

# Organisational Development

## Review of the Year

The 2019/20 year has seen a significant amount of progress against all six of the the objectives identified in the People Strategy which we launched in 2018. The purpose of the strategy is to support the staff to become the best public servants they can be and creating a workforce that can deliver an efficient and effective service.

As part of our review of recruitment we have implemented a new recruitment portal to provide a more efficient process internally for monitoring and managing applications. This proved particularly useful in the wholetime recruitment campaign when the Service received over 500 application in less than 4 days. Having all the applications held electronically in one place improved the efficiency of the process significantly and also provide easily accessible valuable data that will help us target and design future campaigns.

We have fundamentally reviewed our approach to development and assessment this year by designing new development and assessment pathways for all operational roles within the Service. We started with our new Watch Based Station Managers to coincide with the creation of this new role and have now completed the programme from Firefighters to Area Manager including Firefighters in Thames Valley Fire Control. The pathways replace the NVQ programme and provide integrated development, blending operational knowledge with core skills, covering leading self, leading other and leading the organisation. The pathways are externally accredited by Skills for Justice Awards.

We have built on the great success of our middle manager development programme and delivered two Supervisory programme pilot courses we have now lead to a new programme integrated into development pathways for crew managers but open to all staff. This is a bespoke course for the Service but is certificated by the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM).

During the latter part of this year we have started a significant piece of work to digitise the Safe and Well process which underpins our prevention work. We have used skills gained through our project on business process improvement to work with stakeholders, especially safe and well technicians, to develop a system which will link out existing information management system to a digitally captured form. What has

been different about our approach to this is instead of just making our paper forms electronic we have gone back to looking at what data we need to achieve our outcome and making sure that we collect the information in the most effective way.

We have held the Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme silver award for just over a year and we have recently submitted our application for the gold award. We should hear in the latter part of 2020 if we have been successful.

The Fire Authority this year has seen its largest number of new Member appointments (eight in June 2019 and one in January 2020). A review was held on the Member Induction process and the member development task and finish group lead by the Vice Chairman and Organisational Development member champion, Cllr Helliard-Symons, has continue to work well, supporting the development of a revised 2020/23 Member Development Strategy which is aligned to the Corporate Plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan 2019/23. The strategy was agreed by the Authority in October.

Last year we introduced a bursary scheme to support staff's self-development, we have seen an increase in applications this year. We now have two members of staff completing masters courses and a third due to start later this year. We have also supported a number of vocational courses including nutrition, health and well-being and Fire Safety.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) forum is now well established with action plans in place and monitored regularly by the forum. We are now using the forum increasing for consultations on issues and policies affecting staff. A community calendar of events is used to plan events the service can be involved in as well social media campaigns. It is great to have Councillor Tina McKenzie-Boyle continue her involvement with the group as it really demonstrated the Authority's commitment to these issues.

Following on from the middle manager development programme, the first cohorts of the next level of management have started our newly designed supervisory level leadership programme.

Our Workforce-planning group is now well established, and modelling is being used to predict recruitment activity and development needs. There is wide representation on the group and colleagues from representative bodies play an important role on this group.

Our third staff survey was completed at the end of 2019 and the results have shown improvement across the board. The results will also help inform the new 2021/23 People Strategy.

### Ongoing and looking forward

A key piece of work scheduled for 2020/21 is the creation of a revised People Strategy. The current strategy launched in 2018 is set to run to 2021. To bring the People Strategy in line with the IRMP and Corporate Plan it is intended to produce a strategy to cover 2021 to 2023.

An important piece of work in coming months is the development of a talent management strategy to help the Service identify, attract and grow talent in the organisation to ultimately improve the service to the community.

Our support to the Change 100 programme continues and in June 2020 we will be welcoming seven interns who will join us for 100 days. This will be the fourth year that the Service has participated in the programme and the largest number of interns to date. Over the last four years we have managed to hold on to three talented interns and extend their role beyond the initial 100 day period with two now permanent members of staff.

The Member Development Action Plan which is aligned to the 20/23 Member Development Strategy outlines courses and activities that Fire Authority Members will be invited to attend over the next three years to support the delivery of the Strategy. This was due to come to Audit and Governance Committee in March 2020 but this has now been rescheduled for July.

In 2020/21 we will build on the great work of development and assessment pathways for operational roles and create a pathway for Fire Safety Inspection Officers which will align to the work of the National Fire Chiefs Council.

Through 20/21 we will be seeking Investor in People accreditation. This is something we have considered in previous years but the introduction of the HMICFRS inspection programme diverted the necessary resources but we feel we are now in a strong position to move forward with this in the coming months.

In the later part or 202/21 we will fully review our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) objectives to ensure alignment with the IRMP 2020/23 and the new People Strategy 21/23. This will involve working with the EDI Forum, members, staff and public consultation.

By the end of 2020 we hope to roll out the digitised safe and well process and begin to look at digitising some our protection activities.

We will also continue to support the delivery of the Mental Health Action Plan as well as the Health, Safety and Wellbeing action plan.

OD Champion Cllr Pauline Helliard-Symons