

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group
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Item No. 9

REPORT AUTHOR(S): ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER (HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)

SUBJECT: PEOPLE STRATEGY 2018 - 2022

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Background Papers: People Strategy 2014 – 2018
National Framework Document
NFCC Workforce Strategy

Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL			FINANCIAL	
HUMAN RESOURCES		✓	EQUALITY IMPACT	✓
ENVIRONMENTAL			POLICY	✓
CORPORATE RISK	Known	✓	OTHER (please specify)	
	New		CORE BRIEF	

Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.

PURPOSE

To advise Members of the draft People Strategy 2018-2022

RECOMMENDATION

For Members to consider the attached People Strategy, make any amendments and approve for years 2018 – 2022, pending consultation responses which ends on 27 August 2018.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Our People Strategy outlines the Services approach to and relationship with its employees. It is not a policy manual and therefore not overly detailed or tactical.
- 1.2 Our People Strategy demonstrates the importance placed on employees and recognises that good people management processes have a positive impact on organisations.
- 1.3 Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's third People Strategy replaces the 2014–2018 version.
- 1.4 The strategy details:
 - Workforce data – (This will be updated and aligned to HMICFRS data collection).
 - Service Objectives, Vision, National Values and Virtues
 - Organisational fit and alignment
 - Employee Relations and Survey responses
 - Our key achievements
 - Performance
 - Focus areas for 2018 – 2022

Importantly, the document also recognises and communicates the achievements under the previous Strategy.

2. Purpose of the Strategy

- 2.1 Our People Strategy embraces national concepts and strategies as well our own Community Risk Management Plan placing them in the context of our Service, our community and our people management ambitions.
- 2.2 Significantly, this year the People Strategy encompasses the elements contained for the first time in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018 (Appendix 1). The Strategy also encompasses the Service's Inclusion Strategy making clear links to equality and diversity policies, processes and work plans.
- 2.3 The strategy is a reference to be used by managers in their business planning processes and will guide much of the activity of the HR, Training, Equality and Diversity and Health and Safety functions over the next few years. The strategy will ensure that key areas are given visibility and priority.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 Once approved by HR Policy and Challenge group, the strategy will take cognisance of any feedback from the internal and external consultation processes and will then be published.

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Fire and Rescue National Framework for England

6.1 Each fire and rescue authority should have in place a people strategy that has been designed in collaboration with the workforce. This should take into account the principles set out in the NFCC's people strategy and at a minimum cover:

- continuously improving the diversity of the workforce to ensure it represents the community it serves;
- equality, cultural values and behaviours;
- the various routes available in terms of recruitment, retention and progression;
- flexible working;
- professionalism, skills and leadership;
- training opportunities;
- health and safety, wellbeing, disabilities and support (e.g. mental health and physical support); and
- tackling bullying, harassment and discrimination.

6.2 The Home Office collects and publishes a range of workforce data which fire and rescue authorities are required to provide. This includes workforce diversity, information on new joiners, reasons for leaving and firefighter injuries.

Professional Standards

6.3 To enhance professionalism of fire and rescue services, a coherent and comprehensive set of professional standards across all areas of fire and rescue services' work will be developed, drawing on existing standards where appropriate. The development of new standards will be on an ongoing basis.

6.4 All fire and rescue authorities must implement the standards approved through this work and the inspectorate will have regard to these standards as part of their inspections.

Fitness Principles

6.5 Firefighting is a physically demanding occupation and it is essential that firefighters have sufficient levels of fitness to enable them to carry out their tasks as safely and effectively as possible. As such, this requires higher levels of fitness than most

other occupations and therefore there is a requirement for operational personnel to maintain levels of personal fitness. It is recognised that fitness levels may decline with age and whilst this may be mitigated by fitness training, diet and other lifestyle changes, it is acknowledged that there may be a general decline in fitness as a result of the ageing process.

- 6.6 Fire and rescue authorities have an important role in helping to ensure their firefighters remain fit and are supported in remaining in employment. Each fire and rescue authority must comply with the fitness principles set out at Annex C.

Re-engagement of Senior Officers

- 6.7 The re-appointment of principal fire officers to the same or similar posts within the same fire and rescue authority, a short time after they have retired, has caused concern in recent years and increases costs for taxpayers. These individuals very often receive their pension benefits on retirement (such as their tax free lump sum) and then return on favourable terms, including an increase in take-home pay through avoiding paying employee pension contributions.
- 6.8 Fire and rescue authorities must not re-appoint principal fire officers¹ after retirement to their previous, or a similar, post save for in exceptional circumstances when such a decision is necessary in the interests of public safety. Any such appointment must be transparent, justifiable and time limited.

¹ For the purpose of this Framework, Principal Officers refers to those officers at Brigade or Area Manager level, and above, or those with comparable responsibilities to those roles.

- 6.9 In the exceptional circumstance that a re-appointment is necessary in the interests of public safety, this decision should be subject to agreement by a public vote of the elected members of the fire and rescue authority, or a publicised decision by the appropriate elected representative of the fire and rescue authority, taking into account the legislative requirements of PCC FRA Chief Fire Officer appointment procedures. The reason why the re-appointment was necessary in the interests of public safety, and alternative approaches were deemed not appropriate, must be published and the principal fire officer's pension must be abated until they cease to be employed by a fire and rescue authority.
- 6.10 To ensure greater fairness and the exchange of talent and ideas, all principal fire officer posts must be open to competition nationally, and fire and rescue authorities must take account of this in their workforce planning.
- 6.11 While the above requirements only extend to principal fire officers, we expect fire and rescue authorities to have regard to this principle when re-appointing at any level.