

## Update on Apprenticeship Levy Spend 2019/20

### 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 Purpose of Report

This report provides an update on the apprenticeships funded through the levy, since the update report in September 2018.

#### 2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note

- a) the contents of this report; and
- b) the recommendations made to managers in section 6 of the report.

#### 3 Background

The Service continues to pay 0.5% of it's salary bill into the levy on a monthly basis since the introduction of this Government initiative since April 2017.

#### 4 Current position

Out of the 4 apprenticeships mentioned in the previous report, 3 of these have completed and one is in progress - **Level 6 Digital and Technology Solutions Professional.**

In addition to this, two apprentices have been recruited and are both undertaking their level 2 in Business Administration; they are due for completion in December 2020.

Apprenticeships continue to be promoted as a method of development in terms of upskilling and reskilling and will feature as a link in the new Individual Personal Development Review (IPDR) process.

In 2019, Shropshire Fire and Rescue recruited 8 Wholetime Firefighters, 6 of whom were enrolled onto the Level 3 Operational Firefighter apprenticeship. The remaining two recruits were already operational firefighters from other Brigades and therefore the levy money could not be drawn down to fund their training, due to their previous experience and skill in this area.

The cost of the Operational Firefighter apprenticeship is £12,000 per person, resulting in a total cost of £72,000 to be paid from the levy account.

The apprentices' initial training was completed over an 8-week period at the Fire Service College. The apprenticeship is delivered over a period of 24-30 months and work coaches are allocated to each apprentice. Evidence is uploaded by the recruits onto an electronic system, which is then assessed by the work coach.

Initial feedback from the recruits and instructors at the Fire Service College has been really positive with regard to this approach and the high quality of training received.

Managers continue to consider apprenticeships across the Service as an alternative method of recruitment when vacancies arise.

## **5 Funds**

There is currently £98,270 in the levy account. In the last 12 months, £6,165 has been spent on funding apprenticeships.

The amount in the levy fund will be reduced by the payments of the Operational Firefighter apprenticeship over the next 24 months (totalling £72,000). Knowledge Pool (the provider) are yet to register the apprentices onto the system, at which point monthly payments will commence.

The committed spend for the next 12 months amounts to £6,480, which is for the level 6 apprenticeship through Staffordshire University, mentioned in Section 4 above.

The Service has 24 months to use their funds once they enter the levy account, after which they 'expire'. Once expired, the funds are ringfenced to the Department of Education budget, which are used to then help to support existing apprentices in other levy paying employers and to pay for apprenticeships for smaller employers, that do not pay into the levy.

Between September and December 2019 (inclusive), £12,557.92 'expired' funds left the levy account.

## **6 Recommendations**

It is recommended that:

- a) managers continue to consider apprenticeships as a method of development for their staff as part of the IPDR process, and;
- b) consideration should be given to apprenticeships as a method of recruitment as and when vacancies arise.

## **7 Capacity**

By offering the Operational Firefighter apprenticeship through the Fire Service College, this has freed up capacity of the Training Instructors for the duration of initial recruits' course.

## **8 Collaboration / Partnership Working**

Collaboration and partnership working opportunities are considered at every opportunity.

## **9 Community Safety**

There are no community safety impacts arising from this report.

## **10 Environmental**

There are no environmental impacts arising from this report.

## **11 Equality Impact Assessment**

There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report.

## **12 Financial Implications**

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

## **13 Health and Safety**

There are no health and safety implications arising from this report.

## **14 Human Rights (including Data Protection)**

There are no human rights impacts arising from this report.

## **15 ICT**

There are no ICT implications arising from this report.

## **16 Legal Comment**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **17 Public Value / Service Delivery**

There are no public value/service delivery implications.

## **18 Reputation**

There are no reputational impacts arising from this report.

## **19 Security**

There are no security impacts arising from this report.

## **20 Training**

The introduction of the operational firefighter apprenticeship freed up capacity in the Training Team for the duration of their initial course delivered by the Fire Service College.

## **21 Appendices**

There are no appendices to this report.

## **22 Background Papers**

There are no background papers associated with this report.