

# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority



<b>MEETING</b>	Overview & Audit Committee
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	22 July 2020
<b>OFFICER</b>	Mick Osborne – Chief Operating Officer
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Councillor Steven Lambert
<b>SUBJECT OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>Apprenticeship Programme – Annual Statutory Reporting 2019 - 2020</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>This report sets out the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) annual statutory report against the public sector apprenticeship target for the year ending 31 March 2020, for member endorsement.</p> <p>As part of the Government’s apprenticeships Reform agenda, a public sector target was introduced whereby organisations in England must meet a minimum of 2.3 per cent apprenticeship new starts each year, based on employee headcount. For the Authority this equates to 10 per year.</p> <p>The Authority is a qualifying organisation in scope of the public sector target and is therefore required to provide an annual report to the Department for Education (DfE), detailing its progress towards achieving the target. The 2019 / 20 report is set out in Appendix A. It is also a requirement for the Authority to publish the information.</p> <p>The current target period for annual reporting is from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2021 and the deadline for returns is the 30 September each year.</p> <p>For the period of 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020 the Authority have not met their target with 4 new apprentice starts;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Business Admin</li> <li>• 1 Assistant Accountant</li> <li>• 1 Cyber Security Technologist</li> <li>• 1 Senior Leader Master’s Degree</li> </ul> <p>This shortfall in meeting the target has been due to cohort four being employed by the Authority on 25 March 2019 and cohort five being employed on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2020, both of which are outside of this reporting period.</p> <p>Appendix A however does state that qualifying organisations will be measured on average over the</p>

	<p>annual reporting period of 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2021. With our previous employment stats and our current workforce planning the Authority will exceed its required target for this reporting period.</p> <p>Previous reports have been presented at the Executive Committee, and it has been decided that the Overview and Audit Committee would consider future reports for endorsement.</p>
<b>ACTION</b>	Decision
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	It is recommended that the Authority’s annual return – attached as Appendix B – be endorsed for submission to the Department for Education, and for publication on the Authority’s website.
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>	<p>There is an ongoing risk that the Authority might not meet the annual 2.3 per cent target for new apprentice starts set by the Government</p> <p>This risk is mitigated through effective workforce planning, and the Authority’s continued commitment to using apprenticeships as part of its blended approach to refreshing and retaining its workforce.</p>
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	<p>There are no direct costs implications attached to the production and submission of this information.</p> <p>The Apprenticeship levy was introduced in April 2017 for all employers that have an annual PAYE bill of £3 million per annum and employ over 250 staff. The employer’s payment is set at 0.5% of their annual payroll and will include a £15,000 annual allowance. The Authority current pays approx. £58,000 per year into the levy which the government tops up by 10% making a total of £63,800.</p> <p>The Authority is able to draw down on this levy for those employees who are currently undertaking apprenticeships to assist with their own development and to also enhance the skills within the organisation.</p> <p>If the levy fund becomes depleted the Authority will enter into a co-investment with the government. The co-investment rate has changed for new apprenticeships starting on or after 1 April 2019. You will now pay 5% towards the cost of apprenticeship training. The government will pay the rest (95%) up to the funding band maximum.</p>
<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	The recommendations meet and exceed the requirements of the statutory guidance.
<b>CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE</b>	The Authority continues to work with its Thames Valley Fire Service partners to determine options for a collaborative approach to operational apprenticeship recruitment. Work remains ongoing with Thames Valley Police (TVP) on apprenticeships and, in

	<p>particular, in looking at improving diversity and working together to resolve common issues.</p> <p>Careers fairs are being targeted with a collaborative approach being taken between ourselves and TVP, at present these have included the WorldSkillsUK event at the NEC and also the National Apprenticeship show at the MK arena. We have also utilised the assistance of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) with the organising and their attendance at the WorldSkillsUK.</p>
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>	<p>There are no Health and Safety implications.</p>
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b>	<p>The Authority continues to improve the diversity of its workforce and during its recent firefighter apprenticeship recruitment we had a small increase in Female employment.</p> <p>The Authority continues to be mindful of trying to reduce the average age of the operational workforce.</p> <p>Workforce diversity is an ongoing priority. Building on the successes to date with our apprenticeship programme and utilising the national On Call awareness campaign material our aims are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase awareness through TV collaboration work and joined up resourcing</li> <li>• Existing workforce who already interact with the local community being utilised to promote the service we deliver and being supported by our ED&amp;I ambassadors</li> <li>• The continuation of identifying role models within the organisation who can promote the values, commitment to diversity and our employment propositions e.g. we have a national diversity ambassador</li> </ul> <p>The Authority endorsed the submission of a pledge, and were the first Fire and Rescue Service to be accepted by the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network (ADCN) in February 2018. The Authority were given the opportunity to be quoted within the 2019 ADCN report, being asked to showcase us as exemplars within this group and we continue to be active members of this group. In February 2020 we attended The House of commons with our ADCN partners as part of an apprenticeship celebration for National Apprenticeship week. This gave us the opportunity to network with other likeminded organisations.</p> <p>The Authority’s innovative apprenticeship programme provides an excellent opportunity to improve the diversity make-up of the Authority. Targeted “have a go” days are organised for all audiences. A targeted</p>

	<p>campaign was delivered by internal departments and an external organisation via social media to assist with the attraction of a diverse workforce, and analysis of the data is being undertaken to determine the outcomes and to inform future campaigns.</p>
<p><b>USE OF RESOURCES</b></p>	<p><b>The arrangements for setting, reviewing and implementing strategic and operational objectives; performance monitoring, including budget monitoring; achievement of strategic objectives and best value performance indicators;</b></p> <p>The Authority’s apprenticeship programme contributes to achieving its People Strategic Enabler set out in the Corporate Plan 2015-2020:-</p> <p>‘To optimise the contribution and well-being of our people’.</p> <p>Apprentice recruitment forms part of the Authority’s succession planning process and contributes to the delivery of the Authority’s People Strategy, by building capacity and capabilities agenda, supporting ongoing professionalisation of the Service and continuing to raise standards.</p> <p><b>Communication with stakeholders;</b></p> <p>A range of methods are used to communicate on workforce reform across the Authority. Communication is delivered via the Senior Management Team’s blog, the Leadership Group, and the “I” drive. The success of the Authority’s apprenticeship programme is showcased internally and externally through visits from other Services and national events.</p> <p><b>The system of internal control;</b></p> <p>The Apprenticeship Programme is continually monitored through regular updates to the Authority and internal governance boards.</p> <p>The awarding body accredits the programme and yearly audits are undertaken by their representatives to ensure the required standards are being met.</p> <p>The apprenticeship training provider is audited by Ofsted to ensure compliance with funding regulations.</p>
<p><b>PROVENANCE SECTION &amp; BACKGROUND PAPERS</b></p>	<p>The Authority introduced its apprenticeship programme in 2016, ahead of the Government’s reform agenda, and this was driven by its workforce plan. Its key areas of focus were: how apprentices can be utilised most effectively; highlighting the importance of improving the diversity of our workforce; offering career development opportunities to our existing employees and increasing the resilience of our workforce.</p>

	<p>Report to the Overview and Audit committee held on 17 July 2019: Apprenticeship Programme – Annual Statutory Reporting 2018/19</p> <p><a href="https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/03/overview_and_audit_committee_agenda_and_reports_170719-min-min.pdf/">https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/03/overview_and_audit_committee_agenda_and_reports_170719-min-min.pdf/</a></p> <p>Report to the Fire Authority held 13 June 2018: Update on Buckinghamshire &amp; Milton Keynes Fire Authority Apprenticeship Programme</p> <p><a href="https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/03/130618_fire_authority_agm_agenda.pdf/">https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/03/130618_fire_authority_agm_agenda.pdf/</a></p> <p>Report to the Fire Authority held 14 February 2018: Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network</p> <p><a href="https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/03/140218_fire_authority_agenda.pdf/">https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/03/140218_fire_authority_agenda.pdf/</a></p> <p>Report to the Fire Authority held 18 October 2017; Update on Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority Apprenticeship Programme</p> <p><a href="https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/03/181017_fire_authority_agenda_part2.pdf/">https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/03/181017_fire_authority_agenda_part2.pdf/</a></p> <p>Report to the Executive Committee held 29 July 2015: Apprenticeship Scheme</p> <p><a href="https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/03/2990715_exec_committee_papers.pdf/">https://bucksfire.gov.uk/documents/2020/03/2990715_exec_committee_papers.pdf/</a></p>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<p>Appendix A – Government Guidance – Meeting the Public Sector Apprenticeship Target</p> <p>Appendix B – Data Publication and Apprenticeship Activity Return 30 September 2020</p>
<b>TIME REQUIRED</b>	10 Minutes.
<b>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</b>	<p>Dave Whitelock - Station Commander</p> <p><a href="mailto:dwhitelock@bucksfire.gov.uk">dwhitelock@bucksfire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>07919 697354</p>