

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority



MEETING	Executive Committee
DATE OF MEETING	15 July 2020
OFFICER	Mark Hemming, Director of Finance and Assets
LEAD MEMBER	Councillor David Hopkins
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Transport and Workshops Peer Review
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>During 2019-20, the Service commissioned a peer review of the transport and workshops function to gain reassurance that the area was operating effectively.</p> <p>On 5 December 2019, Brian Middleton (Fleet Manager, Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service) visited the Service to undertake this review. A list of the areas covered can be seen on page 2 of Appendix A.</p> <p>The report summary on page 2 states that <i>"it should be noted that the standout area for concern is the ability to attract and retain quality trained technicians."</i></p> <p>This is an issue that the Service has been experiencing for a number of years. In order to attempt to resolve the issue, a market supplement of £3,000 per years was introduced for the vehicle technicians from June 2019. Initially this helped to facilitate the recruitment of one technician, although at the same time another technician left.</p> <p>It was later noted that vehicle technician posts at the then Aylesbury Vale District Council workshop in Stocklake were being advertised at a higher rate, working a 37 hour week rather than the 39 hours our technicians are contracted to (as well as having to provided out of hours cover).</p> <p>From December 2019 it was decided to increase the market supplement to £5,000 per year – prior to this, the round of advertising provided a small number of applicants, none of which were even suitable to interview. This enabled us to retain existing staff and the new technician that was employed during November 2019. It also resulted in the recruitment of a further technician, as well as being able to retain the apprentice technician following his successful graduation. The only vacant post now is the apprentice technician, and plans are underway to</p>

	<p>recruit to this post.</p> <p>Best practice was noted in a number of areas, including training, defect response and reporting, CCTV and telematics, stock management and spare vehicles, as well as numerous policies.</p> <p>A number of improvements are planned for the current year to address some of the other recommendations and observations in this report, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now that the team is fully established, a review of loading hours will be undertaken to ensure that there is sufficient capacity for all scheduled and reactive work. This will consider the additional time required to undertake all inspections in the workshop environment, which was a further recommendation in the report. • As part of the above review, the Service will consider the need to install its own brake roller tester (we currently use the facility at Motts Travel for this testing). • As part of the Business and Systems Integration (BASI) project, approval was given to upgrade the fleet software currently in use to the latest version. This will provide real-time information on servicing, defects, repairs and stock, as well as allowing the technicians to access and record information in a paperless environment. • The Service is currently out to tender for the next tranche of Thames Valley fire appliances. As part of this, we will consider a longer-term replacement programme as recommended in the report.
ACTION	Noting
RECOMMENDATIONS	That the report be noted.
RISK MANAGEMENT	No direct impact.
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	<p>The additional cost of the market supplement is £46k per year (including on-costs). This had already been factored into the budget for 2020-21.</p> <p>If the Service were to purchase its own brake roller tester, it is expected to cost approximately £50k.</p> <p>The peer review was provided free of charge through the Transport Officers Group (TOG) Eastern Region.</p> <p>Future vehicle replacements are already included within the Medium Term Financial Plan.</p>

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	The Authority is a 'best value' authority to which section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 applies. This requires the Authority to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in relation to its functions, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The term 'functions' is wider than the term 'services' and embraces all the duties and powers of the Authority.
CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE	No direct impact.
HEALTH AND SAFETY	No direct impact.
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	No direct impact.
USE OF RESOURCES	See Financial Implications.
PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS	None.
APPENDICES	Appendix A – Transport Officers Group (Eastern Region) Transport and Workshops Peer Review.
TIME REQUIRED	15 Minutes
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