

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No : 5

MEETING: 14 OCTOBER 2019

SUBJECT: FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY), THE STRATEGIC FINANCE MANAGER AND THE PERSONNEL ADVISOR TO THE AUTHORITY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper informs Members of the current position relating to Trainee Firefighters and provides a forward look at forthcoming Firefighter recruitment.

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 and recruitment is required to balance operational deployment within the current challenging financial environment, to support the delivery of the Strategic Community Safety Plan.
- 2.2 An inclusive campaign is essential particularly in the national context. For a number of years Fire and Rescue Services across the UK have found diversifying the workforce to be a challenge. Whilst TWFRS has a long-standing 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, however firefighter roles remain the most challenging to diversify 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 In 2018 the Service worked in collaboration with County Durham and Darlington and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Services to undertake a recruitment campaign, resulting in 23 TWFRS Trainee Firefighters successfully completing the course and being deployed to station from 17 February 2019.
- 3.2 From this campaign a further course of Trainee Firefighters were appointed to commence their 14 week initial training from 16 September 2019, with 17 from TWFRS and 3 for Isle of Man. It is anticipated that TWFRS Trainees will be deployed to station from late December 2019.

4 LOOK FORWARD 2019/20

- 4.1 Building on succession planning from the 2018/19 campaign, current vacancies will be filled through two strands new of Firefighter Recruitment; Inter Service transfers (IST) and a Wholetime (Trainee) Firefighter Recruitment Campaign.
- 4.2 The IST campaign commenced on 27 September 2019 inviting applications from existing wholetime competent Firefighters and Crew Managers from other UK Fire and Rescue Services, with the plan to post successful individuals in late December 2019.
- 4.3 For the Wholetime Recruitment Campaign the Service is again working in collaboration with County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service.
- 4.4 The recruitment campaign has a number of phases including an inclusive workforce initiative to promote diversity and inclusion prior to applications being invited, which is supported by Community Safety teams and operational crews.
- 4.5 Prior to the recruitment campaign launch, potential candidates have pre-registered their interest. The information provides awareness of the recruitment campaign and encourages applications from all areas of our diverse community.
- 4.6 As part of the inclusive workforce initiative, taster sessions for applicants are scheduled throughout October 2019, with 1,000 places available for candidates to attend across the three services. The advert for applications will open in early November 2019.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The budgetary implications for the recruitment activities have been established within current budget provisions.

6 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The inclusive workforce initiative seeks to raise awareness across diverse community members, to encourage applications from underrepresented groups.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

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