

<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	<b>HRMDC/21/2</b>
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT &amp; DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>3 MARCH 2021</b>
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>PEOPLE STRATEGY UPDATE</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>Deputy Chief Fire Officer</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>The Devon &amp; Somerset Fire &amp; Rescue Service's People Strategy sets out its direction and the ideal workplace environment required to enable it to support human performance and therefore deliver effective and considered services to the community. There has been good progress in many areas, and some challenges and opportunities presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, which have been previously reported to the Committee. With the new Government Covid-19 roadmap now in place, plans will start to be revised to reflect this.</p> <p>For this report, a review has been carried out to identify the key actions that will make the difference between small improvements and transformative interventions in each of the themed areas, leading to better outcomes for people and improved performance. This is being called 'game changers', as they are what will give the Service the outcomes needed to meet the aspirations set out in the strategy. All of these key actions are interventions and activities currently underway, and on track to start making a measurable difference over the next few months.</p>
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	Existing resource
<b>EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS</b>	The People Strategy is designed to support equality, diversity and inclusion in the workforce and service provision.
<b>APPENDICES</b>	
<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	<p>The People Strategy 2019-2022</p> <p>Devon &amp; Somerset Fire &amp; Rescue Service - Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Policing &amp; Fire &amp; Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Covid-19 Inspection Results</p>

# 1 **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service's People Strategy sets out its direction and the ideal workplace environment required to enable it to support human performance and therefore deliver effective and considered services to the community. There has been good progress in many areas, and some challenges and opportunities presented by the Covid 19 pandemic, previously reported. With the new Government Covid roadmap now in place plans will start to be revised to reflect this which can be reported at the next meeting of the Committee.

1.2 For this report, a review has been carried out to identify the key actions that will make the difference between improvement and transformation in each of the themed areas. This is being called 'game changers', as they are what will give the Service the people outcomes needed to meet the aspirations set out in the strategy. All of these key actions are interventions and activities currently underway, and on track to start making a measurable difference over the next few months.

## 2. **LEADERSHIP**

2.1. The Strategy statement: 'Our leaders communicate a clear vision, take decisions and empower people to make change and improvement happen. They are visible leaders with a diversity of backgrounds, skills and experiences who demonstrate open and honest listening and are united in living our values. Our leaders at all levels are developed and prepared to take us into the future'.

2.2. The 'game changers' underway are:

- A talent management system underpinned by strategic workforce planning, providing a new approach to people development through development and succession planning pools. This means less temporary roles and ensures leaders feel well prepared for their next step.
- A comprehensive, curated approach to how we develop leaders, underpinned by the NFCC leadership framework. This includes mixed cohorts (operational and support staff) and utilises new online approaches to self-directed learning, our internal expertise and apprenticeships. Our first mixed cohort is at the Area Managers and equivalent level.
- Working with leaders and managers to create a common message about the culture we are growing. This means we ensure that our leadership behaviours demonstrate the change we want to see and that our actions match our words.

### 3. **LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

3.1. The Strategy statement: 'We will create a learning culture which provides consistency and equality of opportunity so everyone can reach their full potential. We will be innovative and creative in offering opportunities and career pathways for people to develop and to ensure they have the right skills for the right role. Staff will benefit from regular performance conversations and development will be tailored, easy to access and available throughout our careers.'

3.2. The 'game changers' underway are:

- Ensuring people feel Safe To: 1) learn – share and learn from our experiences, successes and mistakes 2) contribute – sharing our ideas to make things better and 3) challenge – where things are not right with working practices or behaviours. The tools to embed this approach and therefore a learning culture are embedded in our leadership and management and team development. This is about showing people how to transform their leadership through consciously choosing inclusion to build psychological safety in teams;
- Developing non-technical skills through curating learning content and allowing people to take ownership of their personal development in line with their role and their aspirations. This includes access to two new self-directed learning platforms, Coaching Culture and Mind Tools; and
- Technical competency 1) Utilising our expertise as technical training partner provider to maximise efficiency of the apprenticeship levy and 2) Ensuring Safe Professional and High performing operational teams through a focus on competence, discipline and performance, underpinned by an engaged safety culture.

### 4. **INCLUSION**

4.1. The Strategy Statement 'We will only benefit from a workforce where everyone can be themselves and work together as one organisation regardless of role or workplace. We will recognise and utilise both diversity of thought and experience in the organisation for better decision making. We develop better solutions by engaging and involving employees in planning ideas generation and decision making. We will work ever closer with our trade unions for the benefit of staff.'

4.2. The game changers underway are:

- Our intervention programme Safe To: Learn, Contribute and Challenge gives us the tools to make inclusion a reality through deliberate behaviours. We are developing 1) a toolkit to promote Fairness and Respect 2); 2) a resolution approach to conflict so people don't feel they need to resort to a formal grievance; and 3) an investigation process and disciplinary approach that ensures that any intervention matches the intention to support fair and consistent outcomes. The Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer are currently in the process of introducing the 'Safe To' concept to Whole Time Operational staff, focusing on Health and Safety and Bullying and Harassment;

- To improve our workforce diversity we have; 1) a clear focus on positive action in Firefighter recruitment and development through paying attention to how communities view us as an employer, a new 'always open' approach to recruitment and accessible practical assessment facilities; and 2) Implemented the 'Our Time' sponsorship programme, which matches women who want to progress with internal sponsors to support their development;
- We continue to consider People by Design by; 1) planning and implementing involvement and engagement in change and improvement; 2) assessing impacts on people and working towards a 'value for people' approach to complement 'value for money' when identifying benefits; and 3) listening to and inviting challenge from staff from under-represented groups through new and refreshed staff networks.

## 5. **WAYS OF WORKING**

- 5.1. The Strategy Statement: 'Our employees will be empowered and trusted with performance measured on productivity and outcomes. We will offer a range of flexible options that will improve inclusion, attract and retain a diverse workforce, and enable us to match resources to risk. Our technology and communications will be better and barriers to improving ways of working will be removed, with things that need doing quickly getting done. We will work together, as one organisation, towards our vision and we will recognise and celebrate collaborative success.'
- 5.2. The 'game changers' underway are:
- Smarter Working – developing a people led approach to a more agile and flexible workplace, with collaborative virtual working, easier access to information, and an emphasis on collaborative workspace rather than desk space, and less commuting miles;
  - Work on our governance processes to support more visible planning and performance to give people more effective tools for greater collaboration and alignment; and
  - Transforming our people services to ensure the delivery of expertise and support in the most effective and efficient way.

## 6. **HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING**

- 6.1. The strategy statement: 'We have an holistic approach to health, safety and wellbeing which supports our staff so that they can remain fit, safe, healthy and fulfilled throughout their careers. We encourage and support employees by building a positive health, safety and wellbeing culture and create an environment which improves work/life balance and quality of working life. A clear and supportive fitness testing policy will help keep our staff safe and healthy and a greater integration of work, sports and social activities will help break down barriers and bring people together.'

6.2. The 'game changers' underway are:

- As part of the Safe To: learn, contribute and challenge intervention, we are developing an engaged safety culture based on best practice from military aviation and featuring 1) a 'Just Culture' policy and Framework, 2) a learning teams approach to incident debrief, 3) ensuring human factors are embedded in investigations and 4) a clear and visible reporting system for safety events and near misses;
- Working with partners we are developing a Wellbeing Strategy and Charter which will set out levels of new and existing proactive and reactive wellbeing interventions. We are currently carrying out the Blue Light wellbeing self-assessment to inform this approach; and
- Immediate support is provided through our Covid19 Welfare Cell, The Cell works both proactively and reactively to provide welfare solutions in a timely manner, prioritising work to support this Covid Response phase. The cell aims at this critical time to support a workforce that has the skills, information and resources to stay safe, well and resilient. To inform our work we refresh our people impact assessment regularly and we have recently carried out another Covid survey to see how our staff our feeling using nationally recognised Office of National Statistics? wellbeing questions.

## 7. **NEXT STEPS**

7.1. The Service will report the 'people' related survey results at the next meeting of the Committee, however, the recent Covid inspection undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Policing & Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) gave some encouragement that the interventions are having a positive effect.

7.2. The HMICFRS 2019 inspection indicated that the way that Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service looks after its people requires improvement. In particular it requires improvement at:

- promoting the right values and culture;
- ensuring fairness and promoting diversity; and
- managing performance and developing leaders.

7.3. All of these issues were already identified as areas for improvement in the People Strategy.

7.4. There were a number of behavioural issues identified from the confidential survey in 2019, primarily that some leaders and managers were not consistently displaying Service Values, they were not as visible as they could be and that a quarter of respondents felt they had been bullied or harassed and/or been discriminated against.

- 7.5. The HMICFRS carried out a Covid-19 specific survey in 2020 and the Service is pleased to have seen a huge improvement in all of these areas, with Senior leaders praised for utilising new technology to communicate with staff, a significant decrease in those feeling bullied, harassed or discriminated against and positive feedback that managers and leaders were consistently displaying service values.
- 7.6. The Service is pleased with these improvements, however, we still have some way to go. Inclusion means that everyone can experience a positive work environment and work continues in line with the areas outlined in this report to ensure our values are lived and that the behaviours and culture they represent is sustained.

**JOE HASSELL**  
**Deputy Chief Fire Officer**