

## Update of Progress against the People Strategy

### Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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#### 1 Purpose of Report

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

#### 2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note 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 Committee in December 2008 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 – 2009 and is now due for review. As we enter 2010 it will be fundamentally reviewed to provide direction for 2010 – 2013 to take account of priorities identified through our organisation planning process and the direction set by the new Chief Fire Officer since he came into post in July.

## 4 Overview of Progress

As reported last year, the implementation of the 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.

For the third consecutive year the amount of internal discipline and grievance work, in which the Human Resources Department takes a key role, has continued to increase, although not as dramatically.

We have continued to work with Shropshire Council to complete the introduction of, and transition to, the new human resources information system, Resourcelink, and, although progress has been slower than we would have liked, due to resources restrictions for both parties, the end is now in sight. Indeed, we are now in discussion with Shropshire Council about extending our use of the system to the Training and Development Department and are planning to commence installation in April 2010, with a view to its being fully functional by September 2010, in order that we can move to a single system for training and development recording and management from 1 April 2011.

Over the last year the Training Team has taken on a seventh instructor (for a 2-year period) and is currently recruiting a Technical Assistant to release the Training Instructors from time spent in the physical set up of, and clear up from, training activities. This time will be better spent on review and renewal of course material and writing candidates' course reports.

The Development Team has continued to work on the new firefighter development programme for Retained Duty System staff and two Retained Support Officers have been seconded to the Team to assist with the process. Much progress has been made, including the identification and completion of additional work not originally within their brief, but without which it was recognised the introduction of the trial programme would struggle to succeed, i.e. management development and training for supervisory managers involved in the training of new Retained Duty System firefighters.

The main achievements over the last year across Human Resources, Training and Development in relation to the Strategy have been:

1. The introduction of development programmes for Area Managers (all roles up to Group Manager had previously been implemented);
2. Information technology training to meet need identified in 2008 is underway across the Retained Service;
3. The continued implementation of the new 'Resourcelink' human resources information system in conjunction with Shropshire Council;

4. The introduction of the Beneden Healthcare Scheme, which is available to staff for both themselves and their families for a small monthly contribution;
5. The continued trial and (intended) introduction of physiotherapy services for staff;
6. The trial introduction of the new development package for new Retained Duty System Firefighters;
7. Increased staffing within the Training Team to improve time available for course development;
8. Successfully supporting and co-ordinating the achievement of Equality Standard for Local Government Level 4; and
9. Completion of the national Executive Leadership Programme by the (now) Chief Fire Officer and the Assistant Chief Officer, with a further Assistant Chief Fire Officer currently on the programme.

In conclusion the work as stated in the action plan is now complete, or complete and ongoing as part of normal business, and there has been no significant slippage to report.

## **5 The New Strategy**

In 2009 we adopted three key priority areas for the development of the Service, those being Competence, Capacity and Communication. Whilst our new People Strategy will, of course, remain in line with the national and regional People Strategies, we will seek to focus on our agreed priorities and on the continued development of the culture of our Service.

We are committed to continuing to reinforce a culture of dignity, respect and personal responsibility and these themes will feature in the newly developed Strategy and action plan.

## **6 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

## **7 Legal Comment**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## 8 Equality Impact Assessment

This report is an update of progress against the People Strategy 2006 – 2009, for which an Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken. A separate Equality Impact Assessment has not, therefore, been completed for this report.

## 9 Appendix

People Strategy Action Plan

## 10 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	Status	What has been achieved?
Continuation of internal leadership development programmes	Development Manager	<b>Complete and ongoing</b>	DCFO and ACO have completed the Executive Leadership Programme and ACFO now attending  Area Management development programme recently added to the suite of development for managers
Contribution to the development of operational and non-operational leadership programmes regionally and nationally	Development Manager	<b>Complete and ongoing</b>	Supervisory, middle, strategic and executive management (non-operational) elements completed
Produce a Member training needs analysis development and target high priority need	ACO	<b>Complete</b>	This was completed and undertaken in 2006 and 2007. The process is currently under review.

Produce an organisational Training Needs Analysis and target high priority need	Executive	<b>Completed</b>	High-level analysis undertaken with the Executive in 2007
Support the introduction of CPD arrangements across the Service	ACO	<b>Completed</b>	Completed
Implement a workforce planning and succession process within the Service	HR Manager	<b>Due for completion by April 2010</b>	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	Status	What has been achieved?
Ensure cross-team Business Continuity plans in place	ACO	<b>Complete</b>	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	<b>Complete</b>	Supervisory and executive operational development implemented middle and strategic currently being implemented
Ensure effective Occupational Health arrangements are in place to support a reduction in absence	Human Resources Manager	<b>Complete</b>	After an extension in 2007 the contract was successfully tendered and re-let in April 2008 for a further 3 years.  Physiotherapy has been trialled for 2 years and is being recommended for adoption
Participate in and encourage Trade Union consultation	ACO	<b>Complete and ongoing</b>	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

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>What has been achieved?</b>
Develop Training Needs Analysis across all staff group and departments	Development Manager	<b>Complete for IT</b>	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	<b>Complete</b>	Ongoing
Provide planned training to meet identified need	Training Manager /Development Manager	<b>Complete</b>	Completed and ongoing on an annual basis
Develop the potential of current HR information systems	Development Manager	<b>Complete</b>	New Resourcelink system planned for implementation from April 2010. 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	<b>Complete</b>	New Resourcelink system successfully implemented from April 2008 with further development work being completed at time of writing



## **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

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>What has been achieved?</b>
Provide timely affirmative action events to encourage under-represented groups to consider a career with SFRS	Equality & Diversity Officer	<b>Complete and ongoing</b>	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	<b>Complete and ongoing</b>	New Resourcelink system successfully implemented from April 2008 with further development work being completed at time of writing Data cleanse exercise completed
Develop workforce and succession plans for current staff	HR Manager	<b>Due for completion by April 2010</b>	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	<b>Complete and ongoing</b>	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

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>What has been achieved?</b>
Support and monitor the IPDR process across the organisation	HR Manager/Development Manager	<b>Ongoing</b>	Ongoing
Provide planned training to meet identified need	Training Manager /Development Manager	<b>Complete and ongoing</b>	Ongoing
Participate in regional and national forums to influence future pay negotiations	ACO	<b>Complete and ongoing</b>	Ongoing
Research the provision of additional employee benefits which offer value for money for the Authority	HR Manager	<b>Complete</b>	<p>Childcare vouchers introduced in February 2008</p> <p>Physiotherapy trial for specified need commenced in February 2008</p> <p>Beneden Health scheme introduced in 2009</p> <p>Cycle Scheme introduced in 2009</p>

## 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

<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>What has been achieved?</b>
Support and monitor the IPDR process across the organisation	HR Manager/Development Manager	<b>Ongoing</b>	Ongoing
Provide planned training to meet identified need	Training Manager /Development Manager	<b>Complete and ongoing</b>	Ongoing
Encourage staff to seize formal and informal development opportunities	ACO & Section Heads	<b>Complete and ongoing</b>	Ongoing in conjunction with departmental management
Work effectively, drawing on external support as required to maximise productivity	ACO & Section Heads	<b>Ongoing</b>	Consultancy support had been used from time to time to complete pieces of work
Provide advice and guidance to managers and staff on all HR, Training & Development matters	Section Heads	<b>Ongoing</b>	Three busy years completed with advice provided on a wide range of issues
Plan work schedule in advance to maximise effectiveness and minimise stress	ACO & Section Heads	<b>Ongoing</b>	Additional (temporary) staff have joined each team over the period of the strategy and managers are supported and encouraged to plan in advance to achieve objectives