

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

26 July 2013

Present:-

Bown, Brooksbank, Chugg, Healey (vice Burrridge-Clayton), Horsfall and J Smith

Apologies:-

Received from Councillors Burrridge-Clayton and Knight

***HRMDC/1. Election of Chair**

RESOLVED that Councillor Bown be appointed Chair of the Committee until the first meeting after the Annual General Meeting of the Authority in 2014.

***HRMDC/2. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2013 be signed as a correct record.

***HRMDC/3. Election of Vice Chair**

RESOLVED that Councillor Brooksbank be appointed Vice Chair of the Committee until the first meeting after the Annual General Meeting of the Authority in 2014.

***HRMDC/4. Health, Safety and Welfare Framework for the Operational Environment**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of People and Commercial Services (HRMDC/13/1) that set out details of the new Framework that had been published recently by the Department for Communities and Local Government. This Framework had been established to assist Fire and Rescue Services in balancing the health, safety and welfare of staff whilst they were at work with the risks faced on a day to day basis.

The Director of People and Commercial Services commented that the Service already had a very good infrastructure in place as was demonstrated by the recent Diamond Award from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). There was, however, scope for the Service to learn from best practice in addition and the Action Plan that was being developed by the Organisational Safety Assurance (OSA) department would take account of this, amongst other matters.

***HRMDC/5. Equality Strategy - 'Safer Lives, Brighter Futures' – 6 Monthly Monitoring Report – November 2012 to April 2013**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of People and Commercial Services (HRMDC/13/2) that set out the progress made as measured against the objectives and action plan within the Authority's Equality Strategy – "Safer Lives, Brighter Futures" – between November 2012 and April 2013.

The Committee noted that the Strategy was monitored internally by the Equality Steering Group that consisted of both operational and support staff from across the Service. Externally, the progress made was validated by community advisory groups which represented vulnerable people in the community. Links had been established with the Community Safety Department in addition and work was being undertaken to identify whether the remit of the groups already set up could be expanded as a result. Reference was made to the Equality Risk and Benefit Assessments (ERBA) process undertaken by the Service which had recently been nominated for a national award at the ALARM awards. This process underpinned the Strategy and had also been commended by internal audit.

The progress made against the Strategy was very good with no areas for concern at this stage and the Committee commended all of the Officers involved.

***HRMDC/6. Equal Pay Audit**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of People and Commercial Services (HRMDC/13/3) on the Equal Pay Audit that had been undertaken to demonstrate that appropriate action had been undertaken to identify and eliminate any gender pay discrimination within the Service.

The Human Resources Manager advised that the key issues identified in this audit were:

- Women were under represented in senior operational roles;
- Women were under represented in uniformed roles other than in Control;
- The majority of support staff posts in grade 1 to 3 were women;
- There was a low level of lesbian, gay and bi-sexual employees' self-identification in the Service.

Members of the Committee commented that, whilst the principles behind the audit were understood, the document needed to be simplified so that it could be more easily understood. Additionally, it was considered that the document identified cultural change within the organisation and that this needed to be highlighted.

The Director of People and Commercial Services stated that one of the main points of this exercise was to understand what the barriers were in terms of stopping people from applying for posts within the organisation. It was noted that the document would be reviewed in the light of the comments made.

***HRMDC/7. Plymouth and Devon Racial Equalities Council (PDREC)**

The Committee received for information a presentation given by Crew Manager Dave Evans, who was currently directly supporting the PDREC through a secondment until 31 March 2013.

Members were advised of the value and benefit of this secondment, including an explanation of the areas of work the Service had been able to support and the range and breadth of projects that had been undertaken with some of the most vulnerable groups in our communities.

***HRMDC/8. Firefighters' Pension Scheme Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure**

The Committee noted that it required to appoint 3 of its Members to serve on the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure Stage 2 Panel (IDRP). (Membership in 2012/13 was Councillors Bown, Knight and J Smith).

RESOLVED that Councillors Bown, Brooksbank and J Smith be appointed to serve on the Panel until the first meeting of the Committee following the Annual Meeting of the Authority in 2014.

***HRMDC/9. 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 Paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, including the Authority and information relating to contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Authority and its employees.

***HRMDC/10. Firefighters' Pensions Scheme Update and Business Continuity**

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

The Director of People and Commercial Services updated the Committee on the progress made in respect of the proposed new Firefighters Pension Scheme 2015 together with the concerns that had been raised in this respect by the Fire Brigades' Union (FBU). It was noted that the FBU nationally had balloted for strike action as a result of their concerns and the Committee was apprised of the arrangements being made by the Service for business continuity in the event that the ballot was successful.

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

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 12.02hours