

Update of Progress against the People Strategy

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Alan Taylor, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260225 or Louise McKenzie, Assistant Chief Officer, on 01743 260205.

1 Purpose of Report

This report informs Members of the Human Resources Committee about progress against the People Strategy approved by the Committee in 2006.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

3 Background

In 2006 the first People Strategy for Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service was introduced linking the national and regional requirements placed upon the Service with our local priorities and objectives. An action plan was then developed to detail the activities to be undertaken to in order to achieve the objectives set out within the strategy.

Progress was last reported to the Human Resources (HR) Committee in December 2007 and it was agreed that progress would be reported annually.

The appendix to this report details the progress to date on the action plan.

Members will note that the strategy was drafted to cover the period 2006-09 and as we enter 2009 it will be updated to take account of the Service's identified aims, objectives and priorities as identified through the planning process currently underway.

4 Overview of Progress

The implementation of this strategy has occurred at a time when there have been continual new national priorities announced for the Fire and Rescue Service including a re-focus on operational competence and performance assessment and increasing focus on equality and diversity. The day to day work has continued to need attention and balancing priorities and aligning resources can be difficult. For example we have recently identified the need for a further (seventh) training instructor in order that we can continue to develop as well as deliver the range of training required of us to ensure the safety of our crews, and in 2008 we have added an Equality and Diversity Assistant post to the establishment to support the increasing volume of specialist work in that area.

Last year we reported an increase in internal discipline and grievance work for the department and this has not abated in 2008. However the HR Department have worked hard with Shropshire County Council to ensure the successful introduction of the new HR information system, Resourcelink, and will continue to invest time into ensuring that we get the maximum benefit from it.

Within the Development team, since 2007 we have focused on devising a development process for new Retained Duty System firefighters as well as continuing to support the development and assessment of new wholetime staff. The Development team have also undertaken a considerable amount of the work related to Assessment Development Centres.

The main achievements since we began to implement the strategy have been:

1. The work to reduce the wasted places on our training courses through the re-design of courses
2. The introduction of development programmes for all roles up to Group Manager
3. An Information Technology Training Needs Analysis undertaken across the organisation
4. The implementation of the new 'Resourcelink' HR information system in conjunction with Shropshire County Council.
5. The introduction of Childcare Vouchers for staff through a 'salary sacrifice' scheme
6. The trial provision of physiotherapy services for staff
7. The development of a development package for new Retained Duty System Firefighters
8. A focus on 'New Dimensions' and urban search and rescue training for operational crews
9. Successfully supporting and co-ordinating the achievement of Equality Standard for Local Government Level 3
10. Support for and the inclusion on the national Executive Leadership Programme of the Deputy and Assistant Chief Officers

Much of the work to complete the action plan has been completed and there is no significant slippage to report.

5 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

6 Legal Comment

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

7 Equality Impact Assessment

This report is an update of progress against the People Strategy 2006-09 for which an Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed for this report.

8 Appendix

People Strategy Action Plan - Update

9 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balanced Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	*
Capacity	*	Member Involvement	
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings		Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial	*	Staff	*
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	*

People Strategy Action Plan - Update

Priority 1 – Developing Leadership Capacity

High level objectives:

- We will support the development of staff within the organisation to ensure operational and non-operational leadership capacity is in place to manage the organisation in the future
- We will support the improvement of political and managerial leadership through attracting and developing our senior managers and Members of the Fire Authority
- We will support increased regional training collaboration at all levels of leadership

Actions	Responsible Officer	By when?	Progress to date
Continuation of internal leadership development programmes	Development Manager	06/07 ongoing	DCFO and ACO currently on Executive Leadership Programme Other events occurring to meet demand e.g. Middle management development
Contribution to the development of operational and non-operational leadership programmes regionally and nationally	Development Manager	06/07 ongoing	Supervisory and middle management level Non-operational elements completed Supervisory operational development completed.

Produce a Member training needs analysis development and target high priority need	ACO	06/07	This was completed and undertaken in 2006 and 2007. The process for 2008 onwards is currently under review.
Produce and organisational Training Needs Analysis and target high priority need	Executive	07/08	Completed
Support the introduction of CPD arrangements across the Service	ACO	06/07 ongoing	Completed
Implement a workforce planning and succession process within the Service	HR Manager	07/08	Workforce and Succession planning meetings occur regularly. ADC process fully embedded for management development

Priority 2 – Developing the Organisation

High level objectives:

- We will support the development of our organisation to manage productivity and performance
- We will support the development of Partnerships with other Services/agencies
- We will work to maintain effective employment relations with our employees and representative bodies

Action	Responsible Officer	By when?	Progress to date
Ensure cross-team Business Continuity plans in place	ACO	06/07 ongoing	In place and rehearsed during an exercise in 2008
Design and deliver quality operational training and development programmes to enable competent effective response to emergency incidents	Training Manager Development Manager	06/07 ongoing	Completed and ongoing
Ensure effective Occupational Health arrangements are in place to support a reduction in absence	Human Resources Manager	06/07	After an extension in 2007 the contract was successfully tendered and re-let in April 2008 for a further 3 years. Physiotherapy support is being trialled for 1 year from Feb 08 to Feb 09
Participate in and encourage Trade Union consultation	ACO	06/07 ongoing	Ongoing

Priority 3 - Developing the skills and capacity of the workforce

High level objectives:

- We will work with managers to raise performance and skills across all functions
- We will support the drive to build capacity to meet service needs
- We will provide timely qualitative and quantitative information to support the performance management of all staff

Actions	Responsible Officer	By when?	Progress to date
Develop Training Needs Analysis across all staff group and departments	Development Manager	October 2008	IT TNA undertaken in 2008 and activity to meet identified need has been planned for roll-out in early 2009
Support and monitor the IPDR process across the organisation	HR Manager/Development Manager	Annually	Ongoing
Provide planned training to meet identified need	Training Manager /Development Manager	07/08 ongoing	Completed and ongoing on an annual basis
Develop the potential of current HR information systems	HR Manager	06/07 ongoing	New Resourcelink system implemented in April 2008. Work continues to ensure we maximise the benefits the system can offer. Data cleanse exercise completed
Support the MIS project to procure an effective integrated electronic HR system	HR Manager	07/08	New Resourcelink system successfully implemented in April 2008

Priority 4 – Resourcing the Fire and Rescue Service

High level objectives:

- We will work to build a diverse workforce
- We will work with managers to ensure effective recruitment, retention and progression
- We will deliver effective workforce planning
- We will encourage opportunities for Flexible working

Actions	Responsible Officer	By when?	Progress to date
Provide timely affirmative action events to encourage under-represented groups to consider a career with SFRS	Equality & Diversity Officer	06/07 ongoing	2007 events undertaken 2008 events planned for November
Support the MIS project to procure an effective integrated electronic HR system to support workforce planning	HR Manager	07/08	New Resourcelink system implemented in April 2008. Work continues to ensure we maximise the benefits the system can offer. Data cleanse exercise completed
Develop workforce and succession plans for current staff	HR Manager	06/07	Workforce and Succession planning meetings occur regularly. ADC process fully embedded for management development
Review vacancy management to support the development of flexible working opportunities	HR Manager	07/08	Ongoing as vacancies occur

Priority 5 – Recognition and Reward

High level objectives:

- We will support the development of national pay arrangement which recognise the contribution of all employees
- We will support, with any local flexibilities, the development of an effective employment package
- We will support and monitor effective Performance management

Actions	Responsible Officer	By when?	Progress to date
Support and monitor the IPDR process across the organisation	HR Manager/Development Manager	Annually	Ongoing
Provide planned training to meet identified need	Training Manager /Development Manager	07/08 ongoing	Ongoing
Participate in regional and national forums to influence future pay negotiations	ACO	06/07 ongoing	Ongoing
Research the provision of additional employee benefits which offer value for money for the Authority	HR Manager	07/08	Childcare vouchers introduced in February 2008. Physiotherapy trial for specified need commenced in February 2008 Beneden Health scheme being introduced November/December 2008 Cycle Scheme currently being investigated

Priority 6 – Developing the Capacity of HR, Training and Development

High level objectives:

- We will support managers and training initiatives to strengthen people management practice
- We will maximise the contribution of the HR, Training and Development Team
- We will develop the HR, Training and Development Team

Actions	Responsible Officer	By when?	Progress to date
Support and monitor the IPDR process across the organisation	HR Manager/Development Manager	Annually	Ongoing
Provide planned training to meet identified need	Training Manager /Development Manager	07/08 ongoing	Ongoing
Encourage staff to seize formal and informal development opportunities	ACO & Section Heads	06/07 ongoing	Ongoing in conjunction with departmental management
Work effectively, drawing on external support as required to maximise productivity	ACO & Section Heads	06/07 ongoing	Ongoing
Provide advice and guidance to managers and staff on all HR, Training & Development matters	Section Heads	06/07 ongoing	Ongoing
Plan work schedule in advance to maximise effectiveness and minimise stress	ACO & Section Heads	06/07 ongoing	Ongoing