

# CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

**MEETING OF:** CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY  
**DATE:** 13TH FEBRUARY 2019  
**REPORT OF:** DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION  
**AUTHOR:** ANDREA HARVEY

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**SUBJECT:** PEOPLE STRATEGY 2019-22

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## Purpose of Report

1. This report is to present Members with a proposed People Strategy which is now a requirement of all fire and rescue services following the introduction of the updated Fire and Rescue National Framework. Once approved, it is intended that the People Strategy will replace the existing Transformation Plan which was approved and is currently monitored by the Staffing Committee in respect of the key workstreams and priorities relating to people and workforce reform.

## Recommended:

- [1] That Members note the content and approve the People Strategy.

## Background

2. There have been a number of developments at national and local level which have influenced how the organisation has approached the recruitment, development and retention of its people. A clear emphasis on transforming the fire sector can be seen through the Government's fire reform agenda and the introduction of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services.
3. As highlighted through documents such as the Fire and Rescue National Framework; Thomas Review and Local Government Association's Fire Vision 2024, a key challenge for fire and rescue services 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.
4. People are our greatest asset and in times of ongoing 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.
5. The People Strategy has therefore been written to reflect 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 that have

been identified in the National People Strategy which was approved by the National Fire Chief's Council in 2017.

## Information

6. Within the proposed People Strategy are a number of underpinning principles and commitments which highlight how the strategy will be delivered. Challenges and key workstreams are structured to mirror the established 'Steps' framework, which assigns priorities and objectives into the three key stages of employment; Step In, Step Forward and Step Up. The Strategy then concludes by outlining governance and delivery measures. A copy of the People Strategy is attached at Appendix 1 of the report.
7. The six core values of the organisation are an integral part of the People Strategy and are outlined within the document. Reference is also made to ongoing work to revisit the core values during 2019 to ensure that they remain relevant to the Service's vision for cultural change. In the event that changes are supported following the review of the core values, the Strategy document will be updated.
8. The 'Step In' element of the Strategy covers all aspects of attraction, recruitment and selection. This is primarily to ensure that focus is placed on deploying the right people with the right skills into the right jobs whilst ensuring that the service upholds the highest standards of transparency and fairness in its selection methodologies. Naturally the Strategy highlights efforts being made to be a highly inclusive employer which attracts a diverse workforce from under-represented groups.
9. The 'Step Forward' element of the Strategy is focused on the need to establish robust mechanisms to maximise the workforce capacity and sustainability of our people through strategic workforce planning, matching resources with finance. It also relates directly to the need to ensure a more proactive approach to succession planning and career planning in order to align individual career aspirations with the need to futureproof the business. In order to maximise the capacity and effectiveness 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 beneficial to staff.
10. The 'Step Up' element revolves around the professional development of staff through the adoption of National Professional Standards, schemes such as Firefighter Apprenticeships, and the Service's continued advocacy of staff studying for academic qualifications. This section also provides detail regarding the strengthening of leadership and the identification and development of future leaders, through development programmes. It also outlines the intent for the Service to adopt the National Leadership Framework which Cheshire was instrumental in creating. The Strategy also references the work which will be undertaken to promote effective engagement across the workforce, to create a positive culture which in turn is intended to improve morale, performance and retention.

11. The Strategy outlines governance arrangements and delivery measures and specifically references the role of the Fire Authority in supporting and helping to deliver the Service's priorities for its workforce.
12. Identification of priorities for delivery of the People Strategy will rest with the Service Management Team, including the joint Head of Human Resources. Overarching responsibility for monitoring and updating the delivery of outcomes will sit with the Joint Services People Board, which will also be responsible for delivering actions required of the joint Human Resources function.
13. Officers intend to report on progress on the delivery of elements of the Strategy to Staffing Committee twice a year.

### **Financial Implications**

14. There are no direct financial implications from approving the Strategy itself. However, there are likely to be costs associated with delivery of elements of it. It is expected that much of this will be covered using existing budgets.

### **Legal Implications**

15. The Strategy refers to a range of elements that will help the Service to fulfil its legal obligations. Actions taken will accord with employment-related legislation and guidance.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

16. Promotion of equality and diversity is a core value of the organisation and although there is particular emphasis and focus on equality and diversity within the 'Step In' element, the commitment to equality, diversity, transparency and fairness prevails in all aspects of the Strategy.

### **Environmental Implications**

17. None

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE**