



**Monday,
16 November 2020
3.00 pm**

**Meeting of
Staffing Committee
Remote Meeting**

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Cheshire Fire Authority

Notes for Members of the Public

Attendance at Meetings

The Cheshire Fire Authority welcomes and encourages members of the public to be at its meetings and Committees.

This meeting of the Fire Authority will be held by remote means, i.e. the meeting will not be taking place in person at Sadler Road, but will be hosted over the Internet, using Skype for Business, with participants located in a variety of places.

The Government introduced legislation, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, that enables remote meetings to take place and the Fire Authority has adopted rules that allow and govern the way that remote meetings will work. The rules can be accessed [here](#).

The meeting must be open to the public and press. However, as the public and press cannot attend in person the Fire Authority is arranging for the meeting to be broadcast. Final details about how to access the broadcast will be published on the website prior to the meeting.

Access to Information

Copies of the Agenda are available on the Service's website (www.cheshirefire.gov.uk). A copy can also be obtained from Democratic Services via DemocraticServices@cheshirefire.gov.uk.

The Agenda may be divided into two parts – a public session and a private session. As far as possible items will be included in the public session, with the reports published and the items considered whilst members of the public are able to access the meeting via Skype (with at least audio, but usually with audio and vision). Items dealt with in private session will be described on the Agenda, but the reports will not be published and the items will not be accessible to members of the public. The kind of items dealt with in private session could include information about individuals, or consider matters of a commercial nature.

This agenda is available in large print, Braille, audio CD or in community languages upon request by contacting; Telephone: 01606868414 or email: equalities@cheshirefire.gov.uk

Recording of Meetings

The Authority audio records its meetings. Please contact Democratic Services for a copy of the recording via DemocraticServices@cheshirefire.gov.uk.



MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 2020

Time : 3.00 pm

Remote Meeting - Via Skype

AGENDA

Part 1 - Business to be discussed in public

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1A Recording of Meeting

1B Apologies for Absence

1C Declaration of Members' Interests

Members are reminded that the Members' Code of Conduct requires the disclosure of Statutory Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Non-Statutory Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Disclosable Non-Pecuniary Interests.

1D Minutes of the Staffing Committee

(Pages 1 - 2)

To approve the minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 15th January 2020.

2 Presentation on the People Strategy

(Pages 3 - 26)

A People Strategy 2019-22 was approved by the Fire Authority in February 2019. The Strategy is contained within the Agenda Pack. Officers will present information about developments associated with the People Strategy.

3 Presentation on the Covid-19 Staff Survey Action Plan

(Pages 27 - 28)

A Covid-19 Staff Survey was carried out in June/July 2020. This led to the creation of an Action Plan. The Plan is contained in the Agenda Pack. Officers will present details of activities associated with the Action Plan.

4 Local Government Pension Scheme Discretion Policy

(Pages 29 - 36)

5 Workforce Planning Update

(Pages 37 - 46)

6 Discipline and Grievance Update

(Pages 47 - 54)

7 Exclusion of Press and Public

(Pages 55 - 56)

8

Service Management Team Review

(Verbal Report)

A review was commissioned by the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive and was carried out by RealWorldHR Limited. The review was concerned with the question: is the Service Management Team structure fit for purpose and sustainable? The initial findings from the review have been considered by the Chief Fire Office and Chief Executive and he has asked RealWorldHR Limited to make a presentation to the Committee. By its nature the Review and therefore the presentation will include information about individuals and this is the reason it will be considered in private session.

Agenda Item 1D

Minutes
Staffing Committee
Wednesday, 15 January 2020



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE held on Wednesday, 15 January 2020 at Leadership Team Conference Room - Fire Service, Clemonds Hey at 11.30 am

PRESENT: Councillors Bob Rudd, Michael Beanland, Stef Nelson, Stuart Parker and Morgan Tarr

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Recording of Meeting

As the only report on the agenda was to be discussed in private the meeting was not audio recorded.

B Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mike Biggin.

C Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of Members' interest.

D Minutes of the Staffing Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 23rd October 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

2 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Order 2006, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the items of business listed below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12 A to the Act in the paragraphs indicated:

Item 3:

Pension Abatement and the Training of On Call Firefighters

Paragraph

- (1) Information relating to an individual;
- (3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

3 PENSION ABATEMENT AND THE TRAINING OF ON CALL FIREFIGHTERS

At the meeting of the Staffing Committee on 18th September 2019, Members considered a report which contained details of an issue that had arisen concerning pension abatement that had the potential to impact upon the recruitment and training of on-call firefighters.

Normally, a retired firefighter that was re-employed would see their pension abated in whole or in part so that the pay in the new role plus the pension did not exceed the pay prior to retirement. In exceptional circumstances Staffing Committee was able to decide that abatement should not occur. If it did so the Authority was obliged to pay into the pension fund an amount equal to the sum that would have been abated.

Members had agreed in September that the circumstances were exceptional and that pension abatement should not take place. Officers had confirmed that they were reviewing the situation with a view to avoiding pension abatement issues in the future and Members had asked for a further report in January 2020.

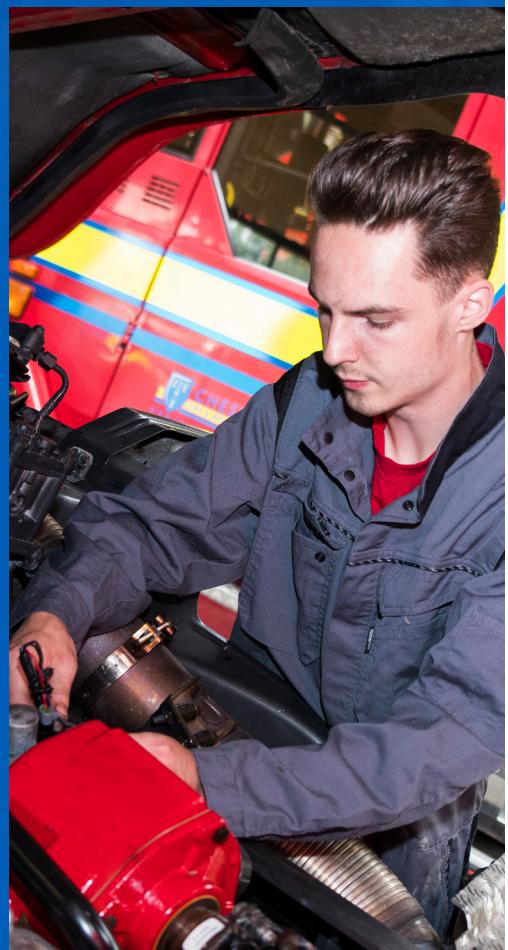
Following the Staffing Committee decision on the 18th September, the On-Call Programme Team carried out a review into the way in which On-Call Module 1 courses were being delivered. The review led to the team establishing a range of delivery options which would provide resilience and ensure that the necessary training would be properly resourced.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] the contents of the report be noted.



PEOPLE STRATEGY 2019 - 2022



Foreword

Our People - 'Changing lives and saving lives' every day...

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's vision is a Cheshire where there are no deaths, injuries or damage from fires and other emergencies which requires us to protect our communities, rescue people and protect the economic, environmental and community interests. Our core strength in achieving this is in our people who are proud to work for an organisation connected closely with its communities and who are genuinely committed to changing and saving people's lives.

Attracting the best staff to work for Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service is a key factor that assists us in delivering our strategic people aims and ensure we consistently provide an excellent experience for them and the communities they support. Through this strategy and the associated annual delivery plan we aim to reinforce our commitment to supporting, developing and enabling our staff to provide the best possible fire and rescue service to our communities.

One of our key priorities for Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service in respect of this People Strategy is also to build upon our reputation for being a high performing, compassionate and inclusive employer and to create a culture where everyone feels they are treated fairly, enjoys their work in a welcoming and collaborative environment and recognises that their contributions are valued.

Every day our workforce strives to be the best they can be in changing and saving lives and through the delivery of this strategy, we are confident that Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service will continue to provide a diligent, responsive and adaptable service that is valued by our communities and a workforce that we are very proud to lead.



Mark Cashin
Chief Fire Officer and
Chief Executive



Councillor Bob Rudd
Fire Authority Chair

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Introduction

The environment and the way that the Fire and Rescue Service operates has changed in the past ten years with the overall reduction of fires, greater collaborative working with partner agencies, and an increased emphasis on national resilience against a backdrop of austerity and shrinking budgets.

Recently the Government's fire reform agenda set out a clear direction of travel to ensure services are effective, accountable, transparent and reflective of the diverse communities they service. This is underpinned by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Fire and Rescue Services regime and the national framework that sets out the overall strategic direction for fire and rescue authorities.

As highlighted through documents such as the Fire and Rescue National Framework, Thomas Review and Local Government's Association Fire Vision 2024, a key challenge for the fire sector is workforce transformation. Key to this is to drive change through improving workplace culture; engagement with staff and ensuring organisations are reflective of their community.

People are our greatest asset and in times of increased austerity and changing demands, appreciating the value of staff and embracing a changing workforce and working environment is more important than it has ever been.

Our People Strategy is shaped by what we are trying to achieve in the context of the above. It will set the direction and focus for people related activity and will also incorporate the six areas of improvement outlined in the National People Strategy which was approved by the National Fire Chief's Council in 2017.

- Strengthen Leadership and Line Management to support organisational change and service delivery to the public
- Developing cultural values and behaviours which make Fire & Rescue a great place to work
- Ways of working that respond to service model needs
- Provide excellent training and education to ensure continuous improvement of services to the public
- Strengthen our ability to provide an excellent service by diversifying our staff and creating a fair & equal place to work
- Continue to support the health and wellbeing of all our staff

Key principles of the People Strategy

The People Strategy is an integral part of the way we work and ownership for its delivery rests across the Service.

In order to support the delivery of this strategy we have adopted some underpinning principles, some of which have been devised locally and some which are laid out in the national People Strategy.

These are as follows:

- We trust our people to make decisions and will give them the skills and knowledge to do this.
- We understand the importance investing in the health and wellbeing of all of our staff.
- We will understand what our people do and will provide them with regular feedback to support and develop them, build confidence and challenge underperformance where necessary.
- We understand the importance of engaging staff in decisions and will listen and involve our people in improving our services and take account of their health and wellbeing.
- As leaders we will lead by example, articulating the behaviours and standards expected of the Service.
- We will continue to strive to be a reflective and inclusive organisation where opportunities, promotion and reward are based on merit.
- We want to be an Employer of Choice.
- Firefighter safety and the safety of everyone that works for us is important to us.
- We will provide clarity on the decision-making levels, accountability and processes without unnecessary hierarchy, and empower operational staff to use operational discretion.
- We will focus on clear and consistent communication of key messages using a wide range of engagement methods.
- We will build trust between us all to allow constructive disagreement and challenge to be seen as part of a positive culture.

People commitments and core values

Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service has a suite of core values that set out the attitudes, behaviours and commitment expected of everyone employed by the Service. These are:



Developing and respecting our people

Valuing our people and constantly developing their diverse range of talents, learning from all that we do.



Putting customers first

Ensuring that our people and communities are at the heart of all that we do, striving to meet their differing needs and expectations.



Working together

Working in partnership with others for the future of Cheshire and its citizens.



Aiming for excellence

Constantly seeking ways to improve the things that we do and the way that we do them.



Delivering our promise

Acting with integrity and taking personal responsibility for making the right thing happen.



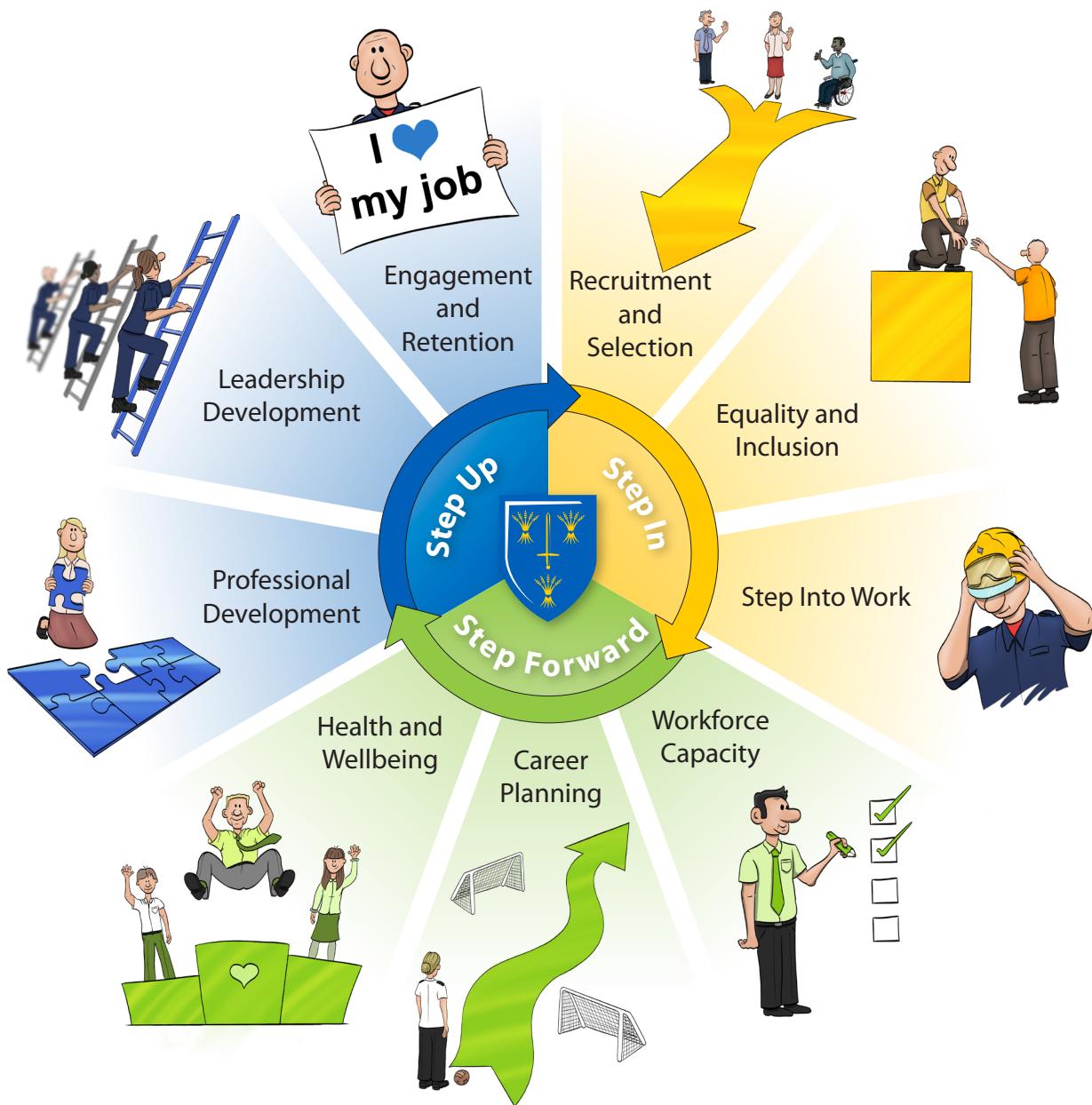
Promoting equality and diversity

Embracing diversity and finding ways to improve our services and the safety and prospects for individuals and communities.

The Service's Core Values are integral to the People Strategy as they define the principles that guide Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's internal culture as well as its relationships with external communities, stakeholders and partners. These Core Values which have now been embedded within the Service for 9 years will be revisited during 2019 to ensure they are still relevant for the Service's vision for cultural change.

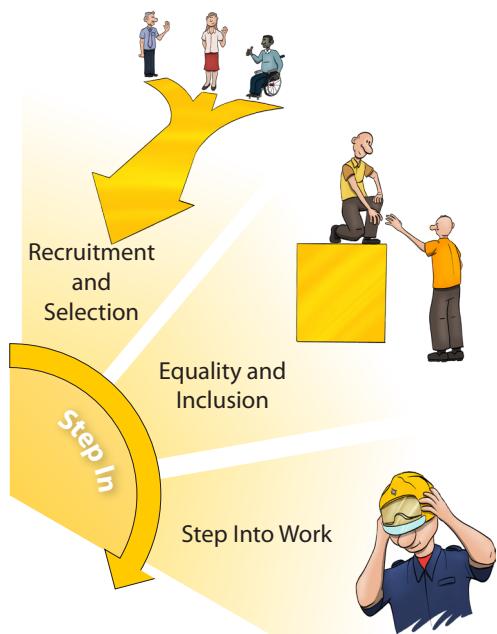
People Strategy Framework

Cheshire has introduced a framework that encompasses and structures the Service's strategic people priorities and objectives. This is referred to as the "Steps" Framework and breaks the people priorities into the 3 key stages of employment:



People challenges and priorities

Step In



The 'Step In' element of the framework cover all aspects of attraction, recruitment and selection to focus on putting the right people with the right skills in the right jobs and ensures the service upholds high standards of transparency and fairness in its selection methodologies.

Recruitment and Selection

Over the course of the next year we will also be reviewing our approach to recruitment following the introduction of a revised set of Core Values. A values/strengths based approach will be considered a means of removing barriers to entry and we remain committed to exploring additional ways of promoting the fire and rescue service an attractive long term career proposition for

people from all areas of the community. We will also review the methodologies, technologies and processes currently in use to ensure the candidate journey is positive and engaging whilst remaining robust, fair and non-discriminatory whilst securing the best candidates.

There is also a need to reconsider the approach in respect of On Call Recruitment which is an ongoing challenge in terms of both attraction and retention. Much work has been undertaken in recent times to target local communities with dedicated project teams assigned to review reward and retention issues, but this needs to continue to secure more innovative and sustainable recruitment practices. An imperative is developing closer partnership working with local employers and we need to undertake a further review as to how we can enrich the perceived value of the role in order to improve on call availability and retention.

A key area of focus in respect of attraction, recruitment and selection is in achieving a workforce that is reflective of the community with particular emphasis on the recruitment of females who are currently very under represented within the organisation. Efforts will continue to be made to draw people from diverse groups to the service and highlight what a good place it is to work and build a career. Utilising on line technology and social media for advertising, familiarisation workshops, career fairs and direct approaches to organisations and networks have been key areas of activity and will continue, as we aim to attract talent for the future.

Equality and Inclusion

The Service has invested significant effort and resources to support diversity and inclusion within the workplace and openly promotes and fosters everybody's right to be different, to be valued as an individual and to be afforded dignity in the workplace without fear of discrimination. The Authority is highly committed to being an open, inclusive employer and is proud to have been named in the Top 100 employers within the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index for the past six years and has been the best performing emergency service in the country for the past three years. This demonstrates our commitment to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

The Service will continue to support positive action and other community events to help encourage recruitment from under-represented groups, such as women and black and ethnic minority residents, to make the organisation more reflective of the community. To assist with this a dedicated positive action steering group has been established to ensure we are focused in respect of targeting under-represented groups and raising awareness about career opportunities within our organisation.

The 'Step In' people agenda is led from the top of the organisation with Fire Authority Members and Chief Officers providing visible leadership ensuring staff, partners and communities witness the personal commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion the Service has. The wider work that the Service engages in to promote a diverse and inclusive workforce, is detailed in the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy¹

and action plan. This outlines the regular interaction with staff networks to develop policy and practice and as a Service who is seen as a national leader in the area of LGBT, we will continue to host national conferences in conjunction with Stonewall and our partners to encourage the sharing of best practices and to further explore and develop strategies around a diverse workforce.

The Gender Pay Reporting that came into effect in 2018 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, requires organisations to publish pay data. With these statutory obligations in mind we fully intend to continue to embed diversity, equality and inclusion into all that we do.

Step into Work

There is also a strong appetite within the 'Step In' element of the People Strategy to ensure that opportunities for young people and the provision of a spectrum of meaningful apprenticeships is incorporated within the Service's attraction strategy. In 2014 we launched our "Step into Work" programme which extended our range of youth engagement initiatives to improve the skills and employability of young people within Cheshire. A varied and interactive work experience programme was designed and is still offered to enthuse and develop work-essential skills such as team working and communication. Within this People Strategy we need to explore other ways of engaging with young people in schools and colleges and become more proactive in raising awareness of the Fire Service as a career option. Special emphasis will also be put into breaking down perceptions about the role and some of the stereotyping that may prevent potential female future recruits from applying.

¹ Link to strategy wwwxxxxxxxxxx

In 2016 the Service launched a new apprenticeship programme aimed at developing modern day firefighters. The intention of the programme was to develop individuals in a wide range of disciplines to reflect the changing role of the Fire and Rescue Service nationally. As this programme has proved to be both popular and successful in providing a rich blend of operational and non operational learning, it is intended that this programme will continue to be a point of entry for new recruits following its transfer in 2019 onto a new trailblazer framework. Within this People Strategy there is also a strong appetite to explore other apprenticeships, including higher apprenticeships, as both points of entry to the Service and for development purposes.

The other area of within the 'Step In' element of the Strategy is about ensuring new recruits

into the organisation are given comprehensive induction there is a strong commitment to ensuring that once hired, all new recruits, regardless of role, receive high levels of support to adequately equip them for success within the Service. Historically induction has revolved around early meetings with line managers, e-learning and attendance on corporate induction programmes within the first three months of service. This has since been reviewed to offer a more blended approach to induction ensuring new starters have access to information and are provided with skills and relevant knowledge in the early stages of their employment in a variety of ways. This is an area that we need to keep refining based on feedback and based on the needs of specific roles.



'Step In' People Commitments

Recruitment & Selection

Recruitment of the right people; with the right skills, attitude and values at the right time using effective and efficient selection methodologies.

Equality and Inclusion

Elimination of all forms of discrimination and achievement of a workforce that is truly representative of the community underpinned by a strong reputation for being a diverse, fair and inclusive employer.

Step Into Work

Extended range of youth engagement initiatives to improve employability skills and the creation of a pipeline of potential talent for future permanent posts.
Establishment of an induction process which provides comprehensive role specific onboarding for all new staff and ensures they are equipped with relevant information to successfully start their new career.



People challenges and objectives

Step Forward



The 'Step Forward' element of the framework focuses on the need to establish robust mechanisms to maximise the workforce capacity and sustainability of our people through strategic workforce planning, matching resources with finances. It also relates directly to the need to ensure a more proactive approach to succession and career planning in order to align individual career aspirations with the need to futureproof the business. In order to maximise the capacity of our people this aspect of the People Strategy also places heightened emphasis on wellbeing and the need to create a healthy working environment that is conducive and beneficial to our people.

In respect of ensuring that our service is sustainable for the future there is an overlap with the work described within the 'Step In' element of the People Strategy. Strategic workforce planning helps us to get the best out of our existing talent by providing an accurate picture of the availability, composition, age structure and capabilities of the workforce. The overlap in creating and maintaining a sustainable workforce is in the requirement for us to take appropriate action

to recruit and retain the right people; address key future and occupational skills shortages; promote jobs; careers and the concept of employability; develop and motivate talent and address diversity and inclusion issues. Given our ageing workforce we also understand that it is essential to act now to attract a new generation of employees and in turn provide opportunities for succession planning and our current employees to pass on their invaluable skills and knowledge.

Workforce Capacity

Workforce capacity and establishment planning is a key function which is subject to both monthly and quarterly scrutiny at middle and senior management level. A priority within these discussions is to align recruitment planning, promotion board planning and manage postings and transfers of uniformed personnel whilst maintaining business continuity and operational effectiveness. Whilst we have developed a forensic way of forecasting workforce capacity more work is required to ensure workforce planning techniques can mature from a spreadsheet of staff posts to systems based reporting which will facilitate managers analysing performance on a monthly basis.

Further development is also planned in conjunction with police partners which will include the implementation of new modern online systems. These new systems will automate the workforce planning process whilst also allowing managers easier access to people data in relation to establishment, capacity, capability, sickness and performance reporting.

Career Planning

In respect of career planning it is essential for the Service to raise awareness in respect of different career options, career pathways and routes of entry into the service. Not only will this form part of the overarching attraction strategy but it is also important to ensure that internal staff can recognise how their transferrable skills may assist them in the future.

Examples of career pathways may be from cadet to apprentice to firefighter. Other avenues may be capitalising on opportunities for green book staff to move into on call or other operational roles. Consideration is also being given to the ability to 'fast track' high performing individuals who display high potential. Currently there is an external high potential development scheme but it is intended to either extend this scheme to, or develop a similar scheme for, internal staff.

One of the fundamental tools that has highlighted the value of career planning and discussions at an individual level was the introduction of the new leadership appraisal process in 2016. The emphasis that this has placed on individual career aspirations provided valuable intelligence to support the planning, development and longer term deployment of staff. Although there is intent to review the way in which appraisal discussions are managed there is a strong appetite not to lose sight of the value and importance of engaging with staff to gain an understanding of their career aspirations to support workforce and succession planning whilst maximising the potential of staff.

Health and Wellbeing

Within the People Strategy and directly linked to the work around workforce capability and career planning is a strong commitment to creating a healthy environment that is conducive and beneficial to our people. Having an environment which allows people to flourish and achieve their full potential is essential to ensuring that the Service is fit for both current and future demands.

Our communities depend on our people and so their health and wellbeing is of paramount importance to us. People who work responsibly and safely improve organisational capability and this in turn reflects upon the service to the community. Staff who know they have safe working arrangements and feel supported in the workplace are healthier, happier and more motivated.

Therefore the physical, psychological (health) and social (wellbeing) aspect of what we do is considered as a key priority provided in this area. Our People Strategy sets out to develop:

- A compassionate culture that fosters employee safety and wellbeing
- Early intervention and prevention to minimize employee sickness
- Encouragement of staff to manage their own safety, health and wellbeing, understanding where to go for information to make informed choices
- Upskilling managers to support staff in maintaining their safety, health and wellbeing and keeping their staff in work or assist in getting their staff to return to work, if appropriate, with reasonable adjustments.

Occupational health services are integral to the services offered and our contract is with highly qualified professional medical staff who are available on-site to provide medical support and advice to individuals and managers to assist with return to work. In order to ensure the occupational health service is comprehensive the Service provides support by investing in a wide range of medical treatments, including counselling, physiotherapy, consultant appointments, tests, equipment and aids for work.

To date, through our strong commitment to the wellbeing of staff and investment of time and resources to managing staff absence and wellbeing, the Service has maintained a very low level of both long and short term sickness which has been recognized nationally. We will continue to keep our focus on wellbeing and maintain our focus on firefighter safety, the reduction of accidents, RIDDOR and muscular-

skeletal problems which underpin need to underpin much of our thinking in relation to workforce design and wellbeing.

The increase in awareness of mental illness has also been acknowledged as a key issue and the MIND pledge has been entered into. Being a compassionate organisation that fosters wellbeing and breaking down the stigma of mental illness continues to be one of our key commitments and further investment will be entered into as part of this strategy to extend the support that we offer staff such as ensuring mindfulness training is accessible to all staff.

Senior managers lead the way in supporting and promoting health, safety and wellbeing in the workplace. They will continue to lead by example providing visibility, supporting and promoting best practice and challenging processes and activity where safety or wellbeing may be at risk.



'Step Forward' People Commitments

Workforce Capacity

The Service is equipped with an understanding of the skills and capabilities of the workforce and able to identify and address gaps to respond to future requirements.

Career Planning

Career pathways and alternative career entry routes developed that attract, retain and maximise the potential of staff and strengthen the service's ability to gather valuable intelligence for succession and workforce planning purposes.

Staff Wellbeing

A healthy workforce with promotion of wellbeing for all our staff incorporating the use of NOG guidance and other elements of learning to maintain safe and healthy systems of work.



People challenges and objectives

Step Up



The 'Step Up' element of the framework revolves around ensuring people have the appropriate skills, knowledge and practical skills to fulfill their roles as professionals, and focuses on strengthening leadership, culture and staff engagement at all levels of the organisation.

Within this element there are tangible links to the work that is ongoing at a national level and our People Strategy seeks to adopt the professional standards outlined with the Fire Professional Framework and will be aligning its leadership development to the new Leadership Framework developed by the National Fire Chief's Council Workforce Committee.

Cheshire strives for continuous improvement and places a heavy emphasis on learning and building capability. Developing our people is also one of the service's current core values. As an existing priority therefore, our People Strategy naturally aligns with the proposals in the National People Strategy which identify leadership, cultural values, behaviours, and training and education as areas requiring improvement.

Professional Development

Work has already commenced to map some of the existing standards outlined within the Fire Professional Framework to the qualifications and standards already required within Cheshire, either upon entry to the service or for purposes of progression.

We have been proactive in becoming early adopters in respect of the new Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship and seek to extend this further along with a broadening of the overall apprenticeship portfolio at both entry, supervisory and middle management levels. The service will also continue to be strong advocates of staff studying for academic qualifications such as the Institute of Fire Engineers and degree level qualifications. The acquisition of these qualifications alongside the respective incident command assessments are, and will continue to, represent part of the eligibility criteria for progression. To ensure these professional requirements remain inclusive we intend to continue investing in providing tutors and study support for staff undergoing a course of academic study.

Leadership Development

Leadership is a key area of emphasis for the service and needs to be exhibited at all levels of the organisation. Delivering an excellent service to our communities and being adaptable to the evolving requirements of a 'modern fire service' is key to our leadership and management focus for the future.

More than ever before we need leaders who are both operationally and professionally competent as well as being capable of creating a compelling vision for the future to inspire and motivate others. We need resilient leaders who will take responsibility for continuous improvement in our performance as a public service and bring other people with them. We also need leaders who are able to collaborate across different functions internally as well as being able to cross traditional boundaries with other agencies to achieve more efficient and joined up services for the communities we serve.

In selecting these leaders we strive to ensure that our promotion board processes are fit for purpose, fair and transparent. In support of this a fictional fire and rescue service is used as the basis for written assessments and guidance documents are provided to ensure candidates are aware of the process and can prepare accordingly. During 2019 there will be a review of the promotion processes to ensure that the methodologies are still appropriate to ensure the most suitable candidates are promoted based on merit.

To date we have offered a wide range of interventions to upskill and support our existing and future leaders. These interventions include leadership and incident command training, coaching, mentoring, use of psychometric assessments, e-learning, internal and external bespoke leadership

development training and most recently the "Step Up Development Programme" which is offered to Watch and Crew Managers and their green book counterparts.

Cheshire does not rely on traditionally classroom based learning, but we need to continue to transform to meet future needs and adopt more blended learning approaches. Technology should be embraced but not over relied upon in terms of e-learning.

Managers and staff are encouraged to use the appraisal system to discuss performance, career aspirations and readiness for promotion although based on feedback from the staff survey in respect of the appraisal system the performance element of the process will be subject to review during 2019. We will also be advocating that future discussions around performance, career aspirations and readiness for promotion will reference the new leadership framework.

We will be adopting the Leadership Framework because with the refreshed PQAs it provides a simple and more consistent approach to leadership and development for all staff, irrespective of discipline, role or function. The Framework brings together the "what and the how" combining traditional operational and professional competence with behavioural expectations. The framework is built around four quadrants as below, and is differentiated by five levels of leadership ranging from a firefighter or entry level support staff or senior leadership.

This framework and the leadership behaviours will be incorporated into a range of people processes over the course of the next year, including interview assessments, promotion board assessments, appraisals and career planning discussions.



Our leaders are vital to the success and the success of our People Strategy. We aim to further develop leadership and management skills and capacity throughout the service including a continuation of our engagement at Member level. We want to develop leaders and managers who are visible and accessible, take responsibility and lead by example, portraying the service's behaviours, values and standards at all times. We will equip managers to be actively involved in their own learning and the learning of our future leaders as coaches and mentors.

Engagement and Retention

The investment in leadership will also be an important catalyst for achieving the culture that we desire. Although we have the foundations of an existing positive and inclusive culture, the results of the 2017 staff survey highlighted areas where we can strengthen our culture and improve overall engagement and staff satisfaction.

We are very keen to fully understand the issues that affect staff morale and in turn performance. Staff engagement is a key

priority for us and an area that we will seek to find out more from our people about what affects their happiness at work. One of the vehicles that has been used for this is a confidential staff survey and as a result of the heightened emphasis placed around staff engagement and culture, whilst this is a key element of the People Strategy, it has been established as a separate workstream with its own forum and action plan.

The underlying ethos of the recent survey was to ensure that the objective to improve culture and staff engagement did not revolve solely around a survey diagnostic but rather around a

wide range of actions and projects that involve staff in developing new ways of working and identifying solutions to highlighted areas of improvement. A key to this has also been senior management visibility and proactive engagement with the Trade Unions to encourage positive and collaborative working and to promote sustainable employee engagement.

In addition we have established regular working with our networks, staff associations and trade unions in order to get closer to the issues and seek collective solutions for our people.



'Step Up' Key People Objectives

Professional Development

The adoption of the National Professional standards with a clear understanding of entry and progression criteria into roles at all levels and familiarity of what constitutes the type, and level of skill, experience and knowledge required.

Leadership Development

Leadership behaviours that exemplify the values and standards of the Service instilled in all staff regardless of role, enabling them to work effectively in collaboration/partnership with others.

Retention and Engagement

The achievement of a positive organisational culture that is based on trust, strong employee engagement, commitment and staff longevity.



People Strategy Delivery and Governance

The People Strategy is an integral part of the way we work and ownership for its delivery rests across the Service.

Role of the Fire Authority and Service Management Team

Both Members of the Fire Authority and Service Management Team (SMT) believe in this strategy and that it will help to deliver the Service's vision for the future in respect of its People. Leading by example, our Members of the Fire Authority and SMT will set the standard for what is expected of all staff in enabling this strategy to be delivered by 2022.

Role of Cheshire Constabulary

The Joint Services People Board will have overarching responsibility for monitoring and updating on the plan and where the joint HR function are responsible for the delivery of objectives, the People Board will have responsibility for determining how the respective priorities will be resourced. Responsibility for the identification of priorities for action within the Strategy rests with SMT, which will include the Joint Head of HR.

Progress against the Plan will be reported to the Staffing Committee on a bi-annual basis.

Role of all staff

This strategy will only be successful if all staff within Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service support it, making the vision of what the Service will look like from a people perspective, a reality. In supporting this strategy, employees will not only assist in enabling the actions outlined but they will also demonstrate their support through their behaviour and attitudes.

The table on page 22 below illustrates the measures in place to ensure the People Strategy and associated objectives and delivery plans form part of the Service's performance management framework ensuring assurance and scrutiny of the actions assigned and outcomes identified.

People Strategy Delivery Measures

	Measure	Frequency	Responsibility
PRIMARY	People Strategy Annual Delivery Plan People Strategy Annual Delivery Plan People Strategy Annual Delivery Plan	Monthly Quarterly Bi-Annual	People Board SMT Staffing Committee
STEP IN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality and Diversity Data • Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan • Positive Action Action Plan • Firepride Allies Action Plan • Limitless Action Plan • Stonewall Assessment • Gender Pay Gap • Probation/Induction Reviews • Pay Policy Review 	Quarterly Quarterly Quarterly Quarterly Quarterly Quarterly Published Annually Monthly during 1st six months Annually	} } } } } } } Line Manager Head of HR
STEP FORWARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of Grievances, Conduct and Dignity at Work Cases • Reporting of Casework • Individual Performance Discussions • Career Planning Discussions • Exit Interviews and Attrition Rates • Workforce/Establishment Planning Reviews • Workforce Planning Monitoring • Recruitment against vacancies • Sickness Absence Monitoring • Succession Planning Reviews • Industrial Relations • Management Conferences 	Quarterly Annual Bi-Annual Annual Monthly Monthly Quarterly Quarterly Monthly Bi-Annual Monthly Bi-Annual	People Board Staffing Committee Line Manager Line Manager People Board Service Delivery Managers/HR People Board People Board ACFO/Attendance Management Board CFO JCNP SMT
STEP UP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Engagement Survey • Staff Engagement Corporate Action Plan Monitoring • Staff Engagement Action Plan Reporting • Promotion Board Moderation 	Every 2 Years Quarterly Bi-Annual Annual – for every process	All Service Staff Engagement Forum Staffing Committee Head of HR





COVID-19 STAFF SURVEY ACTION PLAN

ACTION	ACTION OWNER	PROGRESS	STATUS
Publish information for staff on the procedures undertaken in the event of a positive Covid-19 test in their workplace	Neil Griffiths	we continue to refine the internal T&T process having experienced a rise in cases of possible infection or exposure during the first part of October. The Outbreak Control Group convened on a number of occasions to determine the most appropriate course of action. The group is chaired by a HOD and the group incorporates medical advice from our OH provider. Where necessary, PHE colleagues were advised on any action we had taken in terms of isolating staff. We have followed the latest advice in relation to emergency services and issued Infection Control training to all staff as well as raise the use of facemasks when moving around buildings or when travelling in vehicles.	IN PROGRESS
Provide details on what Covid-secure status for premises means and how this may impact on staff	Neil Wilson	Details on covid-secure working arrangements will form part of return to work 1-2-1s for those returning to the workplace. Workplace risk assessments for individual locations are also available for staff to view on Corporate Documents. Further guidance has been made available through the publication of Covid-19 Safe Workplace Guides for staff and managers. The guides contain details on Covid-secure arrangements and working practices.	COMPLETE
Publish communications reinforcing the need to maintain social distancing measures	Lynn Marsh	Social distancing has regularly been promoted through principal officer briefings and other publications. Signage regarding social distancing is visible in all service locations.	COMPLETE
Publish guidance on cleaning routines for shared areas and equipment e.g. printers, pool cars	Neil Wilson	Guidance on cleaning routines is available on the intranet. In addition, Neil Wilson issued an all-user email on 5 August outlining the importance of cleaning routines for shared resources such as kitchen areas and printers. Further guidance on cleaning workstations and equipment is available within the Covid-19 Safe Workplace Guides and Covid-19 Managers Handbook.	COMPLETE
Develop a mechanism for staff to report concerns regarding social distancing within the workplace	Andrea Harvey	The Safecall facility has been made available for staff to report any social distancing concerns that they may have and where they do not feel comfortable raising this in the workplace.	COMPLETE



Review the use of Principal Officer briefings to communicate with staff	Mark Cashin	The Covid-19 briefings have been reduced in frequency from daily to 2x per week. Ongoing frequencies of the briefing will be determined by the prevailing situation regarding Covid-19. A regular briefing will be maintained post-Covid, with the frequency of this to be determined.	ONGOING
Ensure those working from home are kept in regular contact with colleagues and line managers	Line Managers	The importance of regular contact is referenced within the interim home working guidance, which sets out expectations for staff and line managers. Staff and line managers should ensure that they maintain regular contact between themselves and also their wider team.	COMPLETE
Develop a home-working policy to further support staff to work remotely	Andrea Harvey	An interim home working guidance document has now been published to provide guidance during the lockdown period. The document sets out expectations of staff and line managers for those working from home, as well as providing guidance on issues such as safe working, caring responsibilities, working time and information security.	COMPLETE
Agree guidance on arrangements in the event of staff facing childcare issues due to Covid-19	Andrea Harvey	A range of measures already exist to support staff with unplanned childcare needs and this should be discussed with line managers in the first instance. Guidance on caring responsibilities is outlined within the interim home working guidance document.	COMPLETE
Consider the provision of additional equipment to support the needs of those working at home for prolonged periods of time	Line Managers	Revised DSE assessment processes have been communicated to staff working from home to identify any particular needs regarding equipment. The interim home working document provides guidance for staff regarding risk assessment and the procurement of necessary equipment to enable regular working from home in a DSE compliant manner.	COMPLETE
Promote regular health and wellbeing advice/support for staff to access	Lawrence Howard	A range of information and support is available to use online via the intranet. In addition, the 'Who Do I Turn To' section of the intranet has been promoted on the front page of the intranet to make it easier for staff to access necessary resources. Mental health and wellbeing continues to be a priority, particularly during periods of lockdown. The Covid-19 Safe Workplace Guides contain support and advice for staff regarding mental health concerns. The Manager's Guide also provides guidance on the development of wellbeing action plans which can be put in place to support mental health and wellbeing.	ONGOING
Ensure staff working from home are provided with an opportunity to discuss any potential anxieties and concerns before returning to the workplace	Line Managers	Pre-return 1-2-1s have been developed between staff and line managers; with guidance in the Covid-19 Safe Workplace Guides. These 1-2-1s will explain new covid-secure processes and working arrangements in the particular workplace, as well as explain the individual and workplace risk assessments.	COMPLETE

Agenda Item 4

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: STAFFING COMMITTEE
DATE: 16 NOVEMBER 2020
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION
AUTHOR: ANDREA HARVEY

SUBJECT: LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME
DISCRETIONS POLICY

Purpose of Report

1. This report seeks approval of a revised Local Government Pension Scheme Discretions Policy.

Recommended: That;

- [1] The proposed Local Government Pension Scheme Discretions Policy be considered and approved.

Background

2. The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) in England and Wales was amended from 1 April 2014 so that benefits for service after 31 March 2014, build-up on a defined benefit career average revalued earnings (CARE) basis, rather than on a defined benefit final salary basis.
3. The provisions of the CARE scheme, together with the protections for members' pre 1 April 2014 final salary rights, are contained in the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 [SI 2013/2356] and the Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014 [SI 2014/525].
4. Scheme employers participating in the LGPS in England or Wales must formulate, publish and keep under review a statement of policy on all discretions which they have the power to exercise in relation to members of the LGPS.
5. In drawing up a discretions policy, the Government advises that organisations should not 'fetter their discretion' and it recommends that a "policy should not be so rigid or restrictive as to prevent flexibility where a (possibly unanticipated) situation requires it." In other words it is not advisable for an organisation just to simply state they will not apply a discretion as this will restrict flexibility and bind them to make the same decision in every single case. This is, in fact, removing any discretion. Organisations are able to state

that their normal policy is not to exercise a discretion but then intrude language that would allow them to do so in certain limited circumstances.

Information

6. The Service's LGPS Discretions Policy was drawn up in 2014 and has not been reviewed since then, largely because it has rarely been referred to. However, in recent months a member of staff asked whether it would be possible to exercise a discretion and this led to the review.
7. The revised policy is attached to this report as Appendix A with the proposed changes highlighted in yellow. The main changes involve the introduction of wording allowing extenuating circumstances to be considered, as well as acknowledging that there might be situations where discretion might be appropriately exercised if there is a financial or organisational benefit to the Service.
8. The policy has also been updated to reflect the fact that all discretions would require the approval of the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, the Treasurer and the Pension Scheme Manager. Previously this had been the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and the Pension Scheme Manager.

Financial Implications

9. There may be financial implications associated with the exercise of some discretions. These would vary depending on the circumstances and be considered on a case by case basis by the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, the Treasurer and the Pension Scheme Manager.

Legal Implications

10. As stated above the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 and the Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014 require us to formulate, publish and keep under review a statement of policy on LGPS pension discretions.
11. To date we have been fully compliant with the Regulations but our policy has been found to be rigid and restrictive and has prevented flexibility to apply discretion.

Equality and Diversity Implications

12. There are no equality and diversity implications associated with the proposed policy changes but if discretions are applied they will be monitored to ensure that there is no indirect discrimination or bias towards any particular group of staff.

Environmental Implications

13. None

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MANAGER

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE

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STATEMENT OF POLICY – LGPS NEW SCHEME APRIL 2014

EMPLOYER DISCRETIONS UNDER THE CHESHIRE PENSION FUND

References:

- Local Government Pension Scheme 2008 (LGPS)
- Local Government Pension Scheme 2014 (LGPS)

A written statement of the employer's policy is required for the following regulations:

April 2014:

REGULATION	POLICY ON INDIVIDUAL DISCRETION
LGPS 31: - Award additional pension to a member (of up to a maximum of £6,822 a year). [limit increases annually 1 st April]	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service would not exercise its discretion to award additional pension to an active member, or a member who was an active member who was dismissed under redundancy or business efficiency unless there was a clear financial or organisational advantage to the Service or where extenuating circumstances apply. This would be subject to approval by the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, the Treasurer and the Pension Scheme Manager.
LGPS 16(2)(e) and 16(4)(d) Whether to partly or wholly fund the Additional Pension Contribution through regular payments or one off lump sum	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service would not exercise its discretion to partly or wholly fund an Additional Pension Contribution (APC) purchase with a member.
LGPS 27 / 30(6): Whether all or some benefits can be paid if an employee reduces hours/grade and continues to work (“flexible retirement”)	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service does not give blanket consent for staff in the LGPS aged over 55 years to flexibly retire and draw immediate payment of pension benefits. However, requests would be referred to Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, the Treasurer and the Pension Scheme Manager, and would be assessed on a case by case basis taking into account such factors as cost and impact upon service delivery.
LGPS 30(8): -Whether to waive some or all of the reduction that would apply otherwise when a member retires before Normal Pension Age.	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service would consider waiving any actuarial reduction where there was a clear financial or organisational advantage to the Service or where extenuating circumstances apply. Decisions would be made on a case by case basis, which would be subject to approval by the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, the Treasurer and the Pension Scheme Manager.

REGULATION	POLICY ON INDIVIDUAL DISCRETION
Transitional Protections – LGPS 1 (1)(c) Schedule 2: For those members choosing to retire and draw their pension after 31st March 2014, on or after the age of 55 and before the age of 60.	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service would consider ‘switching on’ the protection to the 85 year rule for a member who elects to draw their pension from age 55 and before age 60 and meet any additional cost of the retirement. The Service would consider waiving any actuarial reduction where there was a clear financial or organisational advantage to the Service or where extenuating circumstances apply. Decisions would be made on a case by case basis, which would be subject to approval by the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, the Treasurer and the Pension Scheme Manager.
LGPS 30 (5) All members who have attained the age of 55 or over may elect to receive their pension provided they have left work for Service in that employment	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service would consider waiving any actuarial reduction where there was a clear financial or organisational advantage to the Service or where extenuating circumstances apply. Decisions would be made on a case by case basis, which would be subject to approval by the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, the Treasurer and the Pension Scheme Manager.
LGPS 9: Determine rate of employees' contributions.	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service would allocate employees to the appropriate contribution rate band according to pay at 1 April each year (based on previous 12 months pensionable pay) and would adjust only on an individual basis if an employee was promoted or demoted part year with effect from the date of the change.
LGPS 22(8)(b): Whether to extend 12-month period to combine previous local government service.	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service would not extend the 12 month time limit for an employee who has not elected to keep their deferred local government service record separate from their active one unless there were extenuating circumstances or there was a clear financial or organisational advantage to the Service or it could be demonstrated that Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service had not complied with their request at the time they became an active member. All scenarios would be considered on a case by case basis, which would be subject to approval by the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, the Treasurer and the Pension Scheme Manager.
LGPS 17: Whether to contribute to a shared Additional Voluntary Contribution (AVC) arrangement.	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service would not exercise its discretion to contribute towards an Additional Voluntary Contribution.
LGPS 100(6): Whether to extend 12-month period to	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service would not extend the 12 month time limit for an employee to make a decision about transferring pension rights unless

REGULATION	POLICY ON INDIVIDUAL DISCRETION
allow a transfer-in of non-LG pension rights.	<p>there were extenuating circumstances or there was a clear financial or organisational advantage to the Service or it could be demonstrated that Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service had not complied with their request at the time they became an active member.</p> <p>All scenarios would be considered on a case by case basis, which would be subject to approval by the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, the Treasurer and the Pension Scheme Manager.</p>

NB: Please refer to policy document #1646 – Statement of Policy pre April 2014.

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Agenda Item 5

CHESHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

MEETING OF: STAFFING COMMITTEE
DATE: 16TH NOVEMBER 2020
REPORT OF: HEAD OF SERVICE DELIVERY
AUTHOR: MIKE CLARK/URSULA JONES

SUBJECT: WORKFORCE PLANNING UPDATE

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update in respect of the current and predicted operational establishment levels for the remainder of the financial year 2020/21 and provide recommendations for 2021/22 establishment levels.
2. The report will also provide an update in respect of the number of personnel that are in development or FF3,4,5 (operationally competent).
3. The report will also provide an update in respect of the number of personnel in temporary positions and temporary promotions.

Recommended: That Members

- [1] Note the Workforce Planning Update;
- [2] Note the recommendations approved by The Service Management Team (SMT) contained in paragraph/s 14, 15 and 16.

Background

4. The workforce planning proposals previously agreed by SMT in the March 2020 paper were to complete the introduction of the 5 remaining firefighter migrations and to utilise firefighter migration/inter brigade transfer and delay the commencement of the wholetime recruitment campaign to a later start date than April 2021.
5. The firefighter migrations have been completed and the need for any further migration/inter brigade transfers are regularly reviewed by the establishments group together with the need for a wholetime recruits course.
6. Starters
 - 6.1 There have been 5 new starters through migration in Q1.

7. Leavers

7.1 There have been 9 leavers in 2020/21 to date:

- 6 retirements have occurred. 4 planned retirements, (5 less than predicted for the year to date), plus 1 deferred retirement from 2019/20 and 1 further early retirement.
- 3 other leavers' have occurred against a planning assumption of 10 for the year.

8. Predicted Leavers for the remainder of 2020/21

8.1 7 further individuals eligible for retirement;

8.2 7 'other leavers' as per agreed planning assumption.

9. Known Recruitment Assumptions

9.1 There is no further planned recruitment in 2020/21.

The following are known recruitment assumptions for the year 2021/2022:

- Of the 11 'Cohort Three' apprentices 10 are expected to go live in Q1 2021/22
- 1 High Potential Development Student

10. Development Firefighters

10.1 The firefighter role map has a number of units which reflect the diverse role of a firefighter. Units 3, 4 and 5 all relate to fire service operations: Unit 3 - Save and preserve endangered life. Unit 4 - Resolve fire and rescue operational incidents. Unit 5 - Protect the environment from the effects of hazardous materials. In 2018 the Staffing Committee approved that on completion of these 3 units, development firefighters can have the restrictions listed in pillar 3 of the Service Development to Competent Guidance lifted, now being deemed operationally competent for the purposes of workforce planning.

10.2 We currently have in Service the following number of development and FF3,4,5 Firefighters in post:

- 17 development firefighters (currently do not hold units FF3,4,5);
- 6 development firefighters who hold FF3,4,5 (operationally competent)

10.3 Appendix 1 provides the latest Gant chart of actual and predicted FF3,4,5 achievement for our development firefighters.

10.4 Excluding DC1 stations, 50 is the maximum number of operational development firefighters the Service can accommodate on the premise of one

development firefighter per watch on one-pump stations and two development Firefighters per watch on two-pump stations.

11. Planning Assumptions

- 11.1 Planning assumptions remain the same as previous workforce planning updates. It is acknowledged that IRMP proposals will see Chester's 2nd appliance return to Chester and Ellesmere Port's 2nd appliance move to Powey Lane which will change establishment levels at those individual stations but not the overall establishment levels. These changes are due to take place when Chester Fire Station is ready for occupation early in 2021 and will be reflected in the March 2021 update paper to Service Management Team.
- 11.2 As previously reported the recent pension ruling could have an impact on how the retirement forecasting is predicted, potentially changing planning assumptions going forward.
- 11.3 On 16th July 2020 HM Treasury and MHCLG published consultations to remedy the age discrimination in schemes. In a written statement the Chief Secretary to the Treasury confirmed that the remedies proposed in the consultations will apply equally to claimants and non-claimants. The consultations run until October 2020 after which the nature and timing of the primary legislation necessary to bring forward changes to the schemes will be developed. It is government's intention for legislation to be in place by April 2022. The consultations propose that remedies will be backdated to the commencement of existing protections in April 2015. However, until further guidance is provided, current planning assumptions continue to be used.
- 11.4 The Joint Corporate Services pension Lead has been re-advertised, however a dedicated Fire Pensions Co-ordinator post within the payroll and pensions team was approved and has now been appointed to.
- 11.5 It is also possible that the departmental reviews of Operational Policy and Assurance (OPA), Protection and Prevention may alter the departmental establishment levels which may have an impact on the Service Delivery establishments should temporary posted individuals return. However, it has been agreed by the Head of Department that for the Operational Training Group (OTG) element of the OPA review that substantive appointments to the minimum staffing levels within OTG can be made following the 2020 Watch Manager Promotion Board, which would inevitably see the number of temporary promotion and postings reduce.
- 11.6 The Service has used migrations as a flexible approach to recruitment over the last 2-3 years. However, it is recognised that although this approach provides a short lead-in time in order to react to a rapid change in establishment numbers, it does create greater impact on the On Call Duty System by creating dual role firefighters who typically have shorter On Call contracts and often take compensatory rest. Therefore, a blended approach of migration and inter brigade transfers would mitigate some of the impact. Additionally the inter brigade transfers would bring greater opportunity for diversification.

11.7 The Establishments Group is also aware that the review of the duty system at Wilmslow may result in a number of staff needing to be redeployed within the Service, albeit the review is not due to be concluded until 2023/2024.

12. Summary of Establishments

12.1 Taking into account temporary movements on and off the wholetime duty shifts system, in summary the predicted establishment level for the end of 2020/21 is 335 which is 4 over the funded posts and which is predicated on those 7 further 'other leavers' coming to fruition and 5 of the 7 remaining retirements going ahead.

12.2 It is noted that throughout the current and next financial year, individuals who are in long-term temporary promotions or posts, who do not have substantive positions, may return and therefore increase the Service Delivery establishment levels. For example, the On Call Support Officer Roles and those individuals who relinquished their substantive posts to enable those in the Crew Manager Talent Pool to secure substantive positions.

13. Temporary Posts and Promotions

13.1 In order to give an overview of the number of individuals who are in temporary posts and/or promotions Appendix 2 has been produced. This number has an impact on managing establishment levels and recommendations for future recruitment.

13.2 Although this report focusses primarily on Service Delivery establishment levels, the table includes temporary postings across all departments as these postings have both indirect and direct impacts on Service Delivery postings.

13.3 The establishment team continues to monitor those individuals who are in both temporary posts and promotions. Highlighting length of time in both post and time in development. This information is periodically shared with Heads of Department. Further detail can be provided to the wider SMT if required.

13.4 The Establishment team continues to make concerted efforts to ensure that not only are individuals given a substantive posting but also that it is at a preferred location. This continues to be an important piece of work that attempts to be inclusive of local Station Commander intelligence and in the spirit of our staff engagement activity.

Recommendations

14. For the remainder of 2020/21 retain the flexibility to introduce further firefighter migrations/inter brigade transfers into the Service. This will continue to provide a more flexible approach to the number of personnel we bring into the Service if planning assumptions are not accurate.

15. 12 firefighter migrations/inter brigade transfers in 2021/22 to be recruited. This will ensure the maintenance of enhanced establishment levels ahead of the potential for greater retirement/leaver numbers because of the change in pensions legislation due in April 2022.

16. A Wholetime Recruitment Campaign for 12 firefighters to be reviewed in March 2021.

Financial Implications

18. Based on the assumptions within this report and the recommendation to recruit and maintain adequate crewing levels there will be a predicted overspend against budget allocation. However, this overspend continues to be significantly reduced compared to the previous financial year.
19. The indicative maximum additional cost for 2020/21 has been calculated based on the planning and staffing assumptions and is as follows:

Total Cost of 4 additional staff above funded total - £176,000¹

Equality & Diversity Implications

20. The decision to further postpone 2020/21 recruitment will have an impact on our ability to improve equality and diversity in our workforce.
21. A Positive Action campaign will commence ahead of the recruitment campaign to mitigate any impact.

Environmental Implications

22. Sustained higher establishment levels has resulted in a reduction in vehicle movements for personnel undertaking pre-arranged additional shifts and Out Staffing. This has reduced the Service's impact on the environment.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE

¹ Note: Financial calculations are indicative based on the cost (+ on costs) of a firefighter @ £44,148¹ rounded to £44k (pay scale used 2020-21 inc 2% pay rise July 2020).

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APPENDIX 1

Key	Completed QA4 or FF 3, & 5
	not completed or booked on to QA4 or FF 3, & 5
	booked on to Future QA4 or FF 3, & 5

Summary - Development Fire Fighter Profile January 2017 - March 2021 - 12 Month Development Timeline (D) Units 3, 4 and 5 Competency

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APPENDIX 2

Temporary Posts

The following table gives a summary of the number of personnel who are in temporary promotions across all departments up to the role of Station Manager.

Role	Number of Individuals		
	Total	Competent	Development
Firefighter	57	40	17
Crew Manager	10	6	4
Watch Manager A	1	1	0
Watch Manager B	10	8	2
Station Manager A	2	0	2
Station Manager B	5/7*	4/6*	1
Total:	85/87*	57	28
Compared to March 20:	74	41	33
FBU - Firefighter	1	1	0

* The total of 7 includes 2 substantive SMB's who have no substantive post, backfilling for the temp GM's, but are substantive SMB's following last Promotion Board.

Temporary Promotions

The table below gives a summary of the number of personnel in temporary promotion posts.

Role: Wholetime	Number	Role: On Call	Number
Crew Manager	14	Crew Manager	17
Watch Manager A	14	N/A	
Watch Manager B	11	Watch Manager B	1
Station Manager A	6	N/A	
Station Manager B	3	N/A	
Group Manager	4	N/A	
Total:	52		18
Compared to March 20:	42	Compared to March 20:	15

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Agenda Item 6

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: STAFFING COMMITTEE
DATE: 16TH NOVEMBER 2020
REPORT OF: ANDREA HARVEY - DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION
AUTHOR: CARMINE RABHANI – SNR HR BUSINESS PARTNER

SUBJECT: DISCIPLINE AND GRIEVANCE UPDATE

Purpose of Report

1. To provide an update to the Staffing Committee on Discipline cases, Grievances, Dignity at Work complaints, and Performance Improvement/Capability procedures within the Service.

Recommended: That

- [1] Members note the information contained within this update.

Background

2. The following information summarises the data that the Service holds on Discipline cases, Grievances, Dignity at Work complaints, and Performance Improvement/Capability procedures for its employees.
3. It covers the last 2 calendar years up to and including October 2020 but as 2020 is not yet complete, references to 2020 figures do not represent a full year's data. Comparisons are also made with 2018 data where appropriate.
4. Fire Staff and Operational Staff data has been separated where there is sufficient data to do so without individuals being identifiable.

Information

Discipline Cases by Type

5. There were 17 discipline cases undertaken during 2019 (calendar year), of these 9 were conduct cases, 7 were attendance cases and 1 was a capability case. In comparison there were 24 discipline cases in 2018, consisting of 13 conduct cases and 11 attendance cases.
6. At the time of writing there have been 19 discipline cases undertaken during 2020, of these 15 were conduct cases and 4 have been attendance cases.

7. During the Covid-19 pandemic the Service has continued to deal with disciplinary issues where they have arisen, however to avoid unhelpful delays we have conducted meetings/hearings via Skype where appropriate, and where face to face meetings have been required we have ensured that meeting rooms are fully Covid-secure to safeguard the health and safety of all parties. In all cases the arrangements for hearings and meetings have been discussed and agreed with all parties in advance to ensure that everyone is comfortable to proceed.
8. In terms of managing attendance a lot of work has been undertaken in recent months in response to feedback from both the 2019 staff survey and the HMICFRS inspection. Through staff feedback it was clear that the policy and associated procedures are fit for purpose, proportionate and the reason for them is clear and understood. What became evident however is that more consideration was needed in respect of how the policy was being applied and how attendance should be managed with more compassion and consideration of how messaging is received during what is often a difficult time for an individual.
9. The work undertaken has resulted in a review of the policy, tone and language, and the development of a "Managing Attendance & Wellbeing Toolkit" for managers and a separate staff guide to address some of the common myths and questions that staff have about attendance management. The intention of both of these documents is to raise understanding of the importance of good attendance management, reassure and re-educate staff about the application of the process, and to prompt managers to consider "how" they are applying the policy, and how to set the right tone and consider the appropriate and desired level of support.
10. The launch of these documents is being supported by Skype sessions with Watches / Teams across the organisation which have been delivered in conjunction with Lawrence Howard, Mental Health & Wellbeing Advisor. To date these have been well received.

Discipline – Breakdown by staff group

11. As of the end of Quarter 1 2020 the proportion of Operational Staff to Fire Staff was 80% to 20%.
12. Of the 9 conduct cases in 2019, 89% (8) were Operational Staff and 11% (1) were Fire Staff. In relation to the 7 attendance cases, 86% (6) were Operational Staff and 14% (1) were Fire Staff.
13. Of the 15 conduct cases commenced in 2020, 73% (11) are Operational Staff and 27% (4) are Fire Staff. In relation to the 4 attendance cases 50% (2) are Operational Staff and 50% (2) are Fire Staff.

Discipline – Outcomes

14. Overall, of the 17 discipline cases (attendance, conduct and capability) in 2019, 47% (8) of cases resulted in a formal sanction, with 41% (7) of cases resulting in no formal action. Employee resignations/retirements accounted for the other 12% (2) of cases. In comparison, in 2018 29% (7) of cases resulted in a formal sanction, with 50% (12) of the cases resulting in no formal action.
15. Of the 8 cases in 2019 which resulted in a formal sanction (which would mean either a written warning, final written warning or dismissal), 12% (2) of the cases involved Fire Staff and 88% (6) involved Operational Staff. The percentage of Fire Staff cases resulting in the issuing of a formal sanction was 100%, compared with 40% of Operational Staff cases.
16. Of the 8 formal sanctions issued, 25% (2) were issued to female staff and 75% (6) were issued to male staff, which when considering the relatively low numbers of cases is broadly in line with the Service's gender split ratio of 81% males to 19% females. By comparison in 2018 14% (1) formal sanction was issued to female staff and 86% (6) formal sanctions were issued to male staff.
17. Of the 8 formal sanctions issued in 2019, 63% (5) were for staff in Service Delivery, with 13% (1) each in Prevention, Operational Policy and Assurance, and Protection.
18. To date, of the 19 discipline cases in 2020 which are either completed or ongoing, 5 formal sanctions have been issued.
19. In summary the discipline figures show us that 2019 appears to show a decrease in both conduct and attendance cases when compared with the data for 2018. However, although the data for 2020 is incomplete, this appears to show an increase in conduct cases coupled with a decrease in attendance cases, but a slight increase in overall cases from 2019 to 2020.

Grievances

20. In 2019 there were 4 formal grievance cases, compared with two in 2018. Of these 4 cases, 3 were raised by male Operational Staff, and one was raised by a male member of Fire Staff.
21. Of the 4 grievances in 2019 one was withdrawn by the individual, one was rejected as it was out of time, and two were heard but not upheld.
22. In 2020 to date there have been 2 grievances. Of the 2 grievances, both were raised by male, Operational Staff, one was not upheld and one was resolved informally.

Dignity at Work

23. In 2019 there were no formal Dignity at Work complaints, compared with 5 formal complaints in 2018.

24. To date in 2020 there has been one formal Dignity at Work complaint, the outcome of which was that it was not upheld.
25. In the last couple of years the Service has placed a lot of emphasis on developing its managers in order to be able to manage with compassion and empathy, as well as focusing during appraisals on the 'how' things are done and not just the 'what' is done. It has also run successful campaigns such as 'Who do I turn to' which highlights what is and isn't acceptable behaviour in the workplace, and the support that is available to staff should they feel harassed or bullied. These efforts to heighten awareness of unacceptable behaviour, and to encourage managers to manage appropriately appears to be reflected in the downward trend in Dignity at Work complaints in recent years.

Capability / Performance Improvement

26. Cases of incapability or poor performance are managed in accordance with the Capability Procedure for Fire Staff, and the Performance Improvement Procedure for Operational Staff. These types of cases do not involve a formal investigation but are managed through a set of monitoring stages. Integral to the process for all staff is the issuing of a formal Performance Improvement Plan once the informal stage has been exhausted.
27. In 2020 to date there have been no formal PIPs issued. In 2019 there were 2 formal PIPs issued, and in 2018 there were 2 formal PIP's issued.

Financial Implications

28. Poorly managed cases can result in legal costs and award of compensation, as well as reputational damage. In addition each case is time and resource intensive, therefore a lower number of cases should mean greater capacity is released for managers to undertake other work.

Legal Implications

29. Where employment cases are not managed appropriately there is a risk of legal claims through the Employment Tribunal.

Equality and Diversity Implications

30. It is important that all sections of the workforce are treated fairly and equitably during discipline procedures, and that all staff can freely raise their concerns where necessary. Employees with protected characteristics are safeguarded by the Equality Act 2010 and trade union representation is always accommodated upon request.

Environmental Implications

31. All staff should be able to work in a safe, professional and inclusive work environment.

**CONTACT: DONNA LINTON, GOVERNANCE & CORPORATE PLANNING
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TEL [01606] 868804
BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE**

Appendix 1

Table 1 – Number of Discipline cases from 2017 to 2020 (to date)

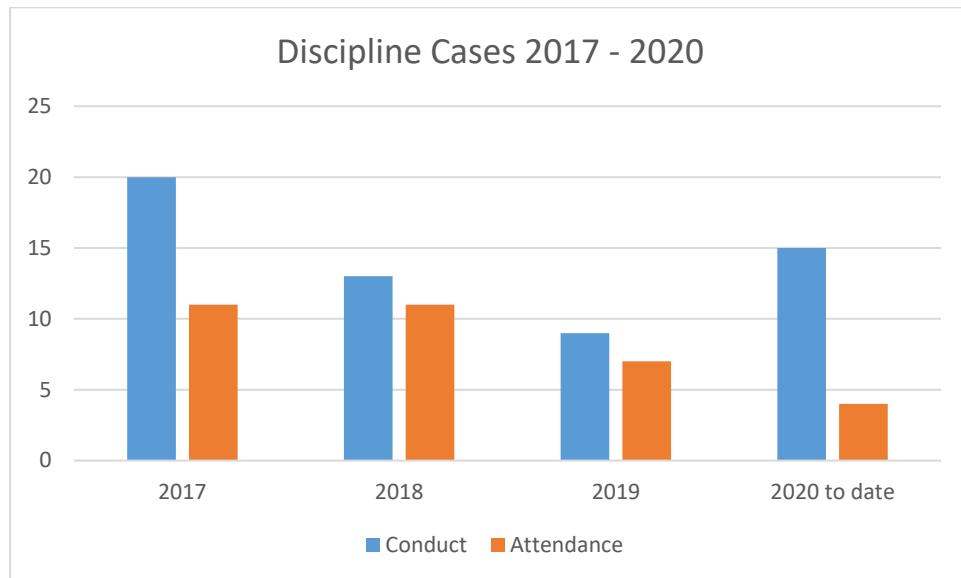


Table 2 – Outcome of 2019 Discipline Cases by Staff Group

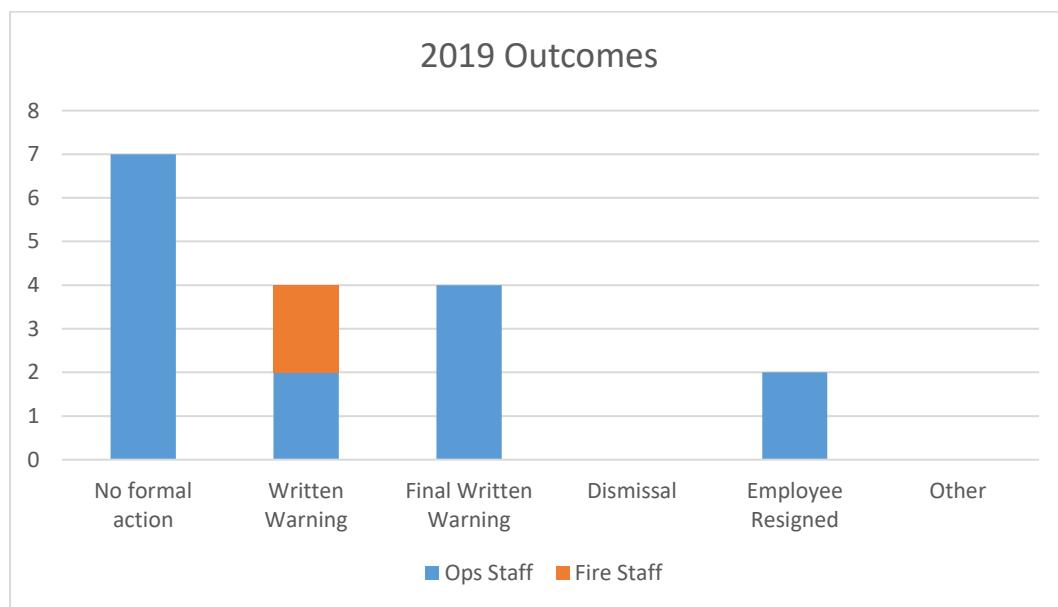


Table 3 – Grievances by Staff Group

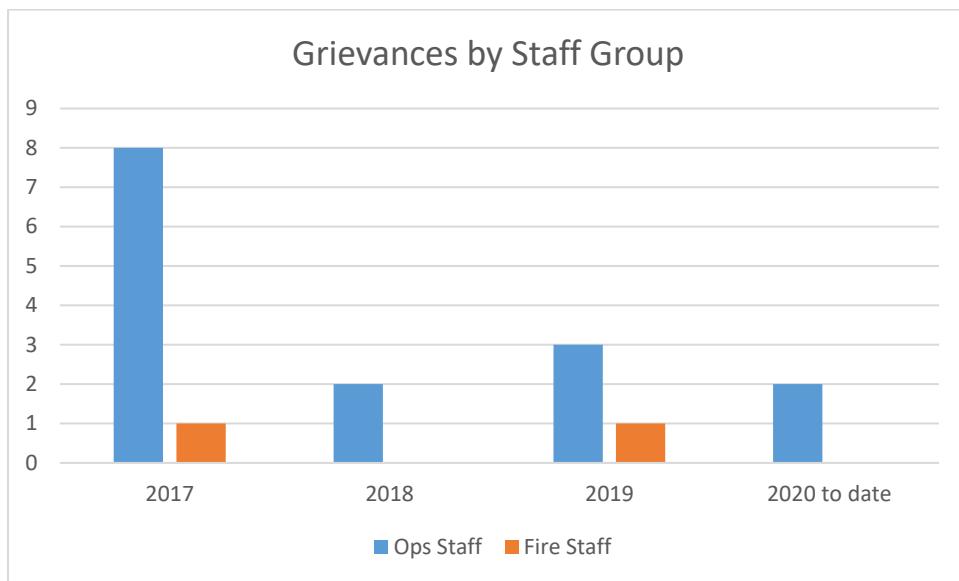


Table 4 – Grievances by Gender (all staff groups)

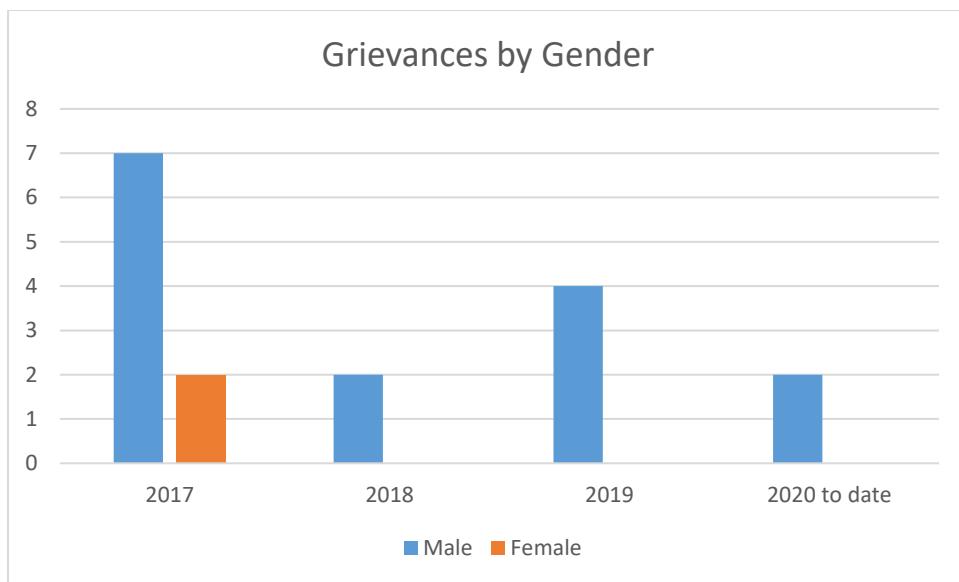


Table 5 – Dignity at Work Complaints by Staff Group

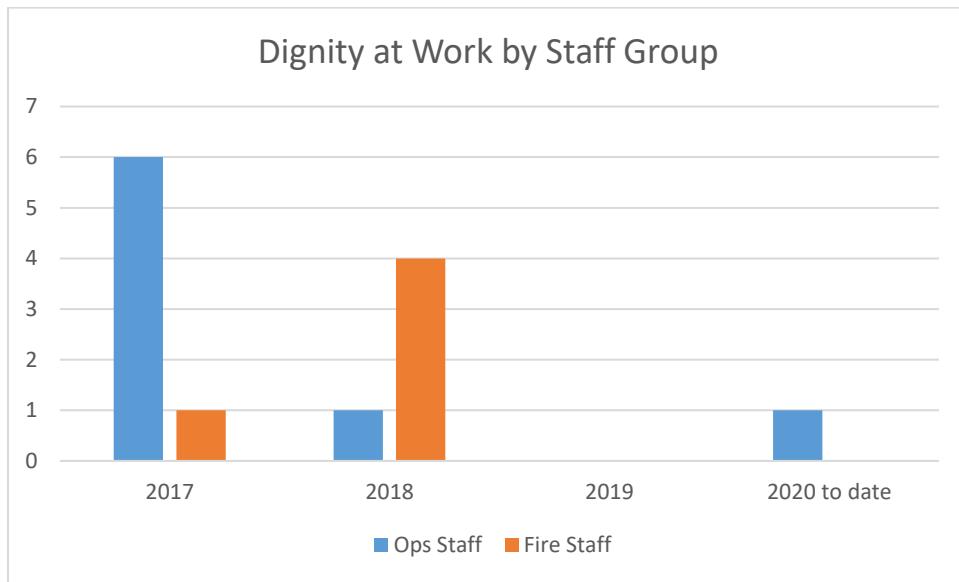
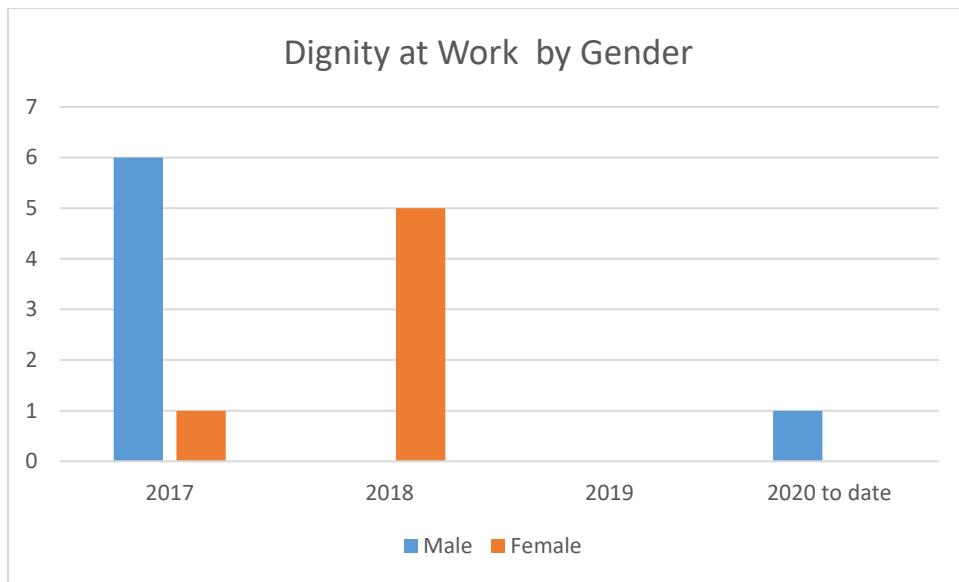


Table 6 – Dignity at Work Complaints by Gender



Agenda Item 7

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: STAFFING COMMITTEE
DATE: 16TH NOVEMBER 2020
REPORT OF: GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE PLANNING
MANAGER
AUTHOR: DONNA LINTON

SUBJECT: EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Exclusion of the Press and Public

Recommended:

That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Order 2006, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the items of business listed below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12 A to the Act in the paragraphs indicated:

Item 8: Service Management Team Review

Paragraph

- (1) Information relating to any individual
- (3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

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TEL: [01606] 868804

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: NONE

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