

# CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

**MEETING OF:** STAFFING COMMITTEE  
**DATE:** 23<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER 2019  
**REPORT OF:** HEAD OF SERVICE DELIVERY  
**AUTHOR:** MIKE CLARK/URSULA JONES

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**SUBJECT:** WORKFORCE PLANNING UPDATE

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## Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update in respect of the ongoing and predicted operational establishment levels for 2019/20. The report also contains recommendations in respect of wholetime recruitment and mitigation measures for any unexpected shortfalls in the establishment.

### **Recommended:** That Members

- [1] Note the Workforce Planning Update; and
- [2] Approve the recommendation contained in paragraph 14.

## Background

2. The workforce planning proposals previously approved by SMT for 2019/20 have now been completed with the following outcomes:

### **Starters**

3. There have been a total of 43 new starters in operational roles during 2019/20 to date:
  - 20 recruits were successful in the 2018 Wholetime Recruitment Campaign. 15 of these were new to the organisation and were enrolled on a wholetime recruit course in January 2019. Upon successful completion of their initial training all 15 were posted to stations during Q1 of 2019/20. The other 5 recruits were already competent firefighters and therefore were posted directly onto station in Q4 of 2018/19.
  - During Q2 of 2019/20 a cohort comprising of 12 Community Safety Apprentices completed their apprentice programme. Of these 9 have been posted to stations, 1 was redeployed into a green book role, and 2 did not meet the standard to secure a permanent position with the Service.
  - A further 11 firefighters were posted to station during Q1 and Q2 having secured wholetime positions through on call migration and inter-brigade transfer processes.

- During Q2 a further 3 posts were filled by external candidates : 1 x Area Manager and 2 x Watch Manager.

## **Leavers**

4. There have been 18 leavers in 2019/20 to date:
  - 8 planned retirements have occurred with 1 further retiree likely this year. This is lower than the original prediction of 11 retirees.
  - 10 'other leavers' have occurred against a planning assumption of 10 for the year.

## **Predictions for 2020/21 – Leavers**

5. During the next financial year a total of 21 leavers are predicted as follows:
  - 11 planned retirements
  - 10 'other leavers' as per agreed planning assumption

## **Recruitment Assumptions**

6. The following are known recruitment assumptions for the remainder of this and subsequent years:
  - Up to 12 migration and/or inter-brigade transfers to be recruited and posted by end of Q4 2019/20.
  - A further cohort of 11 Apprentices to be posted by Q3 2021/22
  - 5 temporary post holders on a current project trial to be made substantive upon conclusion of the project – circa Q1 2021/22 (4 x CM On Call support and 1 x WM Whole Service Review)

## **Development Firefighters**

7. We currently have the following number of Development Firefighters and Firefighters who hold FF3,4,5 (operationally competent) in the Service:
  - 41 Development Firefighters (currently do not hold units FF3,4,5)
  - 6 Development Firefighters who hold FF3,4,5 (and can ride a fire appliance)
8. Appendix 1 provides a Gant chart of the predicted date of achievement of units FF 3,4,5 for our Development Firefighters.
9. Excluding DC1 stations, as previously agreed by Members, 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.

10. The Gant chart identifies that we currently have 41 operational Development Firefighters. This number is set to reduce through the remainder of 2019/20.

### **Planning Assumptions**

11. Planning assumptions remain the same as previous Workforce Planning Updates.
  - Ellesmere Port - maintain the 2nd pump as wholetime for the period of the Whole Service Review.
  - Penketh - the previous assumption that staffing model would change from wholetime to nucleus has been deferred until the findings of the Whole Service Review are reported.
  - 'Other' leavers assumption will remain at 10

### **Summary of Establishments**

12. Appendix 2 provides a table of current and predicted establishment levels for 2019/20 – 2024/25 based upon agreed planning assumptions and recommended recruiting.
13. The establishment level is 327 with funding for 331 posts. In summary, the predicted establishment level for the end of 2019/20 is 370, which is 43 over establishment and 39 over funded posts.

### **Recommendation**

14. Following discussion by the Service Management Team regarding the need to ensure we have a competent and inclusive workforce, and to address any skills shortages, it is recommended the Service invokes a Migration/Inter Brigade Transfer Process to recruit into a maximum of 12 posts by Q4 2019/20.

### **Financial Implications**

15. Based on the assumptions within this report and the recommendation to recruit and maintain adequate crewing and skill levels, additional annual funding will be required from reserves.
16. The indicative maximum additional cost for 2020/21 has been calculated based on the planning and staffing assumptions and are as follows:

**Total Cost of 30 additional staff above funded total £1,170,000<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Financial calculations are indicative based on the cost (+ on costs) of a firefighter @ £39,047<sup>1</sup> rounded to £39k (pay scale used 2017-18 inc 1% pay rise july17).

17. There is a potential for a reduced spend on Pre-Arranged Shifts (PAS) as there will be a reduced number of staffing shortfalls as a result of the proposed recruitment.
18. A point to note is that 2020/21 has been used as an indicative year for predicting costs as the establishment levels are more stable with additional staff being employed for the full year.

### **Equality & Diversity Implications**

19. The decision to recruit into additional posts will have a positive impact on Equality and Diversity. As part of the recruitment campaign, positive action activities will be undertaken to encourage under represented groups to apply for a role in Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.

### **Environmental Implications**

20. None.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE**