

## **Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority**

**HR Committee**

**Item: 7**

**12 October 2016**

**Pathway to Progression**

**Report by Chief Fire Officer**

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### **1 Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides an outline of the promotion and development framework called Pathway to Progression (P2P) which applies to all Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) staff. This report is to inform HR committee members of the aims and principles of the framework, progress to date and the plans going forward for further development and refinement of the framework.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That HR Committee endorse the approach and plans to take P2P forward.
- 2.2 That HR Committee nominate a member of the Committee to this peer review outcome to continue oversight of this priority.

### **3 Introduction and background**

- 3.1 HFRS is committed to providing its staff with the development and support needed for them to perform in their roles to the best of their ability and to enabling staff to unlock their potential in order to progress in to other roles within the service. This supports the organisation in terms of performance and succession planning as well as the aspirations of individual members of staff.
- 3.2 Anecdotal feedback regarding key criticisms of the previous approach to progression have included that it did not enable the consistent appointment of the right person for the right role as it relied heavily on lists of time-limited eligible staff who had successfully completed Assessment Development Centres. Whilst this enabled benchmarking against skills required for the generic role-profiles, working from a list did not enable the matching of skills and experience for the specific requirements of the role over and above the generic role-profile. Also, the approach did not involve local managers in the selection and appointment of staff to their teams. Staff also criticised the previous approach as lacking in transparency and clarity and that waiting times on the 'list' meant that individuals might need to complete further ADCs to remain eligible.

- 3.3 The visit from the Peer Review team in November 2015 confirmed our understanding of these issues as “Concerns were raised with the peer team from staff about the secondment and temporary promotion processes in the organisation. There was a lack of confidence in the fairness and transparency of the promotion and secondment processes” (Peer Review Report, 2015 p. 11).

## 4 Aims and principles

- 4.1 P2P is the framework that is used to support the identification, preparation and selection of staff that are suitable for progression throughout the Service. The aims of P2P are to:

- provide a clear pathway for staff who wish to progress to different roles within the Service
- provide clarity about the expectations of managerial roles
- define levels of organisational assurance
- detail the development input available
- embed a transparent and fair appointment process.

- 4.2 The key principles of P2P are:

- Consistency, fairness and transparency
- The right person for the right role
- Feedback provided throughout to enable development and decision making
- Support managerial judgment, within advocated guidance
- Expectation of line manager to effectively manage entry to the process and provide appropriate, constructive feedback
- One team – one framework for all staff

These principles were designed to create a process which delivers the best outcomes for the individuals and the organisation as well as to address the challenges of the previous approach.

## 5 P2P Framework

- 5.1 There are five key stages to the framework which are outlined below:

### **Driven by Individual: Line manager conversation**

At this first stage the individual is driving the process in conjunction with the line manager. This forms part of the ongoing coaching-style conversations between managers and staff about their performance, development and future aspirations.

### **Organisational Assurance**

This stage assures the organisation that the individual has the necessary knowledge, skills and technical or operational competence to be eligible for consideration for a particular role. This element is linked to the specific requirements for different roles but shares this common principle.

## **Leadership and Management Skills**

The Leadership Offer provided by Hampshire Workforce Development consists of a range of modules to support personal development. This will equip managers with the tools and skills required to be effective in this area in their new role.

## **Appointment Process**

This stage of the process is specific to the role being applied for, rather than using a list of possible staff, and a range of recruiting options will be available to appointing managers. Posts are advertised within the Service and an appropriate method of selection and appointment is used, which is managed by the relevant local managers.

## **Consolidation**

This element ensures that once in role, individuals can consolidate their learning and development. This is different for different roles with different roles having different specifications. There is also an element of performance support and management.

## **6 Progress to date**

- 6.1 For operational members of staff (in the main staff on Grey book terms and conditions) the detail of organisational assurance element of the process is clearer than for non-operational staff (in the main Professional Services/staff on Green book terms and conditions). The approach for Fire Fighter to Crew Manager is established, including for Control staff, and has been implemented since April and this has the greatest clarity. Whilst there are details in place for the other roles, following the recruitment and selection activity for Area and Group Manager roles, and the use of the strengths based approach in this activity and whole-time and retained Fire Fighter recruitment, there is an opportunity to ensure that P2P is aligned to the strengths-based approach.
- 6.2 For P2P to be fully implemented, the approach for staff on Green book terms and conditions needs to be completed in detail.

## **7 Monitoring, review and next steps**

- 7.1 Monitoring of the effectiveness of P2P is via the Resource Management Group (RMG) which is itself in its infancy. The RMG has responsibility for monitoring and overseeing the establishment, recruitment processes as well as P2P overall. Currently, there is significant recruitment and appointment activity within the Service to alleviate as much of the uncertainty about temporary promotions as possible. The Area and Group Manager processes have been completed, with postings for the Group Managers set to be fully in place by early 2017, with the Station Manager selection and appointment process being undertaken next. Once all of these bulk selection and appointment processes have been completed in line with Service Delivery Redesign, P2P will enable the timely filling of posts with the most appropriate person using based on the principles outlined above.
- 7.2 Reviews of the P2P policy and guidance in its current format are planned in as quarterly reviews, with the first review this December, with the caveat that the full

approach has yet to be fully detailed. The role of RMG is both to oversee the review as well as any ongoing feedback. Early anecdotal evidence has been that though there is additional work for the local managers involved in the process compared to the previous approach, the benefits of being involved in decision making and recruitment for their own staff outweigh the drawbacks of additional work. Equally, for staff engaged in the new P2P process from Fire Fighter to Crew Manager, and Crew Manager to Watch Manager promotion, feedback has been positive overall in this direction from the Service. However, for some staff, there is a perception of additional hurdles to overcome when applying for appointments at a higher rank. There have also been some concerns from staff about self-funding the costs of exams until the exam has been passed, at which point individuals are reimbursed by the Service. Also, an area being explored further is the support available to Retained Duty System (RDS) staff. These elements will be included in the review.

7.3 Work is now commencing to further develop P2P for Green Book staff.

## **8 Supporting our corporate aims and objectives**

8.1 P2P supports the People and Leadership priority within the Service Plan as well as contributing to staff feeling equipped and motivated as per the vision for the Service. It also addresses concerns raised by staff which were confirmed within the Peer Review visit in 2015.

## **9 Risk analysis**

9.1 The transition to a new process has been and continues to be a potential risk, with communication and engagement work carried out by the Station Manager in Workforce Planning helping to mitigate against this.

## **10 People Impact Assessment**

10.1 The proposals in this report are considered compatible with the provisions of the equality and human rights legislation.

10.2 Having one framework which applies to all staff enables a 'one team' approach, with a fair and consistent application of the principles underpinning P2P.

## **11 Environmental and Sustainability impact assessment**

11.1 No issues identified.

## **12 Resource implications**

Additional resources to support the final development of the detail of P2P have now been identified.

## **13 Consultation**

13.1 The work completed to date has involved consultation with a range of staff and representatives from across the Service. Further consultation will inform the review

and follow the refinement of the process and development for the largely non-operational areas which require greater clarity and detail.

## **14 Conclusion**

- 14.1 P2P aspires to meet individual and organisational need by providing a consistent, fair and transparent pathway to progression which involves local line managers in the process fully.
- 14.2 Going forward, the work will continue to build on feedback and will align with the strengths based approach and detailed work is to be completed for non-operational roles.
- 14.3 Whilst there is some way to go for this to be fully developed and embedded within the Service, early indications are that this approach will alleviate many of the concerns raised about the previous approach as well as bring additional benefits.