



# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

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**Meeting and date:** Fire Authority, 11 October 2023

**Report title:** People Strategy 2020-2025 – Year three 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.

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**Executive summary:**

The People Strategy 2020-2025 (referred to henceforth as the Strategy), was approved at the October 2020 Fire Authority meeting. It sets out a framework for engaging and developing employees of Buckinghamshire Fire and 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

Updates for each key area and year four future opportunities are provided in the attached appendices.

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

The existing Strategy is 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 BFRS Staff Development Pathway Project is being designed to align to the National Chief Councils (NFCC's) [Core Learning pathway](#) and [NFCC Leadership Framework](#)
- the Authority has launched its new 360 Feedback process. This is currently being trialled within the senior management team and will later be rolled out to middle/dept managers
- a significant commitment to increasing the Service's operational establishment, through a range of selection, recruitment and training methods.

The Service are following the recommendations from both the Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade and the HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services.

#### **Financial implications:**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Cost and benefits implications for each initiative outlined in the Strategy will be considered as part of the supporting individual business cases if the requirement for further funding is identified. 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 2023. 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.

Following the Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade by Nazir Afzal OBE in November 2022 and subsequent news articles into allegations at South Wales and Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Services, the service reviewed what was in place for employees and what actions needed to be taken.

A report was presented to March Executive Committee which showed our work to date and planned. A presentation was given on the proposed “Speak Up” campaign. In March 2023 the HMICFRS published the “Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services” report. An Extraordinary Fire Authority meeting was held on 28 April 2023 where the HMICFRS recommendations were approved. A further report was presented to June Fire Authority to give an update on the work to date.

Our People Strategy comprises of key areas that support cultural changes which will help the Service to better deliver its vision and strategic priorities.

The risk of not Exploring our Culture, the HMICFRS Values and Culture report and the actions associated with this has been added to the Human Resources Risk Register and the Corporate risk register.

**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 in August 2020.

The Service continues to support the Armed Forces Covenant 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 presented the Gold Award in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme in recognition of this partnership.

**Health and safety implications:**

There are no implications with regard to health and safety.

**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.

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 2023 Business Transformation Board and the 19 September 2023 Strategic Management Board and will be reviewed and considered for approval at the 11 October 2023 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 Update 15 February 2023 - Apprenticeship Programme Update

<https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2023/02/fire-authority-meeting-15-february-2023-item-12-bmkfa-apprenticeship-programme-update.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)

Fire Authority report 12 October 2022. People Strategy 2020 – 2025 – Year two update.

[Fire Authority Meeting 12 October 2022. People Strategy 2020-2025 - Year two update](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/>

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives 2020-2025 – Year three update – June 2023

[Fire Authority Meeting June 14. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Objectives 2020-2025 - year three update - June 2023](https://bucksfire.gov.uk)

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Protective Marking</b>
1	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	
2	Employee Engagement	
3	Organisational Development and Resourcing	
4	Training, Learning and Development	
5	Employee Health and Wellbeing	
6	Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)	
7	Year four Future Opportunities	