

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
(Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority)

27 October 2009

Present:-

Councillors Boyd, Burridge-Clayton, Horsfall (vice Mrs Turner), Manning, Mrs. Nicholson and Wallace

Apologies:-

Councillor Cann.

***HRMDC/1. Election of Chair**

RESOLVED that Councillor Wallace be elected Chair of the Committee until the first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Authority in 2010.

***HRMDC/2. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2009 be signed as a correct record.

***HRMDC/3. Declarations of Interest**

Members of the Committee were invited to consider whether they had any **personal/personal and prejudicial interests** in items as set out on the agenda for this meeting and declare any such interests at this time.

No interests were declared.

***HRMDC/4. Election of Vice Chair**

RESOLVED that Councillor Boyd be elected Vice Chair of the Committee until the first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Authority in 2010.

***HRMDC/5. High Potential Leadership Programme**

The Committee received for information a report of the Head of Human Resources Management and Development (HRMDC/09/10) on the introduction, initially as a pilot, of a new pilot High Potential Leadership Programme (HPLP) within Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS) based on a new national "fast track" scheme. The national scheme was intended to provide intensive progression for high potential staff and also sought to attract further high potential individuals into the FRS by offering an opportunity for a challenging and rewarding middle/strategic management career.

The proposed HPLP within DSFRS would have three entry routes for different groups of staff, namely:

- Existing operational staff at Firefighter and Crew Manager level (including RDS);
- Existing non-operational staff;

- New entrants.

DSFRS would be supporting 3 places and the pilot, which was for existing operational staff initially and which would commence in Autumn 2009. The Programme would be evaluated and the results reported back through this Committee in due course.

***HRMDC/6. Eligibility for Retained Duty System (RDS) Staff to Apply for Wholetime**

The Committee received for information a report of the Head of Human Resources Management and Development (HRMDC/09/11) on the establishment of processes to enable “part time” (RDS) staff to be considered for wholetime roles within the Service. The report set out the legislative and national context behind this initiative and gave details of the action being taken within the Service to facilitate eligibility for transfers at firefighter level. The report also set out, amongst other matters, details of the selection process that would be involved, training and role development programmes.

***HRMDC/7. Staff Skills Bank**

The Committee received for information a report of the Head of Human Resources Management and Development (HRMDC/09/12) which advised of work undertaken to set up a Staff Skills Bank as a result of feedback that had been received during the course of the first round of staff seminars. The Skills Bank would capture the additional skills that staff possessed, including hobbies, voluntary work, vocational qualifications, public and charitable appointments, languages, Retained Duty System (RDS) primary employment and any other skills staff may have. This was a voluntary scheme intended to be utilised for small projects and to enhance Area performance and community plans where appropriate.

***HRMDC/8. Absence Management**

The Committee received for information a report of the Head of Human Resources Management and Development (HRMDC/09/13) that updated the Committee on the position in respect of the Service performance on both short- and long-term absence levels.

The corporate target was “to reduce the levels of sickness absence to the regional average of 9.0 days/shifts lost per person by 2010/11”. The target for 2009/10 was 9.6 days and the actual performance to August 2009 was 3.37 days/shifts as compared to 4.34 days/shifts for the same period last year (a 22.4% reduction).

The Head of Human Resources Management and Development advised that the introduction of the new Absence Management Policy had played a key role in reducing the absence levels. The single most important contributory factor had been the return to work interviews which were undertaken now after an absence of only one day. The position was monitored closely by the Service Improvement Group (SIG) and work was being undertaken to drill down into the figures to ascertain whether there were any “hot spots”.

It was noted that the main cause of long term sickness were muscular skeletal and mental health issues. As a result, arrangements had been put into place for staff to be able to self refer to appropriate health practitioners such as a physiotherapist and this had assisted in cutting down on the length of absence. The position would continue to be monitored.

***HRMDC/9. Future Workshops for the Human Resources Management and Development Committee**

The Head of Human Resources Management and Development stated that arrangements could be made for Members to participate in workshop sessions relating to the work of this Committee. The suggestions included holding sessions at Severn Park and Service Training Centre to give Members of this Committee a flavour of the training undertaken within the Service and to give a context to decision making in the future. Additional areas of work that could be covered in due course included firefighter safety and the health and safety role for Members.

*** DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The meeting started at 14.15hours and concluded at 15.35hours.