



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Executive Committee, 14 September 2022

Report title: Workforce Planning Update

Lead Member: Councillor Gary Hall

Report sponsor: Mick Osborne, Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Chief Operating Officer

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Action: Noting

Recommendations: That the Workforce planning update is noted.

Executive summary:

The Service has recently established a Recruitment Oversight board and refreshed our Workforce Planning group to oversee both short- and medium-term plans for our workforce which includes the recruitment and retention of staff, along with our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.

This report details the position of the Service's Workforce planning, as at 1 August 2022, across Wholetime, On call and Support staff groups.

Wholetime

Following the increase in funding approved at the February 2022 Fire Authority meeting, the Service increased the Wholetime operational establishment from 280 to 300. The 20 new operational roles will all be based on station supporting appliance availability.

To meet the new establishment in 2022/23 the Service is utilising three routes to join:

- Firefighter Apprenticeships
- Internal On Call migration
- External transferees from other services (including On Call)

Apprenticeships: Following a recruitment process earlier in the year, there are 20 recruits joining us to start their training in September and October 2022. We have also agreed to start the next round of apprentice recruitment in September 2022 leading to a course planned in March 2023 for up to 17 firefighters.

Nine On Call firefighters are transferring to the Wholetime team during September. These are a mixture of internal and external applicants.

This recruitment plan puts us on track to meet our Station based establishment by the end of March 2023.

On Call

We continue to recruit across all our On Call stations (with five recruits having started on the 1 September 2022).

We are focusing On Call recruitment at four key stations: Aylesbury, Buckingham, Olney and Princes Risborough. On Call awareness evenings at these stations have received a positive response.

Support Staff

Following an in-year budget challenge the Service signed off two temporary roles and recruitment is now underway:

- Digital Marketing Apprentice
- ICT Apprentice

Current employment market conditions are also affecting the attraction and retention of support services staff. There are a number of Support roles that are being advertised or will be due soon. Tracking the number of times we go out to recruit will help highlight issues.

More detail regarding our workforce planning can be found in Appendix 1: Workforce planning dashboard

Financial implications: Any changes relating to the establishment will be submitted via the Budget Challenge process.

Risk management: The Service Risk register has the following risk:

Staff Availability:

- 1) Staff inability or reduced ability to work due to disruption caused by factors such as Pandemic Flu, fuel supply issues, industrial action etc.
- 2) Impact of employment market conditions on attraction of new staff, retention and overall workforce stability.
- 3) Simultaneous loss of Principal Officers / Senior Management Team members

This risk has a score of 16 (Probability: 4, Impact: 4)

Legal implications: The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 places duties on the Authority to secure the provision of sufficient personnel as well as adequate training to its personnel to enable it to: fight fires and protect life and property from fire; rescue persons from road traffic collisions and to deal with the aftermath of such collisions; and respond to other specified emergencies.

Privacy and security implications: There are no Privacy and Security implications arising from this paper.

Duty to collaborate: We continue to look for opportunities to collaborate during recruitment.

Health and safety implications: There are no specific Health, Safety and Wellbeing implications arising from this paper.

Environmental implications: There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion implications: Ongoing recruitment across the Service including two intakes of Firefighter apprentices in 2022/23 has the potential to improve Equality and diversity in the Service. The Service has been actively engaging with our communities with a focus on underrepresented groups currently within the organisation.

Consultation and communication: The workforce planning group consists of stakeholders from across the Service who help build and develop the plan.

Next steps

- Workforce planning groups are planned monthly with updates to the Performance Monitoring Board on a regular basis.

Background papers:

People Strategy 2020-2025, Fire Authority, 14 October 2020: [Bucks Fire & Rescue](#)

People Strategy 2020-2025 – Year One Update, Fire Authority, 13 October 2021: <https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2021/10/fa-item-10-people-strategy-13102021.pdf/>

Corporate Risk Management, Overview and Audit Committee, 20 July 2022: <https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/07/oa-item-11-2.pdf/>

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Workforce Planning Dashboard	