

# DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY



<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	<b>HRMDC/08/7</b>
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>14 NOVEMBER 2008</b>
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>STAFF SURVEY – INITIAL RESULTS</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>DCFO Neil Gibbins</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<p>(a) That the HRMD Committee assumes oversight of the programme of projects to be established to deliver agreed improvement activities; and</p> <p>(b) That, subject to recommendation (a) above, the report be noted.</p>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>The survey was carried out between 18 February 2008 and 21 March 2008 a response rate of 30% was achieved. Following initial statistical analysis of the results, a working group was established to identify any key issues. This work formed the basis of the information contained in the newsletter sent out to all staff at the end of October.</p> <p>This initial analysis has already identified some key areas for further work and action but it is also recognised that it is important to involve staff groups so that improvement actions deliver changes that employees will recognise as improving the position from their perspective. To this end, initial meetings have been held with representative bodies and they have indicated a willingness to work together with management in identifying the priority areas for improvement action.</p> <p>A project team will be established to complete this work and the main project deliverable will be a clearly defined set of improvement activities, including an assessment of resourcing requirements, which will then be incorporated within the relevant service plans.</p>
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	None at this stage.
<b>APPENDICES</b>	Staff Survey Newsletter – October 2008
<b>LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	None

## 1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 It was considered important to conduct a survey to establish of how staff felt about being employees of the Service and to identify any issues that may require improvement. Given the significant amount of change that has taken place, (combination, rank to role and job evaluation being some of the major ones) the survey would provide an important baseline to be used in any future assessment.
- 1.2 The survey was carried out between 18 February 2008 and 21 March 2008. Every member of staff was given the opportunity to complete the survey and 647 were returned. With a total workforce of 2165 this represents a return rate of 30%, which is considered a good response for surveys of this kind.
- 1.3 Statistical analysis of the survey returns began in August and a working group was established in September with a view to identifying the key issues arising from the results. The working group was chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and included both uniformed and non-uniformed managers from HRM, training, qualities & diversity, operations support and communications. It was planned that a newsletter would be sent out to all staff at the end of October to provide initial feedback on the survey results and to begin the process of wider staff engagement in identifying key improvement actions.
- 1.4 The newsletter was issued to staff in accordance with the planned timeframe and meetings have been held with representative bodies to begin the process of engagement and involvement with work to identify key improvement actions. The full survey results will be published on the Service Intranet by the end of November. This is regarded as an important step in demonstrating openness and transparency over the results and that nothing is being covered up.

## 2. **SURVEY RESULTS**

- 2.1 Following the initial analysis of the survey results, a summary of the main 'high spots' and 'hot spots' was produced together with a brief commentary regarding specific sections. This formed the basis of the newsletter that was issued to all staff, a copy of which is attached to this report as an Appendix for information.
- 2.2 This initial analysis has already identified some key areas for further work and action but it is also recognised that it is important to involve staff groups so that improvement actions deliver changes that employees will recognise as improving the position from their perspective. The focus of analysis is clearly on the 'hot spots' and that is entirely proper because the whole purpose of conducting the survey was to identify things that need to be done better.
- 2.3 The work with the staff groups must be allowed to identify the specific actions that will deliver most impact but even at this early stage it is evident that action is required around the perception of senior management, recognition, communication, levels of consultation and the incidence of bullying. The existing Corporate Plan and supporting Departmental Service Plans already contain some development activities that address some, or part of, the issues identified by the survey responses. Consequently, an important part of the next stage will be to focus on the key areas of improvement that will make a real difference to the issues identified by the survey responses. Improvement action overload is a potential barrier to effecting meaningful change and this must be avoided. This does not mean that areas that need to be addressed will be forgotten, but it does mean that we will have to realistic about what can be achieved within the resources available.

3. **NEXT STEPS**

- 3.1 Initial meetings have been held with representative bodies and they have indicated a willingness to work together with management in identifying the priority areas for improvement action. A project team will be established to complete this work and the main project deliverable will be a clearly defined set of improvement activities, including an assessment of resourcing requirements, which will then be incorporated within the relevant service plans.
- 3.2 Once approved and incorporated into service plans, the improvement activities will be managed as a programme of projects and it is suggested that the HRMD Committee assumes oversight of the programme. The Committee is invited to comment on these proposed arrangements and the initial feedback provided in the newsletter.

**NEIL GIBBINS**  
**Deputy Chief Fire Officer**