Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY **Item No. 7**

MEETING: HR COMMITTEE 21 OCTOBER 2025

SUBJECT: PEOPLE AND CULTURE – UPDATE ON KEY DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITY

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND THE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE SERVICES

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The People Services function consists of three individual departments, each with a specific area of focus. This report provides highlights key activities currently ongoing within the People and Culture (P&C) department including the Strategic Recruitment and Promotion Review Plan, as well as updates on key projects including the Green Book Review and HR Information System.

2 RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION REVIEW PLAN

2.1 Further to the Q1 Recruitment and Promotion Review Plan update provided in July, work has now commenced, and progress is being made towards the Q2 objectives. **See appendix 1 – for an overview of the strategic recruitment and promotion review plan.**

2.2 The Recruitment GANTT Chart has now been established and is now used on a weekly basis. It is used as a key tool during workforce planning meetings, helping to coordinate recruitment activities by providing visibility over planning, resourcing, and timelines.

2.3 Each promotion process is supported by a set of key milestones which sits behind the GANTT chart. These milestones are continuously refined after each cycle to drive ongoing improvements and enhance the overall effectiveness of the promotion framework.

2.4 A Firefighter Recruitment Group, comprising of key stakeholders from across the Service had their first meeting on 22nd September 2025. The group explored potential improvements to the wholetime FF recruitment process. A paper outlining the recommendations from the meeting will be submitted to the People & Culture Board in November for decision and approval. The proposals are aimed at enhancing equality, diversity, and inclusion in our upcoming recruitment campaign.

2.5 Although the Promotions Policy is not scheduled for a full review until 2026, a debrief has been conducted following the recent Station Manager promotion process. Key learnings have been captured and will inform the formal review next year. Any additional promotion processes occurring before the policy review will also be followed by a debrief to ensure continuous improvement.

2.6 The recruitment section on the intranet has now been updated with key documents such as advert templates, job descriptions and person specifications. Updated guidance documents and benefits information have also been available.

2.7 The next steps involve reviewing existing interview questions for both operational and corporate roles. A centralised question bank will be developed to support recruiting managers. This will help ensure we have consistency across the Service as well as to align questions to role specific requirements and performance expectations and begin embedding our new values and behaviours framework.

3 GREEN BOOK REVIEW

3.1 The Service has identified the need to undertake a comprehensive Green Book Review. This will involve carrying out a full job evaluation of all Green Book roles across the Service, with the aim of developing a new, fair and transparent pay and grading scheme.

3.2 The P&C team has defined the scope, key steps, and milestones for the Green Book Review project. A procurement process was completed to appoint a supplier with extensive expertise in job evaluation, who will work closely with the Service throughout the delivery of the job evaluation process. In addition, a dedicated Job Evaluation Project Team has been established to provide ongoing support and ensure successful implementation.

3.3 The Green Book Review project is now progressing well, with a range of activities completed to support both role evaluation and staff engagement. These include staff briefing sessions, training for staff and managers to prepare for the Job Description Questionnaire (JDQ) process, system and data readiness, and active engagement with key stakeholders, including trade union representatives.

3.4 Briefing Sessions

As part of the Green Book Review project, a total of 12 familiarisation sessions have been delivered to date. To ensure full coverage and maximise employee engagement, additional mop-up sessions are planned, and a recorded version of the session is available on the Intranet. Attendance has been strong, with

175 Green Book staff and 13 Grey Book line managers having participated so far.

3.5 JDQ Process

JDQ training has been successfully completed for all members of the project team. A total of 14 JDQ sessions are scheduled to take place between 10 and 17 October, with a mop-up session planned for 20 October to ensure full participation. To date, 189 employees have booked onto a session, reflecting strong engagement across the Service. Supporting communications have been issued to all affected employees, and a dedicated intranet page has been developed to provide ongoing updates and resources.

3.6 System and Data Preparation

Gauge system training has been completed for the Job Evaluation project team. During this process, several data inaccuracies were found and flagged for correction. Reports have been created to show current Green Book roles and to distinguish between live and archived jobs in the Gauge system. Pilat reports containing all necessary job information have been prepared to support upcoming evaluations. A tracker and action plan have also been developed and are being updated regularly to monitor progress.

3.7 Stakeholder Engagement

Targeted communications have been issued to Grey Book line managers and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to raise awareness of the Green Book Review project and encourage active participation. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), compiled from the briefing sessions, will be published on the intranet following the final mop-up session to further support understanding and engagement.

4 HR INFORMATION SYSTEM

4.1 The procurement process for the new HR Information System (HRIS) is progressing well, with several key milestones already achieved:

- The system specification has been formally approved by the Programme Board.
- A longlist of potential suppliers was identified via the Digital Marketplace.
- The approved specification was issued to the longlisted suppliers.

- Following evaluation, two suppliers were shortlisted for further consideration.
- Supplier presentations were held on 18th and 25th September 2025, involving key stakeholders from across the organisation. These presentations have been scored and submitted to Procurement.
- Procurement is now preparing the delegation, which will proceed through the formal governance process for final approval.

4.2 This structured approach ensures transparency, promotes stakeholder involvement, and supports alignment with the Services needs as the project moves into its next phase.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 Effective risk management is integral to the successful delivery of both the HR Information System (HRIS) and Green Book Review projects, as well as the Recruitment and Promotion Review Plan.

5.2 Recruitment and Promotion Review Plan – the risks associated with not delivering this plan include failure to properly coordinate and implement recruitment activities, to have no visibility and transparency in relation to recruitment and promotion processes, no continuous improvement of recruitment and promotion processes which will streamline and update existing recruitment processes and documentation, such as adverts, job descriptions, person specifications and application forms.

5.3 Green Book Review – the risk to the Service of not undertaking a job evaluation process is that there is potentially an equal pay claim risk due to inconsistencies in how jobs roles are currently graded and paid, as well as not modernising the pay and grading structure

5.4 HRIS – the current HRIS (Core HR) licence will expire in September 2026, which provides an opportunity for the Service to procure a new HRIS. The risk of not procuring a new HRIS within the required timeframes is that the current HRIS has limited functionality which has led to inefficiencies, increased administrative burden and reduced data integrity.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no financial implications in respect of this report.

7 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

8 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The Authority is recommended to:

a) Endorse the contents of this report

b) Receive further reports as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The under-mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report: Appendix 1 – overview of the strategic recruitment and promotion review plan.