have been given a commitment to full involvement and are being updated regularly through consultation.
General	Generic feedback on the proposition. The impression on the ground is that employee proposition is deteriorating and not improving.	The aim of this project is to turn this perception around and create an improved working environment and offer.

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General	Having a clear deadline with milestones would aid to gaining buy in.	The strategy will link to a plan and details of progress which will contain examples. It will also promote ownership through examples of strategic aims translated into local projects and initiatives.
General	Firmer guidelines and timescales are needed as the document is very scant and high level. It needs more meat and some examples.	Noted
General	Needs – Milestones, dates, details and support.	Noted
General	Scepticism about the organisations ability to deliver this strategy and it will probably be classed as too difficult and shelved.	The SMB are committed to achieving this and will support managers to implement.
General	It is important to provide some examples for the shop floor i.e the tools to deliver.	The strategy will link to a plan and details of progress which will contain examples.
General	We need to listen to staff, look at the example of the leave procedure it did a lot of damage in six months and although fixed now it will take a long time to recover from it.	<p>The vision for the next 3 years is to empower managers to make decisions at an appropriate level.</p> <p>Staff will be listened to and asked what they want to happen to make this a better place to work.</p>
General	The USAR example is another when staff became engaged eventually it was resolved but it had had been 12 months at loggerheads before that.	Things have improved since then, when staff were engaged with. This resulted in a swift resolution to satisfy all parties, an example of what can be achieved.
Employee Relations	Local T&C's The staff have the perception that change is to the employees detriment. No security / no trust: it will be difficult to get to a local T&C's situation as staff feel safe in the grey book T&C's.	<p>Fear of change is common, the project will look for positive demonstrative results early.</p> <p>Any proposed changes to T&C's will be transparently communicated with rationale so that staff can understand the reason for the</p>

Section	You Said....	Response/Action/Improvement made....
		proposed change and the benefits.
General	I think we should be looking for easy, little wins first before looking for bigger things.	Noted
General	Delivering - For support staff: to turn the tide of opinion is difficult – need to put money where our mouths are. If we say we are going to do something positive then do it.	Noted
General	It is a good aspiration to have to be in the Top 100. Needs clear direction and key aims otherwise it just looks like a front to achieve political aims.	<p>Consider benchmarking against the current top 100. Engagement with ALL staff will take place to ask them what would make it the best.</p> <p>The key element of Top 100 accreditation is a staff survey. Top 100 status can only be achieved if the workforce consider themselves to be part of such an organisation. The proposition that is offered to staff to achieve this will therefore have to be grounded in outcomes of mutual appeal to both the Authority and the staff.</p>
General	Lots of people think that the Brigade has lost its soul. How do we bring that back? We are not a business but now we are so business like in the way we talk and everything we do.	<p>Noted – there may be opportunities to find a new soul and would welcome ideas.</p> <p>An outcome of the strategy is to promote the vision, values and employee engagement.</p> <p>Culture surveys will also be undertaken.</p>

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General	Engagement Groups- SM's are affected also and our views need to be considered, not just the staff.	Ensure that engagement with SM's is increased and that consultation with them takes place on the proposed changes.
General	The duty officer pilot is still on-going, there has been no outcome, we are still doing it but there has been no consultation.	Noted
General	Examples of initiative not being conducted effectively. Physical fitness procedure is out but the facilities are not in place (treadmills) this is an example of not doing things properly.	It is accepted by senior management that this has not gone as smoothly as would have been hoped but focus is still on finding a solution quickly.
General	Resources are a major concern, especially with a reduction in the number of SM's.	SM's are not expected to manage change alone. There is a project group that has been tasked with identifying improvements.
General	Financial resources must underpin this also.	Noted as the project progresses the financial envelope can be identified, at this point the costs of change are unknown
General	Support staff. Workforce Strategy Document seems to focus just on WT and On call not Support Staff.	The strategy will encompass all staff and be assured the views and needs of the support staff will be included.
General	It should include all sections of the workforce equally.	Noted.
General	Strategy. The document doesn't tell us how it is going to work and needs to.	<p>The strategy will set the intended direction, an action plan linked to this strategy will provide the details of how.</p> <p>Managers are also encouraged to translate strategy into local initiatives and projects</p>

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General	Coherent strategy. Did anyone know that the RMT have just put out a message for staff to offer to sign up to a new way of working? – No one knows why or what it's about!! No-one in the room knows anything about it!	Noted – recommend that RMT notify SM's prior to any new initiative.
General	Coherent strategy. Individualism is taking over and managers don't know what is going on.	Noted
General	Whoever goes out to talk to staff will need to be able to put some meat on the bones of this.	<p>The latest draft of the strategy links to examples of progress and gives examples of initiatives.</p> <p>Prior to the autumn engagement exercise, watch and team managers will be requested to brief their teams on the CFO's vision for the next 3 years, the Workforce Strategy and the MTFP. The staff going out to the workforce will be there to facilitate a discussion around these issues and to garner further feedback on what aspects of their working life they would like to change/retain in return for what type of reward.</p>
General	Facilitation . It would be better if the engagement was done by someone unconnected to the station.	<p>Facilitators will be recruited from a cross section of the organisation.</p> <p>This is being incorporated into the plan, as is the facilitation being conducted by pairings combining one Support Staff and one Operational member of staff.</p>
General	It's hard to get anyone to attend focus groups. People are always putting themselves out on their own days.	It is not mandatory for staff to attend focus groups.

Section	You Said....	Response/Action/Improvement made....
General	Remember that the Station Managers are a staff group too. They need to be engaged with.	Noted
General	The aspiration is brilliant but there has to be commitment to every single piece of it. Quick wins are important.	Noted. Quick wins have been identified.
Well-being	Occupational Health Service is a priority, can we have some feedback on the feedback provided regarding the service.	<p>Cannot provide feedback on particular cases.</p> <p>Managers will be aware that the occupational Health service is outsourced to PAM, under a wide contract which includes other BCC and Aylesbury Vale CC partners. The specific needs of BMKFRS is covered in detail.</p> <p>The Head of HR meets monthly with the PAM accounts manager to manage the contract for services, review usage and can escalate concerns that staff have raised during that month which have not been adequately dealt with.</p> <p>There has been some considerable improvement in the OH services, including more locations and faster booking and reporting. Feedback from those attending medicals is still mixed, with many having a good and satisfactory experience, whilst some do still have concerns.</p> <p>Complaints and concerns can be raised directly with PAM by employees. Where issues are raised with HR staff after appointments we will pursue these with PAM and feedback responses to the individuals directly.</p>

Section**You Said....****Response/Action/Improvement made....**

		We will continue to manage the service so welcome constructive feedback, and we will seek all opportunities to have a consistently improved service, including if appropriate alternative providers at an appropriate time.
General	How are we going to ensure that the On Call are engaged considering there is no spare time for engagement?	Additional drill night for facilitators meetings.