

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

15 November 2012

Present:-

Councillors Bown (Chair), Brooksbank (Vice Chair), Burridge-Clayton, Chugg, Knight and J D Smith

Apologies:-

Councillor Horsfall

**\*HRMDC/12. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2012 be signed as a correct record.

**\*HRMDC/13. Absence Management and Health of the Organisation**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (HRMDC/12/9) that set out the Service's performance in respect of sickness absence for the period 1 April 2012 to 30 September 2012 as measured against the targets within the Corporate Plan for 2012/13 to 2015/16.

The Human Resources Manager reported that the actual performance for the first half of 2012 was 3.86 days or shifts lost per person as compared with 3.96 days or shifts in 2011/12. He drew attention to the point that further analysis of the sickness absence statistics using a rolling 12 month period showed that performance had remained at a rate of just over 8 days or shifts lost per person since March 2011. He added that the overall profile of long term sickness matched that of short term sickness over this period.

Reference was made to the Service's performance as compared with other fire and rescue services in the United Kingdom for Quarters 1 and 2 in 2012 as set out within national benchmarking data. This showed that Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service compared less favourably to 9 other fire and rescue services participating in the national benchmarking exercise on sickness absence and had performed better in only 4 cases. The Committee enquired as to whether there was any pattern to this and any lessons that the Service could learn to improve its performance. The Human Resources Manager replied that he felt that the Service was taking every possible step to address sickness absence within the organisation and he highlighted some key areas of action. The Director of People and Organisational Development added that the Service did look for examples of good practice amongst other fire and rescue services.

The Committee recognised that the Service had been working on reducing sickness absence over a number of years now and acknowledged that performance was going in the right direction. It was indicated, however, that the Committee needed to maintain oversight of the position in respect of sickness absence levels in the future.

**\*HRMDC/14. Equality Strategy - 6 Monthly Monitoring Report: May to October 2012**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of People and Organisational Development (HRMDC/12/10) that provided an update in respect of performance against the Service's Equality Strategy for the period 1 May 2012 to 31 October 2012.

The Director of People and Organisational Development reported that the new Equality Strategy "Safer Lives, Brighter Futures" was approved by the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority in May 2012 (Minute DSFRA/xx refers) following extensive internal and external consultation. From this and a review of the previous Strategy, a detailed plan was set out with actions for completion at various stages between 2012 and 2016 to enable the Authority to move towards the achievement of the "Excellent" level in accordance with the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework. The report circulated set out the progress that had been made in achieving the actions to date in 2012 and indicated that this was very good and there were no areas of concern at present.

It was noted that a report on progress would be submitted to this Committee to monitor the progress made every six months.

**\*HRMDC/15. RoSPA - Audit Outcomes, Health & Safety**

The Committee received for information a presentation given at the meeting by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

The presentation set out the processes that had been put into place to enable the organisation to monitor how health and safety had been embedded within the Service and explained how the Royal Society for the Protection of Accidents (RoSPA) had been utilised to audit the Authority's progress in achieving this.

The Deputy Health and Safety Manager advised the Committee that in 2012, the Service had received the highest award possible from RoSPA which was its Diamond award for the improvement that had been shown in terms of health and safety improvement and its management systems. This meant that the Service was now in the top 5% of organisations in the United Kingdom. Notably, the Service had achieved a 37% reduction in personal injuries from 2009 to 2012 which was commended.

The Committee extended its congratulations and thanks to the Health and Safety Team and all involved in this on an excellent achievement. The Director of People and Organisational Development commented that this needed to be fed into the Chief Fire Officers' Association in addition and that these results would also assist the Authority in its forthcoming audit under the EFQM programme in 2013.

\* DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 10.55hours