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Update on 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 260201 or Louise McKenzie, Assistant Chief Officer, on 01743 260280.

1   Purpose of Report

This report informs Members about progress against the People Strategy approved by the Committee at its meeting on 21 November 2006.

2   Recommendations

That Members 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 in order to achieve the objectives set out within the Strategy. The appendix to this report details the progress to date on the Action Plan.

The Strategy and Action Plan will be updated to take account of any changing / new priorities identified at the annual strategic planning day, which will take place in December 2007.

4   Overview of Progress

Overall the first year of implementing our Strategy has been a busy one. Alongside the targets and priorities we have set ourselves, the day-to-day work must continue, and with so many new national initiatives affecting the work of the Human Resources (HR), Training and Development function, it is not always easy to balance those priorities and move forward at the pace we would wish across the full range of activities.

This year has seen a significant increase in internal discipline and grievance work for the department, particularly since under the previous regulations HR were not involved in the discipline of uniformed personnel at all. They are now involved in advising on all cases, which in itself has created a significant workload for the HR Manager.

In the Training team we have successfully developed new and improved courses to ensure that our staff are trained in the most up-to-date techniques and applications. This has meant that our trainers have increased the amount of time they now spend actively delivering training from around 60% two years ago to 80% and in some months 100%. This is obviously a demanding schedule and we must, therefore, expect some turnover of our longer-serving trainers to prevent 'burnout'. This in turn affects the performance of the team as new trainers take some months to gain the input to contribute fully.

For the Development team, the last year has see the implementation of new development programmes at all levels up to, and including, Group Manager. We have also been continuing work to train and monitor assessors to award National Vocational Qualifications to our development wholetime firefighters and will shortly seek to do the same for our retained firefighters.

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 a new HR information system in conjunction with Shropshire County Council.

There is obviously still much work to do to complete the Action Plan as it stands but there is no significant slippage to report and progress is good.

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 regarding the People Strategy 2006-09 for which an Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken. An Assessment has not, therefore, been completed for this report.

8   Appendix

People Strategy Action Plan

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	*

Appendix to report on
Update on Progress against the People Strategy
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority
Human Resources Committee
6 December 2007

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	2006/07 ongoing	Events occurring to meet demand
Contribution to the development of operational and non-operational leadership programmes regionally and nationally	Development Manager	2006/07 ongoing	Non-operational elements completed
Produce a Member Training Needs Analysis (TNA) development and target high priority need	Assistant Chief Officer (ACO)	2006/07	Completed
Produce and organisational TNA and target high priority need	Executive	2007/08	Completed
Support the introduction of Continual Professional Development arrangements across the Service	ACO	2006/07 ongoing	Completed
Implement a workforce planning and succession process within the Service	HR Manager	2007/08	On target for March 2008

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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	2006/07 ongoing	In place but yet to be tested
Design and deliver quality operational training and development programmes to enable competent effective response to emergency incidents	Training Manager Development Manager	2006/07 ongoing	Completed and ongoing
Ensure effective Occupational Health arrangements are in place to support a reduction in absence	Human Resources Manager	2006/07	Re-tendering process on course to be completed by end of March 2008
Participate in and encourage Trade Union consultation	ACO	2006/07 ongoing	Ongoing

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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 (TNA) across all staff groups and departments	Development Manager	October 2008	IT TNA commenced
Support and monitor the Individual Personal Development Review (IPDR) process across the organisation	HR Manager/Development Manager	Annually	Ongoing
Provide planned training to meet identified need	Training Manager /Development Manager	2007/08 ongoing	Completed and ongoing
Develop the potential of current Human Resources (HR) information systems	Development Manager	2006/07 ongoing	New Resourcelink system currently being implemented
Support the Management Information System (MIS) project to procure an effective integrated electronic HR system	HR Manager	2007/08	New Resourcelink system currently being implemented

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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 Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service	Equality & Diversity Officer	2006/07 ongoing	2007 event planned
Support the MIS project to procure an effective integrated electronic HR system to support workforce planning	HR Manager	2007/08	New Resourcelink system currently being implemented
Develop workforce and succession plans for current staff	HR Manager	2006/07	Ongoing in conjunction with Assessment and Development Centre processes
Review vacancy management to support the development of flexible working opportunities	HR Manager	2007/08	Ongoing as vacancies occur

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Priority 5 – Recognition and Reward

High level objectives:

➢ We will support the development of national pay arrangements 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	2007/08 ongoing	Ongoing
Participate in regional and national forums to influence future pay negotiations	ACO	2006/07 ongoing	Ongoing
Research the provision of additional employee benefits which offer value for money for the Authority	HR Manager	2007/08	Childcare vouchers to be introduced

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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	2007/08 ongoing	Ongoing
Encourage staff to seize formal and informal development opportunities	ACO & Section Heads	2006/07 ongoing	Ongoing in conjunction with departmental management
Work effectively, drawing on external support as required to maximise productivity	ACO & Section Heads	2006/07 ongoing	Ongoing
Provide advice and guidance to managers and staff on all HR, Training and Development matters	Section Heads	2006/07 ongoing	Ongoing
Plan work schedule in advance to maximise effectiveness and minimise stress	ACO & Section Heads	2006/07 ongoing	Ongoing

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