Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

MEETING	Executive Committee
DATE OF MEETING	19 September 2018
OFFICER	Lynne Swift, Director of People and Organisational Development
LEAD MEMBER	Councillor Steven Lambert
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	**Apprenticeship Programme – Annual Statutory Reporting**
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This report to Members of Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority (the Authority) is presented in advance of the publication of its annual statutory report against the public sector apprenticeship target for the year ending 31 March 2018. The Authority introduced its apprenticeship programme in 2016, ahead of the Government's reform agenda, and this was driven by its workforce plan. Its key areas of focus were: how apprentices can be utilised most effectively; highlighting the importance of improving the diversity of our workforce; offering career development opportunities to our existing employees and increasing the resilience of our workforce. As part of the Government's Workforce Reform agenda on apprenticeships, a public sector target was introduced whereby organisations in England must meet a minimum of 2.3 per cent apprenticeship starts each year, based on their headcount of employees working for an organisation in England. For the Authority this equates to 12 full time equivalent (FTE) per year. The Authority has exceeded this target as follows: 1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018: **14** new apprentice starts. As a qualifying organisation who is in scope of the public sector target, the Authority is required to provide an annual return detailing its progress towards achieving the target, to the Department for Education by the 30 September 2018. As part of this return, the Authority is also required to publish the information (Appendix B). The target period is from 1 April 2017 to 31 March

	2021 and the deadlines for returns will be the 30 September each year. It is recommended that future annual returns are presented to the Performance Management Board and then to the Overview and Audit Committee for approval. The attached appendices provide the following information: Appendix A – Government Guidance – Meeting the Public Sector Apprenticeship Target. Appendix B – Data Publication and Apprenticeship Activity Return 30 September 2018.
ACTION	Decision.
RECOMMENDATIONS	It is recommended that; 1. The Authority's return to The Department for Education (attached as Appendix B) be endorsed for submission and for publication on the Authority's website. 2. It be agreed that annual returns be submitted in future to the Overview and Audit Committee for approval.
RISK MANAGEMENT	There is a potential risk that the Authority might not meet the annual 2.3 per cent target for new apprentice starts set by the Government. This risk is mitigated through effective workforce planning, and the Authority's continued commitment to using the Apprenticeship Programme as part of its blended approach to refreshing its workforce.
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	There are no direct costs implications attached to the production and submission of this information.
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	The recommendations meet and exceed the requirements of the statutory guidance.
CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE	The Authority continues to work with its Thames Valley Fire Service partners, through regular resourcing meetings, to determine a collaborative approach to operational and apprenticeship recruitment. This is one of the priority work streams for the Workforce Reform Group. More recently, links have been established with Thames Valley Police (TVP) on apprenticeships and, in particular, in looking at improving diversity and working together to resolve common issues.
HEALTH AND SAFETY	There are no Health and Safety implications.
EQUALITY AND	The Authority continues to improve the diversity of its

DIVERSITY	workforce, eg., the average age reduction of the operational workforce from 41 to 39 years of age over the last two years. The Authority endorsed the submission of a pledge, and were the first fire and rescue service to be accepted by the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network (ADCN) in February 2018. The Authority's innovative apprenticeship programme provides an excellent opportunity to improve the diversity make-up of the Authority. Targeted "have a go" days were organised for female and ethnic minority applicants and further dates are being organised.
USE OF RESOURCES	**The arrangements for setting, reviewing and implementing strategic and operational objectives; performance monitoring, including budget monitoring; achievement of strategic objectives and best value performance indicators;** The Authority's apprenticeship programme contributes to achieving its People Strategic Enabler set out in the Corporate Plan 2015-2020:- `To optimise the contribution and well-being of our people'. Apprentice recruitment forms part of the Authority's succession planning process and contributes to the delivery of the Authority's People Strategy, by building capacity and capabilities agenda, supporting ongoing professionalisation of the Service and continuing to raise standards. **Communication with stakeholders;** A range of methods are used to communicate on workforce reform across the Authority. Communication is delivered via the People & Organisational Development Director's blog, the Leadership Group, and the I:drive. The success of the Authority's apprenticeship programme is showcased internally and externally through visits from other Services and national events. **The system of internal control;** Any significant changes impacting on the Authority will follow an agreed process, including governance and approval. The Apprenticeship Programme is continually monitored through regular updates to the Authority and internal governance meetings. The awarding body accredits the programme and yearly audits are undertaken by their representatives to ensure the required standards are being met. The apprenticeship training provider is audited by

	Ofsted to ensure compliance with funding regulations.
PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS	Report to the Fire Authority held 13 June 2018: Update on Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority Apprenticeship Programme https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/2215/2810/3697/ITEM_15_Update_on_Buckinghamshire__Milton_Keynes_Fire_Authority_Apprenticeship_Programme__Appendices-min.pdf Report to the Fire Authority held 14 February 2018: Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/5415/1782/9457/ITEM_12_Apprenticeship_Diversity_Champions_Network_ADCN_Fire_Authority_and_Annex_A.pdf Report to the Fire Authority held 18 October 2017; Update on Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority Apprenticeship Programme https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/8715/0719/9540/ITEM_11_Apprenticeships_Update_Report_JPMAppentices.pdf Report to the Executive Committee held 29 July 2015: Apprenticeship Scheme https://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/3814/3740/2533/ITEM_15__Apprenticeship_Scheme_-_29th_July_2015_and_appendix.pdf
APPENDICES	Appendix A – Government Guidance – Meeting the Public Sector Apprenticeship Target Appendix B – Data Publication and Apprenticeship Activity Return 30 September 2018
TIME REQUIRED	10 Minutes.
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