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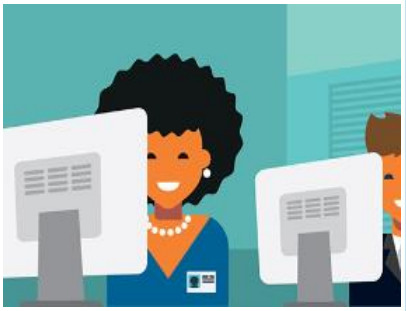
MERSEYSIDE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

DRAFT

PEOPLE STRATEGY

2017 - 2020

Merseyside FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE











SAFER, STRONGER COMMUNITIES; SAFE EFFECTIVE FIREFIGHTERS

FOREWORD BY
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER PHIL GARRIGAN

This Strategy reinforces our commitment to the public by delivering the best possible services to our community whilst harnessing the considerable talents of our staff.

We know our people are instrumental in achieving our ambitions in an ever changing environment. We recognise the significant contribution our people make in achieving our mission, aims and objectives through commitment to our organisational and personal values.

This strategy defines what we need from our people as well as what we, the Service need to do to enable them to make a real tangible difference in their community.

To do this it is vitally important that our people are able to reach their potential, give their best at work and are listened to and valued for their contribution.

With this in mind the development of the strategy and its strategic objectives have been achieved through extensive engagement with our workforce in line with our 'Think People' approach. Its intent compels each and every one of us to play our part in making Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service a great and successful place to work.

During the course of its implementation we will continue to seek the views of our staff and adapt to some of the approaches to reflect the feedback we hear – we know it will evolve.

It is vitally important that we listen to and hear the views of our staff, it is equally important that we recognise and act on the trust that the public places on each and every one of us.

Professional, competent, courteous and community focused people are the centre of our strategy.

I genuinely believe that this strategy will be a step off point for the Service and as such I would like to offer my personal thanks to everyone who has contributed to its development and I look forward to seeing the strategy and implementation plan come to life in the forthcoming months

The future is exciting



Chief Fire Officer Phil Garrigan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This People Strategy has been developed in response to the national People Strategy which sets out the direction of travel for the UK Fire & Rescue Service.

It will be an evolving strategy which takes account of a number of key documents including Sir Ken Knights 'Facing the Future' Report and Adrian Thomas's Independent Review of Conditions for Service for Fire and Rescue Staff in England. Above all it considers how we will deliver our Integrated Risk Management Plan through our people.

It explores the main drivers for change and the impact that these changes have on our people. It also establishes how we continue to deliver our mission, aims and values.

It focuses particularly on:

OUR AIM: EXCELLENT PEOPLE

Developing and valuing our employees, respecting diversity, promoting opportunity and equality for all

OUR CORE VALUE

Our people are the best they can be.

It builds upon existing practice which has added value as well as providing a framework for the future.

The strategy adopts the six components of the national People Strategy which are:

- Strengthen leadership and Line Management to support organisational change and improved community outcomes.
- Developing cultural values and behaviours which make the Fire and Rescue Service a great place to work for all our people
- Provide excellent training and education to ensure continuous improvement of service to the public
- Continue to support the health and wellbeing of all of our people
- Improve our ability to provide good service by diversifying our workforce and creating a fair and equal place to work
- Ways of working that respond to service needs

The strategy sets out our strategic intent with an implementation plan to inform delivery. The strategy will be flexible in order for us to continue to respond to challenges facing our community. It highlights the importance of people and leadership at all levels.

OUR PRINCIPLES

We will adopt the following principles:

- Our core and personal values will underpin everything we do as well as inform the way we work together.

- We will enhance leadership at all levels which in turn will impact positively on the organisation, team and individual creating a high performance culture to serve our community

- We will continue to make a positive difference to our community whether in an operational context or making communities stronger through involvement, engagement and presence.

- We will be an employer of choice that attracts and retains the best people.

- We will provide training and education for all - providing opportunities for teams to grow and learn and achieve high quality outcomes

- We will be open, honest and transparent in how we communicate in order to maximise the engagement and contribution of our people so that they feel valued and recognised.

- We will involve our people in decision making ensuring staff are properly engaged and consulted on with regards to the future direction of the organisation.

- We will challenge negative and undermining behaviours

- We will create a strong focus on organisational learning that both seeks to embed the learning of lessons and use that learning for service improvement

- We will develop a one team culture - working together to achieve our aims encouraging an outcome focused mind-set.

- We will ensure fairness, consistency and honesty in the way we treat each other.

- We will champion diversity and inclusivity within our communities and our workforce.

- We will create a healthy and safe environment where staff can be themselves - a place where stigma and prejudice have no place.

INTRODUCTION

There is significant change ahead of us as a Fire and Rescue Service. This in turn brings opportunities as well as challenges. What we do have is a strong base to work from in terms of our history, our brand, the difference we make to the people of Merseyside and most of all the talents our people bring. We may not have all the answers but by involving people we will arrive at more considered solutions.

- We know that we face further financial challenges and will need to continue to explore how we can find as many savings as possible which limit the impact on people - particularly our front line staff. We also face a changing landscape in terms of our potential governance arrangements as well as new inspection arrangements and independent standards.
- We recognise that the People Strategy will grow and evolve to support the future vision of the wider Fire Service agenda as well as the needs of the City Region. It is the start of a journey with our starting point being to ensure excellence in the delivery of our service as is and to enhance the capability of our people to shape and deliver it.

Leadership at all levels has never been more important - leadership has significant impact on our community, the service we deliver and the teams and individuals within it. Our focus groups have shared with us what great leadership both looks and feels like and it is important that we reflect this in the qualities we expect from our leaders. We want our leaders to lead by example, have a strong team focus and presence with a genuine interest in people. This involves listening, being open and honest, consistent, supportive and encouraging whilst not walking past poor behaviour and attitude.

- We need to set high standards that others aspire to, sometimes that means not taking the easy option. As Lieutenant General David Lindsay once said *"The standard you walk past is the standard you (accept) set"*.

Every time we accept undermining or poor inappropriate behaviour we are endorsing it – our people expect more. Our people want us to be interested and forward facing to look forward not back – this is exactly the approach we will adopt.

The People Strategy is not solely about personal leadership but it is also about strong organisational leadership where we seek to do the right thing, are accountable for our actions and take responsibility. We cannot afford to dwell on what we can no longer do but on what we can continue to do and do very well.

- We aim to support and encourage high performing teams so that we continue to deliver the best possible outcomes for our communities. This means building a climate of trust, clarity in terms of how job roles contribute to the vision and creating an environment where people feel they can influence the way we deliver our service.
- We need to continue to recognise and reward high performance. We appreciate that this will mean different things to different people therefore we will have a variety of

ways to show appreciation and praise. Again, our staff have shared with us some ideas as to how this may take shape.

- We realise that people want to stretch and grow and don't always aspire to a leadership role. We are therefore keen to explore opportunities for staff to develop in their current roles and continue to make a significant contribution.

In the selection and development of our leaders we must ensure that leaders are free from unconscious bias and that they are open to considering a range of perspectives and views. The use of psychometric tools during selection processes may assist in this. We acknowledge the importance of promoting diversity in leadership positions and have leaders from operational and non-operational staff who equally contribute to achieve our aims and core values.

- We must identify the right people with the right values to take up key leadership roles and positively impact on those around them. We must also not be afraid to harness talent more quickly and consider programmes such as accelerated development to turn potential into performance.

- We recognise that leadership works across a range of boundaries. We will develop leaders who know and understand their communities and who make a significant difference.

Two way communication is crucial. Our focus groups have given us feedback on what good engagement looks like. It is important that people feel they have a voice which contributes to shaping what we do.

- We want staff to feel they are part of the organisation, can actively contribute to it and have the opportunity to reflect upon and celebrate their successes.

- We see our people as integral in contributing their experiences, expertise and ideas. We will assist people with change so that they are involved in the planning, are clear about why we need to change and consider the options available.

- We recognise the value of staff forums as our existing ones have received positive feedback and engagement. We will establish further staff forums and measure their impact and value.

- We realise that engagement can be formal as well as informal and aim to deliver both. We appreciate the opportunities technology presents in the communication of key messages and provide timely, consistent messages. We also know that face to face communication is king.

- We want teams to work together to provide the best possible outcomes for the public and harness the different talents people bring. With this in mind we will set up cross directorate working through project work to create stretch and broader organisational awareness. Different people bring different expertise and it is important to use that effectively to continually improve the way we do things.

Our core and personal values are integral to what we do and the service we offer. We will continue to see if our values are fit for purpose and reflect the needs of the service. What is important is that they must be seen as well as written so that there is no SAY- DO gap. We need to stand up and speak up for what is right and address things that are wrong.

- We continue to focus on the wellbeing of our people. We will build upon the support offered to assist staff with welfare and mental health issues. We will also place safety at the heart of everything we do. We need to ensure that our workplaces are conducive to work allowing people to give their best, whilst appreciating that work also needs to have a social aspect.

- We will continue to strive to ensure that we are inclusive in all we do and we will build a representative workforce. We value diversity and recognise that different people bring different perspectives, ideas, knowledge and culture, and that this difference brings great strength. In order to improve the way we deliver services to our communities we want to increase the diversity of our workforce. Whilst we have made significant improvements in this area, we know that we can do more and continue to deliver positive action programmes to raise awareness of MFRS as an employer of choice.

- We value the contribution that apprentices, volunteers and cadets bring in the creation of greater diversity within the workplace. We will continue to invest in these initiatives.

Finally we will stimulate a learning culture where we promote continuous learning and improvement whereby people take responsibility for their own learning and development which ultimately has a positive impact on organisational performance. We also need to encourage taking safe and measured risks so that we innovate, think broadly and continue to build a strong base to adapt to change.

Much of this will help achieve a highly engaged workforce who feel their contribution is valued and recognised.

The BIS report- Engage for Success (2009) defines engagement as *"creating the conditions in which employees offer more of their capability and potential "*. In defining our principles and establishing clear areas of focus (Components parts) we are confident we have the blueprint for future engagement.

These plans will be will be focused on the delivery of our strategic objectives – delivered through the associated action/implementation plan

THE COMPONENTS OF THE PEOPLE STRATEGY



1 Strengthen Leadership and Line Management to support organisation change and improved community outcomes.

Strategic Objective	Detailed Objective	Measures + Accountable project outputs
1.1 To develop a succession pathway to ensure effective workforce planning	1.1.1 To write a succession planning strategy.	Production of a strategy to ensure all roles are filled with high performing leaders and leaders take responsibility for the development of other leaders.
	1.1.2 To write a leadership strategy	Production of a strategy which captures all leadership elements
	1.1.3 To review and develop promotion centres to create a talent pipeline and develop leaders who reflect our values.	Data relating to recruitment by equality group, level, and customer feedback.
	1.1.4 To create a talent base through cadet and apprenticeship programmes.	Data relating to retention, posts and customer feedback.
	1.1.5 To foster cross directorate working through project work to create stretch and broader organisational awareness.	Project working and evaluation.
	1.1.6 To continue to build leaders of place to enable leaders to develop, work and impact across boundaries.	Enhanced community outcomes through partnership working. Customer feedback.
1.2 To provide leadership development programmes at all levels to develop potential and support leaders in all roles	1.2.1 To review leadership development programmes at level 2, 3, 5 and 7 to reflect changes in the organisation, culture and apprenticeship funding	Cost/Benefit Analysis reporting. Successful completion of external qualifications to support development of underpinning knowledge.

	1.2.2 To explore collaborative leadership programmes with other blue light services 1.2.3 To broaden the leadership offer through mentoring, coaching, accredited qualifications and development experience	Design, delivery and evaluation of joint courses Candidate feedback and data relating to progression.
1.3 To continue to reflect key leadership principles in our leadership strategy, to include the identification, development and promotion of leaders to ensure consistency in decision making as well as define what great leadership looks like.	1.3.1 To ensure all leadership pathways reflect our expectations of our leaders and align to the national Leadership strategy. 1.3.2 To define a clear set of behaviours and expectations for people in leadership roles. To ensure that job specifications for leadership positions contain leadership behaviours as well as technical knowledge and capability. 1.3.3 Continued development of 'Think People' strategy to reflect clear engagement and wellbeing principles. 1.3.4 To equip people to build high performing teams.	Development of leadership behaviours as criteria to select and develop leaders. Quality assurance of job profiles and person specifications. Production of an Engagement Strategy and monitoring of outcomes. Data relating to appraisal outcomes.
1.4 To develop a Recognition and Reward Strategy	1.4.1 To consider a range of options to recognise high performance including informal and formal approaches.	Production of a Strategy and staff feedback. Data relating to numbers of nominations, awards given and staff feedback
1.5 To build upon our current engagement strategy to maximise two way communication and engagement	1.5.1 To create strong links between job roles and organisation mission/aims and strategic direction creating a sense of purpose/belonging. 1.5.2 To develop greater interaction between senior leaders and teams/watches.	Production of an engagement strategy. To measure engagement levels and benchmarked to FRS/national employers

2 To provide excellent training and education to ensure continuous improvement of services to the public.

Strategic Objective	Detailed Objective	Measures + Accountable project outcomes
2.1 Our Training and Development Strategy meets organisation, department and individual needs in line with business needs and measures the impact of training.	2.1.1 To undertake an annual training needs analysis and prioritise training in line with organisation need. 2.1.2 To provide business rationale for attendance of training. 2.1.3 To produce an annual training plan and training priorities. 2.1.4 To have defined governance arrangements reporting to the Workforce Strategy group.	To provide an annual cost/benefit report. Quality assurance of appraisal conversation. To report on delivery of the plan at the end of the financial year. Action plans produced and reported on at the Workforce Strategy group.
2.2 Continue to offer a range of learning provision to reflect individual learning needs/styles.	2.2.1To adopt a blended approach in the design of training and development solutions. 2.2.2To consider a range of solutions including coaching, mentoring, secondments and e- learning.	To report on training delivery and outcomes in our annual training report. Quality assurance of all training through initial evaluation and outcomes.
2.3 Learning focuses on knowledge, skills and behaviours.	2.3.1 All training provision details knowledge, skill and behaviours in the learning outcomes. 2.3.2 Define training/educational requirements for each role. 2.3.3 To incorporate apprenticeship standards into training.	Report on annual training plan. Audit of Job profiles/person specifications. Reporting of standards used in the annual training report.
2.4 To create a learning culture based on continuous improvement.	2.4.1 To build the principle of continuous learning in all programmes including the principle of self-directed learning. 2.4.2 To develop a Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	To monitor utilising a learning management system. Production of a strategy and audit of training records.

	strategy to facilitate continuous learning and development. 2.4.3 To support people through change through change programmes with a focus on mind-set. 2.4.4 People take responsibility for their own learning.	Staff feedback from staff survey. Staff feedback from staff survey and monitoring of learning management systems.
2.5 To continue to develop excellence in operations.	2.5.1 Support the implementation of NOG guidance and IFE exams to provide underpinning knowledge.	To gather data on Injuries. Produce a report with success rates of IFE exams.
2.6 To determine the feasibility of a shared platform for learning for generic issues.	2.6.1 To promote exchange of ideas/practices and collaborative working to aid continuous learning and 'doing things only once'.	Feedback from the staff survey.

3 Maximise the wellbeing of our staff –

To create a safe environment where people are fulfilled, productive and challenged.

Strategic Objective	Detailed Objective	Measures + Accountable project outputs
3.1 Promote mental and physical wellbeing of all staff to fulfil basic needs, a sense of belonging, purpose and accomplishment.	3.1.1 Provision of a range of Occupational Health services to meet needs of staff.	Reduce absence and effective return to work.
	3.1.2 We will support the introduction of Blue Light workplace Well Being charter.	Completion of the charter
	3.1.3 Actively introduce and promote specific Health initiatives for all employees.	
	3.1.4 To consider social aspects of the workplace to foster team working and belonging.	Support the retention of employees in the workplace
3.2 Supporting people with long term health issues and disability to remain in work	3.2.1 To explore the working environment in order to consider needs of all staff.	Outcomes of staff survey
	3.2.2 Create a sense of organisation belonging through a number of activities e.g. briefings, away days.	
	3.2.3 To develop a strategy and launch it.	Retention rates and employee feedback
3.3 To continue to put employee safety at the heart of our policies and procedures.	3.3.1 To ensure lone worker safety and support.	Accident statistics and RIDDOR published regularly. Produce a safety culture model that looks at control of major accident hazards: slips; trips and falls.

3.4 To support people transitioning into retirement.	3.4.1 To consider a range of support to enable transition out of the Fire Service at retirement.	Staff Feedback Broader use of on line systems such as YPS
3.5 To continue to develop and deliver Employee Fitness standards to consolidate and support full role engagement	3.5.1 To trial and support the implementation of the new Fire ground Fitness Test taking into account feedback and impact on staff 3.5.2 To evaluate station equipment and gymnasiums to meet this approach. 3.5.3 Develop a team of specialist Physical Training Advisors to support all staff on development, weight management and rehabilitation. 3.5.4 To utilise other specialist Advisors to support Diet, nutrition and personal health.	To support a healthy and engaged workforce, and improve attendance in work Review of sickness absence statistics Individual training initiatives/improvement support
3.6 To review Organisational work locations and evaluate for maximum environmental benefit	3.6.1 To review locations, reviewing current policy on open plan, confidential environments, the ability for social interaction and quiet space for deadline working.	To gain the maximum output from our staff in an environment most suitable for working in

4 Developing cultural values and behaviours which make Fire and Rescue a great place to work.

Strategic Objectives	Detailed Objective	Measures + Accountable project outputs
4.1 We continue to embed, observe and apply our values and behaviours to ensure MFRS is a good place to work.	4.1.1 To consult with staff to determine if our values are fit for purpose.	People survey outcomes and continued feedback
	4.1.2 To embed a values measurement through a 360 feedback process.	Production of a measurement and staff feedback.
4.2 To develop culture change programmes and unconscious bias programmes.	4.2.1 To determine a common view on workplace culture and its impact on morale, operational delivery and day to day activities.	Undertake an annual cultural audit and continue to involve our workforce in the development of solutions.
	4.2.2 To embed a culture which maximises collegiate working, wellbeing, adaptability and risk taking to meet future challenges (Thinking differently outside hierarchy)	
	4.2.3 To foster inter departmental working and strengthen team communication.	Team projects and outcomes.
	4.2.4 To explore cultures in addressing ways of working with partners in particular blue light services.	Consideration in Collaborative partnership strategy.
	4.2.5 To continue to involve staff in decision making and change.	See communication outcomes.
4.3 Organisation and person values embedded in all people strategies from entry to exit.	4.3.1 To embed values in recruitment, promotion and development, appraisals and training and celebrate them.	Auditing all people policies to ensure values are integral.
	4.3.2 To explore the wording of our values to enable people to make connections to work streams.	Outcomes of focus groups.

4.4 To develop more opportunities to encourage people to have a voice, contribute and offer constructive challenge.	4.4.1 To adopt best practice in employee engagement. 4.4.2 To continue to undertake staff engagement audits. 4.4.3 To continue to develop long term culture change.	Production of an Engagement Strategy. Outcomes of Staff survey
4.5 To create more stretch in the workplace through lateral development.	4.5.1 To consider stretch using functional projects.	Production of a lateral development strategy and staff feedback.

5 Improve our ability to provide good service by diversifying our workforce and creating a fair and equal place to work. Staff at all levels reflect the communities we serve.

Strategic Objective	Detailed Objective	Measures + Accountable project outputs
5.1 To develop a positive action strategy to attract staff with protected characteristics and communicated to relevant stakeholders and staff	5.1.1 To continue to monitor data in terms of knowing our communities and recruitment practice.	To monitor diversity of recruit courses and wider recruitment through the **Equality and Diversity Action Plan numbers 12, 20 and Equality and Diversity Objectives number 1-** reports on progress are carried out annually via our Public Sector Equality Duty report.
	5.1.2 To continue to deliver positive action strategies including 'Have a go' activities, mentoring and coaching, Stakeholder engagement and targeted school/college visits.	
	5.1.3 To develop comprehensive marketing material to present MFRS as a career of choice.	To gather customer feedback on the impact of materials.
	5.1.4 To provide a range of interventions to encourage underrepresented groups to seek progression to include:	Monitor the numbers of under representative groups in leadership positions.
5.2 To continue to increase diversity in leadership positions	5.2.1 Bespoke development programme for women including introduction to management programme	Evaluation of programmes.
	5.2.2 Mentoring programme for women in collaboration with the Police	Evaluation from mentors and mentees.
	5.2.3 Support and guidance through the Female Firefighter Forum	Evaluation from attendees.
	5.2.4 The development of BAME specific support mechanisms such as staff forums and focus groups- **E&D Action plan ref 1**	Evaluation from attendees.

	5.2.5 To include progression within the Positive Action Strategy- **E&D Action plan ref 12 and 20**	Production and monitoring of the Positive Action Strategy.
5.3 To maximise opportunities to ensure fairness and inclusiveness in all we do.	5.3.1 To embed equality and diversity in decision making through equality impact assessments and the delivery of the equality objectives	E&D Action Plan ensures that we embed equality and diversity throughout all practices, services and decisions to ensure we are inclusive with our people and communities we serve.
	5.3.2 To explore the comparability between uniform and non-uniform posts.	Our Public Sector Equality annual report reviews all equality statistics including recruitment, gender pay gap and progression.
	5.3.3 To offer training around unconscious bias to ensure we are able to link into inclusive leadership training-**E&D Action plan ref 1. Objective 4.**	Evaluation of training.
	5.3.4 To gain a better understanding of our communities by gathering data and intelligence and forging local partnerships.	Production of data that helps staff develop effective activities, campaigns and results that result in better engagement.
	5.3.5 To ensure staff are better equipped to deliver their roles whilst showing due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited in the Equality Act.	Training delivery and evaluation. Production of equality Impact assessments.
5.4 To embed 'Think People' to maximise engagement.	5.4.1 To establish the extent that staff feel engagement is progressing in line with our commitment and principles.	Outcomes of the staff survey and production of an engagement strategy.
	5.4.2 To gain views on Think People concept and how to embed it into daily activities and decision making.	
	5.4.3 To develop our approach to reward and recognition.	Production of a strategy and staff feedback.
	5.4.4 To develop further staff forums-**E&D action plan 20. Ref 1**	Feedback from forums.

6 Adopt ways of working that respond to service needs.

Strategic Objective	Detailed Objective	Measures + Accountable project outputs
6.1 To consider working practices such as work patterns, terms and conditions and flexibility in order to meet the obligations placed upon us in IRMP	6.1.1 Have a comprehensive understanding of the risks and demands of the service to enable delivery of the right outcomes 6.1.2 Engage with the local community to build up a comprehensive risk profile and to understand public expectations of future demand for its services. 6.1.3 To explore demand led working in functions as well as changes to flexi system.	Flexible duty systems to reflect meet the needs of the risk assessment The service will have the capability to respond to the needs of the community. The workforce match the needs of the community Resources available to meet the needs of the service e.g Bonfire Safety campaigns, large recruitment campaigns
6.2 Clear communication strategies support the implementation of change and workforce concerns.	6.2.1 To review current communication strategy in consultation with the workforce 6.2.2 To create conditions where employees are empowered to suggest new ways of working	Data relating to staff surveys
6.3 Embrace technology to encourage agile working.	6.3.1 Develop the use of technology to respond to risk/demand. 6.3.2 To reduce bureaucracy through lean systems of work	Increase in outputs SSRI HFSC SOFSA
6.4 To develop a recruitment strategy to be informed by workforce profiling.	6.4.1 To write a recruitment strategy to ensure that we have sufficient staff to meet service delivery needs and be responsive to change.	Production of a recruitment Strategy. Service Level Agreements in place to monitor impact of recruitment.