

MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY			
MEETING OF THE:	POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE		
DATE:	13TH DECEMBER 2018	REPORT NO:	CFO/062/18
PRESENTING OFFICER	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER		
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	NICK MERNOCK, DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	REPORT AUTHOR:	LYNN HUGHES, HEAD OF ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
OFFICERS CONSULTED:			
TITLE OF REPORT:	DEVELOPMENT OF APPRENTICESHIPS		

APPENDICES:	APPENDIX 1	FIREFIGHTER STANDARD
	APPENDIX 2	LEADERSHIP STANDARD
	APPENDIX 3	COMMUNITY SAFETY ADVISER STANDARD
	APPENDIX 4	BUSINESS SAFETY ADVISER STANDARD
	APPENDIX 5	MFRA AS AN EMPLOYER PROVIDER
	APPENDIX 6	SUB-CONTRACT AS A TRAINING PROVIDER

Purpose of Report

1. To request that members approve the further development of apprenticeships, incorporating the new funding delivery models and workplace application.

Recommendation

2. That members;
 - a. Approve the adoption and delivery of a number of apprenticeship standards, including Firefighter, Leadership and Management (Levels 3, 5, 7) and Community Safety as a means of developing our people.
 - b. Approve Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority's (MFRA) application to become an Employer Provider to enable taking responsibility for the training of staff, thereby allowing the Authority to maximise its access to and use of the Apprenticeship Levy.
 - c. Instruct that a further report is provided giving a full financial implication statement for the Authority following the attainment of Employer Provider status.

Introduction and Background

3. There are significant drivers to expand delivery of apprenticeships both external and internal. In terms of external factors apprenticeships are seen as an increasing part of the long term plan for improved workforce development. The Government's Apprenticeship Reform Programme is aimed at ensuring apprenticeships become more rigorous and more responsive to the needs of employers. The Enterprise Act 2016 establishes the intent to protect and strengthen the apprenticeship brand, introduce targets for apprenticeships in public sector bodies in England and establish an Institute for Apprenticeships- an independent employer led body that ensures apprenticeships meet the needs of business. The target set at 2.3% of headcount, equates to 24 staff for MFRA. This applies to an intake of new apprentices, or equipping existing staff with a qualification.
4. The introduction of an apprenticeship levy also means that employers will pay 0.5% of each month's pay bill to H.R.R.C. which equates to £200,000 per annum. Additional money is available with government providing 90% of the additional costs.
5. In terms of internal drivers apprentices prove an excellent opportunity to harness new talent in line with succession planning needs. It also enables us to equip our existing workforce with qualifications and training to upskill them.
6. The new standards consist of:
 - A job in a skilled occupation and achievement of full competency in role
 - Substantial and sustained training involving at least 20% off the job training.
 - A requirement to pass English and Maths (functional skills) if this hasn't already been achieved.
 - An End Point Assessment carried out by an external organisation (EPA).
 - A clear framework or standard which consists of the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours to reach competency in role.
7. There are a number of apprenticeships standards that have been approved that are ready to deliver. Appendix 1 provides further detail:-

These are:-

- Firefighter which is aligned to the Authority's current recruitment given the workforce plans.
 - Management and Leadership which is in hand with the promotion, development and training of staff in leadership positions.
 - Community Safety Advisor (the Framework for this has recently been finalised).
 - Business Safety Advisor (the Framework for this has recently been finalised)
8. There are a number of options as to how the apprenticeship standard is delivered.

The options are:-

- Source a training provider (approximately 20% administration fee charged). The training provider manages learning plans, initial assessments and OFSTED.
 - MFRA becomes an employer provider enabling use of the levy for training and associated costs such as staff facilities and equipment. This places a requirement on the employer to be quality assured by OFSTED. Employers need to go through a rigorous approval process via the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP). Appendix 2 covers further details relating to benefits/risks.
9. It is recommended that wherever we have particular occupational expertise such as Firefighter, Community Safety and Leadership Management, we would adopt the employer provider route. Where we don't have the capability and resource as well as small numbers we can continue to operate through a training provider.
10. The Authority has utilised the experience of a short term consultant to develop and write the application for Employer Provider status along with the future delivery of apprenticeships. This has been funded initially from reserves with the potential to reclaim the money through the levy should the Authority confirm that they wish to become an Employer Provider in the future.

Equality and Diversity Implications

11. The Firefighter Recruitment process has a Positive Action Strategy which encourages applications from under-represented groups. Our workforce plans highlight the need to recruit firefighters in line with our retirement profile. This broadly means that 50% of our firefighters in ten years will be new. This will have a significant impact on the age profile, culture and development of our teams.

12. Organisations are required to have safeguarding strategies in place and give consideration to the prevent duty. They should also have equality and diversity policies in place and have clearly defined procedures for tackling bullying and discrimination.

Staff Implications

13. To become an Employer Provider the Service should have staff in place who have the expertise/experience of the organisation as well as occupational knowledge/experience of the subject matter they are delivering and assessing.
14. All apprentices/employees undertaking the programme will need to maintain a portfolio of evidence based on a set of clear requirements. The End Point Assessment consists of a knowledge test, practical assessment, a professional discussion/structured interview based on the content of their portfolio.

Legal Implications

15. The Enterprise Act 2016 establishes the intent to protect and strengthen the apprenticeship brand, introduce targets for apprenticeships in public sector bodies in England and establish an Institute for Apprenticeships- an independent employer led body that ensures apprenticeships meet the needs of business.
16. All apprentices/staff will be fully inducted to ensure compliance with all legislation including health and safety, data protection and equality legislation.

Financial Implications & Value for Money

17. The levy goes to H.M.R.C. as part of a monthly PAYE return. As an Employer Provider the Service can effectively pay itself to deliver the training to our own staff. Funding is removed from the levy account and paid into the services training arm on a monthly basis. The financial position needs further discussion as this will change in line with numbers of apprentices and details will be provided in a further report to Elected Members

Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

18. There are a number of potential risks. Some of these are outside of our control, such as the readiness of sector frameworks and the limited opening of RoATP. An internal risk is organisational readiness in terms of capacity, skills, people and finance. This will be partially mitigated through the recruitment of an Apprenticeship Manager.

19. A potential risk is OFSTED Inspection, however, this will not happen until 3 years from the start of the programme. OFSTED will inspect the service to assess the quality of the training, individual learning plans and record keeping.
20. A further element is functional skills with the necessity of all candidates to pass if they have not already achieved English and Mathematics (A-C)

Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

BACKGROUND PAPERS

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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