



DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

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| REPORT REFERENCE NO. | HRMDC/09/10 |
| MEETING | HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE |
| DATE OF MEETING | 27 OCTOBER 2009 |
| SUBJECT OF REPORT | HIGH POTENTIAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME |
| LEAD OFFICER | Head of Human Resources Management and Development |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | That the report be noted. |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | <p>The High Potential Leadership Programme is the new national ‘fast track’ development programme which provides intensive progression for high potential staff and also seeks to attract further high potential individuals into the FRS by offering them an opportunity to have challenging and rewarding middle/strategic management careers.</p> <p>The national High Potential Leadership Programme pilot for existing operational staff is due to commence in the autumn of 2009 and DSFRS has joined the pilot programme, with the intention of supporting 3 places.</p> <p>The advertising and attraction activities will begin shortly with a view to candidates being ready to begin the programme in March 2010. Therefore this paper is to provide Members with additional background information on the programme.</p> |
| RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS | None (see Section 11.0 below) – CLG funding available for additional development costs, DSFRS only responsible for funding salary and normal related costs for staff accepted onto the programme. |
| EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT | The attraction of applications from target groups is a priority of the scheme and further guidance on approaching this has been provided by CLG. |
| APPENDICES | Appendix A – (Draft) High Potential Leadership Programme Framework |
| LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS | None |

1. **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 A number of research and feasibility studies have been carried out in recent years by the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA), the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Fire Research and Training Trust into the value of high potential development programmes within the Fire and Rescue Service.
- 1.2 The Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) Equality and Diversity Strategy 2008-2018 also sets out a vision for the FRS and a commitment to ensuring that equality and diversity are fully integrated into all aspects of the FRS, and recognises the part that a High Potential programme can play in achieving that.
- 1.3 As a result of these, the Fire Minister agreed funding and support for a High Potential Leadership Programme to be piloted in partnership with Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs). This will seek to provide intensive progression for existing high potential staff and also seek to attract further high potential individuals into the FRS by offering them an opportunity to have challenging and rewarding middle/strategic management careers.
- 1.4 The proposed High Potential Leadership Programme (HPLP) will have three entry routes for different groups of staff, these being:
- Existing operational staff at Firefighter and Crew Manager level (including RDS);
 - Existing non-operational staff;
 - New entrants.

A more detailed framework model for the programme is attached in Appendix A.

- 1.5 The 2009 pilot is for existing operational staff, and pilots for the other two entry routes will take place in 2010.

2. **GOVERNANCE**

- 2.1 The pilot Project Board has representation from Communities and Local Government (CLG), CFOA, Fire Brigades' Union (FBU), Chief Fire and Rescue Advisers' Unit (CFRAU), Unison, Local Government Association (LGA) and the Centre for Leadership. Each FRA is expected to have at least one co-ordinator to support the development and implementation of the programme and ongoing development support to their candidates. For Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS), it is proposed that this is managed through the Workforce Development section within Training & Development.

3. **2009 PILOT (EXISTING OPERATIONAL STAFF)**

- 3.1 The aims of the pilot are around promoting the FRS as a modern employer of choice, contributing to the progress of Equality and Diversity strategy and building leadership capacity within FRSs. It is intended that the HPLP will be developed and agreed with FRAs with the aim of having the first candidates in place during the financial year 2009/10.
- 3.2 Nationally Fire and Rescue Services have been invited to volunteer to join the 2009 pilot, and to date 13 FRS will be taking part, offering a total of around 30 places on the scheme. Within the South West region, the only other Service who has joined the pilot is Wiltshire FRS.

3.3 DSFRS has agreed to provide 3 places for staff on the scheme, with the idea being that they are stationed one per command Area within the Service.

4. **ELIGIBILITY**

4.1 The pilot programme will be open to all existing operational staff at Firefighter (FF) and Crew Manager (CM) levels, including those on the retained duty system. FFs still in development will have to demonstrate competence at FF level before proceeding to CM (development). Specific background experience, academic or vocational qualifications will not be required for eligibility, but will be credited as part of the selection process.

4.2 Applicants will be applying for a programme place within DSFRS and, if successful, will continue to be employed by DSFRS throughout the programme.

5. **MARKETING AND ATTRACTION**

5.1 Advertising material produced centrally by CLG has been developed and agreed with participating FRS and has been distributed to FRS.

5.2 The communications strategy to support the pilot within DSFRS will include the use of:

- DSFRS intranet
- Information leaflets
- Service Update articles
- Applicant briefing packs
- Briefing sessions

5.3 The attraction of applications from target groups is a priority and further guidance on approaching this has been provided by CLG and further guidance and supporting materials are anticipated (to include case studies).

6. **APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS**

6.1 The details of the application and selection process are currently in development, but will broadly comprise the following elements:

Stage 1: Application Form – this will be assessed and be used as a sifting tool

Stage 2: High Potential ADC Process – it is likely that the exercises and tools will be based on those used for Middle Manager ADCs in order to test potential among applicants for operating at that level

6.2 The Assessment and Development Centre (ADC) process will be run nationally in a central location. Scores from the application form, performance at the ADC and interview will determine which applicants are successful in gaining places on the programme.

7. **DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES FOR CANDIDATES**

7.1 The scheme will enable candidates to undergo intensive development in a managed way and progress more rapidly into higher roles, particularly if they have previous managerial experience, knowledge and skills on which they can build.

- 7.2 The programme will align with core values and the FRS Aspire leadership model where appropriate.
- 7.3 The individuals on the High Potential scheme will have an individual agreed development programme established locally. Each programme will include periods of intensive development in a variety of work placements across a number of stations and departments. All candidates will attend relevant training in core skills and managerial roles as required.
- 7.4 There may also be opportunities for individuals to be placed in external organisations that provide the experience and development required, and it is likely that candidates will also spend some time in other participating FRS on an exchange basis in order to broaden and enhance their experience outside of DSFRS. It is anticipated that geographical cohorts will be adopted where possible to build consistency in approach and provide opportunities for the candidates to network and share experiences. For DSFRS, this is likely to be predominantly with Wiltshire FRS.
- 7.5 There will be a focus on evidence gathering/assessment in various roles and candidates will need to commit to self development through study and placements or project work in their own time.
8. **PLACEMENT OF CANDIDATES WITHIN DSFRS**
- 8.1 As previously mentioned (paragraph 3.3 above refers), it is anticipated that DSFRS will support 3 staff on the HPLP, with a view to locating one in each Command Area.
- 8.2 Placements in core roles on stations will need to be carefully considered to ensure that they will provide the best opportunities for support and development, and consideration will need to be given to both the quality of existing management teams at different locations, as well as the workload and range of activity at a particular station or watch. Guidance has been provided on some criteria that can be used in selecting a location which will provide candidates with the best opportunity to succeed on the programme.
9. **SUPPORTING PROGRESSION OF CANDIDATES**
- 9.1 Candidates on the HPLP will be required to demonstrate competence in all roles as they progress using DSFRS existing systems and processes. Candidates' personal and interpersonal skills will also be assessed using the Service's current PDR/appraisal process.
- 9.2 Candidates will not be required to undertake the supervisory ADC processes as the HPLP selection process will have already identified their potential for the same or higher levels.
- 9.3 Candidates will be supported by mentors/coaches within the workplace. External mentors with experience of supporting career progression for candidates may be provided as an additional line of support to both candidates and DSFRS managers.
10. **TERMS & CONDITIONS FOR CANDIDATES**
- 10.1 Candidates on the HPLP will continue to be employed by DSFRS and will work within the existing local terms and conditions applicable to the roles that they will undertake at Firefighter, Crew Manager, Watch Manager and Station Manager levels.

- 10.2 Successful Retained Duty System (RDS) candidates will need to transfer onto the Wholetime duty system in order to take their place on the programme.
- 10.3 Candidates will be 'in development' at CM and WM levels until they have been verified as competent, at which point they will move onto development within the next role. Candidates will undertake Station Manager development when applicable but will have to be successful at a Middle Manager ADC and selection process before moving formally and substantively into a post at that level.
- 10.4 Candidates will undertake a variety of duties on operational shifts, day related and flexible duty systems as applicable. In addition to the standard local terms and conditions, there will be a need for candidates to commit some of their own time to self development through study, courses and placements/project work when they are on operational shift patterns. This level of commitment will generally be set at one full day per week (this will not apply when candidates are on day related or FDS duty systems).

11. **FUNDING**

- 11.1 Central funding will be made available by CLG for the financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11, and a bid will be made for funding to provide continued support to the programme.
- 11.2 The partnership approach to the design and development of the processes and frameworks is intended to ensure that the programme is as cost neutral as possible to participating FRS to ensure sustainability
- 11.3 CLG will fund costs associated with attraction, selection, training of mentors and development activity for candidates that is unique to the programme (e.g. induction module, additional leadership modules, possibly some qualification programmes etc.).
- 11.4 DSFRS will employ and fund the salary and associated costs of candidates, including the cost of the standard training and development that would normally be incurred for staff (e.g. Firefighter development, role development programmes etc.).

12. **TIMESCALES**

- 12.1 It is anticipated that the marketing and attraction phase of the pilot will take place between September – November 2009, with application forms will being available for a fixed period in November, with a view to the deadline for receiving applications being in early-mid November and successful candidates notified in early December. On this basis it is likely that the ADC process will take place in January/February 2010 with a view to candidates beginning on the programme in March 2010.
- 12.2 As DSFRS joined the pilot late, plans are currently in hand to arrange briefing sessions over the coming weeks, and an article has recently been placed in the Service Update to begin the communication process internally. A more detailed communications plan to support the scheme is currently being developed.

JANE SHERLOCK

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(DRAFT) HIGH POTENTIAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

