

**ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY
HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY**

FEBRUARY 2008

PERFORMANCE THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

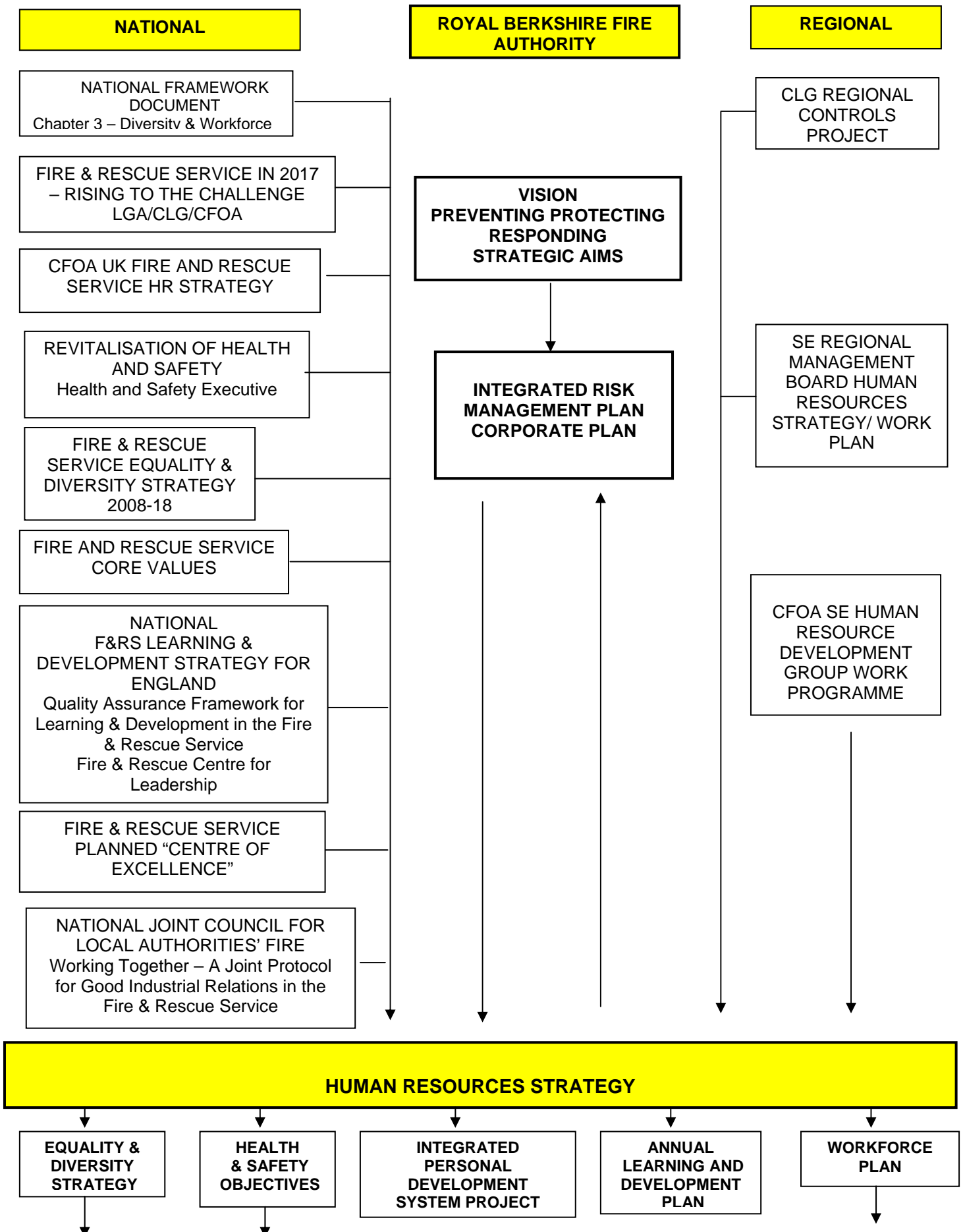
1 PURPOSE

This human resources strategy seeks to align the policies, procedures and plans for managing the people employed by the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority with its vision and strategic aims as expressed through the Integrated Risk Management and Corporate Plans.

The Strategy also needs to address the Government's agenda for change in the Fire Service as articulated in the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework and the National Fire and Rescue Service Learning and Development Strategy for England. In addition it also needs to take account of the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) UK Fire and Rescue Service HR Strategy, Fire and Rescue Service in 2017 – Rising to the Challenge encapsulating the Local Government Associations, Communities and Local Government and CFOA's joint vision for the future of the Fire and Rescue Service and the South East Regional Management Board's Human Resources Strategy, which sets the framework for joint working and collaboration on human resource issues by Fire and Rescue Services in the South East.

The Fire Authority will benchmark its performance in managing its human resources by undergoing assessment against the Investors In People standard at an appropriate time in the future.

2 FRAMEWORK



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ACTION PLAN

ACTION PLAN

**FORWARD
PROJECTIONS**

3 CROSS REFERENCE WITH THE NATIONAL AGENDA

3.1 Draft Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008-11

ISSUES FOR FIRE AUTHORITIES TO ADDRESS:	ROYAL BERKSHIRE RESPONSE:
<p>1. Prevention, Protection and Response</p> <p>1.18 Contingency Planning for Emergencies</p> <p>Fire and Rescue Authorities must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have in place a plan to provide such level of emergency cover as it regards as appropriate during any period of emergency, liaising as necessary with other relevant organisations, but without reliance upon support of the Armed Forces 	<p>Options for providing staff and/or appropriate training to cover periods of emergency are currently being investigated in order to put robust plans in place</p>
<p>3. Diversity and Workforce</p> <p>3.10 Equality and Diversity</p> <p>Fire and Rescue Authorities must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the requirements of the Fire and Rescue Service Equality and Diversity Strategy • Ensure that all plans, policies, practices and procedures are effectively equality impact assessed and appropriate action is taken to remove or mitigate any adverse impact • Produce and at least annually review an action plan for implementation of the Strategy, and report to elected members on progress 	<p>Royal Berkshire Fire Authority Equality and Diversity Strategy and linked action plans.</p> <p>Existing Equality Impact processes will be reviewed to ensure that they are sufficiently robust to meet this expectation.</p> <p>An Equality and Diversity Action Plan is reviewed and reported to elected members in December each year. In 2008 this review will move to June in order to enable monitoring statistics to be considered at the same time as the proposed annual action plan.</p>

ISSUES FOR FIRE AUTHORITIES TO ADDRESS:	ROYAL BERKSHIRE RESPONSE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide annually to Communities and Local government evidence of progress on equality and diversity for publication in the Fire and Rescue Equality and Diversity Report including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - statistical information on recruitment, progression and retention of staff across all diversity strands, and - qualitative information on policies, procedures, practices and processes which support equality and diversity as evidence of progress made 	<p>Comprehensive monitoring information in respect of race and gender is currently collected and published. Further information will be collected and supplied as requested by CLG.</p>
<p>3.20 Workforce Development</p> <p>Fire and Rescue Authorities must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply IPDS principles to the recruitment, development and progression of all staff • Use IPDS and the national processes based on it (National Firefighter Selection Tests, subject to final validation, and Assessment and Development Centres {ADCs}) for all Grey and Gold Book staff 	<p>The RBFRS IPDS Project Plan is largely completed and IPDS Principles are applied to the recruitment, development and progression of all RBFRS staff</p> <p>National Firefighter Selection tests were introduced for firefighter recruitment to all duty systems in 2007. ADCs have been progressively introduced in conjunction with other South East Fire and Rescue Services since 2005 and now apply to all uniformed staff.</p>

ISSUES FOR FIRE AUTHORITIES TO ADDRESS:	ROYAL BERKSHIRE RESPONSE:
<p>3.21 Managing Individual Performance</p> <p>Fire and Rescue Authorities should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • carry out and record individual performance reviews annually which include an assessment of performance against: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - role map units, National Occupational Standards or job description duties as appropriate and - agreed annual objectives, including the setting and assessing of equality and diversity objectives 	<p>RBFRS has operated a system of Performance Development Interviews since 1998 which has been progressively applied so that all staff are now covered. This system will be re-enforced by its integration into arrangements for assessment of Continuous Professional Development payment for uniformed staff in 2008.</p>
<p>3.26 Training and Development</p> <p>Fire and Rescue Authorities must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that they have in place role related training, development and assessment arrangements to develop and maintain the competence of staff. These should be linked to the IPDS framework and National Occupational Standards across the full range of operational activities 	<p>These requirements are met through implementation of the IPDS project and the adoption of appropriate NVQs via the RBFRS Assessment Centre which maintain high quality standards as evidenced through external verification.</p>
<p>3.29 Quality Assurance</p> <p>Fire and Rescue Authorities should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriately quality assure their training and development programmes and their use of the National Firefighter Selection process and Assessment and Development Centres 	<p>As indicated above, RBFRS currently utilises NVQs to provide external quality assurance for much of its learning and development activity. This is supplemented by periodic general Quality Assurance provided by Edexcel and will be further enhanced by utilisation of the recently published Fire and Rescue Service Learning and Development Quality Assurance Framework.</p>

ISSUES FOR FIRE AUTHORITIES TO ADDRESS:	ROYAL BERKSHIRE RESPONSE:
<p>4 Governance and Improvement</p> <p>4.3 Regional Management Boards Regional Management Boards must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have clear aims and objectives and where needed costed plans to deliver on their core business, which remains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - introducing regional personnel and human resource functions - developing a regional approach to training 	<p>RBFRS works closely with other South East FRSs through the SE Human Resource and Development Group (HRDG). Where appropriate collaborative working arrangements have been developed, for example the South East Human Resource Partnership which provides expertise and support to all SE FRSs in connection with the introduction of the National Firefighter Selection Test and Assessment and Development Centre.</p> <p>SE HRDG also manages a Learning and Development Workstream which is managing a South East Learning and Development Strategy approved by the SE Regional Management Board (RMB). One successful outcome has resulted in the regional procurement of Learning and Development opportunities.</p>
<p>4.38 Pay</p> <p>Fire and Rescue Authorities should have regard to the Government's Public Sector Pay Policy and Equal Pay Legislation</p>	<p>RBFRS has contributed to SE HRDG submissions to the Fire Service National Employers on pay. An equal pay audit will be carried out in 2008 in order to confirm RBFRS's position on this issue.</p>

3.2 National Fire and Rescue Service Learning and Development Strategy for England

This national strategy seeks to support achievement of the following goals:

- equip the Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) to meet current and future challenges
- equip the FRS to make the change from being primarily an emergency response Service, to being both an emergency response and a community safety service
- delivery of a better skilled and trained workforce
- improved performance

- support cultural change and the development of an improvement culture with the FRS
- allow for best value from investment in training and supports CPA improvement, including efficient and effective targeting of expertise and resources
- encourage collaboration and partnership working
- support equality and diversity across the FRS
- enable FRS people to maximise their personal and organisational potential

ISSUES FOR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES TO ADDRESS:	RBFRS RESPONSE:
<p>Planning and managing FRS Learning effectively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire and Rescue Authorities to consider giving an elected member the remit for championing learning and development • RMBs to review current learning and development provision and produce proposals for the regional or sub-regional provision of cost effective and accessible training facilities. 	<p>To be considered by the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.</p> <p>The South East Regional Management Board (SE RMB) commissioned consultants to carry out a review on their behalf which reported in 2007. As a result the South East Human Resources and Development Group is managing a number of collaborative projects through its Learning and Development workstream. Current areas of focus are the development of a costing model for learning and development activity, the development of a common regional approach to e-learning which RBFRS leads, initial training for newly appointed firefighters and operational incident command training.</p>
<p>Improving access to learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and regional HR strategies should identify approved learning and development outcomes, including developing the professional capacity of training deliverers. 	<p>RMB/HRDG Learning and Development projects. IPDS Project Plan Annual Learning and Development Plan</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR/learning and development strategies should reflect equality and diversity issues • Training providers should carry out Equality Impact Assessments on their products 	<p>IPDS Project Plan Annual Learning and Development Plan Equality and Diversity Strategy</p> <p>Annual Learning and Development Plan</p>

ISSUES FOR FIRE AUTHORITIES TO ADDRESS:	ROYAL BERKSHIRE RESPONSE:
<p>Ensuring standards are maintained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve full implementation of IPDS 	<p>The RBFRS IPDS Project Plan will be completed in April 2008</p>
<p>Getting value for money:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RMBs to review current learning and development provision and produce proposals for the regional or sub-regional provision of cost effective and accessible facilities. 	<p>Following a full review of regional learning and development activity, "Centres of Excellence" have been identified and a range of regional and sub-regional learning and development collaborations are in place</p>
<p>Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing leadership capacity 	<p>RBFRS has introduced transformal leadership development opportunities at all levels following the national ASPIRE leadership model which was launched in November 2007 and will use elements of the national leadership toolkit as appropriate, e.g. the Executive Leadership Programme.</p>

3.3 CFOA UK FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE HR STRATEGY

This document was launched in November 2005. It sets broad objectives and the following key priorities:

Key Priority	RBFRS Position
<p>Developing leadership capacity - amongst both officers and members, (including attracting effective leaders into the Fire and Rescue Services from other sectors.</p>	<p>RBFRS Human Resources Strategy Fire Authority Members training programme Learning and Development Plans</p>
<p>Developing the organisation – to achieve excellence in people and performance management, partnership working, equality and diversity and efficient delivery of services.</p>	<p>Comprehensive Performance Assessment outcome Equality and Diversity Strategy and Action Plan Human Resources Strategy IPDS Project Plan Community Safety Strategy IRMP</p>

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Developing the skills and capacity of the workforce – across all areas of FRSs, including technical, specialist and support services, line management and the front line workforce.	IPDS Project Plan Annual Training Plan Performance Development System
Resourcing the Fire and Rescue Service – ensuring that Authorities plan for, recruit, develop and re-train the employees they need.	RBFRS HR Strategy Workforce Plan IPDS Project Plan Annual Training Plan
Recognition and Reward – having pay, reward and recognition structures that attract, retain, motivate and develop a skilled and flexible workforce whilst achieving value for money in service delivery.	RBFRS Reward Strategy
Developing the capacity of HR – identifying and building on the expertise of the HR function in planning and delivering the modernisation agenda.	HR resources are kept under review and capacity has been developed in response to the growing demands of the modernisation agenda. Collaboration through HRDG

4 HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS OF THE INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 4.1 The IRMP and HR Strategy should be complementary. The management of risk should drive the deployment of people and competence and recruitment/retention and development should deliver the right people at the right time with the right skills to control and drive down risk and intervene if prevention and protection fail.
- 4.2 The specific human resource implications of the Royal Berkshire Five Year Integrated Risk Management Plan 2007/08-2011/12, Action Plan 2008/09 are as follows:

IRMP Reference	Human Resource Issues
P13 IRMP 2006/07 Report - Optimising Resources Against Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movement of firefighter posts and introduction of new shift patterns
P13 Shift Patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiations with Fire Brigade Union (FBU) to agree revision to overtime payments
P13 Officers Operational Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusion of negotiations with the FBU on the flexible duty system rota • Full implementation of the revised RBFRS Organisation Structure following the transition of uniformed posts from Rank to Role in accordance with national agreements
P14 Change to Fire Safety Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The revised Organisation Structure has been adjusted totake account of the introduction of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

P15 Fire Year IRMP (2007/08-2011/12) Update - Cookham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training to support the movement of the Incident Command Unit to Maidenhead
P16 Environmental and Chemical Incident Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for training, health and safety and crewing issues arising from the review of response to the flooding of 2007
P16 Regional Control Centre (RCC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of staffing and skills levels in RBFRS Control Room until “cutover” to the RCC • Managing the implications for existing RBFRS Control staff of the transfer of Control functions to the SE RCC which is scheduled to take place in 2010
P16 New Dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing crewing, pay and reward arrangements to cover the attendance of RBFRS staff on extended major incidents outside Berkshire, e.g. Buncefield and 2007 flooding incidents
P21 Review RBFRS Chemical and Environmental Operational Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential training and crewing issues arising from the review of the Chemical Incident Unit
P22 IRMP Action Plan 2008/09 - Initiate Windsor/Wokingham Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To research possible shift systems required at Wokingham and Windsor prior to negotiation with the FBU • To fill additional firefighter posts at Wokingham following their transfer from Sonning

5 KEY THEMES

5.1 The Fire Authority has developed its approach to managing its human resources over a number of years. This strategy aims to focus that approach into a number of themes that can then be applied to the range of established human resources action plans. This will ensure consistency of approach in support of the IRMP and Corporate Plans and ensure the key themes are reflected in the delivery of human resource management outcomes.

5.2 Cross Cutting Themes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PERFORMANCE 	Performance matters. All employees of RBFRS need to know how they are performing at individual, team and RBFRS level. Success and achievement should be celebrated and recognised and under-performance appropriately addressed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PARTNERSHIP - Internal 	This is the preferred way of doing business both internally and externally. The Brigade Charter sets the standards that all stakeholders should apply. Mutual respect and trust are the standards against which behaviour will be judged. Internal Aspects of

	the Fire Authority's Communications Strategy promote this approach.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PARTNERSHIP – External 	Working in partnership with a wide range of statutory, voluntary and private sector partners through Local Strategic Partnerships is a growing part of RBFRS business and an increasing number of RBFRS staff need to be able to work successfully with a wider range of partners in order to deliver the IRMP and Corporate Plans. In future this aspect of partnership working will be assessed during Comprehensive Area Assessment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY 	Should underpin all our activities, both prevention, protection and response as well as human resource management, procurement and other support activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS 	The majority of the Fire Authority budget is spent on staff. It will not deliver Best Value unless its human resources are efficiently and effectively deployed. Equally its human resource management systems and services also need to demonstrate Best Value.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FLEXIBILITY 	Traditionally, the Fire Service has demonstrated high levels of flexibility on the fireground. That same level of flexibility now needs to be applied in all areas of activity, including duty systems and deployment of staff in order to deliver the Strategic Aims set out in the IRMP and cope successfully with the modernisation agenda.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEVELOPMENT 	Development of individuals using the IPDS system is central to employee motivation, involvement and effectiveness. It is key to increasing organisational capacity within constrained resources to deliver the IRMP and Corporate Plans.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> INTEGRITY 	The Fire and Rescue Service has developed a set of core values, aspects of which are reflected in the RBFRS Brigade Charter. All members of the Fire Authority and RBFRS should embrace and seek to model their personal and professional conduct on these core values.

5.3 Specific Themes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION 	<p>Given Berkshire's location, a competitive labour market and relatively high cost of living are continuing challenges. The balance between recruitment/training and reward responses will need to be kept under review. Multi-tier entry needs to be implemented for uniformed posts. Particular focus is required on the Retained Duty System where recruitment and retention problems are endemic.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT 	<p>The well-developed Performance Development system needs to be made available to all staff on a consistent basis. Similarly, Workplace Assessment of the maintenance of competence within the IPDS framework. This involves a major change of working practices and culture.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EMPLOYEE RELATIONS 	<p>Partnership working needs to be consolidated and delivered by managers at all levels and extended to encompass all employees and their representatives. Modernised employee relations processes are now in place. These changes involve a parallel change of working culture that will take time to achieve.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE MANAGEMENT CAPACITY 	<p>At present too many decisions are being taken at too senior a level. A planned process of skills development for line managers and devolution of people management responsibilities is in place. Specialist resources to support this devolution also need to be developed further.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HEALTH & WELLBEING 	<p>There is a need to focus on the promotion and maintenance of the health and fitness of all staff groups in addition to addressing the issue of staff sickness absence. A stress management Risk Assessment Action Plan is now in place to address this growing cause of absence. Investment in fitness training and equipment is now beginning to deliver results.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WORKFORCE PLANNING 	<p>The Firewatch system is being developed to provide detailed information on the staff numbers and competences that will be required to deliver the IRMP and Corporate Plans so that recruitment and development activities do deliver the right staff with the right skills at the right time.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MODERNISATION OF CONDITIONS OF SERVICE 	<p>The opportunities created by the introduction of the New Grey Book to develop conditions of service that support the IRMP and Corporate Plans must continue to be taken to the benefit of both the Fire Authority and its staff.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEADERSHIP 	<p>A new model of leadership for the Fire and Rescue Service has been launched and development programmes and recruitment processes are being developed/amended to support this change.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CULTURAL CHANGE 	<p>The current modernisation agenda is producing a change in the long-established workplace culture of the Fire Service. This process should be managed in a positive way so that the benefits are realised without diluting the positive aspects of the existing culture.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REWARD 	<p>The introduction of the role-based pay structure for uniformed staff has provided opportunities for developing a reward structure that supports IRMP and Corporate Plans and links reward more closely to performance. This should continue to be the direction of development in pay and reward at both national and local level.</p>

David Wallace
Director of Human Resources

29.01.08