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Foreword from the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Neil Stocker

We are immensely proud and ambitious about our workforce within West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (WSFRS).

This strategy is about outlining our commitment to how we will deliver on our ambitions.

I therefore want this strategy to support the leadership and development of our service which is highly effective and trusted by our residents and communities, whilst also ensuring that modernisation, integration and collaboration are at the forefront of how we work.

It will also support the National Workforce Strategy 2022 and the WSFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

We will employ and develop an inclusive workforce that reflects the changing role of the fire and rescue service, providing equality of opportunity for all staff. We will build on positive staff survey findings to further develop a genuinely inclusive culture which enables all employees to be high performing because we value the difference of their: gender or gender choice, beliefs or religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, pregnancy, caring responsibilities or membership of a trade union.

We will ensure that our leaders have the support to develop and maintain excellent interpersonal skills and political awareness. This will enable them to build partnerships and relationships to engage and collaborate with Members, colleagues, representative bodies and external partners to improve the services we deliver to our residents and communities.

A programme of activity has been developed that will be taken forward via a People & Culture Board that will provide the focus, scrutiny, and support to enable delivery of the programme. The People & Culture Board is one of four boards that will deliver a continuous improvement plan for WSFRS. It will report to the Senior Leadership Team, in its role as the Executive IRMP Board.

The strategy has been divided into four themes which outline what we need to do to support the achievement of our service priorities and national expectations. These are:

1. Workforce Strategy
2. Workforce Performance and Development
3. Leadership Development
4. Inclusion and Wellbeing

Each theme has been further broken down into specific areas of focus and delivery. This document then summarises what we aim to achieve within our year 1 action plan.

I strongly believe that our staff are our greatest asset and will be instrumental in the realisation of this strategy. We will use this strategy to drive modernisation and to deliver a workforce that is representative of the communities of West Sussex, ensuring we continue to challenge and eradicate any form of bullying and harassment, enabling all staff to reach their full potential in the organisation.

I am excited about our plans and how we will work to improve and develop our service even further. I look forward to working with you all in the further development and delivery of the WSFRS Strategy for People & Culture Development 2018-2022.
Cabinet Member for Safer, Stronger Communities, Debbie Kennard

Welcome to West Sussex County Council’s Fire & Rescue Authority’s Strategy for People & Culture Development 2018-2022.

I am honoured to be the County Council Cabinet Member with responsibility for our fire and rescue service, and I am determined to ensure that it continues to deliver the high quality service that our residents have come to expect. As the Fire & Rescue Authority and governing body for the county, West Sussex County Council has a legal duty to ensure that we provide a highly effective and efficient fire and rescue service that is also value for money.

WSFRS forms a key part of the West Sussex County Council Communities and Public Protection Directorate. This integrated working and close collaboration with other services means that WSFRS plays a key role in delivering the council’s objectives as well as those of the fire and rescue service. I fully recognise that effective partnership and collaboration is the best way of providing effective services to our communities, and I am fully behind the fire and rescue service as it works with others to deliver the objectives that the Fire Authority has set.

Our firefighters proactively protect our communities every day with their safety and prevention work as well as providing a professional emergency response. The people who work for WSFRS are all key to enabling the service to make this happen and this includes both firefighting and support staff.

It is really important that we strive to ensure that we have the best staff in the right roles at the right time.

I am proud of our fire and rescue service and am committed to working to ensure their continued success. This vision will enable us to ensure a sustainable approach to planning and developing our staff needs in order to meet immediate and future workforce requirements.
Introduction

Background – Why do we need a People & Culture Strategy?

WSFRS operates in an increasingly challenging and changing environment. In order to continue to provide a resilient, responsive and professional service, we will need to meet a range of internal and external challenges as follows:

- Operate within increasing financial constraints
- Meet the requirements of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 by supporting collaboration and integration with other public services and partners.
- Modernisation of the workforce, roles and ways of working to address issues of increased staff turnover and issues relating to an aging workforce.
- To acknowledge and address the findings of the WSFRS Staff Stress Survey.
- Meeting future leadership and management requirements through workforce planning and development.
- Manage impacts on the workforce and the employer as a result of changes to employment law and pension arrangements.
- Deliver the objectives of the West Sussex County Council Corporate Plan.
Values

Our values help shape how we engage with our employees, customers and partners on a day-to-day basis and play a crucial role in our ability to achieve our vision and corporate priorities. We have five core values:

- **Proud to be customer-centred**: We put the customer central to everything we do.
- **Listen and act upon**: We listen to each other and act on what we say.
- **Honest and realistic**: We are honest and realistic about what we can achieve.
- **Trust and support**: We trust and support each other to achieve our goals.
- **Genuinely valued**: We feel our contribution is valued and our achievements are recognised.

The values will come to life in our daily work and will be demonstrated throughout the organisation from the Executive Directors, Corporate Leadership Team, elected members and by all levels of staff within the organisation.
Approach

The West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Strategy for People & Culture Development has been developed using information gathered from the following:

- Conditions of Service For Fire & Rescue Staff - The Adrian Thomas Review
- The National Fire Chiefs Council - National Workforce Strategy 2022
- LGA ‘An Inclusive Service’ – The 21st Century Fire and Rescue Service
- NJC Circular for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (NJC/8/17)
- Policing and Crime Act 2017
- WSFRS Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)
- Stakeholder engagement – including representative bodies

The WSFRS Strategy for People & Culture Development includes a detailed action plan for the first 12 months. This will be reviewed regularly by the Fire and Rescue Service Senior Leadership Team (FRSSLT).

Scope

Our four year plan will identify our key priorities and intentions whilst also looking at improving existing ways of working and developing modern and collaborative approaches to providing the service.

In line with the National Fire Chiefs Council - National Workforce Strategy 2017-2022, the main strategic themes are:

1. Workforce Strategy
2. Workforce Performance & Development
3. Leadership Development
4. Inclusion and Wellbeing

This document aims to outline to all staff and partners, the scope and plans for people and culture that we aspire to deliver over the next four years to 2022.

This document pertains specifically to WSFRS; however, as a service which is fully integrated into West Sussex County Council there will be synergy with the wider County Council.
The four strategic themes are further broken down into higher level outcomes which are being developed into detailed delivery plans:

**Workforce Strategy – Outcomes:**

- There will be clear and attractive roles and career pathways to enable us to recruit and retain the best people, whilst meeting the expectations of a new generation of potential applicants.
- We will have a clearly defined, fit for purpose and sustainable structure which will support the achievement of our agreed outcomes.
- We will have flexible working practices where practicable, and without detriment to service provision.
- We will ensure that potential at all levels is realised, with internal replacements for all key roles, who will be ready to step up when needed.
- We will identify and develop future leaders to ensure effective succession planning.
- We will proactively plan our people resource and maintain service level expectations as part of the business planning action plans and ongoing service requirements.
- We will ensure that we transfer valuable knowledge from partners and consultants, those leaving the organisation and those going to new roles.
- We will understand the demand for future resources through workforce planning, including reviewing crewing systems and opportunities for apprenticeships and graduates.

**Workforce Performance & Development - Outcomes:**

- Teams and individuals will have objectives that are clearly linked to directorate and corporate outcomes.
- Staff will have meaningful appraisal discussions with their line managers, and Personal Development Plans will be identified and in place.
- Staff will be managed through informal and formal processes where their performance fails to meet the required standards, in line with current and future policies.
**Leadership Development – Outcomes:**

- We will develop and maintain high performing teams who are focused on making a difference to our communities.
- We will have leaders who role model the WSCC values and behaviours and lead by example.
- We will have resilient leaders who have the capability to lead and support their teams through change.
- We will continue to mirror the NFCC aspiration for the Leadership and Management Development Model (see Figure 1).

**Inclusion and Wellbeing Outcomes:**

- We will continue to develop a diverse workforce; lowering the age demographic for a sustainable future workforce and attracting more women and minorities into traditional male roles.
- We will communicate key information to enable people in their roles and to help all staff feel part of WSCC.
- We will maintain positive engagement with representative bodies.
- We will continue to develop a modern, forward thinking workforce, achieved by the creation of a dynamic, can do environment.
- We will develop and promote an inclusive environment based on mutual trust and respect.
- We will ensure that any reasonable adjustments are made to ensure that staff can undertake their roles effectively.
- We will have fair and equitable internal and external recruitment, and selection processes.
- We will maintain and publish equality data to inform and influence our inclusion and diversity planning.
- We will have policies and practices that support and promote a healthy workplace and workforce.
- We will support the health and wellbeing of all of our staff.
- We will establish representative staff champions for WSFRS minority groups.
Year 1 action plan – priority areas

The priority elements of the Strategy for People & Culture Development 2018-2022 will be the focus of the IRMP year one action plan for People and Culture. These are:

**Workforce Strategy**

- Review payroll processes to ensure accurate and timely payment for all staff.
- Establish a People & Culture Board and associated project work streams.
- Support and deliver WSFRS wholetime crewing review.
- Promote FRS opportunities at county wide careers events.
- Explore integration of apprenticeship programmes across the service.
- Develop a WSFRS succession plan - review all key roles within the service to ensure potential successors/gaps are identified and that recruitment/development plans are in place.
- Work with 3F partners to develop integrated ‘Attract’, ‘Recruit’ and ‘Train’ Firefighter recruitment programme.

**Workforce Performance & Development**

- Evidence that appraisals are taking place and that objectives are linked to business planning outcomes.
- Ensure that managers are trained to identify and address performance, disciplinary and sickness issues, and that employee relations cases are managed in accordance with WSCC policy and timelines.
- Develop, produce and implement a WSFRS ‘Standards of Behaviour’ reference document.
- All managers/leaders to have been trained in people management/leadership skills, and to role model values and expected standards of behavior.
- Identification and utilisation of accurate workforce data and management information to inform decision making.
Leadership Development

- Develop a process for identifying and developing our future leaders and managers to meet succession planning requirements.
- All newly promoted staff to have clear development plans to clarify what is required of them and any support they may need in achieving this.
- Enhance existing coaching and mentoring schemes for potential or new leaders and managers.

Inclusion and Wellbeing

- We will make a pledge to the HeForShe movement and develop an associated action plan and outcomes.
- Benchmark current activities against the College of Policing Blue light Wellbeing Framework.
- Improve and develop staff wellbeing policies and practices, to include access to information on Learning Pool.
- Support annual Pride events on behalf of the council.
- Deliver inclusion training for leaders and managers.
- Ensure expectations for levels of fitness, and that maintenance of these levels are clear, with appropriate support provided.
- Staff motivation and engagement - review how staff can be effectively communicated and engaged with in an ever changing environment, ensuring all staff are appropriately communicated with in a timely manner.
- Continue to support and promote the Employee Assistance Programme, and the Trauma After Care Team, reducing reported incidents of work-related PTSD and stress.
- Join and support Asian Firefighters Association – South East Region membership.
- Commit to the Blue Light Mind Time to Change pledge.

The People and Culture Board will work closely with Human Resources, Organisational Change and with staff, during a scoping phase that will look to support the service and its enablers in designing and defining a robust and sustainable approach to workforce planning within WSFRS.

As this work develops there is scope to collaborate with both internal and external partners. WSFRS will also work closely with any national and corporate initiatives already in train, such as those relating to Diversity and Inclusion.
Workforce Data

The following workforce data represents WSFRS performance measures in relation to The People & Culture Development Strategy. This data provides helpful information and evidence to support the strategy and the action arising from it. It will also help us to measure the ongoing progress of the action plans that support delivery of the strategy.

Wholetime Establishment
The agreed full-time equivalent (FTE) establishment figure for Wholetime employees is 316. The current actual FTE is 322; however, we anticipate a minimum of 8 employees leaving by December 2018.

Retained Establishment
The agreed full-time equivalent (FTE) establishment figure for retained employees is 235 FTE. The service currently has an actual FTE of 205.75, meaning an under establishment of -29.25.

On average, the Service runs with an under establishment of -25.5 FTE.

Age
At WSFRS, the average age for Wholetime employees is 43 and for Retained employees is 39. These figures correlate with the national averages for England.

Gender
At WSFRS, 7.9% of Wholetime employees are female compared to 5.5% nationally and 2.9% of Retained employees are female compared to 4.5% nationally.

Ethnicity
At WSFRS, 1% of Wholetime employees are from an ethnic minority compared to 5.2% nationally. 0% of Retained employees are from an ethnic minority compared to 1.3% nationally. It is worth noting the ethnicity of a significant proportion of employees at WSFRS is unknown.

Potential Retirees
A total of 42 employees can retire at any time with a further 67 forecasted to potentially retire by the end of 2022.

This graph shows a retirement forecast up to 2022 as a percentage of the current establishment. More than half of employees currently in middle to senior management positions can retire by December 2022.
Bibliography

- The Adrian Thomas Report
- The National Fire Chiefs Council - National Workforce Strategy 2022
- LGA ‘An Inclusive Service’ – The 21st Century Fire and Rescue Service
- NJC Circular for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services (NJC/8/17)
- Policing and Crime Act 2017
- Fire and Rescue National framework for England

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Leadership at the Peak.
Tailored Executive Leadership Development Programme.
Focusing on multi-agency expertise, command, innovation and ethical leadership

Level 4 and 5: Leadership for Succession Management
Development Programme. ELP, Cross Sector Leadership and Open Modules. Focus on developing skills to support and lead corporate change.
Group and Area Managers, Heads of Support Services, Senior Professionals

Level 3: Unlocking Leadership Potential
Leadership Talent Management Development Programme
Watch and Station Managers, Support Managers

Level 2: First Time Managers
Focus on People Management, Legal and ethical framework and personal leadership skills, personal resilience

Level 1: Firefighter to Crew/Entry level Support Staff
Induction and local Foundation
Management & Staff Development Modules