



CULTURE ACTION PLAN STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHT REPORT

STRATEGIC SPONSOR	DCFO Derek James
PERIOD COVERED	March 2024 – August 2024

OVERALL PROJECT STATUS	On Track
SUMMARY	<p>The independent review into workplace culture was published in October 2023 along with the management response to the recommendations.</p> <p>A culture action plan has been developed to address the recommendations from the review and the Inspectorate’s Spotlight report previously raised with Members. The action plan, alongside its governance arrangements was presented to the Authority in December 2023.</p> <p>A programme of staff engagement took place from November 2023 – March 2024 so that our plans take account of ideas staff have for further strengthening our culture and our overall approach. This has enabled us to develop a more detailed delivery plan.</p> <p>Good progress is being made against the action plan with no significant issues to raise with Members at this time.</p>

GOVERNANCE	<p>A Culture Steering Group is in place, comprised of individuals with a responsibility to deliver the actions in the plan.</p> <p>A Culture Development Committee (CDC), chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) is in place and meets quarterly. The committee includes staff from across the organisation, trade union representatives and staff network leads. It also allows for open seats for any member of staff to observe or participate.</p> <p>The independent review recommended the engagement of an independent person to help oversee our arrangements and progress. We have sent out a targeted advertisement, requesting expressions of interest in carrying out this role. Two candidates have been shortlisted and have been invited to attend and observe the CDC meeting on 7 August.</p>
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PROGRESS

Of the short-term priorities that were to be delivered by April 2024 good progress has been made. There are a few actions that have slipped (set out below) but will be completed in the medium term (April 2024 – March 2025). These are set out below along with current progress.

Progress against short term priorities (by April 2024)			
Theme	Deliverable	Status	Progress
Strengthening support, welfare and facilities	Review fireground welfare provision	Complete	Operational welfare project is now complete with sign off at Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) Level for the vehicle solution, these are now in build. Continued work is underway in terms of the welfare policy that supports the feeding and welfare requirements on the incident ground.
	Develop culture assurance framework	In progress	The culture delivery plan is being amended to include a section on 'how are we assuring ourselves' This will also form part of the assurance process for the Statement of Assurance annually.
	Develop a decision-making model	In progress	A first draft has been developed and shared for initial comments

In terms of progress against medium term priorities (April 2024 – March 2025) only the actions that are in progress or completed have been included within the update below.

Progress against medium term priorities (by April 2025)			
Theme	Deliverable	Status	Progress
Building trust and confidence	Explore means of overcoming data protection restrictions to allow a greater public	Complete	Improved communications and more transparent outcomes are now in place for those involved in

		interest test to help increase reporting.		management processes.
		All managers that are promoted, including on a temporary basis, are clear on their role and expectations.	Complete	Role Expectations for Crew Managers completed.
			In Progress	Role Inductions for new managers are currently being developed
	Strengthening support, welfare and facilities	Commence a further review of female facilities on station	Complete	A full review has been undertaken to ensure that female provisions are available and marked up at each site. A blueprint of station facilities has been completed and this work has been included in the estates cyclical programme.
		Undertake further consultation on workwear	In progress	A project is well advanced for the procurement of a uniform supplier. This includes a number of staff, from across the Service, in place to trial and feedback on potential uniform options.
		Review our remote working arrangements i. New Starter network ii. Workloads and Expectations	In progress	New Starter network being set up with a specific SharePoint site for new starters A discussion paper will be presented to SLT in September
	Clear cultural expectations for all staff	Introduce a new dignity at work framework	Complete	A framework has been developed and will be published shortly.
		Develop culture assurance framework	In progress	The culture delivery plan is being amended to include a section on 'how are we assuring ourselves'
		Develop a decision-making model	In progress	A first draft has been developed and shared for initial comments

		Strengthening leadership and engagement in workplaces	Review our leadership development programme to ensure an even stronger focus on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), behaviours and culture.	In Progress	New behavioural scenarios have been designed and are being tested in ongoing courses. A schedule of meetings has been programmed to update course material. A pool of Watch Managers who will be involved in delivering our Leadership Programme has been completed.		
				Complete	EDI cross mapping of associated learning and development has been completed.		
					Review the quantity and quality of our e-learning with a view to increasing the level of face-to-face input.	In Progress	A review is underway with plans to 'theme' quarterly e-Learning to better support completion and monitoring
					Introduce a 360-degree assessments aligned to the Code of Ethics.	In Progress	360-degree assessments, are being built into the leadership development programme.
					Better understand the barriers to progression for operational female staff.	Ongoing	Regular Operational Women's Group meetings are in place with support from SLT lead. A range of initiatives are being considered to explore retention and progression of operational female staff as part of a wider Positive Action plan.
					Continue our membership to Women in the Fire Service.	Ongoing	Four members of staff (2 operational and 2 corporate) attended the Women in the Fire Service (WFS) national event In June this year. Female colleagues have been invited to express interest in the WFS "Women's Development Programme" in Q2 and beyond. This also

				forms part of our positive action approach to progress women
		Positive Action and Community Engagement with underrepresented groups	Ongoing	<p>Staff induction has been strengthened with importance of diversity – bolstered with Code of Ethics workshops.</p> <p>Quarterly staff network meetings have been held supported by SLT leads. More networks open to allies to widen learning and understanding.</p> <p>Mechanisms to evaluate staff networks have now been put in place and have operated for some time.</p> <p>A Positive Action Steering Group is in place and overseeing workstreams – Buddy Scheme launched in Q1. First Buddy Me Day planned for August.</p> <p>Mechanisms are in place to capture community learning – oversight at Culture Development Committee.</p> <p>Quarterly Community Newsletters are being send out</p>
		Provide further clarity on roles, expectations and mechanism for effective communication and engagement with staff at all levels.	Ongoing	See update in 'Communication' section

		Strengthening key procedures and practices	Further strengthen the monitoring, oversight and reporting of our managing performance and discipline procedures.	Complete	<p>Strategic Oversight Board in place and meeting fortnightly. Terms Of Reference for this group have been agreed.</p> <p>Work ongoing to strengthen data collection, monitoring, and reporting.</p> <p>The Grievance Procedure has been reviewed and published.</p>
				In progress.	<p>Amendments to the People Policy were agreed by the Fire Authority in June 2024. As with all our Policy Statements, the associated assurance framework will be updated.</p> <p>A review of the Code of Conduct and Misuse of Drugs and Alcohol and Discipline procedures will be completed in September 2024.</p>
			Review the HR departmental structure to have a stronger focus on delivering the HR function through the HR business partners.	In Progress	Final phase of the restructure is being implemented
			Further review maternity and menopause procedures and processes.	Complete	<p>National Joint Council for local authority governed Fire Brigades increased Maternity pay from 1 July 2024.</p> <p>In June 2024 the Service agreed to further enhance this provision for all staff increasing full maternity pay to 36 weeks.</p>
				In progress	National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Menopause conference taking

					place in September Service representatives will be attending.
			Provide assurance that we are fully compliant with the national fire standards.	Ongoing	The gap analysis has been complete against the Communications and engagement standard with nine minor gaps identified to progress.
				Complete	The Gap analysis for Leading the Service and Leading and Development of People has been completed with no areas of concern highlighted.
COMMUNICATION		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Manager Engagement Days in March 2024 included discussion on our culture action plan and sought feedback on additional areas that staff felt should be included. These areas have since been added to the Culture Delivery Plan. • A dedicated 'our culture' SharePoint site has been launched. • Four 'culture conversation' podcasts have been developed. • A Staff networks survey has been completed. • Regular Communications are included in our Weekly Updates and Fire Wire. 			
ISSUES TO RAISE		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following the Home Affairs Select Committee into Fire and Rescue Service Culture, its Chair Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson MP wrote a letter setting out the Committees findings • Following the general election, Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson MP has been appointed as the Minister for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention. • Following His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS's) Thematic Review into the handling of Misconduct a report was published on 1 August. We are currently undertaking a gap analysis against the 15 recommendations. • Our HMICFRS inspection had concluded, and our report is due to be published in late Autumn. • The Worker's Protection Act is due to come into force in October, we will be including an article regards this and will ensure our leadership and management training ensure managers are aware of this forthcoming legislation. 			
RISKS		We are currently delivering against the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) delegated elements of the Resourcing and Savings Programme. This will inevitably cause organisation and cultural strain and is being carefully managed to minimise impacts with positive cultural development.			

NEXT STEPS	Continue to deliver the medium-term priorities.
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