

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

3 October 2011

Present:-

Councillors Cann (Chairman), Boyd, Bown, Healey and Wright

Apologies:-

Councillors Burridge-Clayton and Horsfall

***HRMDC/11. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2011 be signed as a correct record.

***HRMDC/12. 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 declare any such interests at this time.

No interests were declared.

***HRMDC/13. Election of Vice Chair**

RESOLVED that Councillor Anne Bown be appointed the Vice-Chair of the Committee until its first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Authority in 2012.

***HRMDC/14. Absence Management**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (HRMDC/11/9) that provided details of the Service performance for absence levels in 2011/2.

The level of absence between April to July 2011 was 2.70 days/shifts lost per person, a deterioration against the average of 2.40 days/shifts lost per person in the same period of the previous year. The report detailed further breakdowns on the absence in terms of uniformed and non-uniformed staff sickness rates; long and short-term sickness and length of service and age.

The Committee was informed that continuous action was being taken to improve sickness absence management. Initiatives included:

- sharing best practice with Bedfordshire and Luton FRS as part of the Middleware project;
- sharing best practice with CFOA regional HR group and the national HR group;
- Signing up to the mindful employer charter and the two ticks scheme; and,

- Consideration of the provision of stress management awareness training for line managers.

The Chairman moved (and was seconded by Councillor Wright) that:

“in addition to noting the report, an update on the progress made with the Middleware project (in relation to sickness absence management process improvement) be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee and the Senior Management Board be informed that the Committee would be supportive of the introduction of stress management awareness training for line managers”.

This was put to the vote whereupon it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that an update on the progress made with the Middleware project in relation to sickness absence management process improvement be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee;
- (b) that the Senior Management Board be informed that this Committee would be supportive of the introduction of stress management awareness training for line managers; and,
- (c) that, subject to (a) and (b) above, report HRMDC/11/9 be noted.

***HRMDC/15. Equalities Framework Peer Assessment (EFPA)**

The Committee received for information a presentation by the Community and Workplace Equalities Manager which highlighted, amongst other things:

- A summary of the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011 and the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework;
- The purpose of the mock assessment undertaken for the Service in 2010 and the subsequent areas of improvement;
- The replacement of Equality Impact Assessments by Equality Risks and Benefits Assessments (ERBA) designed to deliver improvements in the development and implementation of Service policy by embedding equality considerations in project business cases, process design and policy development; and,
- The full Peer assessment (which was not an inspection but an assessment by “critical friends”) which would commence in November 2011.

The Committee commended the Service on this excellent work and enquired as to how Members could engage with this. The Community and Workplace Equalities Manager advised that up to twelve Authority Members could volunteer to participate in the process. This information would be disseminated to the full Authority and Members encouraged to advise of their interest accordingly.

***HRMDC/16. 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 items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in:

- for Minute *HRMDC/17, in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act, namely information relating to the business affairs of the Authority; and
- for Minute *HRMDC/18, 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 and its employees.

***HRMDC/17. Business Continuity**

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

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (HRMDC/11/10) providing further background to the potential for industrial action linked to proposed pensions reforms; the implications of any such action; and measures being taken by the Service to secure a level of business continuity in the event of any disruptive event such as industrial action.

***HRMDC/18. Fire Control Staffing Issues**

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

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Service Delivery (HRMDC/11/11) on proposals in relation to the staffing models that might be used in moving to a consolidated, single control room and the staffing levels recommended when in steady state. The consolidated control room project was necessitated by a number of factors (including cancellation of the national FiReControl project and the requirement for the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service to vacate its Somerset control room at Hestercombe House by March 2012). The scope of the project was to:

- Establish the control function from one site;
- Mobilise resources using one mobilising system;
- Work on one set of policies and procedures; and
- Develop a staffing model appropriate for service delivery and without forced job losses.

In addition to the staffing models highlighted in the report, it was indicated that further changes might be achievable following introduction of a new mobilising system in the future.

At this time it was not possible to give precise funding implications associated with the proposals as these were dependent on a number of other factors. Once finalised, the financial implications would be submitted to the Resources Committee as part of normal financial performance reporting.

RESOLVED that the recommendations as set out in report HRMDC/11/11 and relating to staffing models for the consolidated control function be endorsed for the purpose of holding discussions with affected staff and representative bodies.

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

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 11.00hours.