

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

10 March 2016

Present:-

Councillors A Bown (Chair), Burridge-Clayton, Chugg, Dyke (sub Horsfall), Hill (sub Thomas), Knight and Wheeler.

**HRMDC/20     Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2015\***

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2016 be signed as a correct record.

**HRMDC/21     Interim Results of the Employee Survey 2015\***

The Committee receive for information a presentation given by the Communities and Workplace Equalities Manager that provided an update on the results of the Employee Survey that had been undertaken in 2015.

The main points noted were:

- This was the fourth employee survey that had been undertaken since combination in 2007;
- There were 9 key areas in which the Service could measure employee satisfaction and engagement with the workforce and these had been utilised as the basis for the questions in the survey;
- Around 800 responses to the survey had been received;
- The responses had been split into 6 areas where satisfaction was gauged to be greater than 50% and 3 areas where it was less than 50%;
- There had been a mixture of positive and negative comments received in addition to the completion of the survey questions, with many practical suggestions made. The comments were made by people who had responded both positively and negatively to the question, with cross cutting themes emerging, i.e. the comments didn't always fit neatly within the question;
- Development work was underway to address the some of the outcomes of the survey which included employee engagement, communication, wellbeing, and learning and development issues.

**HRMDC/22     Absence Management\***

The Committee considered a report of the Director of People & Commercial Services (HRMDC/16/1) that set out the sickness absence levels for staff since combination in 2007 to date, with particular reference to the position in 2014/15 to 2015/16.

It was noted that during 2014/15, the Service had seen an increase in sickness absence levels which had continued into 2015/16. An action plan had been instigated to address this and the Service was starting to see the early signs of an improvement in sickness levels. As a result, in April to October 2016, the sickness absence level was 6.66 days which was a 4.8% decrease on the same period in 2014/15. One of the main areas of focus was on long term sickness where the Service had previously seen an increase but this had now reduced. The action taken to improve performance in this area included ensuring that management data entry for sickness absence was timely and accurate, the improved management of sickness absence and by addressing cultural issues which were impacting upon sickness.

The Committee requested that appropriate benchmarking data should be provided such as from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The Human Resources Manager advised that the cycle period for this report was behind that of other benchmarking reports since it utilised a percentage of lost time rather than the number of days of sickness. This meant that the data was not comparable. He added that the data provided by the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD) and other fire and rescue services was available sooner and reported sickness in a compatible form. Members requested that information be included within future reports setting out the position for sickness excluding work related absence.

The Human Resources Manager made reference to the improvements that had been made to the recording of sickness data. He stated that there was still some outstanding work to be undertaken on this to elicit information from 275 staff to record the reasons for absences and he envisaged that this work would be approximately two weeks' work.

#### **HRMDC/23     Applications for Retirement/Re-employment\***

The Committee considered a report of the Director of People & Commercial Services (HRMDC/16/2) that set out requests that had been made by uniformed members of staff for retirement and re-employment in accordance with the requirements of the Authority's Pay Policy Statement 2015/16.

**RESOLVED** that the requests for retirement & re-employment as identified in paragraph 2.4 of report HRMDC/16/2 be approved.

#### **HRMDC/24     Consultation on the Reform of Public Sector Exit Payments\***

The Committee considered a report of the Director of People & Commercial Services (HRMDC/16/3) that set out details of the consultation issued by HM Treasury on proposals for the Reform of Public Sector Exit Payments, the response for which was due by 3 May 2016. The key changes proposed included:

- Further restrictions on public sector redundancy payments;
- The tapering of lump sum redundancy payments towards retirement; and,
- the introduction of a salary cap of £95,000 for calculating exit payments.

**RESOLVED** that the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Human Resources Management & Development Committee, be authorised to submit a response to the consultation on Reforms to Public Sector Exit Payments by 3 May 2016.

**HRMDC/25     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:

- Paragraph 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 3 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/26     Pension Discretion\***

(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 Corporate Services (HRMDC/16/4) that sought approval to instigate the Authority's pension's discretion for a member of staff and which set out the financial implications of doing so in this individual case.

**RESOLVED** that approval be given for the instigation of the pension discretion as set out within report HRMDC/16/4 for the individual concerned.

**HRMDC/27     Update on Trade Union Facilities\***

(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 & Commercial Services (HRMDC/16/5) that set gave an update on the position in respect of the current Trades Union facilities.

**RESOLVED** that the option discussed at the meeting be approved and that a report thereon be submitted to the next meeting setting out the progress made, together with an overview of the Trades Union Reform Bill.

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

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.05 pm