

## **Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority**

**Human Resources Committee**

**Item: 7**

**1 July 2015**

**Update on Recruitment Strategy**

**Report of the Chief Officer**

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### **1      Summary**

- 1.1      This report provides an update on the work underway to develop a new Recruitment Strategy and prepare the HR Committee for a report in October which will be able to propose a more detailed plan with staffing numbers.
- 1.2      The key aspect of the report is that factoring in the transformational change the Service is going through it is anticipated there will be capacity to begin external Firefighter recruitment alongside promotion opportunities which will enable both the entrance and progression of talent into HFRS.
- 1.3      As referenced in the Workforce Data report, work is already planned to develop a 5 year Strategic workforce plan which will inform the recruitment strategy with the aim of bringing a more detailed plan to the HR Committee in October.

### **2      Recommendations**

- 2.1      That the HR Committee note this update.

### **3      Overview**

- 3.1      Due to the budgetary position of the Authority there has been no external recruitment of Firefighters for over 5 years. This has caused understandable concern as it creates issues for the future from a number of dimensions. From a workforce profile perspective it builds an aging workforce. From a workforce development perspective it prevents the recruitment of new talent that combined with the existing talented staff will meet the changing needs and development of the service moving forward.
- 3.2      Whilst the Risk Review consultation continues to take place it is too early to be able to give detailed future staffing projections. However taking into account natural turnover consisting of likely future retirements and normal resignations it is anticipated the Service will still be under a reduced establishment and as a consequence there will be capacity to recruit.
- 3.3      In addition to this the Service is considering developing a voluntary redundancy scheme which would create further opportunities beyond those afforded by natural turnover. Such a scheme would come into the HR Committee for approval.

- 3.4 In looking to the future a blended approach to Firefighter recruitment is being developed consisting of:
- External recruitment (i.e. external to the Fire and Rescue Service)
  - RDS to Wholetime
  - Transfers from other Fire and Rescue Services
- 3.5 The advantages and requirements for external recruitment have already been outlined at paragraph 3.1. The other two approaches enable this to be balanced with bringing in talented and experienced staff from both within HFRS and external Fire and Rescue Services. Within the transfer category it is already evident in the short time since the strategic partnership with the Isle of Wight FRS has commenced that several Firefighters from IoWFRS would welcome the opportunity to work in Hampshire. The proportion of Firefighters that are brought in from each approach could in broad terms be equal thirds but there is the discretion to vary this once precise numbers are known.
- 3.6 Alongside an external recruitment process a range of positive action recruitment measures will be taken to encourage and support applications from under represented groups in our workforce e.g. females.
- 3.7 Scoping work is being prepared on how an external recruitment process could be undertaken. There are a range of options from running an 'in-house' process, combining with neighbouring services who would be recruiting at the same time or using an external 'supplier'.

#### Promotion

- 3.8 In line with paragraph 3.2 it is anticipated there will be scope for promotion at most levels but particularly likely at Watch and Station Manager levels.
- 3.9 Work is underway to redesign the approach to promotion which will lead to a revised P2P (Pathway to Promotion) process. In very general terms this will see an increasing shift towards individuals taking a pro-active approach to development and promotion. This would see officers interested in promotion needing to complete work based assessments and testing before they would be considered eligible for promotion. It would also focus on aligning eligible candidates with the specific skills for a vacancy rather than taking a 'next candidate from a promotion list' approach.
- 3.10 Taken together the revised Firefighter recruitment and promotion process will form a new recruitment approach for the service for the coming years.

#### **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The detailed plan will be fully costed and ensure recruitment matches the budgeted staffing establishment.

#### **5 Consultation**

- 5.1 This report is an update and consultation is on-going prior to any detailed plan being brought back to the HR Committee.

**6 European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998**

6.1 The proposals within this report are compatible with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998 and considered in the light of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

**7 Background Papers**

7.1 The following documents disclose the facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of the report.

None

Note: The list excludes:

- (1) Published works
- (2) Documents that disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act