

### Operational Workforce Plan

A key outcome of the Buckinghamshire Milton Keynes Fire Authority's (BMKFA) Business Continuity and Resilience plan is the Operational workforce plan. This plan covers short, medium and longer term people resourcing requirements to ensure that the service has sustainable, fit for purpose, effective operational leadership; adaptable workforce capacity which can flex to meet resource demand and risk; and the range of capabilities required to deliver the Public Safety Plan are in place.

The Operational workforce plan also considers risks and opportunities, and builds in ongoing and increasing flexibility to accommodate fast paced external workforce change drivers, balanced by current and predicted changes to workforce demographics.

Any changes to requirements which require investment in people-related resources are included in the Authority's Medium Term Financial Plans (MTFP).

Strategic workforce planning was introduced into the Authority's organisational development objectives in 2011 as part of a significant change programme to reshape the service. The approach to operational workforce planning continues to evolve. As well as aligning the plan with the requirements of the operational resourcing models required to deliver the Public Safety Plan, horizon scanning to predict future external and internal challenges which are then translated into workforce skills, attributes and ways of working requirements, forms a key part of the process.

The operational workforce planning process identifies potential changes, new requirements, projects future workforce requirement, and highlights gaps well in advance. These requirements translate into a series of interventions to maintain service delivery and resilience. The primary interventions are:

Resourcing – which covers recruitment, assessment, promotional activities, acquiring and maintaining competence, and upskilling

Employee proposition – ensuring People Policy, employment contracts and flexible ways of working options are fit for purpose.

The Authority's People Strategy 2016 to 2020 sets out the aims of the Resourcing Strategy enabling the service to:

- attract and secure the right calibre talent to make Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest places to live, work and travel.
- adapt and refresh the workforce to improve service delivery and resilience, to deliver the Public Safety Plan.
- approach resourcing based on demand and risk

- improve the diversity of the workforce to reflect the communities that we serve as far as possible
- optimise tax payer value through developing effective and flexible working practices and collaboration opportunities
- build capabilities

The Authority operates an innovative resourcing model that continues to evolve and which requires agile, flexible, forward looking approaches to deliver the requirements of the operational workforce plan. This model has enabled the Service to provide the same number of appliances that it did five years ago, whilst realising savings that help to achieve the Medium Term Financial Plan.

The priorities identified to support the current operational workforce plan for 2018-19 are:

- continue to establish a flexible range of employment contracts to support new and revised
- ensure resourcing and retention strategy, policies and supporting procedures are fit for purpose
- improve diversity of the workforce through revised candidate attraction methods
- plan and execute 2019 recruitment to meet predicted workforce gaps
- support On-Call Fire Fighter revised resourcing model
- manage the Fire Fighter apprenticeships through to successful end point assessment and appointments
- support implementation of well-being programme
- progress the Career Development review, including determining future role of the Institute of Fire Engineering (IFE)
- Thames Valley Collaboration Programme – progress common approach to operational recruitment processes, apprenticeships Operational Workforce Plan – Headlines

The forecasted operational retirement profile predicts that 15 per cent of the wholetime fire fighter workforce will retire by the end of 2020 and, with a spike in unplanned leavers which is likely to continue in the short term, this requires the Authority to adapt its resourcing strategy to replenish the operational workforce on an ongoing basis against a changing recruitment market locally. Neighbouring services, and particularly London, are continually recruiting for transferees and are able to pay London weighting allowances, so increasing the risk of further leavers.

Recruiting apprentice firefighters in 2016, 2017 and 2018 has enabled the Authority to maintain resilience and refresh the workforce after seven years of not recruiting whole time fire fighters.

In 2018 the operational establishment was increased by 8 to 263 to improve resilience to operate the new resourcing model more effectively. As the model continues to require increasing flexibility and agility, a further review is underway.

The impact of a significant number of retirees and potential unplanned leavers means the Authority will continue to require ongoing operational recruitment, and the associated investment in training to ensure it meets the demands being placed on it as a service.

The plan is to operate a blended approach to refreshing the workforce involving apprenticeships, transferees to balance experience, and a re-engagement consideration to coach, train and mentor an increasing number of newly appointed operational officers.

In addition, the Authority is piloting career pathways, for example, On Call members of staff to Whole Time Fire Fighters.