

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

23 July 2014

Present:

Councillors Bown, Brooksbank, Burridge-Clayton, Chugg, Knight and Smith

Also in attendance in accordance with Standing Order 36(1):

Councillor Healey.

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

RESOLVED that Councillor Bown be elected Chair of the Committee until its first meeting after the Authority Annual Meeting in 2015.

***HRMDC/2. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2014 be signed as a correct record.

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

RESOLVED that Councillor Brooksbank be elected Vice Chair of the Committee until its first meeting after the Authority Annual Meeting in 2015.

***HRMDC/4. Health and Safety Management Information System**

The Committee received for information a presentation given by the Organisational Safety Assurance Manager at the meeting that provided an overview of the new electronic ES9 system for reporting health and safety incidents. The new system had been purchased recently by the Service and the presentation outlined, amongst other matters, the benefits of its adoption which included:

- The old system was paper based and thus cumbersome and prone to delay and the process had been speeded up with a rapid and efficient electronic system;
- The new system provided electronic capture of data together with the ability for real time, detailed analysis of large volumes of information;
- There was more ownership for stakeholders;
- The system gave greater visibility, better security and improved accessibility to the data.

The Committee noted that the Service was the first customer in the fire sector for the supplier, Datex, and this had provided benefits in terms of the design of bespoke requirements for the Service. The systems could be utilised potentially by other fire and rescue services in the future.

***HRMDC/5. Absence Management and Health of the Organisation**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of People and Commercial Services (HRMDC/14/5) that set out details of the Service's performance on absence management for the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 and additionally, 1 April 2014 to 30 June 2014.

The Human Resources Manager reported that, over the past four years, there had been a downward trend on the sickness absence rate. In 2012/13, the absence rate dropped to below a rate of 8 days lost per person per year to 7.79 and this continued into 2013/14 with a decrease to 7.06 days. This compared very well to other industries, with the private sector achieving a performance of 6.1 days lost per person per year in 2012/13 and other public services achieving 9.3 days lost per person per year. The Service was also performing well in most areas (with the exception of fire control) as compared with other fire and rescue services.

In terms of performance in 2014/15, the Committee noted that in the first quarter of 2014/15, the absence rate had increased in comparison to the same period last year. Work was being undertaken to drill down into the data to highlight any problem areas. Reference was made to the new electronic sickness reporting procedure that had been introduced recently and that this reduced the administrative time involved in absence management. The Committee enquired as to whether this provided live data in the same way as the health and safety management information system and whether this could be adapted for use with absence management. The Director of People and Commercial Services replied that options for improving the production of management reports would be investigated and progress would be reported to a future meeting.

HRMDC/6. Equality Strategy "Safer Lives, Brighter Futures" - Monitoring Report: April 2013 to June 2014

The Committee considered a report of the Area Manager (Community Safety, Corporate Communications & Information, Community & Workplace Equalities) (HRMDC/14/6) that gave an update on the progress made with the delivery of the Equality Strategy "Safer Lives, Brighter Futures" for the period April 2013 to June 2014. The Equality Strategy helped to ensure that the Service was meeting its legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The report gave an update on four areas of the Equality Strategy, namely:

- Equality Risks and Benefits Analysis;
- The new Core Values and behavioural framework;
- Fire Pride Network; and
- The Women's Action Network (WANDS).

The Equalities Officer gave an overview of the new Core Values and behavioural framework for the Service that had been developed following extensive consultation with staff. Four broad themes emerged from the feedback given which now formed the Core Values:

- Honesty, clarity and accountability;
- Respect for each other;
- Working together to improve; and
- A "can do" attitude.

These were backed up by the behavioural standards which included three layers – ideal, expected and unacceptable.

It was noted that the new core values were being rolled out across the Service and were being utilised, for example, in team meetings on drill nights, following incidents and at one-to-one meetings.

In terms of Fire Pride, the Committee extended its congratulations to the Equalities Officer on the award of “highly commended” in the employee network category at the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion awards, which recognised the commitment of organisations in achieving diverse and inclusive workplaces.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Authority be recommended to adopt the Core Values and Behavioural Framework as appended to these Minutes (for reference) and referred to in Section 3 of report HRMDC/14/6;
- (b) that, pending (a) above, the Clerk be authorised to amend the accountabilities, roles and responsibilities of Members of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority constitutional governance framework document to reflect adoption of the new Core Values and Behavioural Framework; and
- (c) that, subject to (a) and (b) above, the report be noted.

***HRMDC/7. Retained Duty System (RDS) Leaver Analysis**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of People and Commercial Services (HRMDC/14/7) that set out details of the staff turnover rates for the RDS in 2011/12 to 2013/14.

It was noted that the characteristic pattern for employment generally was for a higher turnover following initial appointment, then decreasing as time went by which was known as the ‘survival curve’. The Service had reviewed the leaver data in January 2012 and it had been ascertained that the majority had left for personal reasons or had not actually given a specific reason. Work life balance was also another key reason. There were also links with equality issues with women in the RDS with the percentage of leavers tending to be higher than for men.

Reference was made to the potential for recruiting nationally through Jobcentre Plus, where recruits would undertake basic training and then fill vacancies within services – a matter that was being considered by the CFOA RDS Working Group. The suggestion was also made for the introduction of an apprentice scheme within Devon and Somerset to attract young people into the Service. The Human Resources Manager responded that, as the Service was still reducing its workforce as a result of the implementation of the Corporate Plan, it was not felt that the time was right for the introduction of an apprentice scheme in Devon and Somerset.

***HRMDC/8. 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 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act, namely information relating to individuals;
- Paragraph 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act, namely information likely to reveal the identity of individuals; and
- Paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act, namely information relating to consultations or negotiations or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with a labour relations matter between the Authority and representative bodies currently recognised by the Authority.

HRMDC/9. Working With Trade Unions

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

The Committee considered a report of the Director of People and Commercial Services (HRMDC/14/8) that identified the employment relations arrangements that were currently in place for the Service, together with the outcome of a review into whether these arrangements were fit for purpose in delivering mutually beneficial employee relations, providing value for money by delivering a return on investment.

Following a lengthy debate, Councillor Knight **MOVED** with Councillor Burridge-Clayton seconding that:

- (a) The Authority be recommended to authorise the Human Resources Management and Development Committee to make a determination on future arrangements for trade union facilities;
- (b) That, pending (a) above, a Special Meeting of the Committee be convened in September 2014 to consider options for trade union facilities in the future;
- (c) That, having given consideration to the request from the South West Regional Fire Brigades Union (FBU) for the part time release of the current Service FBU Brigade Secretary, the Committee expressed a view that any such arrangement that may be agreed should be on the basis of full cost recovery.

This was put to the vote, whereupon it was:

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Authority be recommended to authorise the Human Resources Management and Development Committee to make a determination on future arrangements for trade union facilities;
- (b) That, pending (a) above, a Special Meeting of the Committee be convened in September 2014 to consider options for trade union facilities in the future;

- (c) That, having given consideration to the request from the South West Regional Fire Brigades Union (FBU) for the part time release of the current Service FBU Brigade Secretary, the Committee expressed a view that any such arrangement that may be agreed should be on the basis of full cost recovery.

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

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 13.10hours



As a Service and as individuals we value –

Our core values

	Honesty, clarity and accountability	Respect for each other	Working together to improve	A 'can do' attitude
Ideal	<p>Encouraging an open, honest and respectful working environment for all employees.</p> <p>Acting with integrity on behalf of the team/Service and not self-interest.</p> <p>Making ethical, consistent, fair and transparent decisions that withstand scrutiny.</p> <p>Having clear, comprehensive policies and procedures that are well communicated, applied consistently and updated regularly.</p>	<p>Taking time to develop rapport so you can relate to others.</p> <p>Creating an open, non-judgemental atmosphere where everyone feels able to speak their mind.</p> <p>Showing empathy by considering the feelings of others.</p> <p>Responding to the needs of our communities following regular dialogue about what is important to them.</p>	<p>Focusing on our customers, understanding who they are and what their needs may be.</p> <p>Being flexible in changing times and willing to accept new challenges.</p> <p>Seeking opportunities for employees to work with each other across the Service to share knowledge and increase understanding.</p> <p>Encouraging innovation and new ideas, thinking outside the box and publicising success.</p> <p>Seeking best practice and piloting good ideas and alternative ways of working.</p>	<p>Being an energiser, adding value to your role, going the extra mile and having a positive attitude.</p> <p>Encouraging enthusiasm and passion for the job.</p> <p>Being a good role model who leads by example and demonstrates high standards.</p> <p>Motivating others.</p>
Expected	<p>Setting and communicating the direction of the Service, its aims and objectives.</p> <p>Ensuring all employees are clear about their role and how it contributes to Service aims and objectives.</p>	<p>Actively involving people in decision-making and being open to their ideas, particularly in decisions that affect them.</p> <p>Providing timely, clear and concise communications, using face to face where possible.</p>	<p>Empowering others to operate within their levels of responsibility.</p> <p>Providing opportunities for personal development to enable employees to progress and achieve their potential.</p>	<p>Responding positively to new ideas.</p> <p>Maintaining high standards.</p> <p>Demonstrating pride and professionalism through smart appearance and punctuality.</p>

	Honesty, clarity and accountability	Respect for each other	Working together to improve	A 'can do' attitude
	<p>Setting clear performance standards and monitoring regularly.</p> <p>Being honest, sincere, open and truthful.</p> <p>Having a clear career structure with support available through development opportunities.</p> <p>Taking responsibility for our own actions and decisions.</p>	<p>Recognising the benefits of a diverse workforce and the value this can add.</p> <p>Challenging bullying, harassment and inappropriate behaviour/language.</p> <p>Showing appreciation for people's efforts.</p> <p>Dealing with difficult issues as they occur to avoid the situation getting worse.</p> <p>Supporting employees to develop a healthy, happy work-life balance.</p>	<p>Accepting genuine errors and encouraging people to learn from them.</p> <p>Willing to give and accept constructive criticism in order to improve for the future.</p> <p>Engaging with partners and proactively seeking out other agencies with mutual goals.</p>	<p>Respecting the history and good reputation of the Service.</p> <p>Being reliable and able to carry out tasks without close supervision.</p>
Unacceptable	<p>Disregarding Service policies and procedures.</p> <p>Being dishonest by saying one thing and doing something different.</p> <p>Allowing situations to continue where there is distrust and a bad atmosphere.</p>	<p>Consulting people when decisions have already been made that can no longer be influenced.</p> <p>Being aware of something you know to be wrong but doing nothing about it.</p> <p>Being inconsistent in decision-making and the provision of information.</p> <p>Bullying and harassment.</p>	<p>Taking too much time to respond to issues that could be resolved quickly.</p> <p>Being resistant to change without considering the benefits.</p> <p>Working separately rather than as one organisation.</p> <p>Looking to blame people rather than allowing them to learn from mistakes.</p>	<p>Poor standards in work, appearance and timekeeping.</p> <p>Negativity, always complaining and failing to see anything good at work.</p> <p>Being unreliable and not trusted to carry out the task in hand.</p> <p>Having a poor attitude, not wanting to assist others in any way.</p>