



## **Annex B**

### **Fire Reform - Delivering the Authority's current and future workforce reform programme 2016-2020**

#### **1) Overview**

**This annex sets out the significant examples of outputs and initiatives currently underway and those planned.**

The Authority continues to look to the future and enable an innovative workforce reform programme. The programme builds on the achievements set out in Annex A and Appendix 1 and aligns with the Authority approved new Corporate Plan 2015 to 2020 and new Public Safety Plan (PSP) 2015 to 2020. The previous PSP 2012 to 2017 was delivered two years earlier than planned.

In summer 2015 the Strategic Management Board (SMB) reviewed its approach to employee communications to promote employee and wider stakeholder engagement being at the heart of the workforce reform programme. A series of 'Looking to the Future' workshops were rolled out throughout the Service from August 2015 to February 2016 with a team of employee volunteers trained to facilitate them. The main outcomes and next steps are being considered by senior management, however quick wins are already being actioned.

#### **2) Refreshing the workforce reform strategic aims**

The new 2015 - 20 PSP and Corporate plans place significant emphasis on collaboration, partnerships, new ways of working and diversification of services. Opportunities have been identified to: refresh the ageing workforce; continue to diversify services, whilst maintaining resilience of core services; and enable duty systems to match demand and risk profiles, supported by a range of employment propositions to attract and retain a flexible, diverse workforce. These opportunities have been integrated into refreshed workforce reform strategic aims and translated into an interactive **People Strategy**.

The **People Strategy** 2015 to 2020 sets out our approach and is the foundation for delivering future sustainable workforce reform which optimises the contribution and well-being of our people, to deliver the authority's objectives. It was approved by Members in February 2016.

This phase of the workforce reform programme aims to ensure that the Authority has a resilient, sustainable, high performing, diverse, flexible, agile workforce, motivated to act as advocates in the community.

The People Strategy also captures the essence of the Authority's values, what we stand for, and, encompasses why people are proud and motivated to work here.

It sets out the unique range of benefits offered by the Authority in return for employees willingly utilising their diverse talents, their contribution and working together to make Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest places to live, work and travel.

Alongside the vision and values, the People Strategy could be positioned as the 'organisational glue' which holds the Service together, particularly during periods of transformation.

<b>What the Authority needs to deliver the vision, promote its values and ensure future proofed excellent community service delivery.</b>	<b>What employees need to be highly motivated, engaged, high performing, proud advocates for Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service being a great place to work.</b>
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Outcomes and benefits sought include:

- Fit for purpose, flexible terms and conditions supported by new 'performance' contract of employment.
- A culture of customer service, high performance, accountability, high employee engagement and advocacy.
- Organisational 'identity' that holds the organisation together when pressures for disintegration are predicted to increase.
- A modern approach to employee relations.
- Retention tools to deliver aspects of our talent management strategy.
- Potential to reduce recruitment costs, short term absence costs, reduction in case management activities.

### **3) Aligning resources to finances and risk and demand profiles**

The Authority is reviewing its resources to meet its risk and demand. For planning purposes the Service has been broken down into five geographical areas. Working with a company that specialises in risk analysis, we are modelling a range of scenarios that will enable realigning the resources required within each area to meet the known level of demand. A range of resourcing options are being worked up to enable us to manage every day demand and the more infrequent incidents that require large numbers of resources. This has led to development of new employment propositions for staff whether whole-time or on-call (see section on Resource Management Team below). The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is aligned to this and is reviewed regularly.

#### **3.1) Refreshing the workforce - Apprenticeships**

The scheme was approved by members in July 2015 and covers support services, fire-fighters, community safety and promotion of 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). For the 2016/17 year, 22 firefighter apprentices have commenced their training programme on 12 August 2016 and four support services apprentices have joined on various dates May to September 2016.

Apprenticeships are a significant element of central government's strategy to build workplace skills and government targets of 2.3 per cent of 'new start' apprenticeships each year are to be introduced alongside a levy of 0.5 per cent of pay bills, the latter from April 2017. Details on the 2.3 per cent targets are awaited.

The Authority's Apprenticeship initiatives are built into the workforce plan and aim to meet the government target of 2.3 per cent of workforce taking up apprenticeships for the foreseeable future. This is an innovative piece of work, which will assist with refreshing the workforce, however it won't be the only intervention used to aid recruitment. It is part of a wider strategy which will look at the skills required for the coming years.

Apprentices are employed by the Apprenticeship Training Agency for the duration of the training programmes. The Authority has the option to employ participants on completion of the programme and this would be on localised terms and conditions. This innovative approach to apprenticeships allows for demand fluctuations and impacts of other workforce reform initiatives.

Interest from other Services in our approach is high. On 7 September 2016 we will be sharing our initiatives with other Services at a planned in house event and on 28 September 2016 presenting alongside Merseyside and other Services at a Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) national apprenticeships workshop.

The Authority is also actively supporting the development of new apprentice 'trail blazer' standards for fire fighters and community safety occupations, which need to be in place to give all English Fire and Rescue Services more options to meet the 2.3 per cent targets.

### **3.3) Innovative Resource Management initiatives**

#### **Bank and Operations Pool systems and Flexible firefighter roles**

Formed in preparation for the switch over to the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) in 2015, the Resource Management Team (RMT) has been in operation since 1 November 2014.

The team is responsible for crewing of the Operational Support Room (OSR) when required.

The RMT provides TVFCS with live information on operational resource availability for 24 hour periods. This includes:-

- Organising cover moves.
- Organising standby's (including prearranged).
- Managing the operational resource pool, bank system & flexible firefighter roles.

- Managing the BFRS global figure for leave.
- Providing a link between Duty Officers, Fire Stations and TVFCS.
- Responsibility for managing a unique 'pilot' of 11 operational staff contracted on local terms and conditions, who provide a flexible approach to operational crewing.

This team enables the effective management of resources to ensure we have the right number available each day. We are actively involved in discussions with other fire authorities to share a single resource management team.

The Bank, 'Ops Pool' and the flexible firefighter roles have provided the flexibility required to manage a lean workforce and are a cost effective solution that centralises capacity and enables staff to earn more, and in respect of On-Call they get greater exposure to training and operational incidents. Through engagement with representative body local officials we have agreed local pay rates for the bank and ops pool shifts that are outside of the grey book.

### **3.4) Area/Organisational reviews**

Project teams are reviewing various stations to fully consider options to meet the risk and demand requirements as mentioned above. These are geographical reviews but are supplemented by a full review of On-call staffing, to overcome the challenges being experienced across the whole Fire Service. Existing and potential staff are being engaged in this work to ensure full buy-in.

We are piloting a resourcing model that completely re-thinks the role and use of a firefighter, on-call and whole-time. The pilot delivers greater resilience with crews available across a range of response times (immediate, 10, 20, 60 minutes and 3 hours). We have completed a staff engagement exercise with the On-call staff to seek their views on the existing On-call duty system (we are currently expanding this to explore staff views of the existing whole-time duty systems). These views are factored into a new employment proposition for the On-call which enables fully flexible working across different sites, front line response (including medical calls) and resilience.

The need to encourage a more diverse workforce by creating more opportunity for people to be employed is also factored into the work plan.

## **4) Culture change**

The Authority is implementing a blended approach to transforming the workforce that comprises a mix of the national agenda, Authority enabled frameworks, and, localised, employee driven initiatives.

The following are some examples of initiatives that are adapting the workforce culture to encourage professionalism and positive engagement and will complement our aim of being an Employer of Choice.

### **4.1 Leadership Development**

We have rolled out a supervisory leadership three day programme and two further sessions are booked for this financial year. Equipping leaders at first line management level with the tools to lead change is essential for success.

Leadership master classes are being held with external expert speakers from various sectors to support ongoing development of organisational, commercial and political awareness, and broaden the experience of our staff. This is based on an idea raised during the autumn 2015 'Looking to the Future' workshops. We are delighted that Adrian Thomas, from the Cabinet Office is our next speaker in September 2016. Attendance is initially directed at middle and senior managers and from September this includes our Thames Valley fire service partners.

Any employee can request to shadow senior management and an increasing number are taking this opportunity in recent months. Short task and finish project opportunities are also advertised. These provide for skills development for individuals in return for delivery of important outputs relevant to the workforce reform programme. Two way secondments within and across sectors are also being considered as part of our blended learning and development approach.

## **4.2 Employee Relations and engagement**

The feedback from over 30 'Looking to the Future' workshops has been analysed by the facilitators and senior managers have reviewed the findings and recommendations:-

- Senior managers frequently visit departments and stations and are increasingly using "blogs" to improve communications across the Service.
- A successful initiative is the "Joint Consultation Forum" (JCF) which is regularly held with staff and Trade Union representatives to discuss matters of interest and consultation.

Examples of positive impacts:-

1. We introduced a new Physical Fitness testing procedure through the JCF in May 2015. An amnesty was agreed for staff that failed the fitness test for period of one year to enable them to become familiar with the fitness test and improve their fitness levels. This was supported by all the rep bodies and staff responded positively to it, providing feedback on fitness equipment they would like to see on fire stations, which the Authority had already committed funds to provide as part of its commitment to workforce health and wellbeing.
2. Staff at all levels of the organisation have a really good understanding of the challenges the Authority is facing over the period up to 2020. This has enabled them to engage in specific task and finish projects associated with delivering the people change programmes. The area review in Milton Keynes required a reduction of 12 full time operational roles. Staff knew

this was required to balance the budget and came forward with proposals for how this reduction could be delivered. We now run two fire stations with a single watch, a proposal that was developed with staff and delivered the reductions required by the MTFP.

#### **4.3 Localised terms and conditions**

- Local Terms and Conditions are already in place at several levels across a variety of staff groups. Currently several pilot initiatives of new working practices and patterns are also enabling us to trial local terms and conditions, outside NJC terms to meet local risk and demand modelling.
- The 11 flexi-firefighter roles work on local terms and conditions and they are contractually required to work anywhere in the county, have no fixed duty pattern, undertake any training including medical response at the discretion of the Authority and provide resilience in the event of industrial action. In exchange for this they receive a 15 per cent allowance on top of their basic salary.

#### **4.4 Reward and recognition**

The Authority's remuneration philosophy aims to:-

- Effectively support day-to-day service delivery, transform the authority into a value for money community service orientated, outcome driven, high performing organisation.
- Ensure that the Authority is best placed to attract, secure and retain the right calibre people to deliver our Vision; "Making Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes the safest areas to live work and travel".
- Support behavioural change and building elements of a "performance culture" into reward and recognition policy and procedures, where appropriate.

Outstanding performance is recognised and rewarded, through personal letters from the Chief Fire Officer and an annual merit award scheme, which this year has seen team and individual awards agreed.

Each year staff are invited to nominate colleagues for the Service Awards for Excellence (SAFE). This year there were 40 nominations across the 5 categories and there was a good cross section between Operational and Non-operational members of staff.

The SAFE Award categories for 2016 are:

- Staff member of the year
- Fire Station / Team / Department of the Year
- Initiative / Special achievement of the Year
- Exceptional service award
- Commitment to Equality and Diversity

These awards are presented at the Service's annual awards and long service ceremony.

We enter national awards as we understand the significant impact the recognition has on our employees. As an example this year we have been successful in winning a People Management award, in conjunction with the PPMA (Public Sector Personnel Management Association) for our work supporting and improving employee health and wellbeing.

#### **4.5 Equality and Diversity**

The latest Equality and Diversity four year objectives were agreed by the Authority in June 2016 and have been published. A forum of Diversity Champions is currently being established to assist with this important element of culture change. The Authority is engaging with other blue light services, particularly the Police to learn from their experiences and fast track progress.

#### **5) Collaboration and Service Diversification**

All reports to the Fire Authority must consider collaboration opportunities. There is a mandatory section on the report template to ensure collaboration is considered.

##### **5.1) Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Royal Berkshire and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Services was agreed by the Fire Authority during its meeting on 10 June 2015. Councillor Adrian Busby, Chairman of the Fire Authority, has signed the agreement which sets out a formal arrangement for collaborating with the other Thames Valley fire and rescue services. The MOU commits each fire and rescue service to look at collaboration within the Thames Valley as a first option, to reduce cost, improve quality and improve resilience, but does not tie the Authority in to collaborating if the option is not favourable. This is in line with recommendations of the Knight review.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/200092/FINAL\\_Facing\\_the\\_Future\\_3\\_md.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/200092/FINAL_Facing_the_Future_3_md.pdf)

In November 2015 a Thames Valley Collaboration vision was agreed by the three fire services and is set out in the Collaboration section of the cover report. The strategic aims build on the joint TV Fire Control Service and work is underway to operationally align the Services. The initial focus is on operational policy, procedures and guidance, based on national occupational standards (NOS) and national operational guidance (NOG). Also underway is a programme to standardise fleet requirements generating savings opportunities through joint procurement.

##### **5.2) Thames Valley Police (TVP)**

An MOU was signed with Thames Valley Police in 2014 relating to the sharing of property. We now have co-location at Broughton Fire Station with three more fire station site co-locations being actively pursued.

In addition, both this Authority and Thames Valley Police were successful in obtaining £2.8 million of DCLG transition funding in 2014 which has enabled the opportunity for the new Milton Keynes 'blue light hub' facility to be pursued and

which is due to open during 2018. The location of the site has also proved attractive to South Central Ambulance Service and there is high optimism that all three services will locate at the new facility.

Other work continues with TVP in respect of back office services and talks are currently underway with a view to creation of a TVP led procurement support service hub to include all three of the fire services in the Thames Valley.

### **5.3) SCAS Medical Response**

The Authority is committed to continuing to support South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) through the co-responding scheme. The benefits to public safety are both positive and measurable. Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service co-responders have made a positive contribution and have undoubtedly saved lives. The confidence gained from dealing with casualties has also paid dividends at incidents when co-responders are working in their primary roles as firefighters. Since the current response models were introduced in March 2014, BFRS has mobilised to 4476 calls.

BFRS has led on a project with the other Thames valley FRS, Hampshire FRS and SCAS to establish co-responding to medical emergencies by fire and rescue services across the South Central Ambulance Service area. The aim of this project is to achieve a consistent approach to co-responding and scaling-up the activity to a level that best meets the operational needs of South Central Ambulance Service.

BFRS is currently operating a pilot with SCAS that sees our fire appliance crews mobilised to cardiac arrests anywhere in the county if they are the nearest emergency resource. This was a voluntary scheme which was greatly supported by members and operational staff across the Service.

We are working with SCAS at a strategic organisational development level to identify opportunities to enable the development of our staff to create further mutually beneficial opportunities for joint working.

### **5.4) Blue light Thames Valley Data Sharing**

We are currently working with Thames Valley Police to develop their demand toolkit. The concept is to provide a comprehensive risk and demand profile for the Thames valley region (including health data too through SCAS). This will enable all the Services to be able to identify common themes to develop collaborative interventions to address them. It is anticipated that this will help identify individuals, families and businesses which are common to blue light and health agencies. It opens the way to being more innovative in how we approach demand by joining up our interventions and more importantly our preventative agendas. We are taking the lead on behalf of Thames Valley fire services. The project is currently at the stage where we are sharing data and working through the systems and access to these systems for partner agencies. Obviously data protection legislation is being considered and worked through too.

## **6) Improving professionalism and standards**



### **6.1) New Approach to Training**

We have de-centralised our operational training, pushing more responsibility onto the station based managers that deliver the daily training sessions to our firefighters. This has reduced the size and cost of our central training department, with a change of focus from delivery to quality assurance. Area Trainers now visit and observe training sessions delivered by operational managers to ensure that the training being delivered is of an appropriate standard and develop and support the managers that do not achieve this standard.

We developed and initially piloted a strategic partnership with Capita, the owners and operators of the Fire Service College (FSC) that complements our approach to training. The FSC have provided a development programme for our instructors (available nationally) to ensure that they are competent to be able to deliver the quality assurance assessments of our managers. Our partnership, now in its second year delivers external confirmation that firefighters maintain the appropriate competence. We contract with the Fire Service College for the independent assurance as the peer review process is unable to fulfil a similar role. These improvements were delivered along with an on-going annual saving of £200k in respect to the Authority's training budget.

### **6.2) Learning management system – menu driven blended learning**

These initiatives are supported by an integrated, streamlined and more efficient learning management system (LMS) that encompasses all training and development. This approach to menu driven blended learning has already seen the development of a combined e-Learning and training record system that provides both a cost effective approach to recording our training and allows for a more effective way to quality assure staff and plan for future needs. We have championed the work completed to date, achieved external recognition and now collaborate with a growing number of other blue light services to improve efficiency and effectiveness of learning and development support mechanisms.

### **6.3) Qualifications**

We are continually raising the standard of the technical knowledge and practical skills of all our staff. For operational staff we recently introduced the Institute of Fire Engineering (IFE) technical knowledge qualifications as part of our career development process, with a requirement for some of the papers to be progressed as part of the eligibility criteria for attendance at the assessment centre and the remainder being completed whilst working towards being deemed competent in the role.

Our support staff are encouraged to undertake professional qualifications where appropriate and the governance arrangements in place to support this is via our service wide Training Needs Analysis (TNA) which is approved quarterly by our Training Strategy Group.

### **6.4) Fire Professional Framework**

We are leading nationally on the development and implementation of the 'Fire Professional Framework' (FPF); on behalf of CFOA and the wider sector supported by Skills for Fire, in collaboration with other Services. The FPF forms the basis for the sector's workforce learning and development strategy and is based upon relevant national standards aligned with national operational guidance referred to earlier. The FPF aims to raise standards and provide a consistent 'one stop shop' web portal for all staff employed within the sector to easily access a range of materials covering learning, training, career progression models, guidance, case studies and qualifications.

A soft launch programme for the operational competence element of the FPF is underway from August to November 2016. Police Learning and Development colleagues have agreed to review and compare with the Police Professional Framework which could in time extend to further collaboration.

## **6.5) New Integrated Systems**

The Authority Systems Integration (BASI) project is underway and at this stage the priorities are a new Finance and Human Resources system allowing more autonomy and control, with manager and employee self-service key to supporting the ongoing culture change and professionalisation agenda. This will allow further reform of our support service functions.

## **7) Assurance and Transparency**

### **7.1) Operational Assurance**

BFRS has an evolving team, whose principal focus is toward the active monitoring, reviewing and debriefing of front-line crews, in order to provide reassurance to the Fire Authority, in respect of operational performance and support continuous improvement for all operational aspects. This team is also in place to ensure that in line with the BFRS assurance model that all internal and external factors and drivers are considered and appropriately factored into operational doctrine, policy and procedures and other areas of the Service such as learning and development, policy & resilience (including health & safety) and organisational development.

BFRS is in the process of commissioning an independent review of its current arrangements in respect of both operational performance along with current internal arrangements for providing this assurance to both the Fire Authority and members of the public. The main area of focus will be to examine our operational assurance and resilience, specifically to ensure that all potential input areas have been taken into consideration and that information flows through the organisation reaching all appropriate stakeholders and that the information is understood and where appropriate, informs policy decisions within internal governance arrangements.

Furthermore, this ensures that organisational business continuity arrangements are fully reviewed and fit for purpose.

### **7.2) Measuring Workforce Reform Balanced Scorecard**

Our balanced scorecard is designed to measure progress towards the achievement of the strategic objectives set out in our Corporate Plan. It includes a range of key performance indicators to demonstrate organisational performance. These indicators are underpinned by a suite of data that enables managers to influence and improve performance within the context of their own station and department plans.

The Service is committed to continuous improvement and uses a software platform, 'Viper', to enable performance data to be viewed and interrogated by managers. The Service's Performance Management Board (PMB) meets quarterly to monitor the performance of the organisation, this includes attendance management and other people measures.

To deliver the People Strategy we aim to be in a position to be the employer of choice as measured by the Best Companies guide. Progress towards this is monitored through the PMB.

## **8) Summary and further considerations**

The workforce reform programme has been reviewed to take into account the themes from the Adrian Thomas review; namely the working environment, documented conditions of service, Industrial Relations, duty systems and management of the Fire and Rescue Service. It is understood that there are 45 recommendations in the yet to be published Conditions of Service Review.

We will link the outcomes from the employee engagement workshops to our management and individual staff objectives. We will then carry out an employee engagement (culture) survey annually to measure progress and continually seek ideas for the future.

We will continue to provide opportunities for other authorities to view what we do and learn from us and vice versa. 'Do it once - not 45 times' is our aim.

We plan for succession and resilience for management and staff at all levels. This includes reviewing resources across Thames Valley as part of the collaboration work to identify opportunities to share managers where possible.

We are further developing our resourcing and response models in order to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century demand and risk, taking into account future capacity issues for any new roles and responsibilities, such as medical emergencies, that may come our way. Much of this work is reliant upon the workforce reform work continuing, as a flexible and adaptable workforce is the key to success in this area.

Our resilience arrangements will also continue to be fine-tuned and tested, with a view to widening our scope beyond our own boundaries, in respect of our resilience for those thankfully rare occasions when large or simultaneous incidents occur.

We are not complacent and look to learn from all sectors, taking best practice and adopting it where it provides measurable business benefits for the communities that we serve.