



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE  
FIRE AND RESCUE  
AUTHORITY**

Item 7

MEETING	Policy and Resources Committee
DATE OF MEETING	19 May 2016
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Apprenticeship Scheme
STATUS OF REPORT	For open publication
PURPOSE OF REPORT	For discussion and recommendation to the full Fire Authority
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>Both Wiltshire and Dorset Fire and Rescue Services ran apprenticeship programmes commencing in late 2014. Dorset Fire and Rescue Service ran the programme for 5 operational apprentices and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue implemented the scheme for 4 corporate apprentices. Whilst the objectives of the programmes within the respective Services were different, there have been significant benefits with 4 of the operational apprentices due to secure substantive positions within Dorset &amp; Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service subject to successful completion of their programme on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016.</p> <p>Dorset &amp; Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service age profile continues to show under-representation of staff below 30 years of age. The recruitment of 8 new whole time recruits, due to commence employment in September 2016, will start to positively impact this issue but it's important to continue to recruit at entry level within the Service to ensure there is emerging talent to move into key roles in the future.</p> <p>In addition, it is important that we continue to develop and implement effective Apprenticeship schemes as the Chancellor has proposed that from April 2017 employers with a wage bill of more than £3 million will have to pay a 0.5% levy to fund apprenticeships. Current proposals suggest that contributions to the fund will be available for all organisations (even those that do not contribute) to apply for funding for apprenticeship schemes. Therefore we want to ensure we have established schemes in place in order to maximise our ability to gain funding from the government.</p>
RISK ASSESSMENT	Failure to continue to deliver apprenticeship schemes is likely to have a detrimental impact on the organisation due to lack of

**NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED**

	<p>talented individuals joining the organisation at entry level.</p> <p>Lack of an established Apprenticeship scheme may impact future ability to secure grant funding associated with the Apprenticeship Levy which will apply from April 2017.</p>
COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	None undertaken at this stage.
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS	£95,760 estimate for 2 year programme – 5 apprentices, subject to current funding levels and payment of National Minimum Wage.
RECOMMENDATIONS	To continue to invest in the operational apprenticeship scheme to bring new entrants into the Service and to maintain momentum in delivering effective Apprenticeship schemes across the organisation in future years.
BACKGROUND PAPERS	None
APPENDICES	Appendix A – Proposed Recruitment Plan
REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT	<p>Kay Williams</p> <p><a href="mailto:kay.williams@dwfire.org.uk">kay.williams@dwfire.org.uk</a></p> <p>Tel: 01722 691070</p> <p>Mobile: 07775 760936</p>

## 1. Background

- 1.1 In both Services there has been a focus on reviewing workforce and succession planning and Members have been advised of the high number of retirements forecast.
- 1.2 Within the former Dorset Fire and Rescue Service, an agreement was reached in June 2014 to recruit five operational apprentices to commence a two year apprenticeship programme commencing in September 2014. One Apprentice firefighter decided to leave his apprenticeship after ten months. The other four have completed their ICT level 2, together with a BTEC level 3. They are nearing the completion of their NVQ level 3. These three qualifications are required to complete the apprenticeship. They have also gained a Mental Health Awareness level 1 qualification. Throughout their apprenticeships they have been posted to white watch, rotating through the five conurbation stations in the Poole/Bournemouth area, thus allowing them the opportunity to experience differing appliances and incidents. They have attended numerous courses inclusive of visits and presentations from external providers as part of mutual support within Services.
- 1.3 Within the former Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service four apprentices were recruited into corporate roles. All successfully completed their qualifications and 3 out of the 4 have secured outside employment. Aaron Todd remains working with the ICT Team.
- 1.4 The current firefighter operational apprenticeship scheme is partnered through Kingston Maurward College (KMC) following an in-depth review of 4 potential partnering colleges in April/May 2014.
- 1.5 The potential costs and provisions stated below are based on experience of running the operational scheme, with Kingston Maurward College as the learning partner. Further research is required to consider Wiltshire College and other potential partners to ensure the best learning partner is selected to support the firefighter apprenticeship scheme for the new Service.
- 1.6 However, as we hope to commence this scheme in the Autumn of 2016 it might be necessary to continue working in partnership with Kingston Maurward as the time frames for recruiting potential apprentices will be very challenging.
- 1.7 Over the next 6 months a further review will be undertaken regarding potential apprenticeship schemes across the Service, including corporate functions, with the potential that schemes could commence in 2017. Wiltshire College and other providers will be actively considered for these schemes as they have been successful in supporting previous corporate apprenticeship programmes.
- 1.8 Although supernumerary to crewing figures, the apprentices have continually ridden appliances and worked at operational incidents. They have developed and delivered training to host watches and undertaken community safety, leading talks and

presentations. In addition, they have given assistance at open days, the fire fayre, and the awards ceremony.

## 2. Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship Scheme

- 2.1 The apprentices work a 35 hour week (two days & one night on, with one night for doing college work and then four days off) – linked to the employment restrictions for young people.
- 2.2 By the end of the Apprenticeship the individuals will have completed:
- NVQ Level 3 Diploma in Emergency Fire Service Operations in the community
  - BTEC Diploma in Emergency Fire Service Operations
  - ICT level 2
  - Mental Health Awareness level 1 qualification

## 3. Costs and budget provision

- 3.1 The following costs are based on the level of learning support currently provided to our operational apprentices. As part of the ongoing review of the current processes we will consider ways of reducing costs whilst retaining the quality of learning provision.
- 3.2 The government provides funding for each apprentice and the current operational apprentices are paid through our partner, South West Apprenticeship Company (SWAC). We propose that moving forward, for future cohorts, apprentices will be paid directly through the Service. This will save approximately £21,500 over the two year period.
- 3.3 It is proposed that the scheme is managed through the Apprentice Manager (Station Manager level). The management of the scheme ensures that progress of the apprenticeship training is monitored effectively and mentoring and support is offered to apprentices in both an informal and formal setting.
- 3.4 Both initial and ongoing training has been completed either in-house or through working with partners. The in-house training mimics development required by any operational trainee/recruit. No direct costs were incurred as a result of training delivered by partner organisations.
- 3.5 Funding is provided by the government to training providers. Our chosen training provider/partner only provides some of the training required. We therefore receive Income from Kingston Maurward College in lieu of training delivered by the service. For current apprentices an amount of £6,000 has been received and a second payment will be received of £1,500 for each successful Apprentice trained up to August 2016 (4 apprentices); this should therefore be £6,000, making a total of £12,000 in lieu of DFRS-D&WFRS involvement in training.

- 3.6 There is the potential in the future that all of our trainee operational firefighters could be registered as apprentices. This would be irrespective of their age or the duty system they would be joining. The main driver would be the learning that they would be undertaking.
  
- 3.7 This would be an efficient way of delivering our firefighter recruit training and our development programmes as all of our ‘apprentices’ would potentially be able to draw down funding depending on their age and their previous qualifications.
  
- 3.8 In developing our approach to firefighter initial training and their development, the proposal is to investigate whether our revised firefighter development programme can be aligned to the majority of the learning outcomes associated with the awards set out in section 2.2. This is the approach that has proved successful to date.
  
- 3.9 Any additional training to meet the needs of the qualifications would be provided by our learning partner and this would be delivered flexibly through e-learning so that the impact on any RDS staff was kept at the same level as existing firefighter development programmes.
  
- 3.10 We also plan to investigate whether we can align our youth intervention and education programmes in the future so that they can feed into our apprentice scheme should we so wish. Clearly there is a considerable amount of work associated with this but it is felt that there is real potential to align our operational recruitment and training and our highly respected education programmes.

<b>Payment to Apprentices – based on current statutory minimum</b>		
<b>Age of apprentice</b>	<b>Current national minimum wage (from 1 October 2015)</b>	<b>Net annual salary payable (based on 35 hour week)</b>
18 years	£3.30	£6,006
19 years and over in first year of apprenticeship	£3.30	£6,006
19 – 20 years having completed their first year of apprenticeship	£5.30	£9,646
21 years +	£6.70	£12,194

<b>Additional Costs</b>	
Apprentice Manager – 50% of gross salary	£23,000

Uniform costs, Advertising, Recruitment costs/supporting costs	9,500  (Based on uniform costs of £1,750 per apprentice and £750 for advertising etc)
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<b>Financial Overview &amp; Total Direct Investment Required for 5 apprentices for 2 year programme</b>		
	Income	Expenditure
Government funding - operational apprentices, provided through KMC – see 3.7	£15,000  (Based on £3k KMC per apprentice funding for current cohort)	
Apprentice salaries		£78,260  (Based on 5 @ £6,006 and 5 @ £9,646)
Apprentice Manager (50% of gross salary)		£23,000
Uniform/supporting costs		£9,500
Estimate of Investment Required		£95,760  (£110,760 expenditure minus funding of £15,000)

#### 4. Recommendation

- 4.1 To continue to invest in the operational apprenticeship scheme to bring new entrants into the service and to maintain momentum in delivering effective apprenticeship schemes across the organisation in future years.

**Proposed Recruitment Plan 2016/17**

**Appendix A**

<b>DRAFT TIMELINE FOR APPRENTICE RECRUITMENT 2016</b>		
<b>Suggested Timeline</b>	<b>Stage</b>	<b>Comments</b>
WC 9 May 2016	Meet with KMC to agree programme.	Agree any pre-programme activity to raise awareness and offer fitness advice.
WC 6 June 2016	Advert opens	Apprentice roles to be advertised for 2 weeks minimum on National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) website with links from our own and KMC's website.
WC 20 June	Application Sifting	Initial sifting by KMC. Screened applications forwarded to DWFRS L & D Team. Invitations issued for Stage 1 – initial Fitness Testing.
July/August (2-3 days depending upon numbers)	Stage 1 – initial Fitness Testing	Assess initial fitness. Invitations issued to successful candidates to attend Stage 2 – Practical Testing.
August/September (2-3 days depending upon numbers)	Stage 2 – Practical Testing	Assess practical abilities. Invitations issued to successful candidates to attend Stage 3 – interviews.
September	Stage 3 - Interviews	Interviews conducted.
October	Stage 4 – Medical Clearance and References	Successful candidates invited to attend sight test initially, followed by medical clearance. References sought. If all in order issue Green Book contract and invite successful candidates to attend induction.