

LANCASHIRE COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Meeting to be held on 27 September 2017

WORKFORCE PLAN

(Appendix 1 refers)

Contact for further information:

Bob Warren – Tel No. 01772 866804

Executive Summary

The Workforce Plan details the workforce profile, explains the challenges, the potential changes the Service faces in relation to workforce issues and the measures which will be taken to meet those challenges.

Recommendation

To note the Workforce Plan.

Information

1. Purpose of the Workforce Plan

The Lancashire Fire and Rescue Workforce Plan is not a rigid narrow plan for forecasting targets, but rather a plan which contextualises the changes the Service anticipates may affect the workforce and how the Service intends to respond. The objective of the plan is simply to ensure that the organisation has:

- The right number of people with the right skills employed in the right place, at the right time to deliver the short and long term objectives of LFRS.
- The right people are in the right roles considering the experience, skills and qualifications required for the role.
- A better understanding about what sort of workforce is likely to be needed in the future.
- The right resources are allocated to work areas to fulfil the demands for the service now and in the future.
- A diverse workforce is recruited and developed which can meet the differing needs of the communities of Lancashire.

For workforce planning purposes the data collected relates to a position in time as at 31.3.2017 and considers information available in terms of the profile of our workforce, recruitment, retention, labour demand and turnover.

2. Workforce Profile

The majority of staff at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service are white, male and are employed within the wholetime uniformed service. A substantial number are also retained members of staff. There has been a slight increase in the number of BME staff and a slight increase in the number of women employed. Within the wholetime service the majority of staff employed are aged 45-49 years with a substantial number aged 50-55 years and 40-44 years. The youngest element of the workforce is RDS, where the largest number of employees are aged less than 34. Within Support Services a significant proportion of staff are also aged 50-55 years of age.

3. Absence

The CIPD 2016 Absence Management survey, reports nationally that absence levels have decreased compared to last year, from an average of 6.9 days per employee to an average of 6.3 days per employee, however these absence rates vary from sector to sector. The projected public sector average is 9.3 days. LFRS has followed the national trend with a reduction in absence over the last 12 months, with the total number of days lost per employee reducing from 8.8 days per employee to 7.7 days per employee. The most common reasons for absence in the public sector are stress, musculoskeletal injuries and mental ill health. The main reasons for absence within LFRS are musculoskeletal, hospital procedure (for a condition or injury) and mental ill health (which includes stress).

4. Turnover

The median voluntary resignation rate in the UK is 14.1% and for the public sector is 14.7%¹, this compares to 8% within the wholetime Service, and 12% within business support services, when comparing the total number of leavers to the number of business support posts. RDS is the highest level of turn over at 14% which creates a continual recruitment challenge. However, turnover does give LFRS the opportunity to increase the diversity of the workforce in term of background of experience, knowledge and skill set. Due to the current age profile, it is anticipated that there will be a loss of a number of Crew, Watch and Station Managers. Forty six firefighters will also potentially retire and therefore the need for suitably skilled firefighters will increase. Turnover in all ranks will reduce after 2020. Recruitment will continue to 2021 to address the turnover.

5. Workforce Challenges

5.1 Retained

Retained Fire Fighters are recruited through three campaigns a year, running an RDS campaign is distinct from wholetime due to candidates having to live or work within 5 minutes of the Station. Recruiting and retaining to the RDS remains difficult, some areas have an ageing population and we know the retained duty system appeals to the younger age group, other areas are remote and the population is sparse and widely dispersed across the locality. There is therefore a constant requirement to recruit staff to the RDS. During 2017/2018, the Service established seven Retained Support Officers, an element of their role will be to supplement service delivery's capacity to promote recruitment to the RDS to local business, communities and at events.

¹ CIPD turnover rates 2016

5.2 Diversity

Wholetime firefighter recruitment took place in June 2016 (internal campaign restricted to RDS) and in March 2017 (external campaign following positive action). There were no recruitment challenges in terms of attracting applicants. However there were challenges in relation to the attraction and appointment of candidates from a diverse background. There are currently no diversity targets, however the Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018 developed by the Department of Communities and Local Government did indicate that each Fire and Rescue Authority should consider a minimum of 15 percent of new entrants to the operational sector to be women and recruitment of minority ethnic staff across the whole organisation to be the same percentage as the minority ethnic representation in the local working population. The Service has commenced a range of positive action activities, measures and publicity aimed at attracting a diversity of applications to apply to the wholetime service in relation to the next recruitment campaign planned for October 2017.

5.3 Leadership

There are challenges in delivering a flexible service in an environment of change and effective leadership is seen key in meeting these challenges. In addition, there are anticipated a high turnover of staff at Station, Watch and Crew Manager. The Service has recognised this and is investing in the development of its leaders within operational and Support Services. This October, the Service will hold its second Leadership Conference, which creates an opportunity for the leaders from within the Service to come together to share the direction of travel in terms of being positive and ambitious and to also develop skills and competence in terms of leading teams. This approach is considered in more detail within the Service Organisational Development plan.

5.4 Collaboration

The Service continues to explore opportunities to work in a collaborative way with the Police via the Lancashire Constabulary Partnership Development, the Local Authority Strategic Partnership Development and other partners. Whilst recognising that the changing National context on the position of collaboration could impact on its industrial relations environment. Increased collaboration also creates a need for a broader range of skills and the Service recognises that its firefighters of the future will need well developed communication skills and must be able to respond to our diverse community in a range of different circumstances. The Service also acknowledges that its line managers will need excellent people management skills to ensure that staff are supported through any change, ensuring they are engaged in the change process and fear and uncertainty is addressed.

Business Risk

To ensure that leaders of the future are able to respond in a positive and development way there is a need to invest in organisational development to deliver leadership capacity; these issues are identified more fully and responded to within the Service organisational development plan.

Environmental Impact

The report has no environmental impact.

Equality & Diversity Implications

To recognise, understand and respond to the needs of all communities the Service needs to consider how it recruits, develops and retains a workforce which better reflects the diversity of the local community.

HR Implications

No Human Resources implications arising from the report.

Financial Implications

No financial implications arising directly from the report.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact
Reason for inclusion in Part 2, if appropriate:		