



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Fire Authority, 13 October 2021

Report title: People Strategy 2020-2025 – Year One Update

Lead Member: Councillor Steven Lambert People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance

Report sponsor: Mick Osborne, Chief Operating Officer (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)

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Action: Decision

Recommendations:

That the People Strategy 2020-2025 staff engagement plan be approved.

Executive summary:

The People Strategy 2020-2025, which was approved at the October 2020 Fire Authority meeting sets out a framework for engaging and developing employees of Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (the Service). The strategy will support cultural changes which will help the Service to better deliver its vision and strategic priorities, while ensuring behaviours, values and standards are adhered to.

The framework maintains the existing five key areas; however, they were reworded to better reflect our values;

- Key area one – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Key area two – Employee Engagement
- Key area three – Organisational Development and Resourcing
- Key area four – Training, Learning and Development
- Key area five – Employee Health and Wellbeing

Each key area has objectives which support the overarching strategy, these are further expanded within the document.

In order to achieve the objectives as detailed within the strategy, output and impacts will be reviewed on a regular basis and reported through the governance process.

The strategy has been reviewed and updated following stakeholder engagement and feedback from the formal consultation process, where the potential impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic have been captured.

The new strategy was effective from November 2020, succeeding the previous 2016-2020 People Strategy, then published on the Service's Intranet with a public facing version published on the external website. Development of the external website continues and will complement the new strategy as it evolves.

The current strategy can be found on the Service's external website link below:
<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/authority/people-strategy/>

The strategy has now been in place for ten months (November 2020 - September 2021) and the planned launch and station roadshow plan to engage and consult with staff was affected by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Now that government restrictions have been reviewed by the service and station visits can once again commence the planned launch and station roadshow can, with approval, go ahead.

This report is to update Members and key stakeholders on progress made on the strategy and detail the plan to raise its profile both internally and externally.

The plan in Appendix 1 details an internal staff engagement plan and an external public engagement plan.

Financial implications:

Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, the strategy contributes to achieving benefits and savings that have been identified in the Public Safety, Corporate and Medium Term Financial Plans.

Cost and benefits implications for each initiative outlined in the strategy will be considered as part of the supporting individual business cases. People Strategy updates will be delivered from existing budgets.

Risk management:

A significant identified risk is the Service's ability to deliver a more diverse workforce within funding and recruitment constraints, and against a background of changing demographics.

The Organisational Development (OD) Risk Register highlights our current and future employee resourcing risks. Control measures are in place to mitigate the risks, where the People Strategy is one.

The strategy complements our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) objectives, and arrangements are in place to ensure that language and content are inclusive.

The successful implementation of the People Strategy depends on the buy-in and energetic support of everyone concerned, therefore employee engagement will continue to enable the development of the strategy.

Quality assurance arrangements are in place which ensure the Service can govern the content of the strategy and how it is used. For example, this will allow opportunities for further development through collaborative working.

Legal implications:

There are no legal implications arising from the update report.

Privacy and security implications:

No personally identifiable information is contained within the overarching People Strategy. Data Protection Impact Assessments exist for each key area of the strategy, these will be revised and updated where required.

Duty to collaborate: The Policing and Crime Act 2017 requires the service to consider opportunities for collaboration with the police and ambulance services.

Collaboration opportunities arising from the People Strategy will be reviewed as they present themselves.

The three Thames Valley Fire Services are progressing common approaches to operational On-Call Firefighter recruitment. This joint working initiative is an opportunity to promote fire service careers and raise awareness across community groups with the aim of improving employee diversity.

Collaboration with Thames Valley Police (TVP) on apprenticeships and promoting careers for young people is well established. The Service continues to support the Armed Forces Covenant and promise to actively champion the armed forces community. It acknowledges that we recognise the value serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families can bring to our Service.

The Station Commander Human Resources Projects collaborates and consults with the EDI group and ensures key information is raised that could influence or effect the People Strategy 2020-2025.

Health and safety implications

The Service has implemented a range of measures to comply with Government guidance for *Working Safely with COVID-19* in terms of social distancing, maximum occupancy of rooms, personal hygiene and cleaning regimes which are audited and monitored. Staff are kept informed of all changes via a robust communications programme in the ever-evolving situation.

The global Covid-19 pandemic continues to present risks, which the Service adapts to in order to ensure the safety, wellbeing and productivity of our staff as well as the safety and wellbeing of the public, visitors, contractors and our partner agencies.

Covid-19 measures will continue to be adopted when visits to station and authority premises are facilitated to engage and consult with staff.

Environmental implications:

There are no environmental implications.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications:

The Service has a statutory obligation under equality legislation to eliminate unlawful discrimination. The People Strategy, policies, and procedures aim to support the meeting of these requirements.

If we have greater representation of our diverse communities, then we will be able to find solutions to barriers in relation to employment and accessing services.

Diversity is one of our core values and a key area in this strategy. The dedicated EDI section is now fully embedded.

The strategy aligns to and complements our EDI Policy and objectives.

Consultation and communication:

The People Strategy provides a framework, along with the governance arrangements for controlling the Service's workforce development over the next five years and is aligned to the Public Safety Plan and Corporate Plan 2020 - 2025.

The strategy sets out a framework which supports delivery of the Service's strategic objectives over the next five years. The priorities and objectives within the strategy will be cascaded to directorate, team and individual levels and resourced from within the establishment and budgets set by the Workforce and Medium-Term Financial Plans.

This paper was presented at the 9 September 2021 Business Transformation Board and the 21 September 2021 Strategic Management Board and will be reviewed and considered for approval at the 13 October Fire Authority meeting.

Background papers:

Fire Authority report 16 June 2021. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives 2020 – 2025 Year one update.

[Fire Authority Annual Meeting - 16 June 2021 - Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service \(bucksfire.gov.uk\)](https://www.bucksfire.gov.uk)

Fire Authority report 14 October 2020. People Strategy 2020 – 2025.

[Fire Authority Meeting - 14 October 2020 - Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service \(bucksfire.gov.uk\)](https://bucksfire.gov.uk)

Fire Authority report 10 June 2020. The Authority's People Strategy 2016 – 2020 Annual Update.

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/06/fire-authority.pdf/>

Public Safety Plan 2020 - 2025

[New five-year Public Safety Plan launched - Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service \(bucksfire.gov.uk\)](https://bucksfire.gov.uk)

Corporate Plan 2020 – 2025

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2021/06/fa-160621-item-14.pdf/>

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion objectives 2020-2025.

[Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service \(bucksfire.gov.uk\)](https://bucksfire.gov.uk)

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	People Strategy 2020-2025 – Raise the profile plan	

Appendix 1

People Strategy 2020-2025 – Raise the profile plan

Introduction

Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) is fully committed to Equality and Diversity. The service recognises fairness and inclusion is fundamental to everything it does, to achieve its vision of making Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest areas in England in which to live work and travel.

The service believes a workforce that better reflects the diversity of the local working population will create a stronger, more enriched and well-informed organisation, able to meet the expectations of a modern Fire and Rescue Service. This is a key aspect of our People Strategy. The service objective is to embed Equality and Diversity into everything it does internally and externally.

The service recognises having a diverse flexible workforce, which better reflects the community it serves, can enhance performance as well as improve its service to the community. These core values underpin the strategy.

The recommendation is for the following action:

1. That the People Strategy 2020-2025 staff and public engagement plan be approved.

Raising the profile plan internally

The plan over the next 6 months (November 2021 - April 2022) is to visit each fire station and shift system, including support staff to engage and consult on the People Strategy 2020-2025. The roadshow will include a presentation to staff on the strategy and highlight through discussion, how the service will meet any challenges and identify risks and opportunities. This is with the intention to raise the profile of the strategy, encourage engagement and ensure staff from across the entire organisation are made aware of how their work contributes and supports the five key areas.

- Key area one – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Key area two – Employee Engagement
- Key area three – Organisational Development and Resourcing
- Key area four – Training, Learning and Development
- Key area five – Employee Health and Wellbeing

This plan underpins key area two, Employee Engagement and aims to ensure the workforce has the information required to undertake roles effectively and efficiently through appropriate communication channels.

The development of this strategy will continue to be supported by engagement with:

Organisational Development, Joint Consultation Forum, Leadership Group, EDI group, Human Resources, Health and Safety, Operational Training and Assurance and all employees.

Raising the profile plan externally

The strategy is public facing on the service's external website. Work is ongoing to refresh this to ensure it remains engaging, accessible and practical.

A robust communication plan has been established to ensure information from within the strategy that has influenced the five key areas is published. This information will be published across our internal and external communication channels and platforms.

The chart on the next page details the staff engagement timetable and key dates.

People Strategy 2020-2025 – Raising the profile plan

Six-month Raising the profile plan						
Who's Coordinating?	November 2021	December 2021	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022
Station Commander HR Project manager	Staff engagement plan - Objective: To raise the profile of the strategy and encourage engagement from operational and support staff.					
	High Wycombe (red)	Beaconsfield (red)	Aylesbury (red)	West Ashland (red)	Broughton (red)	Support staff working group
	High Wycombe (white)	Beaconsfield (white)	Aylesbury (white)	West Ashland (white)	Broughton (white)	
	High Wycombe (blue)	Beaconsfield (blue)	Aylesbury (blue)	West Ashland (blue)	Broughton (blue)	Support staff working group
	High Wycombe (green)	Beaconsfield (green)	Aylesbury (green)	West Ashland (green)	Broughton (green)	
						Flexi Duty Officers, Group Commanders and Principal Officers
	Gerrards Cross (red)	Amersham (red)	Buckingham (red)	Newport Pagnell (red)	On-Call working group	
	Gerrards Cross (blue)	Amersham (blue)	Buckingham (blue)	Newport Pagnell (blue)	On-Call working group	Flexi Firefighters
	On-Call working group	On-Call working group	On-Call working group	On-Call working group		Flexi Firefighters
						Resource Management Team – based in Service Headquarters