



Classification	Official – Sensitive, Commercial Sensitive		
Meeting	SLT Strategic Decision Meeting	Agenda no.	5b
	Strategic Board		8
Meeting Date	17th November 2023		
	13th December 2023		
Report Authors:	Colette Black, Director of People Services		
Presented By	Colette Black, Director of People Services		
Subject	People Strategy		
Type of Report:	Decision		
Action Point No.	N/A	For Publication	Yes

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Service Leadership Team (SLT) and Strategic Board are asked to:

1. Note an update on delivery of the People Strategy Action Plan 2020-2024 (appendix A)
2. Note the key dates for reviewing the People Strategy for 2024-2028 (appendix B)
3. Approve fully transitioning from the use of the Local Government Association Fire and Rescue Authority (LGA FRA) Equality Frameworks (appendix C) as a governance model to:
 - a. Inclusive Employers Standard,
 - b. Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) objectives and,
 - c. NFCC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Maturity Model.
4. Note an update on the actions resulting from the HMICFRS spotlight report on Culture and Values (appendix D).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Delivery of the actions that sit within People Strategy are 'on track' (see appendix A), a plan for reviewing the People Strategy 2024-2028 is in place (see appendix B) and the HMICFRS Culture and Values actions are in progress.

BACKGROUND

As above.

OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS

People Strategy Action Plan 2020-2024

All 6 Pillars are on track to complete delivery. Delivery of the People Strategy Action Plan required 188 actions to be completed. 22 actions remain outstanding. Assurance activity is being planned for Q4 of 23/24.

Plan for reviewing the People Strategy for 2024-2028

Stakeholder engagement has commenced for the next People Strategy. Consultation, using the Gunning principles, is planned. The consultation phase will close at the end of January 2024 and a draft strategy will be shared in February 2024.

It is proposed that the strategy is proactively kept under review until the CRMP is finalised; the People Strategy serves the CRMP and may need adjustment to ensure it meets this need.

Equality frameworks

In March 2023, the Strategic Board considered a proposal to fully transition from using the LGA FRS Equality Framework as a governance model to the new Inclusive Employers Standard. An exception and closure reports were provided to this effect. An action from that meeting (04/23) reflects the request that the LGA FRS remain open and that a mapping exercise will be carried out to support the request. This map is shown as appendix C. These can be reported in one dashboard/snapshot also shown in appendix C.

HMICFRS spotlight report on Culture and Values

The spotlight report made 35 recommendations. 18 of these recommendations were not for action by ECFRS. The remaining 17 recommendations led to 20 actions for ECFRS. Of these, 12 are complete, 5 are on track, 3 are delayed. Plans are in place to complete 4 which are delayed; all will be completed by 31 January 2024.

RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

These actions are potentially control measures for our people related risks, particularly:

- SRR150005 - Due to a lack of investment and planning there is a risk that the Service does not develop and manage its people effectively resulting in a failure to deliver against the Service's People Strategy. (Having the right people, in the right place, with the right skills, at the right time.)
- SRR150019 - There is a risk that the Service fails to provide a safe and inclusive culture which ensures the well-being of staff and contributes to attracting a diverse workforce.

LINKS TO FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN

This report and recommendations contribute to the current Fire and Rescue Plan objective of promoting a positive culture in the workplace and having a 'safe and diverse workforce who we enable to perform well in a supportive culture underpinned by excellent training'.

We are currently entering a period of review for the Community Risk Management Plan and potentially the Fire and Rescue Plan. For these reasons, the People Strategy will remain in 'draft' until those documents are finalised. This is to ensure that the People Strategy fully enables the objectives of the Service.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are several potential financial implications related to the apprenticeship recommendations:

- Continued use of the apprenticeship levy moving into co-investment, potential options being explored include co-investment with police.
- Additional resources recommended by the review which are not currently budgeted for.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None directly.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

Additional resources recommended by review; these need to be considered.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

The actions being taken will not have a disproportionate impact on individuals with protected characteristics (as defined within the Equality Act 2010), when compared to all other individuals and will not disadvantage people with protected characteristics.

Race	no	Religion or belief	no
Sex	no	Gender reassignment	no
Age	no	Pregnancy & maternity	no
Disability	no	Marriage and Civil Partnership	no
Sexual orientation	no		

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None directly.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

A variety of stakeholders were included in the review. The report will be shared with these and with representative bodies as appropriate.

FUTURE PLANS

Further paper to revert to the SLT with proposed new People Strategy Action Plans for 23/24 and 24/25.

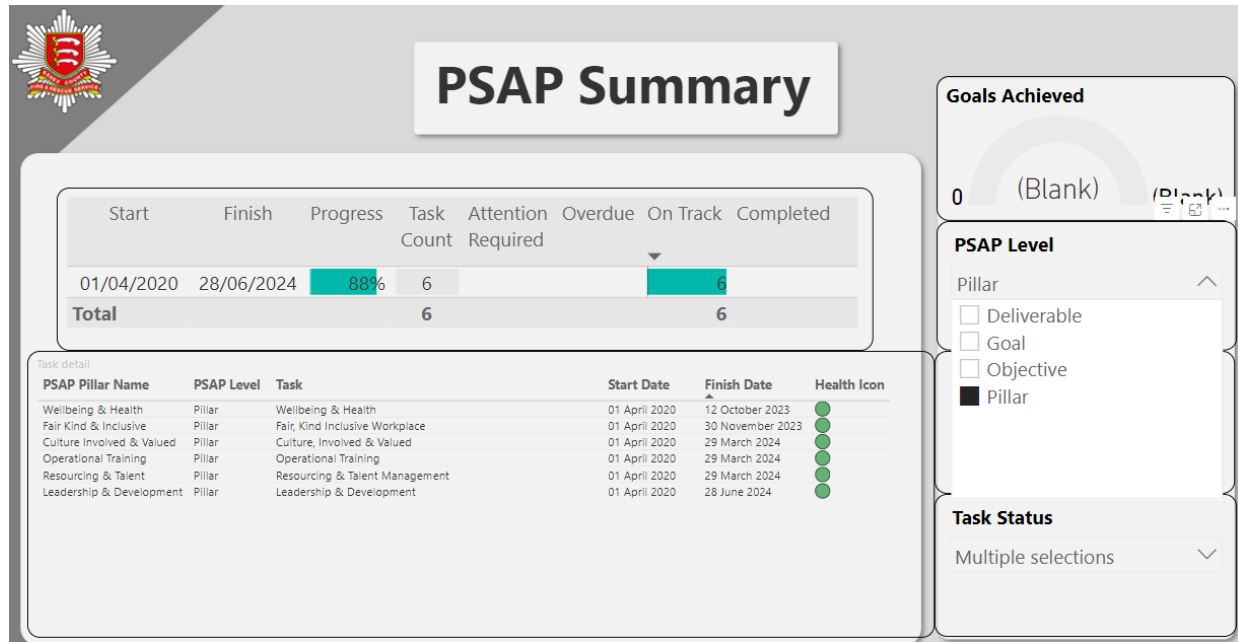
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AND APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Update on delivery of the People Strategy Action Plan 2020-2024
- Appendix B – Key dates for reviewing the People Strategy for 2024-2028
- Appendix C - Comparison of Equality Frameworks (CB)
- Appendix D - An update on the actions resulting from the HMICFRS spotlight report on Culture and Values

Appendix A – Update on delivery of the People Strategy Action Plan 2020-2024

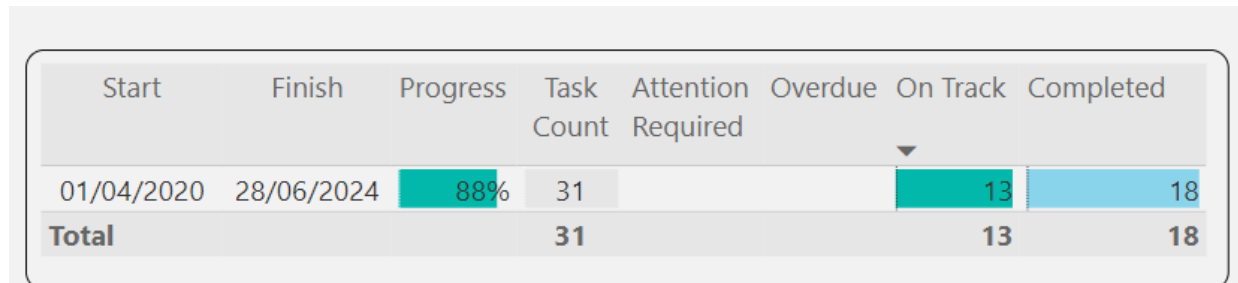
Pillars

All 6 pillars ‘on track’.



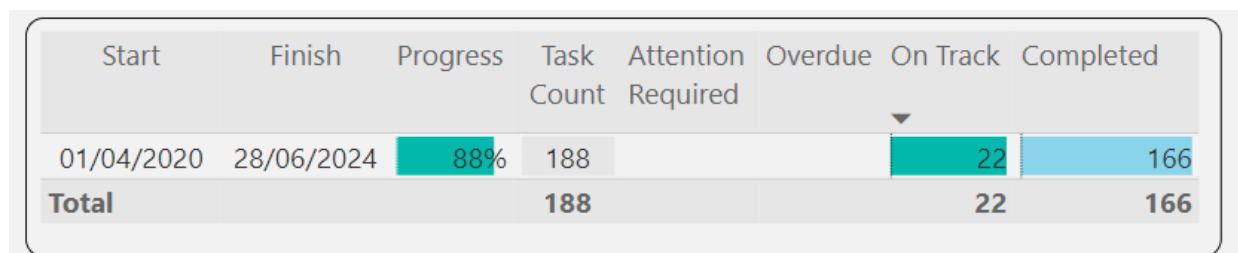
Goals

The pillars have 31 goals. 18 are completed, 13 are on track.



Deliverables

There are 188 deliverables to achieve those goals, 166 are now complete. 22 remain and are ‘on track’.



Appendix B – Key dates for reviewing the People Strategy for 2024-2028

Key dates

Date	Board
31 May 2024	Consultation closes
6 June 2024	People Strategy Board
9 July 2024	Submit papers for SLT Strategic Decision Meeting
23 July 2024	SLT Strategic Decision Meeting
5 September 2024	Submit papers for Strategic Board
19 September 2024	Strategic Board

Stakeholders

This stakeholder mapping and matrix principles are embedded in the project. These are detailed fully in our Communication strategy.

	Engagement approach	Timing
People		
Service Leadership Team	Utilise SLT informal meeting	January/February 2024
Employees	Workshops with representatives of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wholetime • On-call • Support • Control Workshops with varying levels including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading Service • Leading Function • Leading Others • Leading Self 	March 2024
Trade unions	Workshops added to JNCCs	March 2024
Staff networks Dignity and Inclusion Advocates	Agenda item for Inclusion and Diversity Action Group	March 2024
Partners		
PFCC	Initial workshop Planned workshop	August 2023 February 2024
National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)	Engagement with People Programme Board for alignment with national programmes, developing NFCC People Strategy and Fire Standards	March/April 2024
Essex Anchors	Engagement with Essex Anchors for Essex alignment	March/April 2024

Appendix C

We utilise and maintain the following frameworks to evidence good practice, to a national standard, in equality, inclusion and diversity:

- NFCC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Maturity Model
 - Picture below
- Inclusive Employers Standard
 - [The six pillars of diversity and inclusion | Inclusive Employers](#)

We evidence our public sector commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion through delivery of:

- Public Sector Equality Duty objectives
 - See figure 1.

We also maintain a separate spreadsheet which reflects the LGA FRA Framework. The LGA FRA Framework has 5 'areas' with 104 actions. Of the 104 actions, there are 6 that do not currently have evidence against them. These are being monitored through the Inclusion and Diversity Action Group.

The actions for all of the above are embedded in our People Strategy Action Plan. This is monitored through the People Strategy Board and Performance and Resources Board. It is proposed that we transition fully away from monitoring the LGA FRA Framework to utilising the NFCC EDI maturity model, the Inclusive Employers Standard and the Public Sector Equality Duty Objectives. This delivers the following benefits:

- The opportunity for externally verified assurance (Inclusive Employers Standard),
- Delivery of our PSED obligations which are both internally and externally focussed,
- Ongoing assessment of our maturity in this space with future focussed stretch (Maturity Model).

The map below is intended to demonstrate that the areas of LGA focus are covered in the other tools.

Map linking LGA areas with proposed tools going forward

LGA Area	Current status	Proposed going forward
LGA Priority Area 1 - Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment		
Vision and commitment	Evidence provided against all actions.	PSED – Objective 1 IES – Equip and Engage pillars NFCC – Level 3 and 4
Accountability	Evidence provided against all actions.	IES – Embed pillar NFCC – Level 3
Organisational Commitment	1 action outstanding	Outstanding action - Being monitored through IDAG PSED – All IES – All NFCC – All
Partnership	Evidence provided against all actions.	PSED- Objective 4
LGA Priority Area 2 – Effective service delivery		
Responsive and accessible services	Evidence provided against all actions.	PSED – Objective 3 and 4 NFCC – Level 4
Commissioning and Procuring Services, Facilities or Estates	2 actions outstanding	IES – Embed pillar Outstanding action - Being monitored through IDAG
LGA Priority Area 3 – Community knowledge and engagement		
Collecting, analysing and using information	Evidence provided against all actions.	NFCC – Level 3 and 4 IES – Engage and evaluate pillars PSED – Objective 1 and 3
Engagement with communities	Evidence provided against all actions.	PSED – Objective 3 and 4 NFCC – Level 4
Customer/public satisfaction	Evidence provided against all actions.	PSED – Objective 3 and 4 NFCC – Level 4
LGA Priority Area 4 – Employment, health and wellbeing		
Workforce strategies and policies	Evidence provided against all actions.	NFCC – Level 3 and 4 IES - All
Workforce monitoring	Evidence provided against all actions.	NFCC – Level 3 and 4 IES - All
Workforce values and behaviours	Evidence provided against all actions.	NFCC – Level 3 and 4 IES - All
Performance management	Evidence provided against all actions.	NFCC – Level 3 and 4 IES - All
Health and wellbeing	Evidence provided against all actions.	NFCC – Level 3 and 4 People Strategy

Equal pay and job segregation	Evidence provided against all actions.	NFCC – Level 3 and 4 People Strategy
LGA Priority Area 5 – Recruiting, training and selection for progression/promotion		
Recruiting, Retaining and Employing a Diverse Workforce	Evidence provided against all actions.	NFCC – Level 3 and 4 PSED – Objective 1 and 2 IES – Equip, Empower and Embed pillars
Recruitment and Selection Processes	3 actions outstanding	NFCC – Level 3 and 4 PSED – Objective 1 and 2 IES – Equip, Empower and Embed pillars Outstanding action - Being monitored through the People Strategy Board
Organisational and individual learning and development	Evidence provided against all actions.	NFCC – Level 3 and 4 PSED – Objective 1 and 2 IES – Equip, Empower and Embed pillars
Retention and Progression within the organisation	Evidence provided against all actions.	NFCC – Level 3 and 4 PSED – Objective 1 and 2 IES – Equip, Empower and Embed pillars



Proposed reporting dashboard

Maturity model – currently assessed at level 3, working toward level 4. Next peer assessment date INSERT.

Areas of focus for next period

- X
- X
- X

Inclusive employers standard – currently accredited at bronze, working toward silver. Next IES accreditation date January 2024.

Area of focus for next period

- X
- X
- X

Public Sector Equality Duty Objectives

Independent review of progress due DATE.

Objective	Progress made	Area of focus for next period
1		
2		
3		
4		



Public Sector Equality Duty Objectives

Figure 1

- 1. We will consistently demonstrate ‘due regard’ (give genuine attention and thought) to equality and diversity in our organisation and aim to be leading practitioners of workplace diversity and inclusion across Essex.**
- 2. We will invest in a diverse workforce with the skills, knowledge and attitude needed to build a culture of diversity and inclusion.**
- 3. We will deliver inclusive evidence-based services that show ‘due regard’ when assessing risks and behaviour in the community, to help make sure services are accessible and fair to everyone.**
- 4. Demonstrate community-focused leadership by working in partnership and making the most of our presence in the region to stress the importance of socio-economic factors, and how they affect both employment and services.**

Maturity Model



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council



Level 3 – Integrating Inclusion

1. Focused on creating an inclusive culture through leadership, accountability and measurement.
2. Diversity and inclusion are embedded into the key talent management processes e.g. recruitment, performance management, leadership development, succession management.
3. Accountability and measurement is integrated into all decision making processes through People Impact Assessments.
4. Diversity of thinking is understood as part of the inclusion agenda.
5. Leaders utilise analytics and trend data to make decisions and identify problems.
6. Inclusion fosters engagement and an organisational culture aligned with strategy, brand and social responsibility.
7. Achievement of accreditations and externally assessed standards.
8. Embedding People/Equality Impact Assessments into everyday activities and service delivery.
9. Diversity and inclusion are embedded into HR and business systems and processes.
10. Inclusion is supported by meaningful staff engagement and an organisational culture aligned with strategy, brand, and social responsibility.
11. A work culture where everyone understands their role in ensuring inclusion is embedded.
12. Recognising and awarding excellence in inclusion and showcasing role models.
13. Support and empower staff networks to add value and influence organisational change.
14. Diversity and inclusion are embedded into HR and business systems and processes using such tools as disability passports and other passports that outline an individual's reasonable adjustment requirements.



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council



Level 4 – Leading from the Front

1. Recognised as a leader in diversity and inclusion.
2. Inclusion and diversity is business critical.
3. External brand and internal brand aligned.
4. Diversity and inclusion drives innovation.
5. Organisational diversity flourishes because it is integrated and not assimilated, avoiding homogeneity of thinking.
6. Cultural intelligence and community insights are integral to learning activities.
7. Promoting inclusive leadership throughout the organisation.
8. Inclusion analytics are predictive, automated and are used intentionally by leaders to drive strategy.
9. Equal access to services and employment are central to organisational strategies.
10. The broader workforce is supportive of inclusion and take actions in their own teams and in provision of services to be inclusive.
11. Developing workforce awareness of the changes in respect of diversity and what this means i.e. transgender was relatively unknown or talked about until a few years ago – what is coming down the road in the future.
12. The FRS is an employer of choice across all of its communities. Senior leaders are personally leading EDI within their own teams and corporately.
13. A compassionate and safe work culture that enables you to be your authentic self, and be empowered to have a voice, challenge, and share your experiences.

Appendix D - HMICFRS Culture and Values Report – summary of actions

The spotlight report made 35 recommendations. 18 of these recommendations were not for action by ECFRS. The remaining 17 recommendations led to 20 actions for ECFRS. Of these, 13 are complete, 5 are on track, 2 are delayed. Plans are in place to complete 4 which are delayed; all will be completed by 31 January 2024.

Raising concerns				
	Action	By whom	By when	Status
1	Obtain data from 'Protect' to establish usage which might help to demonstrate staff awareness.	CB	31 May 2023	Complete
2	Undertake pulse survey to check in that staff are aware of how to share concerns.	CB	30 June 2023	Complete
3	Work with Staff Network leads to check in that staff are aware of how to share concerns.	CB	30 June 2023	Complete
4	<p>Going forward, all employees that raise a concern will have a single point of contact from the HR team. Throughout the lifespan of a case, there will be qualitative 'check in' points to ensure that updates are being given and support is suitable. On conclusion of a case, a series of quantitative questions will be asked of the person who raised concerns. Questions will include satisfaction about the support provided.</p> <p>A report will be provided to the CFO and SLT in December 2023 which reflects the qualitative and quantitative feedback from this approach.</p>	CB	31 December 2023	On track
5	Recommendations from 'Safer Together' will be incorporated into the People Strategy Action Plan 2022/23 and 2023/24 as appropriate.	CB	30 June 2023	Complete

6	Finalise draft role profile for a temporary Head of Professionalism who will be tasked with exploring options for creating a professional standards function.	CB	31 May 2023	Complete
7	The OPFCC website does not currently detail how Fire related complaints will be responded to.	CB	31 May 2023	Complete
8	Public perception survey to include a question about whether members of the public know how to raise concerns.	EC	31 December 2023.	On track
Background checks				
9	Continue with implementation of additional DBS checks. CB and CP to revert to CFO and SLT with an update on 12 July 2023.	CB/CP	12 July 2023	Complete
10	By 31 March 2024 all members of staff will have a DBS check.	CB/CP	31 March 2024	On track
Leadership				
11	Gap analysis and commencement of actions relating to both Fire Standards to be provided to Continuous Improvement Board.	CB	1 September 2023	Delayed 1 complete 12/9/23 1 outstanding to 14/12/23
12	360-feedback, using the existing TLQ 360 tool will be utilised by all members of SLT within the organisation by 1 October 2023 (mid-year appraisal time).	CB	1 December 2023	On track
13	360-feedback for the next level of the Service to be complete 31 March 2024.	CB	31 March 2024	On track
14	Additional pulse surveys to be run through June 2023 to further seek feedback.	CB	30 June 2024	Complete
15	A cultural dashboard is being developed to be produced 6-weekly for the SLT. The dashboard will include themes from Safe Share.	CB	31 October 2023	Complete

	Diversity data			
16	Commission a follow up review to assess maturity level with enhanced PIA approach in place. PIA app to go live (pending user testing). Create a PIA quarterly review board for assurance and learning.	CB	1 October 2023.	Delayed 31/1/2024 to allow for PIA app to go live.
	Improving diversity			
17	Next positive action plan due 1 September 2023. Succession plans to include direct link to diversity.	CB	1 September 2023	Complete
18	We will develop a series of case studies from existing non-operational colleagues who have accessed promotion, and which highlight the progression paths available.	CB	31 July 2023	Complete
19	We will launch 'Practice to Progress' to support development of all employees that are under represented within our Service.	CB	31 July 2023	Complete
	Core Code of Ethics			
20	Provide review of implementation and audit feedback to CFO and SLT in July 2023.	CB	31 July 2023	Complete through AFI updates.