

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY



REPORT REFERENCE NO.	HRMDC/09/4
MEETING	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	22 JANUARY 2009
SUBJECT OF REPORT	UPDATE OF PROJECTS RELATING TO RETAINED DUTY SYSTEMS
LEAD OFFICER	ACFO (COMMUNITY SAFETY)
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p>(a) <i>That the Committee endorses the involvement of all staff affected by the implementation of improvements to the Retained Duty System;</i></p> <p>(b) <i>That, subject to (a) above, the Committee notes the progress made to date.</i></p>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>Following the review of the Retained Duty System (RDS) which was completed in March 2008, important areas of potential improvement have been identified that will significantly enhance the service's ability to attract and keep staff on the RDS including females and those from minority groups.</p> <p>This paper illustrates the planned and proposed projects that will be undertaken by working groups including RDS employees.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	The resource implications have not been quantified at this stage, however, it is intended that the implementation of new ways of working will be cost neutral at least or result in organisational efficiencies
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be carried out for the project as appropriate.
APPENDICES	None
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	Retained Review

1. **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 A review of the Retained Duty System (RDS) arrangements in Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS) was carried out which was reported to the Committee in March 2008. This involved extensive consultation with RDS employees, their partners and service managers. Following this process, the results have been analysed by relevant departments in order to inform future activities and plans.
- 1.2 As a result senior managers have identified areas of work that require immediate or longer term action. This paper provides an update of existing and planned activities.

2. **EXISTING PROJECTS**

Development of new RDS working arrangements

- 2.1 As part of the RDS review DSFRS employees were consulted regarding the performance of the existing “pay as you go” and former Devon Salary Scheme arrangements as well as their preferences for future RDS contracts, working arrangements and methods of payment. This consultation process and performance review has identified the positive and negative aspects of both of the existing systems.
- 2.2 In order to develop the most effective way forward, utilising the strengths of the existing arrangements as well as considering new ideas, a working group to include an RDS representative from each of the existing 6 areas has been established.
- 2.3 The intention of this is to improve working arrangements in order to assist with recruitment and retention issues as well as improving operational performance. This is an excellent opportunity to further develop the strengths of the existing RDS systems and to harmonise the arrangements across Devon and Somerset.
- 2.4 It is intended that this group will report during the spring of this year.

Availability monitoring systems and electronic pay roll

- 2.5 The review identified that the implementation of an availability monitoring tool and improvements to the paper based pay system were a priority. As a consequence the Service Management Board recently approved the procurement of such a system.
- 2.6 An electronic availability system will present real time information regarding the availability of appliances and RDS employees enhancing resilience, and will also provide service managers with effective systems to manage performance. Additionally it will provide options such as the use of text via mobile phones and use of the internet for RDS employees to update and record their weekly cover improving the flexibility of their working arrangements.
- 2.7 An electronic RDS pay system will enable pay claims to be processed electronically via the intranet or internet. This introduction could provide efficiency savings or improvements due to reduced workload for the Pay and Conditions department and service delivery managers, as well as increased morale due to enhanced effectiveness and accuracy. Additionally employees will be able to review their own pay claim history remotely reducing the number of queries to the pay department. This area was identified as a key issue within the RDS review.

2.8 A Working Group has been formed to manage the implementation of this project; however, it is expected that the procurement process will take until the end of April 2009 and therefore, the system will not be available for use for at least 6 months.

3. **PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT**

3.1 Once again feedback from the RDS review has identified issues that require further development or implementation. RDS employees will be used to form project teams in order to meet some of the objectives listed below:

- Introduce a Retained forum to improve communication and consultation with RDS employees.
- To review the provision of the existing recruitment process in order to improve access and availability of recruitment information.
- Develop improved RDS vacancy management arrangements to provide accurate work force planning information.
- Develop a strategy for positive action in order to promote recruitment from under - represented groups.
- Develop a strategy to raise awareness of the role of Retained firefighters within the community
- Develop a strategy to improve liaison with the primary employers of RDS employees
- Review the range of activities currently being carried out by RDS employees and identify opportunities to introduce specialist roles and skills.

4. **CONCLUSION**

4.1 The purpose of this update is to provide a summary of the existing and planned projects that have been generated following the RDS review. Working groups are formed or being formed for these tasks and will be managed using the service project control tool.

4.2 RDS employees have been extensively consulted during the review process and will be actively involved in the planning and implementation of the proposed projects. This approach will improve the level of involvement and contribution of RDS employees towards the service improvement programme.

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