

**Status of Report: Public**

**Meeting: Corporate Governance Committee**

**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023**

**Subject: People Programme of Work**

**Report by: The Chief Fire & Rescue Officer**

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**For: Information**

### **Purpose**

1. The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an update on the Cultural Survey actions and other people related plans including the HMICFRS 'Spotlight' report and the external cultural review of the Service.

### **Recommendation**

2. It is recommended that Members note
  - a) the People Plan and programme of work being implemented across the Service.
  - b) the information related to closed Discipline and Grievance cases between April 2022 – October 2023.

### **Executive Summary**

3. At the last meeting of the Committee, a request was made for a more detailed update in relation to the combination of actions arising from several reports currently live within the service. Those reports are;
  - The internal cultural survey
  - An independent review of the service culture
  - The HMICFRS Spotlight report
  - The Equality Action Plan
  - Health and Wellbeing Survey
  - The implementation of the Core Code of Ethics
4. As previously reported, there is a significant level of overlap arising from the various reports and to avoid duplication of effort or confusion, work was undertaken to bring the six reports together and form a single 'People Plan'.

5. Members will also be aware of the areas for improvement arising from the HMICFRS Inspection and that two of those related to the people pillar of inspection. This work is being managed via the Corporate HMICFRS action plan.

## Background

6. The service has been subject to, or has invited scrutiny of, several Our People related areas of work. The Service has an Equality and Inclusion action plan, a Health and Wellbeing Survey and the implementation of the Core Code of Ethics. In short, there are seven action plans and recommendations with impacts and implications across people related activity.
7. To help manage activities and resources, and to avoid areas of duplication of work, a decision was taken to have oversight of all actions and requirements combined into one plan – The People Plan. A copy of the Plan will be presented to the Committee at the meeting. The aim of the People Plan is to take a holistic (systemic) view of the actions required to drive the service forwards in implementing its revised People Strategy which is one of the key strategies in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).
8. At the last meeting of the Committee, members had also requested an update on closed Disciplinary and Grievance cases; these are detailed at Appendix A to this report. There has been an upward trajectory in relation to disciplinary cases, although this is not unusual as there is often a series of ‘peaks and troughs’. The establishment of the independent reporting line ‘Say So’ has seen minimal (3) anonymous reports to the service; none have been of serious concern and one is directly related to an ongoing case.
9. As part of the People Plan, significant work has been undertaken in relation to the development of employees. In the past year, 48 supervisory managers have completed the new course, 65 individuals have been trained to undertake interviews and over 100 people have received interview skills support.
10. In response to the introduction of the Core Code of Ethics, 63 development sessions have been delivered across all staff groups. A report has been delivered on feedback from these sessions and actions have been fed into the People Programme of work.
11. The Service’s Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) action plan has been reviewed by the EDI Manager, who since joining the service has focused on a visible presence across fire stations and headquarters.
12. The EDI Manager has led on the development of a new Equality Impact Assessment process and a series of updated policies and procedures including Neurodiversity and the Menopause. Work has taken place with the new

Positive Action and Recruitment Officers, and together they will improve work within local communities to enhance the Service's recruitment profile with underrepresented groups. The EDI Manager will be expanding learning development input across the wider organisation, with an emphasis on the part the Service as an employee plays in developing culture and improving the understanding of inclusion.

13. Staff engagement and the employee voice are another key focus within the People Plan. This theme has led to the introduction of staff engagement days. It is anticipated that through the wider involvement of the workforce, opportunities to learn and understand wider issues for the service can be better communicated and understood.
14. The Service's Health and Wellbeing support has been enhanced with the introduction of a Health and Wellbeing Officer. Essential work on support to operational staff following incidents has been reviewed and improved, along with the approach to stress risk assessment, guidance on suicide awareness and important work on mental health at work which has been introduced into the learning and development activities with managers.

### **Report Implications/Impact**

15. Legal (including crime and disorder)

The service has a moral and legal duty for the care and wellbeing of its employees. It is a duty that is taken very seriously and the Service will continue to progress this as part of the People Strategy.

16. Financial (including value for money, benefits and efficiencies)

The Service's investment in people and cultural development is currently being funded from within the existing Learning and Organisational Development budgets. Money approved for two FTE additional roles is currently being used to support this spend following a lack of success in recruiting to these new posts.

It remains the view of the ACO Service Support that these roles are necessary and will be revisited or repurposed to ensure that the people programme of development continues.

17. Risk (including corporate and operational, health and safety and any impact on the continuity of service delivery)

The Service reputation as an employer of choice will be at risk if it is not seen to have a positive healthy working environment.

18. Staff, Service Users and Stakeholders (including the Equality Impact Assessment)

Clearly this is a significant area of interest for all employees. They will be key to the ongoing development as a Service. The Service's Health and Safety Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board will provide oversight of activities and ensure direction and performance management.

19. Environmental

None directly arising from this report

20. Impact upon "Our Plan" Objectives

The People Strategy is a key supporting document within 'Our Plan'. Future work will include the evolution of a Workforce Plan which will document the needs of the service from a capability perspective, with an initial three year forecast. This will be developed to support the implementation of the People Strategy and will be presented to Members in the early part of the new year.

### **Background Papers**

None.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Closed Disciplinary and Grievance Cases

### **Officers to Contact**

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