

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

22 January 2009

Present:-

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

Apologies:-

Councillor Shadrick

Prior to the commencement of the formal business of the meeting, Councillor Cann advised the Committee that Councillor Des Shadrick was seriously ill in hospital. He extended the best wishes of Members and requested that a letter be sent on behalf of the Committee to this effect.

***HRMDC/26. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2008 be signed as a correct record.

***HRMDC/27. Declarations of Interest**

Members 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/28. Absence Management**

The Committee received for information a report of the Head of Human Resources Management and Development (HRMDC/09/1) that set out the position in respect of performance on sickness absence (to the end of November 2008). The report also updated the Committee on progress that had been made on the Absence Management Policy.

It was noted that there had been a 12.9% decrease in absence for all staff compared with the same period last year (Q1 to Q3 in 2008), although there were variations in performance across staff categories. The breakdown for control room staff continued to be over the target as compared with the same period last year with a 69% variance. Reference was made to the Absence Management Policy and it was requested that this be submitted to the Committee for information in due course.

***HRMDC/29. Staff Survey**

The Committee received for information an update given by the Head of Human Resources Management and Development on the action being taken to address the issues raised in the recent Staff Survey.

The Committee noted that there had been a 30% response rate to the survey which was very good for an exercise of this type. The results of the ORS survey were to be published on the intranet with a commentary to explain the action taken where points had been drawn to the attention of the service. The Head of Human resources Management and Development added that a Steering Group had been established to manage the way forward.

***HRMDC/30. Corporate Manslaughter Bill - Update**

The Committee received for information a presentation given by the Head of Human Resources Management and Development.

The presentation covered the action that needed to be taken to ensure that the Authority's policies, procedures and processes were consistent with best practice. It was noted that there had not been any changes made to the Corporate Manslaughter Bill itself, but the new Guide to Health and Safety Offences Act 2008 contained updated penalties that could be imposed for health and safety contraventions and these were outlined at the meeting.

***HRMDC/31. Community Safety Proactive Measures**

The Committee received for information a report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Community Safety) (HRMDC/09/2) that, following the introduction of enhanced response times for dwellings, proposed improvements to service delivery in respect of its prevention activities and specifically, to be able to identify groups in the community that were more at risk and to target resources accordingly. The proposal would:

- improve the ability of the service to access and analyse risk information in order to prioritise those wards with the greatest predominance of high risk groups and;
- develop a delivery strategy, building on the excellent work undertaken by Community Safety Action Teams (CSATs), expanding this work with the utilisation of community fire safety advocates.

This work required the implementation of different forms of employment contract and the Committee was asked to endorse this approach.

Councillor Cann drew attention to a project that had been undertaken in North Devon in respect of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HIMOs) and he suggested that this work should be promoted widely by the Authority. He proposed (seconded by Councillor Parker) that a second resolution be added to the advice in the report

“that the Authority takes steps to promote widely the excellent work being undertaken in North Devon in respect of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HIMOs)”.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Committee supports the proposal set out within paragraphs 4 and 5 of this report for different employment contracts and conditions;
- (b) that the Authority takes steps to promote the excellent work being undertaken in North Devon in respect of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HIMOs).

***HRMDC/32. Target Setting for Goal 2 of the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority Corporate Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12**

The Committee considered a joint report of the Head of Human Resources Management and Development and the Head of Service Planning and Review (HRMDC/09/3) that set out options in respect of targets under Goal 2 “to be an employer of choice” for inclusion within the Corporate Plan for 2009/10 to 2011/12.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the following targets be included within Goal 2 of the Corporate Plan for 2009/10 to 2011/12:
 - (i) By 2013, the percentage of recruits from minority ethnic groups across the whole organisation to be 7.29%;
 - (ii) by 2013, 18% of firefighters recruited into the service to be women;
 - (iii) to reduce the proportion of working days/shifts lost per person due to sickness absence to 9.0 days by 2010/11;
 - (iv) to ensure that 90% of retained posts are filled;
- (b) That, with the inclusion of the targets set out above, the Corporate Plan for 2009/10 to 2011/12 be submitted to the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority on 16 February 2009 for final approval.

***HRMDC/33. Update of Projects Relating to Retained Duty Systems**

The Committee received for information a report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Community Safety) (HRMDC/09/4) that updated the Committee in respect of the progress made with the review of the Retained Duty System (RDS), setting out important areas for potential improvement that have been identified. The report also set out details of existing projects that had been instigated to address issues raised during the review and projects in development including:

- The introduction of 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;

- To develop a strategy to raise awareness of the role of retained firefighters within the community;
- To develop a strategy to improve liaison with the primary employers of RDS staff.

***HRMDC/34. Work Programme**

The Head of Human Resources Management and Development provided an update on the current position in terms of a Work Programme for the Committee. The areas in which further work was to be undertaken for consideration by the Committee included:

- Staff Survey;
- Retained Review;
- Health of the Organisation;
- Training and Development;
- Health and Safety.

It was suggested that the next meeting on 15 April 2009 could be themed around Training and development, with the meeting to be held at Service Training Centre at Plympton. This would also give the Committee the opportunity to have a tour of the facilities and to view at first hand the work being undertaken there.

***HRMDC/35. Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED 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 any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

***HRMDC/36. Job Evaluation For Non-Uniformed Staff**

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

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Human Resources Management and Development (HRMDC/09/5) that set out the progress made with the job evaluation scheme for non-uniformed staff.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority be recommended to adopt the proposed pay and grading structure as set out in paragraph 4 of report HRMDC/09/5;

- (b) that, in relation to pay protection (and given that incremental increases and cost of living increases have been made in the two previous financial years):
 - (i) an incremental increase and cost of living rise be applied for 2009/10 to match the commitment made to staff at the point of combination; and;
 - (ii) a further year of continued protection be made for 2010/11 by way of a cost of living rise only (i.e. without any further incremental increases);
- (c) that, to facilitate (a) and (b) above, additional budget provision as identified in paragraph 5.2 of the report HRMDC/09/5 be made.

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

The meeting started at 14.00hours and concluded at 16.12 hours.