



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Meeting and date: Fire Authority, 12 October 2022

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

Lead Member: Councillor Gary Hall, Lead Member for People, Equality and Diversity and Assurance

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

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Action: Noting

Recommendations:

That the contents of this update and progress made in the key areas are noted.

Executive summary:

The People Strategy 2020-2025 (referred to henceforth as the Strategy), was approved at the October 2020 Fire Authority. It 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 (Appendix 1 and 6)
- Key area two – Employee Engagement (Appendix 2)
- Key area three – Organisational Development and Resourcing (Appendix 3)
- Key area four – Training, Learning and Development (Appendix 4)
- Key area five – Employee Health and Wellbeing (Appendix 5)

Updates for each key area are provided in the attached appendices.

The current Strategy can be found on the Service's external website.

The Strategy has been in place for slightly under two years, due to a minor delay in employee engagement resulting from the Covid-19 global pandemic. The proposed station roadshow and employee engagement sessions were completed within the

planned timescales (Appendix 7) and achieved the objective of raising the profile of the People Strategy.

The existing Strategy is now embedded within the Service and work is on-going to develop each of the five key objectives.

There has been notable progress made in all key areas. Examples include:

- a renewed approach to community engagement supported by a structured Equality, Diversity and Inclusion calendar
- the delivery of culture survey listening workshops to enhance employee engagement, progressing issues raised and providing timely updates on progress made
- the introduction of Leadership and Management training for all managers, giving leaders at all levels the knowledge and empowerment to manage effectively
- a significant commitment to increasing the Service's operational establishment, through a range of selection, recruitment and training methods
- a refresh of the Service's Mental Wellbeing Support Network, resulting in 37 Mental Health Champions being trained in positions across the Service

The focus will be to deliver measurable improvements as part of the next HMICFRS inspection and to review and refresh our objectives following the publication of the NFCC People Strategy 2022-2027. This is expected to be published during the last quarter of 2022 and will enable the Service to ensure we are addressing issues identified at both a local and National level.

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:

The Organisational Development (OD) Risk Register highlights current and future employee resourcing risks. The Strategy is identified as one of the control measures in place to mitigate resourcing risks by ensuring we attract the employees with the required skills, knowledge and behaviours to progress our organisational objectives. Employee availability continues to present an identified risk, the Service continues to

develop new methods to maintain and increase employee availability, which supports the Services operational response model.

The Strategy complements our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) objectives, which were reviewed and updated in 2022. Arrangements are in place to ensure language and content are inclusive and appropriate.

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

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

Legal implications:

There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations.

Privacy and security implications:

No personally identifiable information is contained within the Strategy. Data Protection Impact Assessments exist for each key area, 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 Strategy are identified and actioned proactively and as they present themselves. The Service continues to work closely with our Thames Valley partners in a range of areas and collaborate through the Five Shires collaboration partnership “Addressing Inequalities” collaboration (Buckinghamshire, Royal Berkshire, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Services) which was originally set up following the Black Lives Matter movement. They have contributed to workshops and are lead members of working groups on a collaborative video, planning webinars and sharing best practice.

The Service continues to support the Armed Forces Covenant (see appendix 6) and promises 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 Service was recently presented the Gold Award in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme in recognition of this partnership.

Health and safety implications:

The global pandemics continue to present risks. The Service adapts to this to ensure the safety, wellbeing and productivity of our employees as well as the safety and wellbeing of the public, visitors, contractors and our partner agencies. This resulted

in a minor delay to the delivery of the roadshow due to the emergence of the Omicron variant.

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 Strategy, policies, and procedures aim to support the meeting of these requirements.

If the Service has greater representation of our diverse communities, it will be better equipped to find solutions to barriers in relation to employment and accessing services. This can be achieved through effective recruitment procedures and on-going employee engagement, enabling the Service to identify and address any actual or perceived barriers for employees from under-represented groups.

Diversity is one of our core values and a key area in this Strategy. The dedicated EDI group is fully embedded and meets monthly to progress EDI objectives.

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

This proposal supports the Services Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives 2020-2025. Significant progress has been made towards the HMICFRS report which identified “areas for improvement” and “cause for concern”. Further information can be found in Appendix 1.

Equality Impact Assessments are carried out in the five key areas to ensure equalities are fully considered.

Consultation and communication:

The 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 a Directorate, team and individual level and resourced from within the establishment and budgets set by the Workforce and Medium-Term Financial Plans.

The author has collaborated and consulted with key stakeholders to ensure the information provided regarding the five key areas has the relevant detail and is representative of progress made over the previous twelve-month period.

This paper was presented at the 8 September 2022 Business Transformation Board and the 20 September 2022 Strategic Management Board and will be reviewed and considered for approval at the 12 October 2022 Fire Authority meeting.

Background papers:

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/>

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)

Apprenticeship Programme – Annual Statutory Reporting 2020 – 2021 – 21 July 2021

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2021/07/oa-item-15-210721.pdf/>

Fire Authority report 13 October 2021. People Strategy 2020 – 2025 – Year one update.

[Fire Authority Meeting - 13 October 2021 - Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service \(bucksfire.gov.uk\)](https://bucksfire.gov.uk)

Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service HMICFRS report – Dec 2021

[BFRS HMICFRS 2021 Report \(bucksfire.gov.uk\)](https://bucksfire.gov.uk)

Funding Phase 2 Leadership & Management Development Programme – 23 March 2022

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/03/ec-item-7-230322.pdf/>

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives 2020-2025 – Year two update – June 2022

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2022/05/fa-item-16.pdf/>

Appendix	Title	Protective Marking
1	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion update	
2	Employee Engagement update	
3	Organisational Development update	
4	Training, Learning & Development update	
5	Employee Health & Wellbeing update	
6	The Armed Forces Covenant update	
7	People Strategy 2020-2025 – Employee engagement Roadshow	

8	Equality Impact Assessment	
9	People Strategy - 2023 Forward Planner	