

## **HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

(Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority)

19 March 2012

### Present:-

Councillors Cann (Chair), Bown, Brooksbank, Burrige-Clayton, Horsfall, Mills (vice Boyd) and Wright.

### Apologies:-

Councillor Boyd.

### **\*HRMDC/30. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2012 be signed as a correct record.

### **\*HRMDC/31. Declarations of Interest**

Members of the Committee 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/32. Assessment & Development Centre (ADC) Technical Assessment - Update**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (HRMDC/12/4) that set out the current position in respect of technical assessment within the Service which was being introduced to replace stage 1 of the existing Assessment and Development Centre process.

The Director of People and Organisational Development advised that the technical assessment involved a paper based exercise together with both short and longer multiple choice questions. A pass mark for the examinations had been set at 70% based on the need to ensure operational competence and that the assessment was a robust test of knowledge. It was noted that the first Supervisory Management level ADC had already been undertaken and that 35 of the 84 candidates (42%) sitting the examinations had achieved the pass mark. Of the candidates who did not pass, the majority achieved a mark of over 50% which was very promising. These candidates would be offered a further opportunity to re-sit the examination in due course with appropriate support to assist with their preparation in the future.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee notes the approach taken in line with the principles of Technical Assessment and endorses:

- (a) The pass mark, and;
- (b) The Institute of Fire Engineers (IFE) equivalent level for Supervisory level technical assessment – to be Level 3 Certificate.

**\*HRMDC/33. Absence Management and Health of the Organisation**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (HRMDC/12/5) that set out the progress made with absence management, including an update on aspects linked to the overall health of the organisation.

The areas set out within the report included:

- Sickness absence performance 2011/12;
- Detailed breakdown of long term sickness;
- The main reasons behind sickness absence;
- Levels of wellbeing and referrals to counselling;

The Human Resources Manager stated that the current actual level of sickness absence (to the end of January 2012) was 6.55 days/shifts lost per person as compared with the same period in 2010/11 when it was 6.60 days per person. This demonstrates a gradual improvement in performance throughout the course of the year to a point where the Service had achieved a 0.8% improvement on 2010/11.

It was noted that the level of referrals to counselling in Somerset remained at a much higher level than in Devon and it was anticipated that more information on this matter would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

**\*HRMDC/34. Draft Equality Plan 2012/16 And Consultation Report**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (HRMDC/12/6) that set out the requirements of the new Equality Act 2010, together with details of the Public Sector Equality Duty that came into force from April 2011.

The Director of People and Organisational Development reported that the Equality Act 2010 set out nine legally protected characteristics, namely - Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex and Sexual orientation. The duty also stated that, in relation to the protected characteristics above (with the exception of marriage and civil partnership), public authorities must give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

These duties required the Service to publish equality objectives and, with this in mind, a new Equality Plan entitled "Safer Lives, Brighter Futures" had been produced and had been subject to wide consultation both within the Service and with external stakeholders. As a result of the consultation, it was noted that the Equality Plan had been amended to take account of comments made and this was now commended to the Committee for approval and endorsement by the Fire and Rescue Authority.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee:

- (a) notes the contents of the Consultation Report, and;
- (b) approves the Equality Plan 2012-16, amended as appropriate in line with the outcome of the consultation, and commends it to the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority for endorsement and adoption.

**\*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 involved 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 contemplated consultations in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Authority and its employees.

**HRMDC/36. Redundancy Compensation Rates**

(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).

The Committee considered a report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (HRMDC/12/7) that set out the background to the current redundancy compensation rate and which set out information to assist with the review, including comparisons with other local authorities within the South West region.

The Chairman moved (and was seconded by Councillor Burrige-Clayton:

“that it be recommended to the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority that there should be no change to the current redundancy compensation rate (a multiplier of 2) and that this matter should continue to be reviewed at least annually”.

Upon a vote (7 for, 0 against), the motion was carried.

**RESOLVED** that it be recommended to the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority that there should be no change to the current redundancy compensation rate (a multiplier of 2) and that this matter should continue to be reviewed at least annually.

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

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 10.43hours