

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No 12

MEETING: 19th June 2017

**SUBJECT: INVESTORS IN PEOPLE (IIP) ACHIEVEMENT OF GOLD AWARD
STANDARD**

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

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the findings from the Investors in People (IIP) assessment which took place between February 27th and March 3rd 2017 and the achievement of gaining the Gold Award standard.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) originally gained the Investors in People (IIP) award in December 2007 and upon re-assessment in 2010 became the first emergency service nationally to achieve Gold status.
- 2.2 The Service was subsequently reassessed in 2013 and again received the Gold award, but additionally designated with 'Champion' status, as an example of good practice to other organisations across the UK.
- 2.3 To maintain accreditation, IIP assessed TWFRS during early 2017, as part of the mandatory review and re-accreditation process.

3 AWARD STRUCTURE, EVIDENCE AND REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 This 2017 assessment has been conducted under the new standard, which is more challenging to achieve than previous frameworks. The IIP standard is divided into nine indicators, which are underpinned by subsequent evidence requirements; namely:
- Leading and inspiring people
 - Living the organisation's values and behaviours
 - Empowering and involving people
 - Managing performance
 - Recognising and rewarding high performance
 - Structuring work
 - Building capability
 - Delivering continuous improvement
 - Creating sustainable success.

- 3.2 The organisation was assessed against the above themes by IIP who used surveys, interviews, meetings and observations. Potential award levels encompass Standard, Silver, Gold or Platinum, which represent the level of performance and 'maturity', with judgements ranging from a fundamental 'developed' level to 'high performing'.
- 3.3 Prior to a 5 day onsite assessment, 296 completed staff surveys were completed by staff, representing a 33% response rate.
- 3.4 The onsite Assessment commenced with a briefing by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Organisational Development); attended by the Chair of the Fire Authority, the Chief Fire Officer, together with Strategic and Senior Leaders. The assessors also observed a Listening Event; Health and Wellbeing session; LEAD Engage module and the introduction to a T3 Training Day.
- 3.5 Semi-structured interviews were carried out with 54 personnel, including 22 individual interviews, 8 paired interviews and 4 group interviews. Interviews took place at Service HQ; Birtley and Marley Park Community Fire Stations; and at Safetyworks!

4 SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

- 4.1 The Service was successful in once again achieving Gold accreditation against the new 2017 standard, whilst retaining Champion status. This is an excellent achievement, particularly set against wide-ranging changes within the Authority. The outcomes from the assessment will be used to facilitate ongoing Organisational Development practices.
- 4.2 It is worthy of note that the 'Gold' standard is awarded to only the top 2% of organisations assessed against the standards.
- 4.3 The assessors highlighted that *"Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service should be congratulated on this achievement, especially as it was gained during a sustained period of organisational change"*.
- 4.4 The Service achieved the following levels:
- *High Performing* level of performance for one indicator (Creating Sustainable Success);
 - *Advanced* level of performance for 6 of the 9 indicators,
 - *Established* level of performance for 2 indicators (Managing Performance; and Recognising and Rewarding High Performance).

5 KEY STRENGTHS

- 5.1 The report highlighted several areas that are considered by the assessors as Key Strengths, which are summarised in Appendix 1.

6 REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The report also included development areas, which are being formulated into an action plan. A summary of the development areas are set out below; a full copy of the report is available on request.

6.2 Indicator 1 - Leading and inspiring people

- There is scope to further develop measures which demonstrate that levels of trust and confidence in leaders and managers are improving.
- It is recommended that the Service should further explore how the impact of the Engage programme will be evaluated.
- It is recommended that the Service strike a balance between measuring employee satisfaction, feedback and engagement.
- It is recommended that the Service consider alternative approaches to communicating high-level information.

6.3 Indicator 2 – Living the organisation’s values and behaviours

- There is scope to embed the values more explicitly in the various public feedback and stakeholder feedback processes.
- It is recommended that behaviours which support the values are given greater prominence in the new approach to Personal Development Reviews which is currently in the planning phase.

6.4 Indicator 3 – Empowering and involving people

- There are some employees who believe they are not empowered.
- As partnership working continues to grow, there may be some value in seeking formal feedback from partner organisations to support the evaluation of the Engage leadership and management development programme.
- A small number of interviewees raised concerns around delays in receiving information from other departments.

6.5 Indicator 4 – Managing performance

- Organisational KPIs could be extended to include a suite or scorecard of people measures, building on those currently in place, such as absence reporting and workforce composition.
- A small number of people had infrequent 121 meetings with their manager, or were unsure of their value.

6.6 Indicator 5 – Recognising and rewarding high performance

- In the current climate, it is unlikely that significant improvements can be made to compensation and benefits, so it is especially important that recognition is optimised.
- Informal recognition from managers is sometimes infrequent or half-hearted: all managers should be encouraged to consider the impact of the words they use when engaging with staff.

6.7 Indicator 6 – Structuring work

- In the medium term, the Service will need to assess the impact of reduced opportunities for career progression.

6.8 Indicator 7 – Building capability

- There is scope to strengthen evaluation of large-scale investments in learning and development by ensuring there is a clear link to organisational, team and individual performance measures.

6.9 Indicator 8 – Delivering continuous improvement

- Innovation could be embedded as an element of the performance review process.
- The Leadership Bond specifically requires leaders to develop external relationships with partners, demonstrating the benefits of teamwork, collective intelligence and joint action.

6.10 Indicator 9 – Creating sustainable success (No recommendations made).

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Maintaining the Investors in People Gold Award represents a significant achievement for TWFRA. It acknowledges the efforts of the Service in establishing excellent management practices and the support of staff who have embraced considerable change. It also demonstrates that TWFRS staff are fully committed to, and enthusiastic about their work.
- 7.2 This assessment of the organisation was undertaken at a time of significant organisational change and in the context of a challenging new IIP framework to be assessed against. The Investor in People award enables the Service to use the IIP 'Gold' Quality Mark on its documentation.
- 7.3 Gaining the Gold Award from Investors In People is a huge achievement. The learning from this assessment will be progressed through an action plan, led by staff from across the organisation.

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications in respect of this report. Organisational Development improvements will be managed through existing budgets.

9 HR IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The IIP report recognises several areas of good practice, with areas for improvement as highlighted in section 6 above. These will be incorporated into an action plan.

10 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The assessor highlighted the positive work of the authority across broad strands of equality, diversity and inclusion.

11 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

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

12 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 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

Investors In People Assessment Report: Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

Appendix 1

Key Strengths identified as part of the TWFRS IIP assessment.

Indicator 1 - Leading and Inspiring People- Advanced

- The vision and purpose of Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service are very clear.
- The Service's strong commitment to leadership and management development through the Engage programme.
- Senior leaders are involved in a range of national, regional and sectoral bodies and working parties, where their expertise is recognised.
- The Service has taken a leading role for more than a decade in driving an equality and diversity agenda, and has been recognised most recently through an "Excellent" rating in the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework review.
- The Service is acknowledged as being one of the top Fire and Rescue Services in the country.

Indicator 2 – Living the Organisation's Values and Behaviours-Advanced

- The values underpin all operations and activities within the community,
- The Service invites feedback from the communities and individuals it serves.
- The values are being strengthened by positioning them as the foundation of the Leadership Bond,
- The Service continues to invest heavily in staff wellbeing,

Indicator 3 – Empowering and involving people- Advanced

- There is a strong culture of sharing knowledge and information within and across teams.
- People are encouraged to "own" their area of expertise.
- The Leadership Bond places a strong emphasis on empowerment.

Indicator 4 – Managing performance- Established

- Performance expectations throughout the Service are driven by the requirement to manage resources effectively without compromising service delivery.
- People are involved in developing team-based KPIs,
- Comprehensive quality assurance measures are applied to the Service's activities.

Indicator 5 – Recognising and rewarding high performance- Established

- Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service is strategically reviewing its approach to reward and recognition.

- Various approaches to formal and informal recognition are in place.
- Views are captured in the Staff Survey and through focus groups:
- There are opportunities for celebration, such as Award Ceremonies including family members; and parents being invited to events when young people have achieved qualifications.

Indicator 6 – Structuring work- Advanced

- There is a continuing commitment to review the structure and operations of the Service.
- The Service has achieved and reported on previous reorganisations.
- New ways of working have made a significant contribution to achieving efficiencies.
- The Service has reviewed its key strategy documents and reduced these to three.
- Successive internal surveys (2012 to 2016) consistently confirm that employees find their work interesting (92% satisfaction).

Indicator 7 – Building capability- Advanced

- There is a strong culture of learning and development across the Service.
- The impact of learning and development is measured through staff feedback.
- The introduction of the extended day shift has enabled additional time to be made available for training without compromising operational response times.
- Investment in new technology, such as Coldcut Cobra technology, is supported by training and is enabling Firefighters to tackle fires safely by reducing risk.

Indicator 8 – Delivering continuous improvement- Advanced

- The commitment to continuous improvement is evidenced in the Service's on-going review of its strategies, policies, processes and practices.
- The sustained, continuously improving investment in employee health and wellbeing has impacted positively on the Service's Attendance metrics.
- Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service has achieved positive results from a range of audits, awards and assessments.
- The Service actively promotes sharing practice with external organisations and partners; and driving improvement and innovation through influencing.

Indicator 9 – Creating sustainable success- High Performing

- Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service experienced 2 fatalities from all fires in 2015/16. This was the lowest number of fatalities from all fires when compared to other metropolitan FRS.

- Injuries from All Fires performance data for 2015/16 showed that there were 170 injuries. This reflects a downward trend since 2011/12.
- All districts of Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service saw injuries from all fires reduce in 2015/16.
- Injuries from Accidental Dwelling Fires in 2015/16 was a reduction of 15% of the previous year and reflected a downward trend since 2011/12.
- The Service has generated financial savings of £23.09m (-39% compared to its budget in 2010/11).
- The Service achieved 8th place in the Stonewall WEI (2014) and 13th place in the “Inclusive Top 50 Employer Award” (2017).
- The Service’s participation in the peer-reviewed Equality Framework resulted in a second “Excellent” award in 2016.
- The Service achieved the RoSPA President’s Accreditation, which is a celebration of 10 consecutive Gold Awards.
- The Service increased its number of Volunteers to 80 in 2015.
- “After the Incident Survey” responses (seeking the views of those who have used services) delivered 100% overall satisfaction scores.