

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

23 January 2012

Present:-

Councillor Cann (Chair), Bown, Brooksbank, Burrige-Clayton, Horsfall and Wright

Apologies:-

Councillor Boyd

***HRMDC/23. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2011 be signed as a correct record.

***HRMDC/24. Declarations of Interest**

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

No interests were declared.

***HRMDC/25. Absence Management and Health of the Organisation**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (HRMDC/12/1) that set out the progress made with absence management, including an update on aspects linked to the overall health of the organisation.

The areas set out within the report included:

- Sickness absence performance 2011/12;
- Detailed breakdown of long term sickness;
- The main reasons behind sickness absence;
- Levels of stress and referrals to counselling;
- Staff turnover;
- Discipline and grievance cases;
- Collective relationships with unions.

The Human Resources Manager stated that the current actual level of sickness absence (to the end of November 2011) was 5.33 days/shifts lost per person as compared with the same period in 2010/11 when it was 5.12 days per person. Although the Service was not achieving the same level of absence as in 2010/11, this had been improving throughout the year and was due to lower levels of absence within Fire Control and non-station based Uniformed staff.

Attention was drawn to the point that there had been another increase in long terms sickness levels for November and December 2011 but that this appeared to be back on track in January 2012. Members of the Committee enquired as to how the Service compared with other local authorities and fire services nationally. The Human Resources Manager commented that the Service was above the average for the public sector but did not perform as well as the private sector. The results of a national survey reflected that sickness in other sectors tended to reflect the same reasons for absence namely, mental health and musculoskeletal issues.

In terms of the levels of stress and referrals to counselling within the organisation, it was noted that this had increased again within Somerset although it was recognised that the figures included the counselling sessions held as a result of the M5 motorway road traffic collision in November 2011. The Service was drilling down into the information to obtain the categories for referral for counselling which may give more explanation to report to the Committee in due course.

***HRMDC/26. Retained Duty System: Outcome from the Part Time Workers Regulations Employment Tribunal**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (HRMDC/12/2) that set out the position in respect of the payment of compensation to firefighters as a result of the outcome of the case raised under the Part Time Workers Regulations at an Employment Tribunal.

It was noted that Popularis, the company engaged to deal with the payments to staff, would be in a position shortly to issue settlement offer letters to individuals. There had been £643,000 set aside in the Reserves for current personnel together with those leavers who had made a claim. It was envisaged that a further £900,000 may be needed to cover the issue of pensions and provision had been made for this although this matter had not yet been concluded.

***HRMDC/27. Strategic Workforce Planning**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (HRMDC/12/3) that set out the workforce planning activity being undertaken by the Service to ensure that it had the correct staffing capacity in place to deliver the corporate objectives.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Committee includes this matter as a standing agenda item for future meetings, and;
- (b) subject to (a) above, the report be noted.

***HRMDC/28. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public were excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act, namely:

- Paragraph 3 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Authority; and

- Paragraph 4 – information relating to any consultations or negotiations or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Authority and its employees.

***HRMDC/29. Review of the Redundancy Multiplier**

(An item taken in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 during which the press and public were excluded).

The Director of People and Organisational Development reported that the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority had agreed a multiplier to be used in the event of either compulsory or voluntary redundancy situations and that this was subject to review on an annual basis.

The Committee discussed the basis on which the multiplier may be reviewed, whereupon Councillor Bown moved (and Councillor Burridge-Clayton seconded):

“that the Director of People and Organisational Development be requested to undertake further research in respect of the redundancy multiplier offered by other fire and rescue and local authorities with a view to the submission of a report on potential options being submitted to a future meeting of the Committee”.

This was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED that the Director of People and Organisational Development be requested to undertake further research in respect of the redundancy multiplier offered by other fire and rescue and local authorities with a view to the submission of a report on potential options being submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

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

The meeting started at 14.00hours and finished at 14.55hours