

Background

The Authority's People Strategy 2016-2020 was approved by Members at the 3 February 2016 Executive Committee meeting, and was aligned with the Public Safety Plan and Corporate Plan 2015–2020. It provides a clear, simple framework, demonstrating how Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) captures the commitment and professionalism of all its people to achieve the Authority's vision, aim, priorities and objectives, as documented in the Public Safety and Corporate Plans.

The challenges for the Authority are well documented within the Public Safety Plan and Corporate Plan. These plans demonstrate our commitment to delivering consistent improvement, as well as taking a fresh look at how we deliver our services.

The People Strategy was developed to encompass an innovative approach and an interactive format to encourage stakeholder engagement and buy-in. Its purpose is to deliver the Authority's goals by linking strategic aims to service-wide initiatives and projects. This approach aims to develop the organisation through the promotion of a culture of employee involvement, ownership, responsibility and trust. It also ensures our employees, alongside our partners and key stakeholders, can see how strategic aims are translated into day-to-day business, highlighting the importance of every person's contribution to achieving the Authority's vision.

The interactive experience is designed to give prospective and current employees an in-depth understanding of how Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service is continually looking to engage its workforce in moving forward with the Service's vision, aims and priorities.

The strategic framework originally highlighted four key areas: Resourcing, Well-being, Talent Management and Employee Engagement. Whilst Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) was included in each of the four areas, it was decided to create an additional EDI area to raise its profile.

Within each area there are a number of strategic outcomes which are aligned with the direction of the Service.

Overview

Our **Vision** is that "Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes are the safest areas in England in which to live, work and travel.' Our aim and priorities will enable us to capture the commitment and professionalism of all our people to achieve this vision.

Our Aim is to optimise the contribution and well-being of our people.

Our Priorities are to:

- adapt and refresh the workforce to improve service delivery, resilience and delivery of Public Safety Plan outcomes

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- move to flexible, affordable and local terms and conditions to support demand and risk-led people resourcing where appropriate
- ensure the People Strategy, employment policy, supporting contracts and systems for building capacity and capability are established to support demand and risk-led people resourcing
- adapt the employee proposition to optimise employee motivation, and to attract and retain the right calibre of high performing people
- ensure the utmost well-being of our people.

The key to achieving our Vision, Aim and Priorities is developing an excellent Employee Proposition.

'The Employee Proposition is the unique set of benefits that the Authority offers in return for employees willingly using their talents to work together with the Authority to make Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest areas in England in which to live, work and travel.'

The Employee Proposition and People Strategy will ensure the Authority can:

- recruit, engage and retain the most highly performing and motivated people
- effectively analyse and forecast the changing internal and external landscape of the services we provide, through data analysis, research and resource modelling
- ensure our workforce reflects the diverse communities we serve as far as is possible
- through robust talent management give our people the best opportunities to develop and improve and attain their full potential wherever possible
- recognise and reward high performance
- achieve a high level of positive employee involvement through effective and productive employee engagement.

What have we achieved so far?

- The working group has reviewed the current content and updated it with recent successes, to evidence our achievements to date
- Ensured the People Strategy is corporate by liaising with the Communication team
- Embedded People Strategy management into business as usual
- Created the development environment to meet WCAG 2.1 AA standards
- Implemented accessibility statement
- Implemented language translation
- Implemented Article 30 legal compliance through a managed data subject compliance system to deal with website cookies and data retention
- Added an events calendar and booking system to facilitate event management and recruitment
- Begun the new website procurement process with the Communication team and organisational stakeholders.

Resourcing Section:

- Embedded recruitment into the People Strategy by interfacing the e-Recruitment portal directly into our Human Resources system
- Embedded on-call recruitment and highlighted our new response model
- Managed our own advertisement campaign to point potential recruits to the People Strategy
- Successfully ran an apprentice recruitment campaign where the People Strategy was the first point of call for all outward-facing advertisements
- A blended approach to refreshing the workforce introduced to ensure the right blend of skills and attributes are in place to maintain resilience and meet the demand and risk requirements of the operational resourcing model
- BMKFA introduced an apprenticeship model in 2016, well ahead of the government reform agenda to promote apprenticeships from 2017. Significant progress has been made and in March 2019 the fourth tranche of fire fighter apprenticeships were recruited. This brought the total number of fire fighter apprenticeships to 64
- Leadership and Management apprenticeships were introduced in 2018, aimed at retaining existing employees. A programme is in place, working in partnership with local colleges, for up to 25 aspiring leaders to progress employee and career development via this route.

Well-being Section:

- Well-being strategy was implemented in June 2018 and has since been communicated to employees through various means – intranet articles, the Health, Safety and Well-being Committee, and via the Well-being Roadshows and the Health, Safety and Well-being update presentations
- A well-being communications plan has been devised and is being implemented
- Network of Mental Health Champions and First Aiders has been trained and is now established; names of First Aiders have been posted on the new Health, Safety and Well-being noticeboards which have been installed at each site in the organisation. All staff who have received training are being issued with a green mental health awareness ribbon pin so that personnel will know that these people can be approached for support where necessary
- A review of the well-being self-assessment, first completed in 2018 is currently underway to assess the progress made in the first year of the strategy.

Talent Management Section:

- Succession planning is undertaken as part of the performance management process and includes a rolling organisational training needs analysis
- Senior /Executive Leadership assessment/development model, designed to identify potential, was used as the basis for the Temporary Area Commander Assessment and Development Centre in May 2019. The Executive Leadership Model takes into the account the recently launched national Leadership framework, which was developed with significant input from within the People and Organisational Development Directorate. The model is also designed to be used for nominated individuals to help determine senior level potential as well

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as for group development centres. This is being progressed as part of the 2019 succession planning process and appraisal reviews

- Role model executive behaviours, aligned with the above model, are being built into the e-appraisal process and behavioural review; to be piloted as part of the 2019-20 year-end review from Autumn 2019
- All employees have an annual appraisal, where their commitment to their own development and their career aspirations are recorded. Quality assurance of appraisal returns is undertaken to identify themes, and to assist with business training requirements
- A modular 'Supportive Leadership' Programme for first time managers and newly promoted 'middle managers' commenced as a pilot from 10 June 2019. Additional Modules identified include Recruitment and Selection, Employee Engagement, Effective Communications and Pay and Reward policy and procedures
- A review was commissioned to undertake a strategic review of the Organisation's approach to employee development, ranging from individual personal development through to career development and succession planning. Project plan, priorities and key milestones were approved at the January 2019 Business Transformation Board (BTB)
- SMB agreed that the Institute of Fire Engineering (IFE) temporary arrangements would continue throughout 2019. Recommendations on the role of IFE in the promotion process for 2020 onwards were presented to January 2019 BTB
- Recommendations for 2020 formed part of an in-depth People and Organisational Development team Roadshow covering promoting understanding of the employee development/ promotional processes and maintaining competence systems.

Employee Engagement Section:

- A service wide 'Your Voice Matters' culture survey carried out in late 2017 identified what we did well and areas which could be improved. In 2018 SMB agreed an overarching action plan based on the survey outcomes. Progress is reviewed monthly and is then communicated via blogs, intranet articles, roadshows and station visits. Heads of Service also determined action plans within their areas, ensuring that the outcomes "you said, we did" formed part of the action plans
- Progress to date is scheduled for review at the 6 June 2019 Leadership and Management forum, and next steps for the remainder of the year to be identified and agreed
- A group of volunteers coordinate the culture survey plans, support progress and are now planning a follow up survey to commence late 2019 to formally determine improvements made
- Reward and recognition is a key area of focus of this section of the People Strategy. Content relating to pay-related policies and recognition has been added to promote the Authority's employment proposition. Reviewing recognition options is a current priority based on employee feedback on financial awards. For example, transforming the annual SAFE award process to

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become an ongoing programme where recognition can take place throughout the year is under consideration

- Joint Consultation Forums are held regularly with the representative bodies and staff representatives covering a wide range of topics including change management proposals and policy updates. The terms of reference have recently been updated.

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion(ED&I) Section:

- An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion section has been created to raise the profile of the work being done to support the promotion and delivery of the Authority's ED&I objectives
- We are three years into the four year ED&I objectives set in 2016. Progress is formally reviewed annually. In April 2019 a 2019-20 progress review was undertaken to determine priorities for the remainder of the year, determine the Year Four action plan, and to start the process for determining 2020- 2024 ED&I objectives
- We use the National FRS Equality Framework as the basis of our ED&I work. As well as facilitating shared learning as trend data is captured, it will provide opportunity for benchmarking from 2020
- Our objectives are:
 - Objective 1: We aim to be an employer of choice, attracting, recruiting, retaining and developing staff from diverse backgrounds, to reflect the communities we serve
 - Objective 2: We will provide a more diverse range of service to better protect the communities we serve
 - Objective 3: Our employment offer will be inclusive and embrace flexibility to support improved diversity representation across the service.
 - Objective 4: Our culture will engage and value diversity and difference to enhance our service offering to the public

These objectives were further refined into workforce and community objectives and, for each year, detailed action plans are set and delivered. Years One and Two objectives established the foundations and measures, and Years Three and Four aim to embed ED&I into all that we do.

- Impact assessments which focus ED&I matters form part of our change management and reporting procedures to support the aim to embed ED&I into all our work
- The ED&I section showcases the work we have carried out to date; for example the Apprentice Diversity Champions Network where our progress is included alongside major national and multi-national companies and is identified as exemplary. Also featured are the apprenticeship recruitment campaigns to attract more women and more candidates from the BAME community
- Each ED&I theme within the national equalities framework has an SMB sponsor and named manager responsible for delivery of the action plan. An informal ED&I group with representation across the Service is in place to promote, provide feedback on, and support delivery of our ED&I programme.

Next steps

- Determine future people challenges internally and externally to inform 2020–2025 Public Safety and Corporate plans
- Analysis of the workforce and local population demographics to identify opportunities, challenges and gaps, which will inform specifics within the revised strategy
- Engage with key stakeholders to seek views and feedback to consider for the 2020 to 2025 People Strategy and secure buy in.
- Integrate the strategy into the main Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service website.

The aim is to have a revised People Strategy 2020-2025 in place by summer 2020, aligned to delivering the objectives of the 2020-2025 Public Safety Plan/Corporate plans.