

## Update on Apprenticeship Levy spend 2021/22

### Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Rod Hammerton, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Donna Trowsdale, Development Officer on 01743 260187.

### 1 Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the apprenticeships funded through the levy, since the update report in 2020.

### 2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

### 3 Background

The Service continues to pay 0.5% of its salary bill into the levy as it has been doing on a monthly basis, since the introduction of this Government initiative in April 2017.

The public sector target requires all public sector employers with more than 250 employees to have an average of 2.3% of their staff as new apprenticeship starts, per year, (or if this is not achievable, 'to have regard to' the target). For Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), this equates to approximately 13 per year.

A breakdown of new apprenticeships by financial year, since the introduction of the initiative is as follows.

Financial Year	Number of apprenticeship starts
2017/18	2
2018/19	2
2019/20	10
2020/21	4
2021/22	6

## **4 Completed apprenticeships**

Since the last update report, seven operational Firefighters successfully completed the Level 3 Operational Firefighter apprenticeship in October 2021, passing their end point assessment with excellent feedback. These recruits were the Service's first cohort of Firefighter apprentices and feedback from them regarding their experience of the programme, together with high praise from the Fire Service College regarding their commitment and enthusiasm, has led to the Firefighter apprenticeship now being the Service's chosen development route for new recruits.

Two Business Administration Level 2 apprenticeships were also completed in December 2020 through Herefordshire and Ludlow College (County Training).

## **5 Current apprenticeships**

There are currently 11 Firefighters undertaking the Level 3 Operational Firefighter apprenticeship; four are due to complete in June 2022 and five are due to complete in April 2023.

One employee is due to finish their Level 6 Digital and Technology Solutions higher degree apprenticeship imminently; one employee is working through their Level 5 Learning and Development Practitioner apprenticeship, and is due to finish in March 2023, and there is one Level 3 Business Administration apprenticeship that is due to finish in September 2022.

Individual Performance and Development Reviews (IPDRs) are in the process of being discussed for the new year, so it is anticipated that additional requests for apprenticeships as a method of development may be requested to develop and upskill existing employees.

## **6 Planned recruitment**

The Service is in the process of recruiting for apprentices in the below areas:

- Training, Learning & Development x 2
- Admin Support
- HR

The Service will also be looking to recruit in the following areas, pending confirmation of a suitable apprenticeship programme:

- Prevention
- Workshops

## **7 Funding**

Since March 2021, £75,851 has been spent on funding apprenticeships from the levy account. The planned spend for apprenticeships that are currently 'live', over the next 12 months is £53,765. Current funds stand at £43,828, increasing monthly with payments into the Service's account.

Since July 2020, the Service has not 'lost' any expired funds, meaning that all funds that have been paid into its levy account within the previous 24 months have been spent.

## **8 Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and the progress made towards utilising the apprenticeship levy across the Service.

## **9 Financial Implications**

The funding of apprenticeships through the Levy reduces the financial impact on the internal development budget.

## **10 Legal Comment**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **11 Equality Impact Assessment**

There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report. An EQIA is therefore not required.

## **12 Appendices**

There are no appendices attached to this report.

## **13 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.