

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority



MEETING	Fire Authority
DATE OF MEETING	7 June 2017
OFFICER	Lynne Swift, Director of People and Organisational Development
LEAD MEMBER	Human Resources and Equality and Diversity
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	The Authority's People Strategy 2016 to 2020 - Annual Update
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>This report provides an update on the development and achievements to date of the Authority's People Strategy 2016 to 2020, which was approved by members at the 3 February 2016 Executive Committee.</p> <p>The Strategy provides a clear and simple framework to 'Optimise the Contribution and Well-being of our people'. It demonstrates how Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) is creating the environment for enhancing the engagement, commitment and professionalism of all of its people to achieve the Authority's Vision, Priorities and Objectives.</p> <p>The strategic framework highlights four key areas: Resourcing, Well-being, Talent Management and Employee Relations.</p> <p>Annex A of this report details the People Strategy's main developments and examples of achievements to date, within these four areas, building on the initial concept and developing it into a prospectus for potential employees.</p> <p>Annex B of this report gives a brief summary of the employee engagement outcomes, including the themes and topics where the highest number of feedback comments were made.</p> <p>This report will be supplemented by subject specific strategic reports throughout the financial year. Examples include; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Employee Culture Survey Outcomes.</p> <p>The strategy continues to be developed with an innovative approach using an interactive format. This</p>

	<p>is designed to encourage stakeholder engagement and contribution to delivering the strategy. The strategy aligns with the Authority's Public Safety and Corporate Plans.</p> <p>The Strategy provides an ongoing opportunity for employee development through the use of 'task and finish' groups.</p> <p>Having a web-based interactive portal to showcase the strategy means that it can be easily accessed by our employees, partners and all key stakeholders; all of whom can see how our strategic aims are translated into delivering day-to-day services, highlighting the importance of every person's contribution to achieving the Authority's vision.</p> <p>This pioneering approach towards transparency for the Strategy also allows us to actively share the Authority's strategic direction.</p> <p>The People Strategy can be accessed via the following link:</p> <p>https://people.bucksfire.gov.uk/</p>
ACTION	Noting.
RECOMMENDATIONS	That the Service's People Strategy 2016 to 2020 main developments and achievements to date, set out in Annex A and the employee engagement outcomes in Annex B are noted.
RISK MANAGEMENT	<p>Inclusion</p> <p>The strategy compliments our Equality Diversity and Inclusion objectives, and 'a day in the life of a firefighter' video is being produced in this area. Employees are able to capture and highlight the great work that they are doing, which meet the strategic aims and outcomes. Arrangements are in place to ensure that language and content are inclusive.</p> <p>Lack of employee/stakeholder engagement</p> <p>Employee involvement and ownership is already underway, following introduction sessions to employees and identification of People Strategy champions to regularly interact with and provide updates on progress in delivering the strategy.</p> <p>Adaptability to meet pace of change</p> <p>The strategy is both flexible and dynamic; allowing the Authority to keep its content current and fit for</p>

	<p>purpose.</p> <p>Assurance</p> <p>Whilst individuals are free to contribute to the strategy suggesting improvements and providing evidence, quality assurance arrangements are in place which ensures that the Authority can govern its content and how it is used. For example this will allow for opportunities to further develop the strategy, such as through collaborative working.</p>
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	<p>Whilst there are no direct financial implications from this report, the strategy contributes to achieving savings that have been identified in the Public Safety, Corporate and Medium Term Financial Plans.</p> <p>Cost and benefits implications for each initiative outlined in the strategy will be considered as part of the supporting individual business cases.</p>
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	<p>There are no legal implications arising from the recommendation.</p>
CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE	<p>All primary activities consider opportunities for collaboration. Current collaborative work with our partners is shared and showcased in the strategy.</p>
HEALTH AND SAFETY	<p>A key feature of this strategy is to optimise employee well-being, which is one of the four main strands of the strategy. Examples of how employee's well-being is being optimised are given in Annex A.</p>
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	<p>The strategy fully aligns to our Equality and Diversity Policy.</p> <p>As part of the ongoing development and implementation of the strategy, the resourcing section will host tools which help meet the Equality Diversity and Inclusion objectives.</p> <p>Work is underway on a dedicated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion section to showcase our work.</p> <p>An integrated impact assessment has been completed which is subject to ongoing review as the initiatives develops.</p>
USE OF RESOURCES	<p>Contribution to the achievement of strategic objectives;</p> <p>The People Strategy provides a mechanism to align the strategic enabler (to optimise the contribution and</p>

	<p>well-being of our people) to individual performance outcomes, measured by critical success factors.</p> <p>Communication with stakeholders; Key stakeholder communication is maintained via normal channels during the strategy's development and implementation programme, including updates as a standing item on the Joint Consultation Forum agenda. Key stakeholders are encouraged to contribute to the strategy via a series of innovative engagement methods.</p> <p>The system of internal control; The effectiveness of the People Strategy will be measured by critical success factors to be fully developed during 2017, linked with a stakeholder culture survey scheduled for Quarter two of the financial year. These factors will then become a standing item on the bi-monthly People and Organisational Development Directorate (POD) Management meeting agenda. Progress reports to Business Transformation Board (BTB), Strategic Management Board (SMB) and appropriate member committees will be scheduled as appropriate.</p> <p>The medium term financial strategy; The People Strategy further enables and contributes to achieving savings identified in the Public Safety, Corporate and Medium Term Financial Plans.</p> <p>The balance between spending and resources; Funding for the hosting of the strategy, as it is hosted on the world wide web is accommodated within budget. A 'Task and Finish' Group has been set up to develop and communicate the interactive elements of the strategy. Each strategic initiative has a nominated lead officer.</p>
<p>PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS</p>	<p>The Authority's People Strategy 2016 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Public Safety Plan Corporate Plan Fire and Rescue People Strategy 2017</p>
<p>APPENDICES</p>	<p>Annex A - People Strategy 2016–2020 Development, Achievements and Next Steps</p> <p>Annex B - People Strategy: Employee engagement outcomes</p>

TIME REQUIRED	20 Minutes.
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Annex A – People Strategy 2016–2020 Development, Achievements and Next Steps

Purpose and summary of report

The purpose of this report is to outline the People Strategy's main achievements to date, building on the initial concept and developing it into a prospectus for potential employees.

How we approached implementation

The development opportunity to engage in task and finish work to develop and market an interactive People Strategy was open to all employees. Those who were selected received a briefing from the original author of the strategy setting out the scope of the work. The initial recommendations were to publish and promote via a web-based portal. The domain name 'people.bucksfire.gov.uk' was sourced, which allows for a seamless transition between the main BMKFA website to the People Strategy and back again, giving the impression that they are on the same site. The web-based interactive strategy was created to meet the original brief, initially hosting the four key areas (Resourcing, Talent Management, Well-being and Employee Relations).

During the development and implementation phases, the People Strategy was held as a standing item on the agenda for all Joint Consultation Forum meetings for challenge and buy-in from the represented groups; these are attended by employer representatives, trade unions and employee representatives. The strategy was initially launched internally. Whilst it can be accessed externally, promoting to external stakeholders is planned for the future. Representatives from the task and finish group visited stations and departments to promote the People Strategy and encourage their interaction by contributing to articles on it. People Strategy 'Champions' have been identified, targeting employees that are responsible for their respective station and department social media accounts.

Examples of achievements within the four identified areas are:

Resourcing

Succession planning

A report was prepared for management planning two to three years ahead for senior and critical roles to ensure we have in place robust and resilient succession planning options. The resulting training needs analysis is currently being actioned to meet the skills gaps identified. At all levels we know from our workforce planning data what knowledge, skills and experience we are likely to require in the future. The plans also consider short and medium term arrangements which may be required to ensure effective operational assurance and sound business continuity needs. The valuable data gathered allows us to prepare for the future and develop our people for new roles and responsibilities in the medium to longer term.

Flexi-Firefighter pilot

Piloting new ways of working, including the introduction of the flexi-firefighter concept; new staff taken on in fulltime positions as flexible firefighters on local terms and conditions. These firefighters work on their own agreed specific shift pattern providing cover where needed, as coordinated by the Resource Management Team.

Talent Management

The Training, Learning and Development Framework

The Training, Learning and Development framework, and governance arrangements within it, seek to ensure that there are no critical skill gaps and also ensure that we maintain optimal resilience across the service. The Strategy is based upon the principles of the [Fire Professional Framework](#) (FPF) [Competence Framework for the Fire Service], the Fire & Rescue Service National Framework and the National Occupational Standards. Our training record is modelled after the Fire Professional Framework, and we are continuing to align our competencies to the FPF model through a blended training record that includes both eLearning and practical skills assessment. Other learning projects include collaborative course development with other services as well as a drive to share training materials to speed up development of learning.

Leadership development centres for support services staff

Learning & development, temporary moves, promotions and career development opportunities were priority topics raised by staff as part of the employee engagement programme. In response to the feedback from Staff, and the drive to achieve more, it was agreed that we will pilot an 'Aspiring Leaders Pathway' programme.

The aim of this new Aspiring Leaders Pathway (ALP) is to identify existing and potential leaders within the organisation and provide personal plans which will aid the individual's development, signposting opportunities including potential lateral moves and secondments. This initiative will also support us with future succession planning and resilience. The pathway will be open to all staff across the organisation.

Well-being

Global Corporate Challenge

The Global Corporate Challenge was an excellent initiative run during the summer of 2015 and 2016 to promote our commitment to improve the health and well-being for all our employees. With a place for everyone in the competition, funded by the Service, the aim was to improve health and fitness across every department, create some competition and of course to have a lot of fun doing it.

Blue light programme

Working with the charity MIND, the blue light programme was run at service headquarters for our own employees as well as staff from our emergency service partners South Central Ambulance Service and Thames Valley Police. We know that by learning some simple ways to cope better with the stresses and strains of

everyday life, you're more likely to deal with difficult situations at work or at home without becoming unwell.

Employee Relations

The Milton Keynes Project consultation

Prior to the launch of the public consultation into the proposal to merge Bletchley and Great Holm Fire Stations in Milton Keynes and create a blue-light hub station, the consultation document was published to enable staff and other interested parties to read all of the background material before the consultation went live.

Consultation Forum

To facilitate effective information and consultation, employees will be represented on various consultation groups such as the Joint Consultation Forum and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champions Forum, bringing together management, employees and their representatives for consultative purposes.

Recent innovative developments

The task and finish group identified areas that they felt contributed towards developing the strategy further. The additional areas created by the team to showcase 'Station Activity' and 'Talent Wall'.

Station Activity

This is a live page that receives social media news from all of our stations and puts them into one place. The page automatically updates itself, with the newest posts being at the top, and only displays original content sent by the station.

Talent wall

This area was created to celebrate the collection of both internal and external awards that our people have received since 2015. The awards include SAFE, Long Service and Charity Awards and in addition to Organisational and Employee Awards. The SAFE Awards were introduced by the Authority in 2015, allowing members of the community and colleagues the chance to recognise members of staff for exceptional service and excellence. Examples of these awards include 'Staff Member of the Year' and 'Commitment to Equality and Diversity'.

The next six months

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Workforce Committee have developed a national Fire and Rescue People Strategy 2017 to 2022 which was approved by the NFCC on 27 April 2017. This strategy is a framework which gives directional guidance for fire and rescue services and also sets out the national agenda for workforce matters. Initial comparison with the BMKFA People Strategy indicate the Authority, through its forward thinking and strategic approach, is well placed on workforce reform matters. A future report on workforce reform will include progress against the 'Conditions of service for fire and rescue staff: independent review' by Adrian Thomas on behalf of the Home Office, and identify the national workforce matters which are relevant to Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority.

Plans and regular reviews with stakeholders are already in place to further develop the People Strategy, these include:

Critical success factors - These factors are to be determined in 2017 as part of the initial brief for the task and finish group.

Employee Engagement (Employee Relations) - Ongoing implementation of the action plans from the engagement process set out in Annex B.

Cultural survey (Employee Relations) - Scheduled to take place in quarter 2 of 2017/18.

Apprentices phase two (Resourcing) - Recruitment is underway for the second phase of apprentice firefighters.

Aspiring Leadership Programme outcomes – management apprenticeships (Talent Management) - The results and identified outcomes from the ALP to identify those selected for the management apprenticeships.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (new section) - An additional section on the People Strategy dedicated to the ongoing work.

Resourcing strategy (Resourcing) - This strategy will ensure that we can flexibly support organisational needs, and future risk and demand models, including meeting challenges of an ageing workforce and future retirement profiles.

eRecruitment (Resourcing) - This strategy will act as a prospectus, supporting our new eRecruitment portal which is already in development.

eLearning packages (Talent Management) - Heat is currently growing its scope to provide training resources to all Staff. Specific to our operational Core Training Record, a blended resource approach to delivering training material is being taken. All new eLearning courses are being developed with supporting PowerPoints and instructor notes to allow training delivery of eLearning to be given to groups. This initiative increases engagement through a classroom environment for crews, while still allowing the opportunity for staff to take the courses individually through eLearning.

Nationally, the OD team have scoped, developed, and deployed a national eLearning Catalogue with CFOA and NFCC backing. This Catalogue was developed to allow rapid sharing of training materials across all UK Fire and Rescue Services. Services are able to download training resources from other services and adapt them to their local training needs. The site will also feature Learning & Development engagement areas focusing on FRS training best practice and include an area where staff can discuss current training or planned training agendas and initiatives.

Annex B – People Strategy: Employee engagement outcomes

Following on from the Chief Fire Officer's 3-year vision roadshow, facilitated employee engagement sessions took place between December 2015 and February 2016.

In excess of 1800 comments were collected by the 10 facilitators in over 30 engagement sessions across the organisation. These comments were categorised into 12 themes, which were:

Leadership; My Company; Personal Growth; My Manager; My Team; Giving Something Back; Fair Deal; Wellbeing; Communications; Equipment; Training; and New Initiatives.

Within each of the 12 themes, comments were grouped into topics; some topics appeared in more than one theme e.g. Communications.

Below are the topics (and their respective themes) that have been identified as priority areas based on the number of cumulative comments that were made across the 12 themes:

- Communications (Communications)
- Promotions (Fair Deal)
- Operational Training (Training)
- Development of staff (Personal Growth)

There are a mixture of comments made about these topics, some positive and some highlighting areas for improvement.