



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

MEETING	Fire Authority
DATE OF MEETING	18 October 2017
OFFICER	Lynne Swift, Director of People and Organisational Development
LEAD MEMBER	Councillor Steven Lambert
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Update on Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority Apprenticeship Programme
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>This report is presented to Members of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (the Authority) as an update on the Authority's apprenticeship programme and relevant national developments.</p> <p>Delivering three million apprenticeships by 2020 is a key priority for the government reform agenda; as well as introducing a new style of apprenticeship that has been designed to meet the changing needs of employers, learners and providers.</p> <p>The introduction of the levy set at 0.5 per cent of an employer's pay bill above £3million and the 2.3 per cent public sector target for new apprenticeships starts annually, has allowed the Fire and Rescue Sector to focus on utilising apprenticeships to meet future skills requirements and address identified workforce diversity issues.</p> <p>The Authority approved its apprenticeship programme in July 2015, ahead of the levy and targets being introduced and therefore already had plans in place to embed apprenticeships within the workforce.</p> <p>By the end of 2017/18, the Authority will have 50+ apprentices working to a number of different apprenticeship standards, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firefighter • Business & Administration • Information Communication Technology • Management & Leadership <p>These apprentices will be a blend of new starts and upskilling existing members of staff.</p> <p>Appendix 1 provides a full update on the Authority's</p>

	<p>apprenticeship programme.</p> <p>Appendix 2 details the government’s reform agenda and its impact on the fire and rescue sector.</p>
ACTION	Noting.
RECOMMENDATIONS	That the content of the update be noted.
RISK MANAGEMENT	<p>The following risks have been mitigated as an outcome of the Authority’s apprenticeship programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputation – due to the Authority’s pro-active approach to implementing apprenticeships, it is well established with regards to utilising the levy payment and meeting the public sector targets. • Resourcing – increasing the number of firefighter apprentices recruited in 2016 and the subsequent 2017 intake has improved the Authority’s resilience, helping to maintain minimum crewing levels.
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	<p>All costs associated with the apprenticeship programme are budgeted for in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).</p> <p>Any financial impact of subsequent decisions taken or impacts on the Authority would be factored into the Medium Term Financial Planning process and would be scrutinised and challenged as appropriate prior to any implementation.</p>
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	None arising from the recommendation.
CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE	<p>We continue to work with our Thames Valley, other fire and emergency service partners on workforce reform and support national and regional events, sharing best practice.</p> <p>A current priority relevant to this update is to determine a collaborative approach to firefighter and apprenticeship recruitment across the three Thames Valley Fire Services. This project is currently being scoped out and target date for implementation is Summer 2018.</p> <p>Royal Berkshire are named on our contract with the Apprenticeship Training Agency and therefore are able to call off of it should they wish to do so.</p> <p>The Authority is also working with other fire and rescue services and the Police to develop an Emergency Call handler apprenticeship standard and is part of the employer consortia to develop fire sector specific new apprenticeship trailblazer standards.</p>
HEALTH AND SAFETY	No Health and Safety implications have been

	<p>identified.</p> <p>The Health and Safety department have recruited a business and administration apprentice.</p>
<p>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</p>	<p>Integrated impact assessments have and will continue to be completed for any change programme which relates to the Authority’s apprenticeship programme.</p> <p>The apprenticeship programme provides an excellent opportunity to improve the diversity make-up of the Authority; with particular reference to age and gender. Targeted “have a go” days were organised for female and ethnic minority applicants, the recent intake has a significant increase in females being appointed, albeit as yet from a low base.</p>
<p>USE OF RESOURCES</p>	<p>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;</p> <p>Setting, reviewing and implementing strategic and operational objectives;</p> <p>The Authority’s apprenticeship scheme contributes to achieving it’s people strategic enabler set out in the Corporate Plan 2015 to 2020:-</p> <p>‘To optimise the contribution and well-being of our people.’</p> <p>By using the opportunity provided by apprenticeship schemes to ‘adapt and refresh the workforce to improve service delivery and resilience’. This is especially prevalent when considered in regard to the steadily increasing age of the operational workforce and the need to develop new skills in the Authority as services diversify.</p> <p>Communication with stakeholders;</p> <p>A range of methods are used to communicate on workforce reform across the Service. For example via employee engagement sessions, People and Organisational Development Director’s blogs, the leadership group to cascade and the I:drive. The success of the Authority’s apprenticeship programme is showcased internally and externally at visits from other services and national events. The Authority has had an increased presence at schools and career events promoting the apprenticeship programme to potential applicants.</p> <p>The system of internal control;</p> <p>All significant changes impacting on the Authority will follow an agreed process, including governance and approval.</p>

<p>PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS</p>	<p>Background: Apprenticeship Scheme: Executive Committee – 29 July 2015 http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/7114/5527/6772/EXECUTIVE_COMMITTEE_PACK_290715.compressed.pdf</p>
<p>APPENDICES</p>	<p>Appendix 1: Update on Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority Apprenticeship Programme. Appendix 2: Government reform agenda and its impact on the fire and rescue sector.</p>
<p>TIME REQUIRED</p>	<p>10 Minutes.</p>
<p>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</p>	<p>Anna Collett acollett@bucksfire.gov.uk 01296 744468</p>