

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No 7

MEETING: 10 SEPTEMBER 2018

SUBJECT: FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY,
STRATEGIC FINANCE MANAGER AND PERSONNEL ADVISOR**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper informs Members of the position relating to the current Firefighter recruitment campaign, which aims to recruit and train 20 new Firefighters from 29 October 2018.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Recruitment of firefighters is critical to ensuring the effective management of operational deployment, in-line with budget and risk critical activities. The service is currently under establishment which causes increased costs in overtime and detachment allowances.
- 2.2 An effective campaign is essential particularly in the national context. For a number of years Fire Services across the UK have found diversifying the workforce to be a challenge. Whilst TWFRS has long predicated commitment to diversifying the workforce through inclusive workforce campaigns, the ability to attract a diverse workforce remains a national challenge. TWFRS has had relative success across the recruitment of all roles as we strive to recruit people that represent the communities we serve, whilst ensuring we attract the highest quality of candidates as future employees.

3 RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

- 3.1 Working in collaboration with County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, a campaign is currently running, with recruitment opening on 9 July 2018.
- 3.2 The recruitment campaign commenced with an inclusive workforce campaign which has ran over six weeks which produced targeting information which Community Safety teams used to engage with over 3,000 members of the community. The information provided awareness of the recruitment campaign and encouraged applications from all sectors of the community.

- 3.3 A targeted social media campaign has received over 90,000 views on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and has generated a significant response to our website for pre-registrations to the application process.
- 3.4 Taster sessions for potential recruits was scheduled during late June and early July 2018 and has seen nearly 1,000 candidates attend sessions within the three services.
- 3.5 The registration portal opened on 9 July 2018, with 4,520 candidates completing registration; 4,469 completed this correctly and were subsequently invited to progress to the next stage.
- 3.6 Following registration, candidates were required to pass three sets of online test; sequentially passing each in order to be invited to participate in the next test. When setting the thresholds for each stage, the HR teams of each service collaborated in undertaking an adverse impact assessment. The outcome informed the level at which the pass mark is set.
- 3.7 The number of candidates who completed the Behavioural Styles Questionnaire was 3,930 of which 2,940 met the pass mark (30% percentile).
- 3.8 The number of candidates who completed the Situational Judgement Tests was 2,764 of which 1,916 met the pass mark (40% percentile).
- 3.9 The final set of online tests were grouped into three subcategories, numerical, verbal reasoning and mechanical reasoning. The number of candidates who completed these tests was 1,832 of which those top 200 were selected.
- 3.10 The 200 candidates undertook role related tests between 6 and 10 August and 130 candidates were invited to interview between 20 and 31 August.
- 3.11 On 29 October 2018, the new recruits will commence their 14 week initial training at the BTC. Accounting for a two week break over the Christmas period, it is anticipated that they will be deployed to station from 17 February 2019.

4 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 Risk management has been adopted throughout the campaign to date and will continue to be monitor throughout. The inclusive workforce element of the campaign has been subject to a Project Start Up and Evaluation.
- 4.2 This report links to Strategic Goal 1: To respond to risk appropriately and Strategic Goal 4: Deliver a modern, effective service, ensuring value for money with staff who reflect the community we serve.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 A total budget of £220,000 for the recruitment and training of 20 candidates, which includes firefighter salaries and PPE, has been established within current budget provisions.
- 5.2 The campaign is managed through an online portal, managed by the Fire Service College with attributed costs of £18,900. In addition, targeted social media and job boards have been utilised at a cost of £1,500. These costs are provided for within the budget set out in 4.1 above.
- 5.3 In addition to the above, resource to support the management of the campaign has been allocated at a cost of £16,000 which will be met from the Reform and Transformation Reserve.

6 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and will continue to be reviewed throughout the campaign.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Authority is requested to:
 - a) Note the contents of this report;
 - b) Receive further reports as appropriate.

**Tyne and Wear Fire
and Rescue Authority**
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