

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

24 June 2016

Present:-

Councillors Bown, Chugg, Healey (sub Thomas), Julian, Knight and Wheeler.

HRMDC/1 Election of Chair*

RESOLVED that Councillor Bown be elected Chair of the Committee until the first meeting after the Annual General Meeting of the Authority in May 2017.

HRMDC/2 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 March 2016*

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2016 be signed as a correct record.

HRMDC/3 Election of Vice Chair*

RESOLVED that Councillor Chugg be elected Vice Chair of the Committee until the first meeting after the Annual General Meeting of the Authority in May 2017.

HRMDC/4 Absence Management*

The Committee considered a report of the Director of People and Commercial Services (HRMDC/16/6) that set out the 2015/16 year end performance figures for sickness absence together with an update on the progress made to date with the Action Plan.

The Human Resources Manager advised the Committee that sickness absence for all staff in 2015/16 was 9.10 days on average per person as compared with 9.74 days in 2014/15. Whilst this was an improvement in performance, the Service was not complacent and continued to implement the Action Plan to seek to reduce this further. He referred to the performance for different categories of staff, namely:

- Wholetime statin based staff;
- Wholetime non-statin based staff;
- Control staff; and,
- Support staff

It was noted that, within wholetime staff, long term sickness (periods over 28 days) and short term certified sickness (between 8 and 28 days) had improved with a 27% reduction and an actual sickness absence rate of 7.16 days on average per person for the year. Control had also seen an improvement primarily through a reduction in long term sickness but this remained higher than in other staff categories. Support staff had seen an increase in sickness absence from 8.17 days in 2014/15 to 8.70 days in 2015/16 but this was an improvement on quarter 3. The position for wholetime non station based staff had deteriorated, however, from 9.55 days lost in 2014/15 to 10.98 days in 2015/16.

The Committee expressed the view that it would prefer to see reported the actual number of staff off sick at any one time rather than the average number of days taken as not all staff would have had absence due to sickness. Councillor Knight also commented that he felt there was duplication with sickness absence also being reported to the Audit & Performance Review Committee. He requested that this be reviewed and also that this report covered any sickness patterns that may emerge from the data. Additionally, he suggested that the figures for long term sickness absence for wholetime staff be adjusted so that sickness resulting from injury on duty through operational incidents were recorded separately

The Human Resources Manager commented that the Service held information on injuries on duty and that new reports would need to be developed to show this information. In terms of the reporting of sickness patterns, he advised the Committee that managers were already required to monitor sickness absence carefully and any period of three absences would trigger a review meeting to discuss this in more detail. Local managers were therefore far better placed to identify where any sickness pattern might occur. The Director of People and Commercial Services added that it may help the Committee to see information in respect of any disciplinary action taken in respect of sickness and this could be provided in a health of the organisation paper to the Committee, along with information in respect of capability issues, long term sickness and so on.

Councillor Wheeler enquired about a national proposal to move to GP medical certificates after fourteen days instead of seven. The Human Resources Manager commented that he was aware of this proposal but that the Service would prefer to see the submission of certificates for sickness absence based on the seven days as was the current arrangement

RESOLVED that the Service continues with the action plan directed towards reducing down sickness absence.

HRMDC/5

Applications for Retirement and/or Re-employment*

The Committee considered a report of the Director of People and Commercial Services (HRMDC/16/7) that set out the 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 2016/17.

RESOLVED that the requests for retirement and re-employment as identified within paragraph 2.4 of report HRMDC/16/7 be approved.

HRMDC/6 Appointments to the Internal Disputes Resolution Panel (IDRP)*

The Committee considered a report of the Clerk (HRMDC/16/8) that set out the requirement for the Committee to appoint a Panel of three members with delegated authority to consider and determine complaints made by individuals under stage 2 of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure.

RESOLVED that Councillors Bown, Burrige Clayton and Knight be appointed to service as members of the Internal Disputes resolution Procedure (IDRP) Panel until the first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Authority in May 2017.

HRMDC/7 Update on Organisational Development*

The Committee received for information a presentation given by the Area Manager (Organisational Development) on the progress being made with Organisational Development following the recent Service restructure.

The Area Manager (Organisational Development) advised the Committee that, although the restructure had been completed, work needed to continue on organisational development. A definition of organisational development was "a planned systematic approach to improving organisational effectiveness – one that designed strategy, people and processes" which seemed to take in all the things the Service wished to achieve in the future. He indicated that, as part of this, the Service would be looking at:

- Leadership and management;
- The culture of the organisation;
- Employee engagement;
- Equality, diversity and inclusion;
- Performance enhancement; and, strategic workforce planning.

He added that it was early days but there was a small team of staff who would be looking at the business with a view to adapting to the future needs of the Service.

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 they involved 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 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 Trade Union Facilities*

(An item considered in accordance with Section 100A 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/16/9) that gave an update on the position in respect of the current trade union facilities together with giving an update on the position in respect of the Trade Union Act 2016.

RESOLVED

- (a) That recommendation (a) as set out within report HRMDC/16/9 be approved;
- (b) That the Trade Union facilities for any On Call Executive FBU representatives be approved as discussed at the meeting;
- (c) That the summary of the Trade Union Act 2016 be noted and that a further report be submitted to the next meeting taking into account the points raised at the meeting.

NB. Councillor Wheeler asked for his abstention from the vote taken during consideration of the motion put forward under resolution (b) above to be recorded.

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

The meeting started at 10.00hours and finished at 12.20hours