

**M. Pearson
CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY**

**To: The Chair and Members of the
Human Resources Management and
Development Committee
(see below)**

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HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

(Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority)

12 September 2008

A meeting of the Human Resources Management and Development Committee will be held on the above date, **commencing at 10:00 hours in Conference Room A in Somerset House, Service Headquarters** to consider the following matters.

M. Pearson
Clerk to the Authority

AGENDA

1. **Apologies**
2. **Minutes** of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 22 August 2008 attached (Page 1).
3. **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

Items which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as matters of urgency.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to consider whether they have 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. *Please refer to the Note 2 at the end of this agenda for guidance on interests.*

PART 1 – OPEN COMMITTEE

5. **Absence Management**

Report of the Human Resources Manager (HRMDC/08/4) attached (page 2)

6. **Firefighter Recruitment**

Report of the Human Resources Manager (HRMDC/08/5) attached (page 8)

7. **Corporate Equality Scheme**

Report of the Head of Human Resources Management and Development (HRMDC/08/6) attached (page 14)

8. **Staff Survey**

In November 2007, the Human Resources Management and Development (HRMD) Committee noted the arrangements for undertaking the first ever Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service employee survey. As a newly combined fire and rescue service it was essential that an employee survey was conducted to measure staff opinion following such a major period of change.

To ensure that the survey was independent, Opinion Research Services (ORS), the contractor providing consultation services to the Fire Services Consultation Association (FSCA), was commissioned to undertake the survey.

The Head of Service Planning and Review will give a briefing at the meeting in respect of the progress made in respect of the survey.

9. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RECOMMENDATION that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act, namely information relating to consultations and negotiations in connection with a labour relations matter between the Authority and its employees.

PART 2 – ITEMS WHICH MAY BE TAKEN IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

10. **Job Evaluation**

The Human Resources Manager will give an update at the meeting on the position in respect of the Job Evaluation exercise.

MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO SIGN THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER

Membership:-

Councillors Cann (Chair), Mrs. Parsons (Vice Chair), Ford, Parker, M. Phillips, Shadrick, Viney

Substitute Members

Members are reminded that, in accordance with Standing Order 30, the Clerk (or his representative) MUST be advised of any substitution prior to the start of the meeting.

NOTES

1. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to inspect any minutes, reports or lists of background papers relating to any item on this agenda should contact Sam Sharman on the telephone number shown at the top of this agenda.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

What Interests do I need to declare in a meeting?

As a first step you need to declare any personal interests you have in a matter. You will then need to decide if you have a prejudicial interest in a matter.

What is a personal interest?

You have a personal interest in a matter if it relates to any interests which you must register, as defined in Paragraph 8(1) of the Code.

You also have a personal interest in any matter likely to affect the well-being or financial position of:-

- (a) you, members of your family, or people with whom you have a close association;
- (b) any person/body who employs/has employed the persons referred to in (a) above, or any firm in which they are a partner or company of which they are a director;
- (c) any person/body in whom the persons referred to in (a) above have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or
- (d) any body of which you are a Member or in a position of general control or management and which:-
 - you have been appointed or nominated to by the Authority; or
 - exercises functions of a public nature (e.g. a constituent authority; a Police Authority); or
 - is directed to charitable purposes; or
 - one of the principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

more than it would affect **the majority** of other people in the Authority's area.

Anything that could affect the quality of your life (or that of those persons/bodies listed in (b) to (d) above) either positively or negatively, is likely to affect your/their "well being". If you (or any of those persons/bodies listed in (b) to (d) above) have the potential to gain or lose from a matter under consideration – to a **greater extent** than **the majority** of other people in the Authority's area - you should declare a personal interest.

What do I need to do if I have a personal interest in a matter?

Where you are aware of, **or ought reasonably to be aware of**, a personal interest in a matter you must declare it when you get to the item headed "Declarations of Interest" on the agenda, or otherwise as soon as the personal interest becomes apparent to you, **UNLESS** the matter relates to or is likely to affect:-

- (a) any other body to which you were appointed or nominated by the Authority; or
- (b) any other body exercising functions of a public nature (e.g. membership of a constituent authority; other Authority such as a Police Authority);

of which you are a Member or in a position of general control or management. In such cases, provided you do not have a prejudicial interest, you need only declare your personal interest if and when you speak on the matter.

Can I stay in a meeting if I have a personal interest?

You can still take part in the meeting and vote on the matter unless your personal interest is also a prejudicial interest.

What is a prejudicial interest?

Your personal interest will also be a **prejudicial** interest if **all** of the following conditions are met:-

- (a) the matter is not covered by one of the following exemptions to prejudicial interests in relation to the following functions of the Authority:-
 - statutory sick pay (if you are receiving or entitled to this);
 - an allowance, payment or indemnity for members;
 - any ceremonial honour given to members;

- setting council tax or a precept; **AND**
- (b) the matter affects your financial position (or that of any of the persons/bodies as described in Paragraph 8 of the Code) or concerns a regulatory/licensing matter relating to you or any of the persons/bodies as described in Paragraph 8 of the Code); **AND**
- (c) a member of the public who knows the relevant facts would reasonably think your personal interest is so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

What do I need to do if I have a prejudicial interest?

If you have a prejudicial interest in a matter being discussed at a meeting, you must declare that you have a prejudicial interest (and the nature of that interest) as soon as it becomes apparent to you. You should then leave the room unless members of the public are allowed to make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter by statutory right or otherwise. If that is the case, you can also attend the meeting for that purpose.

You must, however, leave the room **immediately after you have finished speaking (or sooner if the meeting so decides)** and you cannot remain in the public gallery to observe the vote on the matter. Additionally, you must not seek to **improperly influence** a decision in which you have a prejudicial interest.

What do I do if I require further guidance or clarification on declarations of interest?

If you feel you may have an interest in a matter that will need to be declared but require further guidance on this, please contact the Clerk to the Authority – preferably before the date of the meeting at which you may need to declare the interest. Similarly, please contact the Clerk if you require guidance/advice on any other aspect of the Code of Conduct.

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

22 August 2008

Present:-

Councillors Cann (Chair), Ford, Parker, Mrs Parsons, Viney and Shadrick.

***HRMD/7. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2008 be agreed and signed by the Chair.

***HRMD/8. Declarations of Interest**

Members of the Committee were invited to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interests they may have in item(s) to be considered at the current meeting in accordance with the Authority's approved Code of Conduct.

No interests were declared.

***HRMD/9. Appointment of a new Chief Fire Officer**

The Committee considered a report of the Clerk to the Authority (HRMDC/08/3) that set out proposals for the commencement of a process to appoint a new Chief Fire Officer, starting with the establishment of a Panel of Members to undertake the shortlisting and interviewing of candidates in accordance with Standing Order 48(2).

RESOLVED that an Appointment Panel consisting of the Members set out in paragraph 2.3 of report HRMDC/08/3 be authorised to undertake the shortlisting and interviewing of candidates and to make a recommendation on appointment to the Authority in accordance with Standing Order 48(2).

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

The meeting started at 14.00hours and concluded at 14.07hours.

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY



REPORT REFERENCE NO.	HRMDC/08/4
MEETING	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	12 SEPTEMBER 2008
SUBJECT OF REPORT	ABSENCE MANAGEMENT
LEAD OFFICER	Steven Pope – Human Resources Manager
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	During the last Human Resources Management and Development Committee it was requested that the Service report back on an ongoing basis as to the Service performance and actions in relation to the management of absence within the Service. The elected members specifically requested further information on the cost of absence, long-term sickness and on the findings of the national FRS absence management working group and these have been included.
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	
APPENDICES	
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	

1. **INTRODUCTION**

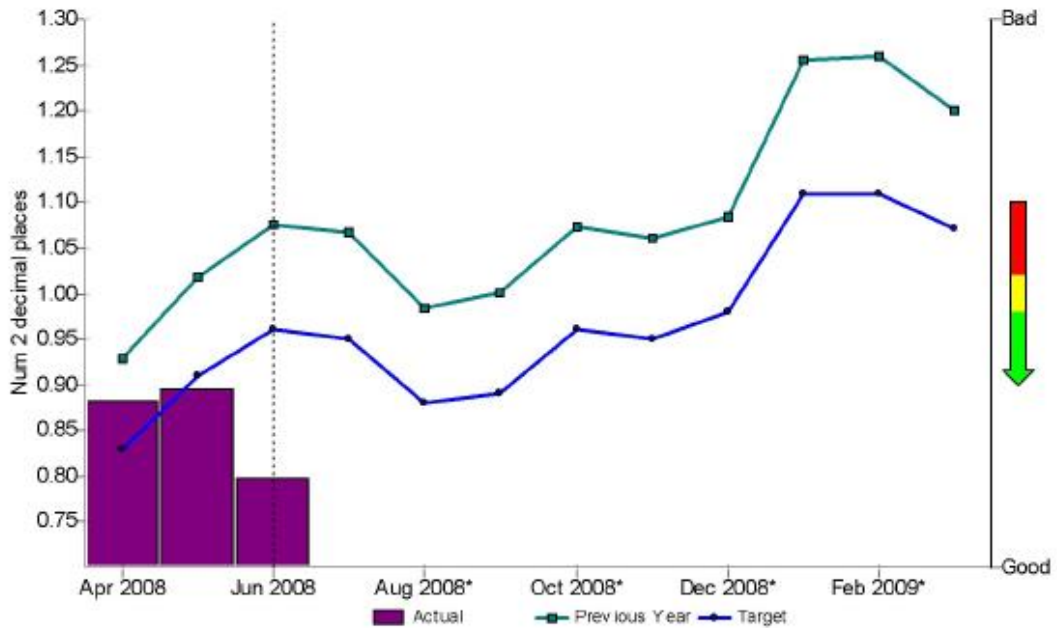
1.1 At the last meeting of the Human Resources Management and Development Committee (HRMDC) on the 19 June 2008, the agenda included a presentation on the work being undertaken to improve the absence levels in relation to the Service targets. As part of this ongoing monitoring of the Service performance, members requested an update on a regular basis at future meetings.

2. **CURRENT PERFORMANCE**

2.1 The Service has a corporate target to reduce the levels of sickness absence to the regional average rate of 9.0 days/shifts lost per person by 2010/11.

2.2 The target absence level was not achieved in 2007/8 but there has been a very significant improvement for the first quarter of 2008/9 in which we have seen a 15% decrease in absence when compared with the same period last year.

**All Staff Sickness Rates by Month
2008/09**



All Staff – Cumulative Sickness Rates per Person – by Month

	Actual 08/09	Previous Year 07/08	% variance on previous year
Apr 2008	0.88	0.93	-5.0%
May 2008	1.78	1.95	-8.7%
Jun 2008	2.57	3.02	-14.8%

2.3 The duration of sickness absence is split into three categories:

1. Short-term uncertified – up to 7 calendar days and a doctor's not is not required
2. Short-term certified – 8 to 28 calendar days and a doctor's note is required
3. Long-term – 29 calendar days or more.

2.4 The reduction in sickness absence has mainly occurred in the area of long-term sickness absence and short-term uncertified sickness.

All staff – sickness rates per person – by length of sickness

	Actual 08/09	Previous Year 07/08	% variance on previous year
Long-term sickness	1.54	1.85	-16.8%
Short-term certified sickness	0.42	0.44	-4.4%
Short-term uncertified sickness	0.61	0.72	-15.9%

2.5 When considering sickness rates by staff group, uniformed rates are down by a very considerable 26%, but Control has increased by 57% (although this is due to a very small number of staff with long-term sickness) and non-uniformed have increased by 10%.

2.6 In considering the reasons for sickness, there are categories of sickness identified by the DCLG. The Service is at this stage developing a number of sub groups to include Mental Health and Musculoskeletal. All the other sub groups are currently grouped under an 'Other' category:

Mental Health - includes post traumatic stress disorder, stress, anxiety, depression, chronic fatigue syndrome.

Musculoskeletal - includes problems with neck, shoulders, back, knee, upper and lower limbs.

Other - includes cancer, neurological problems, sickness/diarrhoea, headaches, cold, flu, chest infection, dermatological problems, respiratory, cardiovascular etc.

For the first quarter of 2008/9 the breakdown of reasons for absence is as follows:

- Mental Health sickness accounts for 28%
- Musculoskeletal sickness accounts for 26%
- Other sickness types account for just over 46%

3. **COST OF ABSENCE**

3.1 One aspect that the Committee has requested further information in particular is on the cost of sickness absence. This is a matter in which organisations have various means of calculating depending on whether the direct costs of contractual and statutory sick pay are used or whether indirect costs eg acting up payments, standbys, overtime are included. The Service has a ridership factor applied at station level to account for absences including annual leave, training and sickness. So when a member of station based staff is absent, it does not necessarily mean that further costs have been incurred.

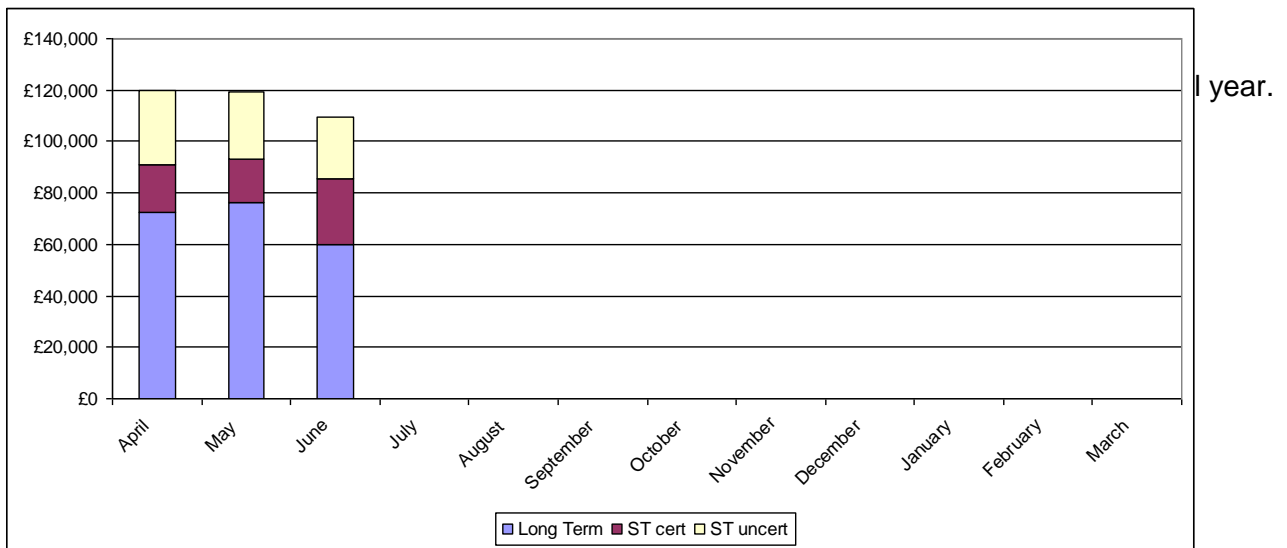
3.2 The costs that have been calculated relate to direct salary costs only and do not take into account any indirect costs or allowances eg flexi duty.

3.3 For the first quarter of 2008/09, the overall cost of sickness absence for the Service can be calculated in this way as £348,785. It needs to be emphasised again, however, that this does not mean that this amount can be saved through any potential reduction in sickness overall.

Of the total £348,785:

- 59.8% / £208,639 of this cost is due to long-term sickness
- 17.5% / £60,907 of this cost is due to certified sickness
- 22.7% / £79,239 of this cost is due to uncertified sickness

***Cost of sickness by duration of absence
Apr – Jun 2008/09***



3.4 The service will continue to monitor these costs throughout the remainder of the financial year, however, it is encouraging to see that they are falling.

4. **DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF LONG TERM SICKNESS**

4.1 Previously, the Committee requested further information on the long term sickness ie those over 28 days. This list is reported on a monthly basis and includes those who are long term sick and those on restricted duties.

4.2 The number of long term sick over the last 6 months has been as follows:

Number of staff	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Uniformed	27	28	23	23	19	19
Retained	14	17	10	10	8	10
Non-uniformed	3	6	6	7	6	2
Total	44	51	39	40	33	31

4.3 The downward trend for uniformed staff is particularly encouraging and non-uniformed has also seen a recent improvement. In terms of considering the location of the long-term sickness there are three uniformed locations with more than one person on long-term sickness namely Camels Head and Plymstock station and also Somerset Control. The retained and non-uniformed are all at different locations.

5. **HSE REPORT ON ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT IN THE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

5.1 One of the elected members previously reported that they had taken part in a working party for the Fire & Rescue Service nationally which had resulted in a report commissioned by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) and directed the Service to consider its findings. Since the last meeting this report has been published. The report has researched five UK Fire & Rescue Services which have provided case studies. The study was intended to consider what policies and practices existed, the views and experiences amongst staff, the degree to which these policies reflected recent recommendations, barriers and facilitators to adopting the recommended practices and finally other practices which were considered useful. The five case studies were representative of the 46 UK FRS's with varying levels of absence. In 2005/6 the range of absence for uniformed staff was from 9.5 to 12.5 days per annum improving to 7.5 to 9 days in 2006/7.

5.2 The report found that there were three overarching factors for successful attendance management and these were:

5.2.1 **Effective use of performance management information**

Services had struggled in obtaining accurate calculations for sickness due to the non-standard working day and shift patterns. Once resolved it enabled predictive information to be produced on how the annual performance might look and allowed this data to be charted and used alongside messages from senior management.

5.2.2 **Strategic prioritisation of attendance management**

A key driver for sustaining improvement was prioritising attendance management at a senior level of the organisation. This could also be enhanced through the engagement of elected members in providing leadership, scrutiny and political accountability. Services implementing a sickness improvement plan or with an absence management steering group were seen as effective.

5.2.3 **Devolved responsibility for attendance management**

Previously within the national FRS Fit for Duty report in 2000 it had been found that there was insufficient devolved responsibility to line managers and that managers needed to develop new skills, make time for new tasks eg return to work interviews and shift from being a 'peer' to the 'boss'. Ensuring that this devolvement of responsibility occurred was cited as a key driver for reducing absence.

- 5.3 The study considered how sickness is managed with consideration for a number of aspects to the procedures including contact during sickness by the line manager, the role of occupational health during sickness, funding for private treatment, use of the Firefighters' Charity, sick pay, and managing the return to work including phased returns and modified duties.
- 5.4 The report also highlighted strategies for managing attendance with return to work interviews, trigger point reviews with the lowest being 10 days or 4 times in a 12 month period and the highest being 15 days or 5 times in a 12 month period. Other strategies included the use of redeployment, retirement, capability proceedings and dismissal.
- 5.5 How attendance could be supported was also researched with key initiatives including:
- Welfare, counselling and trauma support
 - Fitness, health screening and health promotion
 - The use of incentives eg linking to CPD payments or to the provision of available overtime
- 5.6 This holistic approach to attendance management was considered as that which would lead to a successful reduction in absences. It is encouraging that much of the work taking place in DSFRS is comparable with the findings of the national research and the report provides a useful comparator.

6. **PROGRESS WITH ABSENCE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

- 6.1 Since the last HRMDC meeting, the working party have met on a fortnightly basis and have been joined, for some of the meetings, by a representative from the FBU to progress with the new service policy. This work has progressed well and the first draft is nearing completion. Once finished, the next stage will be to undertake a formal consultation stage and prepare a training programme for line managers to enhance the rollout of the policy.

7. **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The Service has seen a significant improvement during the first quarter of this financial year in the absence levels and is continuing to progress with the production of quality absence management data and more robust procedures. The considerable success that has been achieved so far this year now needs to be built on in order to achieve the service targets over the full year.

STEVEN POPE
Human Resources Manager

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY



REPORT REFERENCE NO.	HRMDC/08/5
MEETING	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	12 SEPTEMBER 2008
SUBJECT OF REPORT	FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT
LEAD OFFICER	Steven Pope – Human Resources Manager
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	At the last HRMD committee meeting on the 19 June 2008, Members requested further information in relation to staff transferring from the Retained Duty System to the Wholetime Duty System and in respect of the Government's proposals for a Graduate Recruitment Scheme. This information is included within this report including background information on the transfer of retained to wholetime, our workforce planning and details of the National Firefighter Selection process.
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	
APPENDICES	Appendix A: New Recruit Firefighter Selection Flowchart
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 At the last HRMD committee meeting on the 19 June 2008, the Members requested further information in relation to staff transferring from the Retained Duty System to the Wholetime Duty System and in respect of the Government's proposals for a Graduate Recruitment Scheme.

1.2 With regard to the Graduate scheme, this is referred to within the Fire & Rescue Service National Framework 2008-11 document and under the heading of Equality & Diversity it states that:

'To help and support FRA's in improving diversity in their workforce at all levels the CLG will work with stakeholders to develop initiatives for High Potential and Graduate Entry Management Development Schemes.'

1.3 The document also states under Training & Development that:

'High potential development and multi-level entry schemes are designed to identify and bring on talent through the organisation and encourage recruitment of people with diverse skills and backgrounds. A collaborative approach to implementing such initiatives is likely to produce more resources-efficient solutions. Consideration should be given to the role of Regional Management Boards in taking this forward.'

1.4 Despite a government announcement regarding the introduction of such a scheme into the Service, Communities and Local Government has, to date, brought forward no proposals.

1.5 The National Framework was published in May 2008 and at this point in time the concept of a multi-entry scheme has not been incorporated into the Corporate Plan or departmental business plans but will be a matter for further consideration in preparing for next year's update to our plans.

2. **BACKGROUND TO RETAINED TO WHOLETIME TRANSFERS**

2.1 The concept of transfers from the Retained to Wholetime is based on Firefighters having the same set of competencies whether in one duty system or the other.

2.2 Since the introduction of rolemaps and the Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS), it is possible to assess Retained Firefighters in the same way as Wholetime Firefighters. Whilst the initial acquisition of skills takes longer for the Retained Firefighter, they have the potential to reach the competency level of their wholetime counterpart.

2.3 Traditionally within the Fire & Rescue Service, retained staff have not been able to transfer to Wholetime and this same position has been taken throughout the Southwest. Within the former Devon FRS, wholetime staff taking on additional retained duties were not able to carry across their previous rank or role as we now have within the Fire & Rescue Service. They would therefore start as a Firefighter whatever their previous wholetime position. Within the former Somerset FRS wholetime staff were not offered the opportunity to take on additional retained duties. In both the former DFRS and SFRS, Retained Firefighters could apply to be new wholetime recruits and if successful through the selection process could undertake the recruits' course. However, such vacancies were limited and there was always considerable numbers of applicants.

2.4 Following combination, DSFRS has seen an increase in the interest from Retained Firefighters wishing to be considered for wholetime positions and also external applicants who are firefighters within non-FRS organisations eg MOD, airport Firefighters.

3. **PROPOSED SERVICE POLICY ON RETAINED TO WHOLETIME TRANSFERS**

3.1 In order to be able to use these particular pools of potential wholetime staff, the Service has developed a policy for Appointments, Promotions, Acting-up and Transfers which incorporates details of transfers in from the retained. The Service has consulted with the relevant stakeholders including the Representative Bodies and having assessed the feedback will shortly be issuing the new policy to the Service. The policy includes the following extracts from the section on transfers:

3.2 To fill a particular business need, DSFRS may, from time to time, accept transfers in response to advertised or announced Wholetime vacancies from Firefighters in other Services or Duty Systems. These might include:

- firefighters from local authority services; and/or
- firefighters from overseas services; and/or
- members of non-local authority fire services; and/or
- firefighters currently on the DSFRS Retained Duty System.

3.3 In such cases, candidates must have successfully completed phases 1 and 2 of development (or equivalent) for their current roles and successfully completed any separate probation procedures.

3.4 Members of non-Local Authority Fire Services e.g. Ministry Of Defence, Airport Fire Services and Overseas Services will also need to provide an independently verified portfolio of evidence, acceptable to DSFRS, that has been cross mapped to the National Firefighter Role Map and Occupational Standards. Advice will be given to potential applicants on how this may be achieved.

3.5 When applying to transfer, individuals will be required to complete an application form, from which potential candidates for transfer will be short-listed. The application form will require details of skills, experience and other attributes. Appointment will be subject to a selection procedure which may consist of (*inter alia*) written and practical assessments and a formal interview. A medical examination, references and a record of skills maintenance and achievement will also be required.

4. **WORKFORCE PLANNING**

4.1 The Service has recently recruited 7 new Firefighters and continues to review our workforce plans. During the financial year 2007/8 the Service extended the number of open vacancies within the wholetime staff in order to accommodate the move to dual crewing of Aerial Appliances which would reduce the wholetime establishment by 24. In addition the Authority has decided to reduce the number of Area Managers by 3.

- 4.2 Taking account of the dual crewing, Area Managers and the known recruits, the Service is currently 15 under our adjusted establishment and likely to be 22 under by the year end. The Service has therefore already determined that there should be 10 wholetime vacancies made available for the Retained with an option for a further 5 retained to wholetime transfers. In addition, the Service intends to prepare for an external recruitment campaign for new recruits. The precise number will depend on the Service predictions for retirements from existing staff within the Service. There are currently 37 staff with 29 years' service where 30 years is required to reach the normal pensionable age. These staff could opt to retire, continue in employment or seek a flexible retirement which would allow the employee to retire and be re-employed possibly under a job share basis. There are also a further 38 employees who have already worked beyond 30 years' service. The Service is currently updating our information on the retirement intentions for these members of staff.
- 4.3 Any future changes in establishment requirements or duty systems could also impact on our workforce planning requirements. Having not previously advertised for transfers from the Retained to Wholetime the Service is not currently able to predict the likely number of applicants but it is thought to be considerable.

5. **RETAINED TO WHOLETIME SELECTION PROCESS**

- 5.1 Whilst competent retained staff will be eligible to apply for wholetime positions, there will need to be a competitive process to select the successful candidates. This will include a battery of ability tests including numerical and verbal reasoning, spatial awareness and mechanical problem solving. They will also undertake a theory based technical skills assessment and have an interview to assess their Personal Qualities and Attributes.

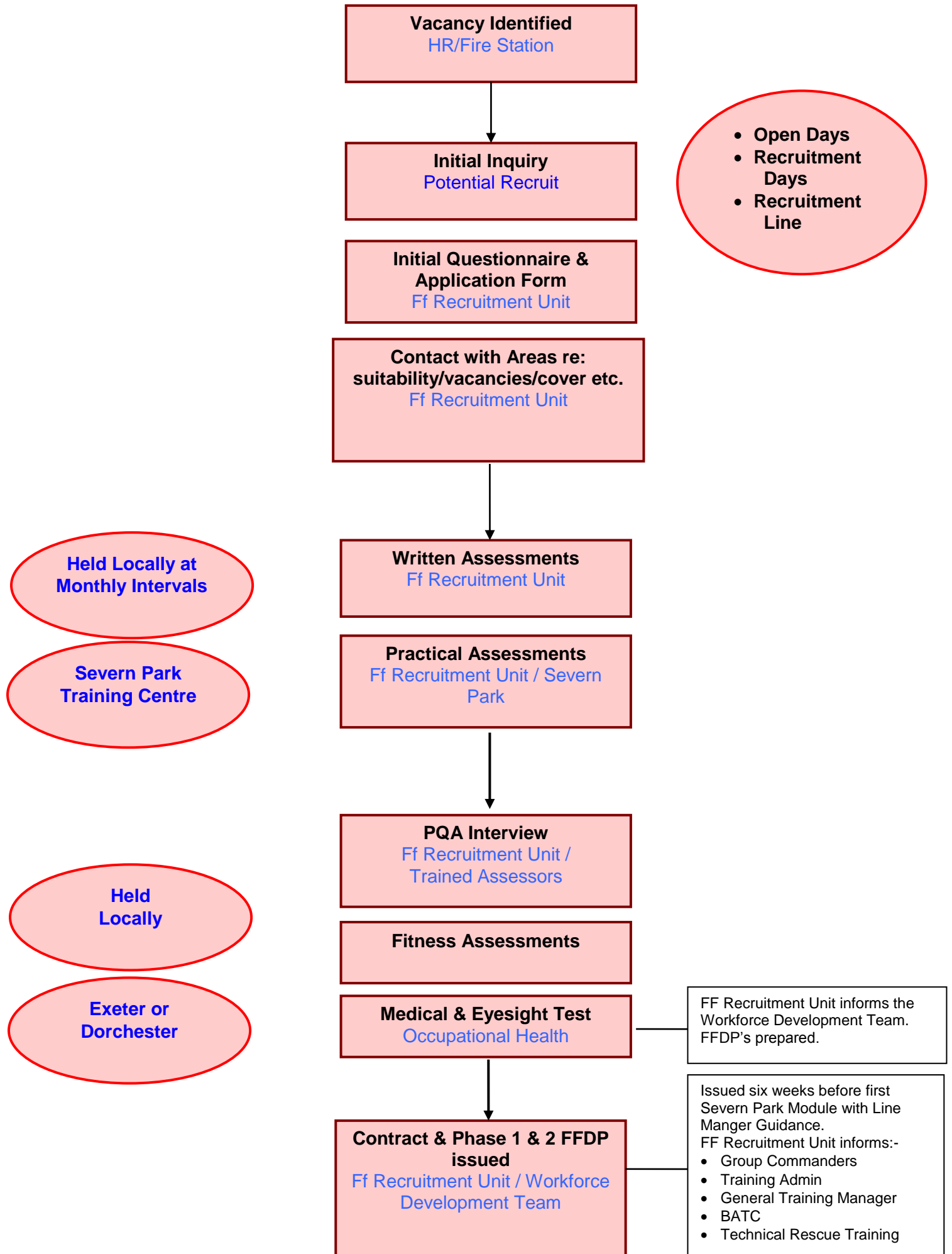
6. **NEW RECRUIT FIREFIGHTER SELECTION PROCESS**

- 6.1 The Fire & Rescue Service National Framework 2008-11 document states that FRS's are expected to use the National Firefighter Selection (NFS) process. The CLG have commissioned further research into these tests and their impact assessment but in the meanwhile they provide a fair, consistent and transparent recruitment process. Prior to their introduction each FRS would have had their own process.
- 6.2 The NFS process includes an initial application form including personal details eg work history and qualifications and a questionnaire to test the suitability of the applicant as a Firefighter. If successful at this stage, the candidate undertakes written assessments of aptitude including verbal and numerical reasoning and a situational awareness test. There is also a questionnaire to assess applicants' attitude and motivation in relation to scales based on the Fire & Rescue Service Personal Qualities and Attributes.
- 6.3 The candidates then do practical tests which include a ladder climb, ladder lift, enclosed space test, equipment assembly, casualty evacuation and equipment carry. If successful at this stage the candidates then have a PQA interview. There is then a medical and the take-up of references prior to any offer of employment.
- 6.4 Since the introduction of the NFS tests the Service has not recruited any wholetime new recruit Firefighters but the Service has continued to recruit for the retained and has utilised these new selection processes. We continue to have some concerns over the suitability of these tests for retained recruitment and this will be considered further over the coming months. The flowchart for the recruitment process is attached.

7. **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 There have been a number of significant changes in the processes for Firefighter selection as a result of the modernisation of the Service and within DSFRS we are progressing with their implementation.

STEVEN POPE
Human Resources Manager



DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY



REPORT REFERENCE NO.	HRMDC/08/6
MEETING	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	12 SEPTEMBER 2008
SUBJECT OF REPORT	CORPORATE EQUALITY SCHEME.
LEAD OFFICER	Head of Human Resources Management and Development
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>(a) <i>To note the contents of this briefing</i></p> <p>(b) <i>To endorse the title of the Corporate Equality Scheme as "Making The Connections"</i></p> <p>(c) <i>For a member of HRMD to be identified to work with the Equality & Diversity team on the development and implementation of this Scheme</i></p>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>At the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 31 July 2008, the requirements of the National Equality & Diversity Strategy were outlined. It was agreed at that meeting that the Human Resources Management and Development (HRMD) Committee would have</p> <p>(a) responsibility for the Strategy on behalf of the Authority and;</p> <p>(b) that a member (or members) of HRMD should provide a lead role in relation to Equality & Diversity issues.</p> <p>The Corporate Equality Scheme that will link with the National Equality & Diversity Strategy is currently being completed</p> <p>Equality and Diversity is still not seen as fully embedded within DSFRS. During discussion on this aspect, the phrase "Making The Connections" was felt to be a simple and identifiable title for the Corporate Equality Scheme</p> <p>The Scheme will be linked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSFRS Corporate Plan • Departmental and Area business plans
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	None
APPENDICES	None
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	None

1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 At the DFRA meeting of 31st July 2008, the requirements of the National Equality & Diversity Strategy were outlined. It was agreed at that meeting HRMD Committee would have responsibility for the Strategy on behalf of the Authority and that a member (or members) HRMD should provide a lead role in relation to Equality & Diversity issues.
- 1.2 This paper sets out what is currently being done in relation to the Strategy and the future plans and actions linked to the Strategy.

2 **BACKGROUND:**

- 2.1 The Equality Act 2006 establishes the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The EHRC will bring together the Commission for Racial Equality, The Disability Rights Commission and The Equal Opportunities Commission from October 2007. It will take on all of the powers of the individual Commissions as well as new powers to enforce legislation more effectively and promote equality for all.
- 2.2 Public Authorities such as Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service are now required, by duties placed upon us, to promote Equality and Diversity within everything that we do.
- 2.3 In order to comply with the duties placed upon public authorities by legislation DSFRS are required have equality schemes in place for gender, race and disability.
- 2.4 Guidelines produced by the Equality and Human Rights Commission recommend that a Single Equality Scheme is produced that encompasses all 6 strands (gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion or belief).
- 2.5 The Fire & Rescue National Framework Document 2008-11 and the Equality & Diversity Strategy 2008 – 2018 require evidence on the development and implementation of policies which support and promote equality and diversity.
- 2.6 Priority 2a of the Corporate Plan is “To improve the service’s approach to equality and diversity”. One of the targets’s under that priority is that DSFRS will achieve Level 3 of the Local Government Equality Standard by 2010. This Single Equality Scheme will be a significant driver to achieving that target.

3. **HOW WILL THE SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME HELP TO ACHIEVE PRIORITY 2A?**

- 3.1 It will:
- Be built on evidence provided by community/staff consultation.
 - Bring together and highlight in one document all the current and future activities in DSFRS that are relevant to the Local Government Equality Standard.
 - Have the 6 equality strands clearly identified within it.
 - Have DSFRS functions relating to each strand clearly identified.
 - Detail our priorities for Equality Impact Assessing policies.
 - Have a 3 year action plan setting out our direction of travel.
 - Have a person identified as being responsible for each action.

- Contribute towards changing organisational culture (National framework document 2008 – 2011).

4. **WHAT PLANS AND PROJECTS ARE ALREADY RUNNING THAT WILL LINK WITH THIS THE SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME1**

4.1 The Equality & Diversity Unit already are already managing 8 projects (at various stages of beginning, half-way through or near completion) that will provide the foundations and on-going progress of the Single Equality Scheme

- On-line E-learning Equality & Diversity Training programme
- Engaging with Hard to Reach Groups
- Improve monitoring of Equality & Diversity performance data
- Undertaking Equality Impact Assessments of all training courses
- Positive Action Working Group to develop and implement a Positive Action Strategy
- Harmonisation of all Equality & Diversity Policies
- Reviewing the Equality Impact Assessment Procedures
- Promote Core Values

5. **AT WHAT STAGE IS THE SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME DOCUMENT?**

5.1 The basic framework for the document is in place and some consultation has already been undertaken.

6. **WHAT WILL BE THE NEXT STEPS?**

6.1 At the last Authority meeting it was agreed that a specific Authority member should be identified as “championing” Equality & Diversity on behalf of the Authority. This development work on the Single Equality Scheme provides a unique and specific opportunity for such a member to become involved.

6.2 A series of meetings with middle and senior managers has been organised to gain input to fully develop the action plan for the next 3 years.

6.3 A rough draft document will be ready for presentation to SMB and The Authority by the end of October.

7. **THE SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME NEEDS A CORPORATE “BRANDING”**

7.1 Equality and Diversity is still not seen as fully embedded within DSFRS. During discussion on this aspect, the phrase “Making The Connections” was felt to be a simple and identifiable title for the Corporate Equality Scheme

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