

Workforce Development Update
Potential Risks, Opportunities, and Interventions
July 2021

Senior Management Team (SMT) development and future proofing:

The immediate and longer-term succession plans for SMT are detailed within Appendix B. The succession planning process for SMT is an iterative approach, that is formulated through discussion, engagement, and continuous development with SMT members.

This approach promotes the seeking of internal and external opportunities for SMT development - a most recent example of this is the temporary secondment of an Area Commander into the Deputy Chief Fire Officer role within a neighbouring Service.

SMT members are actively encouraged to hold positions on NFCC Committees to enable networking and inform future working practices whilst enhancing their own personal development. Attendance at these external events are kept under continuous review and primarily based on tangible benefits to the Authority.

The Authority is committed to developing its workforce and has the processes in place to achieve this, however recognises that there may be a requirement to recruit future leaders outside of the current workforce and this is included within the succession plans.

In 2020 the Authority was the first Fire & Rescue Service to hold a senior manager assessment and development centre, which invited and accepted applications from external applicants. This broadened the Authority's development pools and the skills, knowledge and experience within them.

Options to nominate members of SMT for the forthcoming NFCC Executive Leadership Programme are being explored.

As part of the Leadership and Management Development Framework, a coaching and mentoring scheme is being introduced, with members of SMT being trained to enable them to mentor future senior managers of the Authority.

Notable Workforce Risks to The Authority:

Age Discrimination Remedy – Sargeant:

On 20 December 2018 the Court of Appeal handed down the judgment in the Firefighters transitional appeal case. The judgment found that the transitional protections introduced with the new pension Scheme in 2015 were unlawfully discriminatory on grounds of age. This matter has been remitted to the Employment Tribunal to determine a remedy.

On 15 July 2019 the Chief Secretary to the Treasury made a written ministerial statement confirming that, as ‘transitional protection’ was offered to members of all the main public service pension schemes, the difference in treatment will need to be removed across all those schemes for members with relevant service. The impact of this ruling may mean senior/middle managers potentially retiring earlier than previously forecasted, the mitigations, opportunities and interventions detailed below assist with minimising this impact.

Risk Mitigation, Opportunities, and Interventions:

Regular systematic and rigorous Strategic Workforce and Succession Planning processes are in place, which incorporate current Public Safety Plan requirements and horizon scanning of likely future external and internal challenges. Outcomes from these processes are subsequently translated into timely interventions to ensure the Authority continues to meet workforce capacity requirements and build capability. In addition, it provides opportunity to refresh the workforce through the identification of people; internal and where required external to fill identified key positions.

In line with BMKFA extant recruitment and selection procedure, and its Pay Policy Statement, re-engagement or re-employment of fire officers and firefighters is an option for consideration and was implemented with approval by the Authority at its meeting on 10 June 2020 for the DCFO role.

The Authority has been pro-active in its approach to recruitment and since the approval of the Authority’s apprenticeship programme in 2015, has recruited firefighters annually to support frontline resources. The apprenticeship programme continues to evolve to ensure it is fit for purpose and meets the needs of the Authority. A report detailing next steps and recommendations for the apprenticeship programme will be presented to the Authority in December 2021.

The Authority undertook a review of its performance and development process with the aim of refreshing the appraisal process, ensuring it was fit for purpose and delivering effective performance reviews for all staff. All employees are required to have an annual appraisal, where their commitment to their behaviours linked to the Authority’s values is an essential element. Quality assurance of appraisal returns is undertaken to identify themes, and to assist with training requirements. Performance Management and the revised process is to be included as part of the learning outcomes of the middle manager leadership programme, which forms part of the proposed Leadership and Management Development Framework.

The Training Needs Analysis (TNA) process assesses the need for staff training at least annually. This TNA is translated into prioritised learning programmes, approved by the Training Strategy Group and scrutinised to ensure alignment with business priorities, business continuity succession plans and approved budgets.

The Authority's workforce development programme, continues to ensure replenished development pools at each level, resulting in staff with the required skills to fulfil the roles when needed. All elements/modules of our promotional process have been reviewed, consulted on and brought together in one Operational Promotional Procedure to provide clarity and consistency to staff on the requirements and route for promotion.

Following the successful pilot of a scheme used to identify and develop future senior leaders in the Authority, this has been embedded into the recently refreshed appointments and promotions procedure and a new Leadership and Management Development Framework is being developed to support and assist with the development of existing and newly recruited or promoted managers.

All these interventions continue to futureproof the Service and minimise the potential impact on its workforce, ensuring the operational commitment can be maintained.