



DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

M. Pearson
CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY

To: The Chair and Members of the Human
Resources Management & Development
Committee

(see below)

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

Friday 16 September 2016

A meeting of the Human Resources Management & Development Committee is to be held on the above date, **commencing at 10.00 am in Conference Room B, Somerset House, Service Headquarters** to consider the following matters.

M. Pearson
Clerk to the Authority

AGENDA

PLEASE REFER TO THE NOTES AT THE END OF THE AGENDA LISTING SHEETS

1 Apologies

2 Minutes (Pages 1 - 4)

of the previous meeting held on 24 June 2016 attached.

3 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

Items which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as matters of urgency.

PART 1 - OPEN COMMITTEE

4 Absence Management (Pages 5 - 14)

Report of the Director of People & Commercial Services (HRMDC/16/10) attached.

- 5 **Equalities Strategy - "Safer Lives, Brighter Futures" Monitoring Report (Pages 15 - 20)**
Report of the Director of People & Commercial Services (HRMDC/16/11) attached.
- 6 **Redundancy Compensation Rates (Pages 21 - 28)**
Report of the Director of People & Commercial Services (HRMDC/16/12) attached.
- 7 **Retirement and Re-employment (Pages 29 - 32)**
Report of the Director of People & Commercial Services (HRMDC/16/13) attached.
- 8 **A New Approach to Competence, Training and Assurance.**
The Director of People & Commercial Services to give an update at the meeting on the Academy project which is aimed at improving the level and consistency of training for operational staff. This project will help maintain and improve firefighter and public safety by ensuring operational competence is maintained and assured in the most efficient and effective way.
- 9 **Blended Learning and its Links in Supporting Staff Training**
The Director of People & Commercial Services will give a demonstration and explanation at the meeting of the latest theories and technologies being used by the Academy to support and improve operational competence and learning.

MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO SIGN THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER

Membership:-

Councillors Bown (Chair), Burrige-Clayton, Chugg (Vice-Chair), Julian, Knight, Thomas and Wheeler

NOTES

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1. | <p><u>Access to Information</u>
Any person wishing to inspect any minutes, reports or lists of background papers relating to any item on this agenda should contact the person listed in the “Please ask for” section at the top of this agenda.</p> |
| 2. | <p><u>Reporting of Meetings</u>
Any person attending a meeting may report (film, photograph or make an audio recording) on any part of the meeting which is open to the public – unless there is good reason not to do so, as directed by the Chairman - and use any communication method, including the internet and social media (Facebook, Twitter etc.), to publish, post or otherwise share the report. The Authority accepts no liability for the content or accuracy of any such report, which should not be construed as representing the official, Authority record of the meeting. Similarly, any views expressed in such reports should not be interpreted as representing the views of the Authority.
Flash photography is not permitted and any filming must be done as unobtrusively as possible from a single fixed position without the use of any additional lighting; focusing only on those actively participating in the meeting and having regard also to the wishes of any member of the public present who may not wish to be filmed. As a matter of courtesy, anyone wishing to film proceedings is asked to advise the Chairman or the Democratic Services Officer in attendance so that all those present may be made aware that is happening.</p> |
| 3. | <p><u>Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (Authority Members only)</u>
If you have any disclosable pecuniary interests (as defined by Regulations) in any item(s) to be considered at this meeting then, unless you have previously obtained a dispensation from the Authority’s Monitoring Officer, you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) disclose any such interest at the time of commencement of consideration of the item in which you have the interest or, if later, as soon as it becomes apparent to you that you have such an interest;(b) leave the meeting room during consideration of the item in which you have such an interest, taking no part in any discussion or decision thereon; and(c) not seek to influence improperly any decision on the matter in which you have such an interest. <p>If the interest is sensitive (as agreed with the Monitoring Officer), you need not disclose the nature of the interest but merely that you have a disclosable pecuniary interest of a sensitive nature. You must still follow (b) and (c) above.</p> |
| 4. | <p><u>Part 2 Reports</u>
Members are reminded that any Part 2 reports as circulated with the agenda for this meeting contain exempt information and should therefore be treated accordingly. They should not be disclosed or passed on to any other person(s). Members are also reminded of the need to dispose of such reports carefully and are therefore invited to return them to the Committee Secretary at the conclusion of the meeting for disposal.</p> |
| 5. | <p><u>Substitute Members (Committee Meetings only)</u>
Members are reminded that, in accordance with Standing Order 35, the Clerk (or his representative) must be advised of any substitution prior to the start of the meeting. Members are also reminded that substitutions are not permitted for full Authority meetings.</p> |

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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

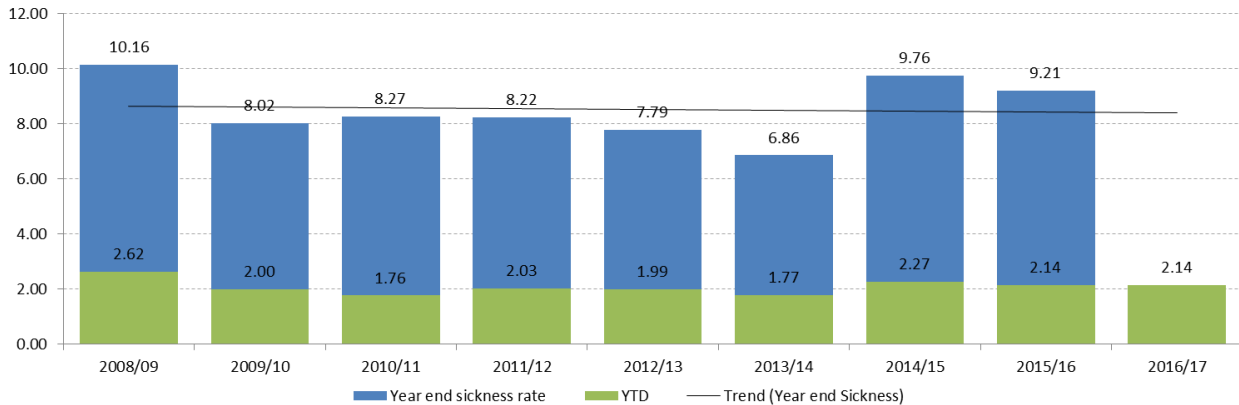
Agenda Item 4

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	HRMDC/16/10
MEETING	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	16 SEPTEMBER 2016
SUBJECT OF REPORT	ABSENCE MANAGEMENT
LEAD OFFICER	Director of People & Commercial Services
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the Service continues with the action plan directed towards reducing down sickness absence.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>Absence Management is a standing item on the Human Resources Management and Development Committee agenda.</p> <p>During 2014/15, the Service saw an increase in sickness absence levels which had continued into 2015/16. As a result of this the Service has been taking action to redress this situation and over 2015/16 there has been an improvement in sickness levels. For Q1 in 2016/17 we are at the same rate as Q1 in the previous year but we are seeing an improvement in long-term sickness levels.</p> <p>This report also highlights the work that we are doing on management information to ensure that we can make tactical and strategic decisions and this work will be demonstrated as part of the meeting.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Increased staffing time associated with the action plan whilst there are other competing priorities and support staffing levels have reduced.
EQUALITY RISK AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS (ERBA)	The current Absence Management policy has had an equality impact assessment and a further ERBA will be required for a new Sickness Absence Management policy that is in development.
APPENDICES	None
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	None

1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Within Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (the Service), the health, safety and wellbeing of employees is taken seriously and as such the Service provides a wide range of initiatives, interventions and policies to ensure that employees enjoy a safe and supportive working environment. However, the Service recognises that employee absence has a significant cost to the organisation and is therefore something that needs to be measured, understood and addressed. A reasonable balance needs to be struck between the genuine needs of employees to take occasional periods of time off work because of ill-health and the Service's ability to fulfil its role in serving local communities.
- 1.2 The Service performance for Absence Management has been included as a standing item on the members Human Resources Management and Development (HRMD) Committee agenda since the formation of the Service and has also featured within the Audit & Performance Review Committee (APRC) performance report. During 2014/15, the Service saw an increase in sickness absence levels which had continued into 2015/16. As a result of this the Service has been taking action to redress this situation and over 2015/16 there has been an improvement in sickness levels. For Q1 in 2016/17 we are at the same rate as Q1 in the previous year but we are also seeing an improvement in long-term sickness.
- 1.3 The Service does not set a target level for sickness levels but compares performance with previous years and bench-mark data. This creates a 'yo-yo' reporting effect with good results invariably being followed by poorer results and vice versa. An alternative approach would be to use tolerances as a means of determining how we are performing over a longer term period. The Service is currently developing an outcome based approach to performance management and will be determining external and internal measures as part of this work. It is intended that these new measures will incorporate sickness level reporting.
- 1.4 It is also important that data is presented in a form which meets the requirements of the audience and HRMD Members have previously requested that we show our absence data in a format that enables us to show how many staff are off at any one time rather than the lost working days. We would also look to distinguish any lost time as a result of a workplace injury as requested. The Service will demonstrate at the meeting the work that is being done to enable this to be achieved with our new Absence Reporting tool which is an application within our newly created Workbench.
- 1.5 The key areas of focus within the Service action plan are as follows and further information on progress is included within this report:
- The provision of more timely and accurate information to managers;
 - Leadership – making the link between sickness and performance, with managers taking a more active role in the management of individual sickness and in managing workloads and priorities;
 - An appropriate blend of robust decisions, taken at an earlier stage, in relation to long-term sickness and appropriate preventative measures to prevent sickness; and
 - The development and promotion of a health, fitness and wellbeing culture.
- 1.6 Absence levels since the formation of the Service are shown overleaf. This shows the improvement during the last financial year and that for Q1 we are at the same rate as the previous Q1 period in 2015/16.

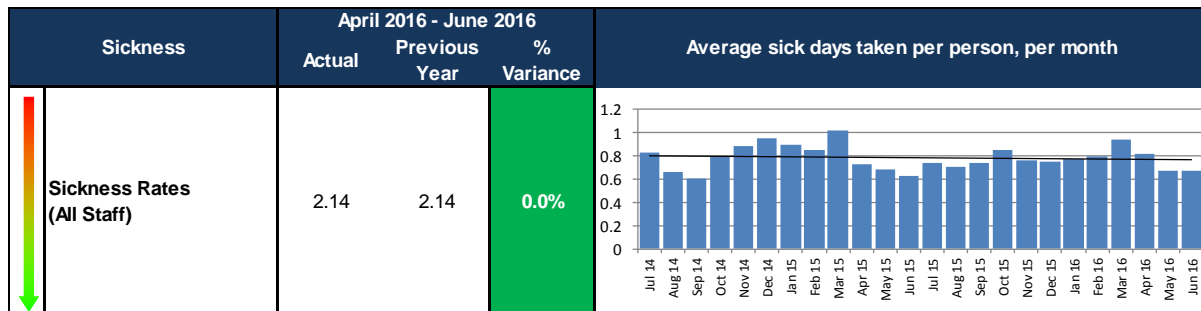
Sickness Levels since the formation of DSFRS



2. 2016/17 ABSENCE PERFORMANCE

2.1 The graph below shows the monthly sickness rates for the last 2 years. On average, employees have taken 2.14 days of sick leave from April to June 2016/17.

Sickness Direction of Travel



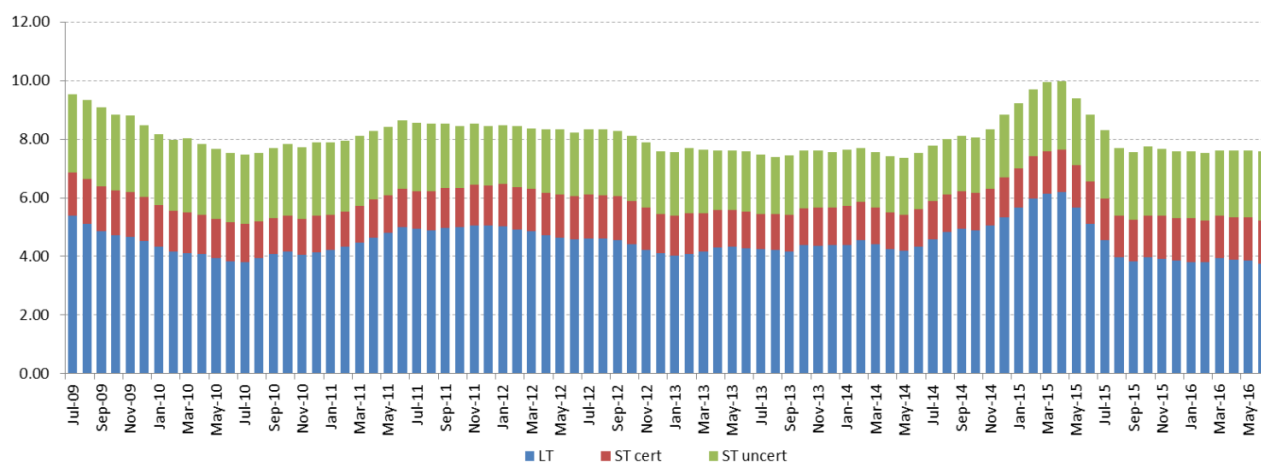
2.2 With monthly peaks and troughs in sickness, it is difficult to see the on-going longer term change in the rates over this time. The graph overleaf shows the 12-month rolling sickness rate as measured at the end of each month. As this is a rolling rate it removes any monthly peaks and troughs and enables us to see performance trends more clearly.

2.3 There are 3 categories of sickness shown in the graph:

- Short-term uncertified sickness – periods of sickness up to 7 days
- Short-term certified sickness – periods of sickness between 8 and 28 days for which a GP certificate is required
- Long-term sickness – periods of over 28 days

2.4 Within the chart, it is striking that we see a peak that occurred in long-term sickness up until August 2015. Over the last 12 months, we have seen a consistent reduction in long-term sickness that has been sustained.

Average sick days taken per person, per year on a rolling 12 month basis



2.5 We can then consider the breakdown of sickness rates between the different contract types as well as the length of sickness. There are 4 contract types that we consider:

- Wholetime Station based staff
- Wholetime non-Station based staff
- Control Staff
- Support Staff

Sickness Rates by Post Type

Sickness Rates by post type April 2016 - June 2016		Wholetime Station based staff			Wholetime Non Station staff (inc SHQ, STC, group support teams etc)		
		Actual	Previous Year	% Variance	Actual	Previous Year	% Variance
	Overall Sickness Rate	2.20	2.08	6.0%	2.92	2.31	26.6%
	Total # Days/shifts lost	836.5	838	-0.2%	552	454	21.6%
	Sickness Rates - Long Term (over 28 calendar days)	1.37	1.44	-5.2%	2.40	1.85	29.6%
	# Days/shifts lost LT	520.5	584	-10.9%	453	364	24.5%
	Sickness Rates - ST Cert (8 - 28 calendar days)	0.28	0.20	39.2%	0.33	0.28	17.1%
	# Days/shifts lost STCert	103	80	28.8%	62	55	12.7%
Sickness Rates - ST Uncert (up to 7 calendar days)	0.56	0.44	27.4%	0.20	0.18	10.9%	
# Days/shifts lost STUncert	213	174	22.4%	37	35	5.7%	

Sickness Rates by post type April 2016 - June 2016		Control			Support staff		
		Actual	Previous Year	% Variance	Actual	Previous Year	% Variance
	Overall Sickness Rate	2.98	2.59	15.1%	1.40	1.71	-17.9%
	Total # Days/shifts lost	98	107	-8.4%	328.8	429	-23.4%
	Sickness Rates - Long Term (over 28 calendar days)	1.40	1.74	-19.6%	0.57	0.95	-39.8%
	# Days/shifts lost LT	45	72	-37.5%	133.8	238	-43.8%
	Sickness Rates - ST Cert (8 - 28 calendar days)	0.27	0.22	20.7%	0.25	0.33	-22.9%
	# Days/shifts lost STCert	9	10	-10.0%	60.4	82	-26.3%
Sickness Rates - ST Uncert (up to 7 calendar days)	1.32	0.61	115.8%	0.58	0.43	34.1%	
# Days/shifts lost STUncert	44	25	76.0%	134.6	109	23.5%	

2.6 Within Wholetime, long-term sickness has improved compared with the previous year but both short-term sickness and certified and non-certified has increased.

- 2.7 Within Control long-term sickness has improved but short-term sickness in particular is showing an increase. Control are the staff category with the highest levels of sickness being marginally higher than Wholetime Non-station based staff.
- 2.8 Support staff have seen an overall improvement in sickness although again short-term sickness has increased.
- 2.9 Wholetime Non-station based staff is the poorest performing category when compared to the previous year.
- 2.10 Since we are only looking at a short period of 3 months, which is going to be subject to greater variation, these results have less significance and we believe that we would be better to consider our performance using tolerance levels to avoid such short-term variations.

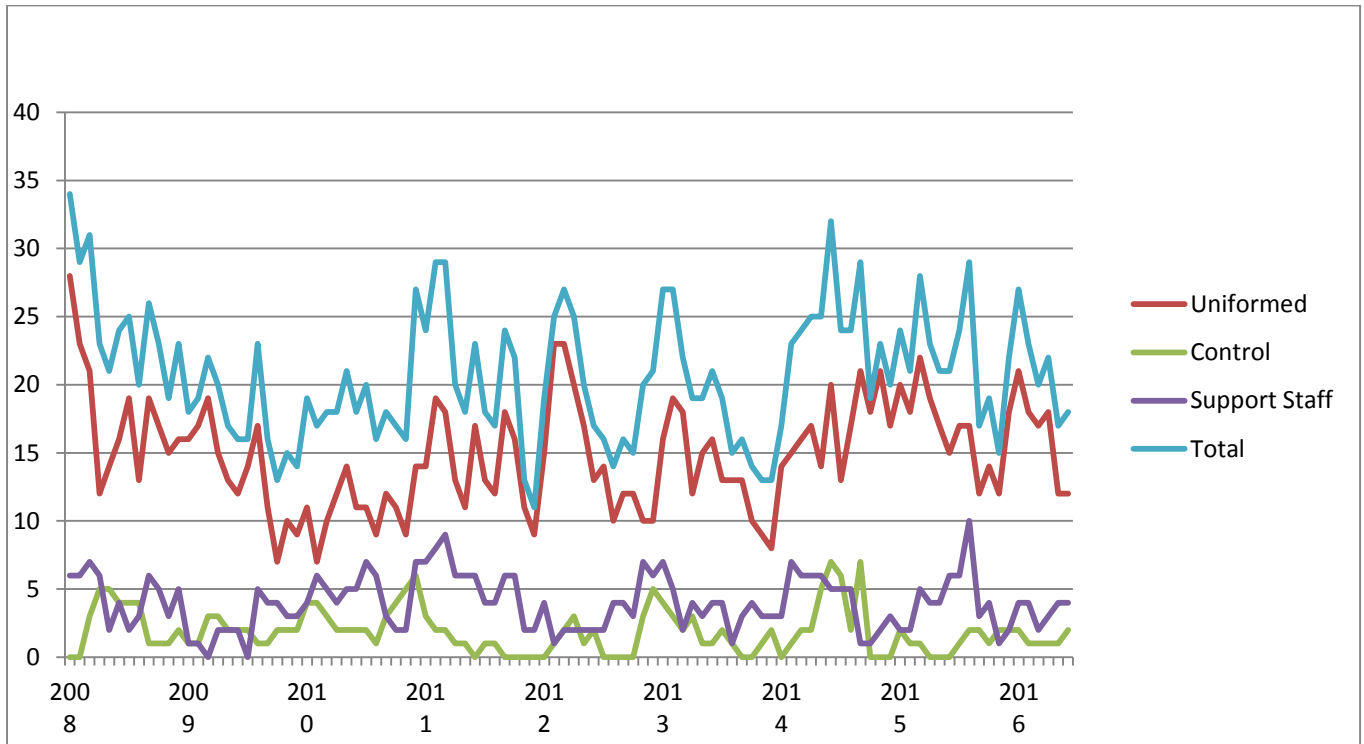
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- 2.11 In order to understand how a small number of staff on long-term sickness can have a big impact on absence levels, we can consider the number of staff that are on long-term sickness at any one time and this are shown on the next page.
- 2.12 When staff come off long-term sickness this can be as a result of a number of reasons including the person returning back to work with full fitness, returning on restricted duties, ill-health retirement or through leaving the Service on capability grounds.

Numbers of staff on Long Term Sickness



2.13 This data that has been presented is very much turn-key and it is important that in considering the way we present information, it enables us to have more understanding as to how changes have happened rather than just what has happened. The data that we obtain needs to be improved from a management information perspective which enables tactical decisions and also the development of improved executive data to support strategic decision making.

3. ACTION PLAN ACTIVITY

The specific highlights of our progress towards our Action Plan have been:

3.1 Management of long term sickness

- Removal of Sick Pay Review panels
- Provision of further information to managers to enable monthly reviews of employees with long-term sickness
- More contact and discussion with employees who are off work due to sickness
- Better access to restricted duties
- Exploring ways to speed up any medical delays by, where appropriate and with a business case, providing private medical assistance

3.2 Developing a fitness, health and wellbeing culture

- An Outline Business Case for Firefighter Fitness within the Service has been produced with the aim that we create a fitness culture against a backdrop of an ageing workforce. This has been approved by SLT and a full-business case will be developed.
- Vocational Fitness Tests are being trialled at stations with very positive feedback being received about the suitability of the tests and it has been agreed that this will be the preferred method of fitness assessment for operational staff from Firefighter to Watch Manager.
- Funding from an ear-marked reserve for Change & Improvement has been made available for purchasing Fitness Equipment in this financial year, as approved by the Authority at the end of 2015-16.
- A trial will also be undertaken to facilitate team fitness activities within the on-call staff.
- Shuttle run tests are being incorporated into the new Firefighter tests to provide an indication of fitness levels at an early stage in the selection process.
- The strategic approach to fitness testing and fitness equipment will also be incorporated into the Health, Fitness and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Promotion of the MIND Blue Light Campaign to help improve the resilience of staff, make staff more aware of the importance and value of mental health and to be more responsive when people experience mental health issues. This has been backed up with the signing of the Blue Light Time to Change pledge with an associated action plan.
- Training of managers in the Blue Light Line Manager courses which have been provided by MIND. The funding period for this campaign has now ended but in order to maintain consistency and to continue the legacy of the Blue Light campaign, it is proposed that we will continue with courses being provided over the next 3 years. Our plan is to run 10 courses per year which will provide a further 450 course places.
- It is also proposed that we rebrand Staff Supporters as there is shrinking interest in the current group, possibly due to capacity issues. This group will be extended to include volunteers who can specifically provide Mental Health support. The group would be referred to as Peer Supporters with nominees sought from each Group Command. Mental Health First Aider training will be provided for these staff and Organisational Assurance are likely to play a lead role in this volunteer team.
- Other considerations include a web based forum which encourages people to discuss Mental Health issues online. This avenue is thought to appeal to the more social media savvy staff and we will be exploring whether we could use it in the Service. Wellbeing Policy: We will review our overall policies and Mental Health should be considered in wider policy decision making. We currently have a Welfare policy and Stress Awareness policy and we will determine whether we should have a Mental Health policy or over-arching Wellbeing policy in addition to the existing policies. The Service has also introduced mental health drop-in sessions.
- Personal Wellbeing Action Plans: These are a useful tool and we think that they could be used as an Occupational Health or Welfare recommendation.

- Appraisals: The existing annual Personal Performance and Development plans include a welfare section and managers should be reminded of this aspect to discuss with staff. Future development work on appraisal processes should also incorporate this.

3.3 The provision of information & data

- Improvements have been made to the sickness reporting portal and where sickness reason codes were previously not recorded the Service has sought to complete this information. As previously highlighted in this report, an improved Sickness 'App' is close to completion, which includes a 'Lite' version that can be accessed via a smart phone. These products will replace the existing sickness portal and give easier access for inputting data and enable the provision of real time, better quality management information.
- The sickness absence codes have been modified so that they are aligned to the national categories as used through the Cleveland FRS national reporting standards.
- Our Performance Management Information System has been reconfigured to enable departments to access performance data by location but this will need to be adjusted as a result of the Service restructure.
- We still need to incorporate on-call sickness data into our overall reporting system and seek benchmarking data via the national reporting.

3.4 Sickness absence policy

- The Service policy is being rewritten to incorporate changes and to make it easier to obtain information on our procedures.
- Where staff have agreed an appointment with Occupational Health but fail to attend the Service has introduced a charging mechanism for staff.
- Sick pay panels have been removed and employees now automatically move to half pay or no pay at relevant junctures unless they make an application for consideration of extreme extenuating circumstances.
- The policy will modify the payments for restricted duties and provide consistency across different staff categories.
- The policy will give improved guidance on trigger points and Return to Work Interviews.
- We have received feedback from the FBU and RFU and are reworking aspects of the policy.

3.5 Other Activities

- The Service re-organisation will reduce the number of temporary appointments within the uniformed service and create a more stable workplace, which is expected to increase levels of employee satisfaction.
- There have been a number of Service wide communications in relation to sickness through Alert messages.

- The existing Occupational Health contract has been novated from Devon County Council to IMASS and the transfer arrangements have been completed.
- Development of a proposed new Wholetime Flexible Working Pattern to ensure that we have the right number of staff that are needed at any one time to crew appliances whilst at the same time giving more flexible working arrangements, which will help reduce short-term absenteeism. This project is currently awaiting the outcome from discussions with Trade Unions.
- The whole aspect of cultural change is being developed and supported through the introduction of Our Values and a behavioural framework. Input from the staff survey has been beneficial in helping to set the direction for further work which will be part of the Organisational Development plan.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 We had previously seen a downward trend in sickness absence levels since the formation of the Service with an exceptionally good year in 2013/14. In 2014/15, we experienced significantly higher absence levels which prompted the development of an action plan to redress the position. It is noted that 2014/15 followed a year of considerable changes within the Service with significant reductions in staffing levels as a result of needing to meet Government grant reductions. There was also uncertainty around pensions and non-continuous periods of industrial action which may also have an impact on morale and this may have contributed to higher sickness levels.
- 4.2 In 2015/16 we continued to have significant change with responsibility for the fire and rescue service moving from the Department of Communities and Local Government to the Home Office, reviews of working arrangements and equipment and reductions in middle managers and support staff. We are also in discussions concerning enhanced collaboration with other blue light services which would represent significant change for the organisation.
- 4.3 Overall, we have seen an improvement in the sickness absence levels for 2015/16 and will continue to progress with the action plan.

JANE SHERLOCK
Director of People & Commercial Services

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Agenda Item 5

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	HRMDC/16/11
MEETING	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	16 SEPTEMBER 2016
SUBJECT OF REPORT	EQUALITY STRATEGY – ‘SAFER LIVES, BRIGHTER FUTURES’ MONITORING REPORT
LEAD OFFICER	Director of People & Commercial Services
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	Implementation of the Equality Strategy 2012-2016, Safer Lives, Brighter Futures, helps to ensure that the Service is meeting its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. Highlights since the last report include the employee survey results and follow-up actions, increasing workforce diversity and a report on the Asian Fire Service Association development day, hosted by the Service in May.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	No additional resource implications
EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ANALYSIS (ERBA)	There is no requirement to carry out an ERBA on this report
APPENDICES	none
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	Equality Strategy 2012-2016 ‘Safer Lives, Brighter Futures’

1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Equality Act 2010 provides legal protections for people based on their 'protected characteristics' which are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 1.2 The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty which, in relation to the protected characteristics, requires the Service to give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people.
- 1.3 The Equality Strategy 2012-2016, Safer Lives, Brighter Futures, sets out the objectives and action plan that assist the Service in meeting the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

2. **A NEW EQUALITY STRATEGY FOR 2017-2020**

- 2.1 The current Strategy has a life of four years and comes to an end this year. There is a requirement under the Public Sector Equality Duty to publish equality objectives at least every four years to help focus attention on priority equality issues in order to further improve service planning and delivery and employment practices.
- 2.2 The Service is in the process of developing the new Strategy which involves:
- a review of the action plan in the current strategy;
 - consideration of the equality aspects of corporate priorities;
 - seeking guidance from the national Equality Framework for Fire and Rescue Services;
 - internal and external consultation.
- 2.3 A draft of the revised Strategy will be brought to the Human Resources Management & Development Committee in December 2016 for consideration.

3. **EMPLOYEE SURVEY RESULTS**

- 3.1 An employee survey is one of the key tools for measuring and improving employee engagement and satisfaction and the Service has carried out such surveys for a number of years. Research shows that having an engaged and satisfied workforce leads to greater productivity, reduced levels of sickness absence and an increase in discretionary effort i.e. a 'can do' attitude and willingness to go the extra mile.
- 3.2 A new approach was taken to the latest survey in order to simplify the approach, reduce the time taken to complete and encourage more employees to participate. Employees were invited to indicate their levels of satisfaction around nine core questions. These were new questions so it is not possible to make comparisons with previous surveys, however the results provide a baseline for future surveys. The results were analysed in-house and the main findings and next steps were communicated to employees in April 2016. The headline results were also presented to Human Resources Management & Development Committee on 10 March 2016.

- 3.3 There was a particularly positive response to the statement 'I understand how my role contributes to the work of the Service'. The majority of respondents were satisfied with their line manager's style and this was supported by many positive comments including some describing excellent managers who are seen as role models and mentors. The majority also agreed that their day to day experience is consistent with the core values with positive comments made about their experiences and the benefits of the core value framework itself. Most staff were also satisfied with their overall experience of working for the Service.
- 3.4 Around half of respondents said they were happy with the level of control and influence they have in their jobs and with their ability to achieve a good work/life balance, particularly relating to the wholetime duty system, flexi time and the amount of annual leave.
- 3.5 Looking across the questions and at both the numeric and many written responses, a number of cross cutting themes emerged which have been identified as priorities for further action and development. These are:
- Working together as one organisation – ensuring that all employees feel their roles and contributions are understood and valued by others.
 - Strategic direction and leadership – that the direction and priorities of the Service are clearly communicated and understood by employees and that leaders are visible role models.
 - Management styles – ensuring that all our managers are effective in their management and leadership practices and are supported to achieve this.
 - Employee engagement – ensuring a consistent approach to engagement with clear and effective opportunities for employees to be involved.
 - Communications – that major change issues are communicated effectively throughout the organisation and that information is prioritised, easy to read and targeted to those that need it the most.
 - Development and progression – that there is an increased focus on talent and succession planning and that processes and procedures are transparent and consistent.
 - Impact on wellbeing of reducing resources – that the risks of increased stress are understood and mitigated, that the wellbeing of employees continues to be monitored and the services available to support employees are understood.
- 3.6 The Service leadership were aware of most of these key themes and had already proposed, as part of the new structure, to bring relevant resources and skills together into an Organisational Development team. The team is now in place and is starting work to support change and transformation in the Service by improving the way people are led, managed and developed. The team strategy and working plan is being finalised but their focus will include leadership and management development, strategic workforce planning, service mapping, reviewing systems and processes, talent management, organisational culture and values, creating a more diverse workforce and employee engagement, inclusion and wellbeing.
- 3.7 The Organisational Development team will ensure that the key priorities identified in the employee survey are addressed so that individuals and the Service can benefit from increased engagement and satisfaction. They will also lead on future surveys to ensure that levels of satisfaction continue to be monitored and relevant action taken.

4. INCREASING WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

4.1 A diverse, more representative workforce can bring many benefits in terms of better services, more satisfied, engaged employees and a positive workplace culture. The Service has recognised the need for greater diversity in the workforce, particularly around gender, for some time. Eighteen months ago a positive action plan was approved with objectives to encourage more women to consider firefighting as a career and to get more women into leadership roles. It has been difficult to make significant progress to date due to limited operational recruitment. The issue is also a national one and other Fire & Rescue Services experience a similar gender imbalance.

4.2 There is now an increased national focus and expectation, however, that Fire and Rescue Services will proactively seek to redress workforce balances, particularly in gender and ethnicity, to ensure they are better representative of the communities they serve. Theresa May, when Home Secretary, made this clear in her speech at Reform. More recently she has called for an inequality review in public services. We can expect a greater focus on this, and equality and diversity in general, in any future inspections or assessments.

4.3 The gender and ethnicity workforce figures at 24 August 2016 are as follows:

<u>GENDER</u>	Male	Male %	Female	Female %	Totals
Wholetime	558	96.5%	20	3.5%	578
Retained	1099	96%	45	4%	1144
Retained Casual	7	100%	0	0	7
Control	10	25.5%	29	74.5%	39
Support	133	52.5%	119	47.5%	252
Support Casual	5	45.5%	6	54.5%	11
<u>Totals</u>	1,812	89%	219	11%	2,031

<u>ETHNICITY</u>	White British	White British (%)	Other	Other (%)	Rather not state/no reply	Rather not state/no reply (%)	Totals
Wholetime	523	90.5%	11	2%	44	7.5%	578
Retained	1058	92.5%	13	1%	73	6.5%	1144
Retained Casual	6	86%	0	0	1	14%	7
Control	38	97.5%	1	2.5%	0	0	39

<u>ETHNICITY</u>	White British	White British (%)	Other	Other (%)	Rather not state/no reply	Rather not state/no reply (%)	Totals
Support	218	86.5%	5	2%	29	11.5%	252
Support Casual	8	72.5%	0	0	3	27.5%	11
<u>Totals</u>	1,851	91%	30	1.5%	150	7.5%	2,031

(Figures include 177 employees who have dual roles e.g. wholetime and retained)

- 4.4 The greatest gender imbalance is in the operational workforce, both wholetime and retained with approximately 96% male employees and 4% female. With regard to ethnicity, we are obtaining figures for the Service area so we can assess how representative the workforce is in relation to local communities.
- 4.5 A project plan is being developed by the Organisational Development team, aimed at delivering a more diverse workforce along with the cultural benefits that will bring. The plan will identify and review all relevant systems and processes in the Service to ensure they support the aim of achieving a more diverse workforce as part of cultural reform. This will include looking at systems and processes around recruitment (wholetime and on-call), fitness standards, the role/person specification of the modern firefighter, the role of advocates and volunteers, retained contracts, leadership development etc.
- 4.6 We will also be learning from other Fire and Rescue Services about what has worked for them and also from other organisations including the military and emergency services. The police, in particular, have achieved a great deal over the years and currently around 30% of police officers are female.

5. ASIAN FIRE SERVICE ASSOCIATION DEVELOPMENT DAY

- 5.1 On 27 May, DSFRS hosted a national development day on behalf of the Asian Fire Service Association and delegates from Fire & Rescue Services across the country attended the event. The theme was Responding to the Refugee Crisis: working individually, collectively and in collaboration with partners to achieve better outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers.
- 5.2 A mixture of speakers and workshops covered topics relating to asylum seekers, refugees, modern day slavery and hate crime with a focus on the role of fire and rescue services, particularly in prevention and protection.
- 5.3 A highlight of the day was listening to the life stories of Shoker Abobeker and Dena Rafati, both based in Plymouth and who are now working to support DSFRS but who previously sought asylum in this country.
- 5.4 The development day concluded that navigating the complex UK asylum system can leave many people feeling lost, isolated and with little control over their lives. Despite this, the day showed how working together in partnership can help refugees and people seeking asylum to speak out about their experiences and to tell us about the services that best meet their needs and will keep them safe.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Service's Equality Strategy continues to be implemented and regularly monitored. Work is now underway to develop a new Equality Strategy which will be effective from 2017. The main priorities from the employee survey are being addressed by the new Organisational Development team along with actions to increase the diversity of the workforce.
- 6.2 It is recommended that the report be noted.

JANE SHERLOCK
Director of People & Commercial Services

Agenda Item 6

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	HRMDC/16/12
MEETING	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	16 SEPTEMBER 2016
SUBJECT OF REPORT	REDUNDANCY COMPENSATION RATES
LEAD OFFICER	Director of People and Commercial Services
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p><i>That the Committee reviews the current redundancy compensation rate with a view to recommending that the Authority:</i></p> <p><i>(a) Retains its current compensation rate (a multiplier of 1 using actual week's pay) for all uniformed and support staff.</i></p> <p><i>(b) That the compensation rates be reviewed at least annually by the Committee, with any proposed changes being recommended to the Authority.</i></p> <p><i>(c) That any future proposed revision of the compensation rates would be subject to consultation with the trade unions.</i></p>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>At the meeting on 16 September 2015, the Committee recommended to the Fire & Rescue Authority that the redundancy compensation rate be reduced from a multiplier of 2 to 1 for support staff. The Committee also recommended that the redundancy multiplier for uniformed staff be increased from the statutory minimum (which caps the compensatory week's pay to the actual pay) to align with that applied for support staff.</p> <p>The recommendations made were agreed by the Authority meeting on 7 October 2015, to take immediate effect.</p> <p>The Authority also endorsed the Committees recommendation to review the compensation rates at least annually, hence the submission of this paper which also sets out the background on how redundancy compensation payments are applied.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Dependent upon the number of redundancies and multiplier that is used.
EQUALITY RISK & BENEFITS ASSESSMENT	The redundancy compensation rates are in accordance with the statutory formula relating to age and service.
APPENDICES	A. Redundancy Compensation Rates within the South West
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	None

1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 At its meeting held on the 16 September 2015, this Committee considered the matter of redundancy compensation rates to apply and resolved to recommend that the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority (the Authority) (Minute HRMDC/11 refers):
- (a) *reduce its current compensation rate to a multiplier of 1 using the actual week's pay for both voluntary and compulsory redundancy and that this multiplier be extended to uniformed staff;*
 - (b) *implement the multiplier of 1 with effect from 7 October 2015;*
 - (c) *endorse, subject to (d) below, that further reviews of the compensation rates should be undertaken on an annual basis by the Human Resources Management & Development Committee, with any recommended changes to the compensation rate [and associated date for application of any revised compensation rate] being made to the full Authority;*
 - (d) *That any future proposed revision of the compensation rates would be subject to consultation with the trade unions.*
- 1.2 These recommendations were approved by the Authority at its meeting on 7 October 2015 (Minute DSFRA/26(c) refers).
- 1.3 This paper now sets out findings from the review carried out this year, in accordance with the Authority decision, and includes an explanation of how redundancy compensation is applied and recommends that no further change is made at this time.
- 1.4 It should be noted that offering voluntary redundancy is a managerial tool which has allowed the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service ("the Service") to reduce down staffing numbers at a greater rate than would otherwise have been the case. Since this matter was last considered by the Authority, the Service has made a number of compulsory redundancies from its non-uniformed support staff (Green Book).

2. **REDUNDANCY MULTIPLIER**

- 2.1 The Service employs the majority of staff on two sets of terms and conditions which are commonly referred to as the 'Grey Book' and 'Green Book'. There are also several pension schemes covering the different categories of staff. For uniformed staff there is the Firefighters' Pension Scheme and the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme which are now closed to new members and the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015. For non-uniformed support staff there is the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). The Firefighter's Pension Schemes are available to operational staff and the LGPS for all other support (non-uniformed) employees and also the Control Room staff.
- 2.2 The rules of the Local Government Pension Scheme require a service to have a policy on pension discretions to apply in certain situations including that of redundancy. As such, the Service has a policy on pension discretions and following the previous Authority decision and consultations with trade unions, the multiplier was set at a rate of 2 for staff who are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. This was subsequently reduced to a multiplier of 1.

- 2.3 The Firefighters' Pension Schemes do not contain any reference to discretions for enhanced redundancy pay. This was previously thought to mean that fire & rescue authorities have no powers to increase a redundancy payment over and above that provided for under the Employment Rights Act 1996. This position was, however, subsequently challenged by two fire and rescue authorities and the Queens Counsel opinion was obtained. This was unequivocal in advising that enhanced redundancy payments to operational staff are lawful by virtue of the general power of competence as set out in Section 5A of the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act). The Queens Counsel opinion also advised that, should an authority be minded to apply enhancements, it should do so evenly (i.e., the same enhancement for staff conditioned to the Local Government Pension Scheme as for those conditioned to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme) to eliminate the risk of potential challenge under the equalities legislation. This information was presented to the Committee last year and informed its subsequent recommendation to the Authority on redundancy compensation rates to be applied.
- 2.4 As a reminder, the statutory redundancy pay for an employee with at least 2 years' continuous service is based on the employee's age, salary (subject to a salary maximum) and the length of service.
- Up to the age of 21: 0.5 week's pay for each completed year of service.
 - 22 - 40 years of age: 1 week's pay for each completed year of service.
 - 41+ years of age: 1.5 weeks' pay for each completed year of service.
- A "week's pay" is subject to the statutory maximum (currently £479).*
- 2.5 For staff within the Local Government Pension Scheme, there is additional legislation in relation to redundancy payments in the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006 ("the Regulations"). Almost all public sector organisations and many in the private sector have previously introduced schemes which offer more than the statutory redundancy pay referred to above, however, in recent years, organisations have reviewed their schemes and some organisations have reduced the multipliers that are applied. The maximum payment permitted under the Regulations is 104 weeks.
- 2.6 Most enhanced redundancy schemes in the public sector use the actual week's pay in the calculation (rather than the £479 statutory limit) and apply a multiplier to the number of weeks calculated using the statutory redundancy pay formula referred to above ("the multiplier"). This was modified in 2006 as the previous calculation of enhanced redundancy pay was not acceptable under the Age Discrimination Regulations.
- 2.7 The Authority is currently committed to using the actual weekly pay levels in its Reorganisation, Review, Redeployment and Redundancy ("4Rs") policy agreed with all the recognised unions and approved by the Authority on combination. This policy, however, is silent on any multiplier to be used since it was envisaged this would be included in a future redundancy policy. Such a policy was not introduced since the 4Rs policy has been sufficient for the organisational changes that have been made.
- 2.8 For this Authority, it was previously determined that a balance had to be struck between the cost to the Authority, what would be suitable compensation for staff whose positions were at risk of redundancy on a compulsory basis, and what might be considered as a level likely to be attractive to staff who may be willing to consider voluntary redundancy.

- 2.9 Following the change in Corporate Plan in 2013, the Service sought volunteers for redundancy and since that time staffing reductions have been made. The Service is, however, now close to the agreed establishment levels and so the requirement for whole-time uniformed redundancies is currently diminished. Indeed, in all likelihood, with the current leaver and retirement rates, the Service is planning for potential whole-time recruitment in 2017.
- 2.10 Since the reduction in the redundancy compensation rate for support staff, there has been only 1 volunteer for voluntary redundancy. However, the Service has in any event seen an upturn in support staff turnover with 23 resignations in the first 4 months of 2016/17 compared with a total leaver turnover of 30 in 2015/16 and 16 in 2014/15. Amongst uniformed staff, there have been 4 approved voluntary redundancies since the increase in the compensatory rate.
- 2.11 All departments are considering their Strategic Workforce Plans over the next few years against various scenarios. This will inform the Organisational Development Strategy which it is intended will be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Authority has determined that it will review the level of redundancy multiplier to be applied at least on an annual basis. Having modified the redundancy multiplier in 2015-16, there appears to be no reason to make any further adjustment at this time and it is therefore recommended that this remains unchanged.

JANE SHERLOCK
Director of People and Commercial Services

REDUNDANCY COMPENSATION RATES WITHIN THE SOUTH WEST

Organisation	Redundancy Compensation Dec 2010	Redundancy Compensation Feb 2012	Redundancy Compensation Jan 2014	Redundancy Compensation Mar 2015	Redundancy Compensation Sept 2016
Devon and Somerset FRS	The 4R's policy commits the Service to using the actual week's pay rather than the statutory limit but is silent on what multiplier should be used.	Initially a multiplier of 2.5 was used and this was reduced from Apr 2011 to a multiplier of 2 using the actual week's pay.	A multiplier of 2 using the actual week's pay.	Currently a multiplier of 2 using the actual week's pay.	Reduced to a multiplier of 1 using the actual week's pay. The rate was extended to uniformed staff as well.
Devon & Cornwall Police	-	-	-	-	At the time of publication we are seeking further information.
Devon County Council	Multiplier of 2 using the actual week's pay.	Multiplier of 2 using the actual week's pay.	No change	Under review but no further details are available at this time.	At the time of publication we are seeking further information.
Somerset County Council	Multiplier of 2 using the actual week's pay but under review.	Reviewed in April 2011 and reduced to a multiplier of 1 using the statutory weekly pay for compulsory redundancies and the actual weekly pay for voluntary redundancies. A min payment of £1500 is applied.	No change	No change	At the time of publication we are seeking further information.

Organisation	Redundancy Compensation Dec 2010	Redundancy Compensation Feb 2012	Redundancy Compensation Jan 2014	Redundancy Compensation Mar 2015	Redundancy Compensation Sept 2016
Plymouth City Council	Multiplier of 2	Reviewed in Nov 2011 and reduced to a multiplier of 1 using the statutory weekly pay i.e. no additional enhancement.	No change	No change	At the time of publication we are seeking further information.
Torbay Council	Multiplier of 1 using the actual week's pay but under review.	Multiplier of 1 using the actual week's pay.	No change	No change	At the time of publication we are seeking further information.
Cornwall Council	Up to April 2010 multiplier of three times actual week's pay. Post April 2010 it is 1.75 times based on the actual week's pay.	Reviewed in May 2011 and kept to a multiplier of 1.75 using the actual week's pay.	No change	No change	No change for support staff. No decision on uniformed staff as yet but likely to apply the same rate.
Dorset County Council	Multiplier of 2.5 using the actual week's pay but under review.	Reviewed in Apr 2011 and reduced to a multiplier of 1.75 using the actual week's pay.	No change	No change	At the time of publication we are seeking further information.
Gloucestershire County Council	Multiplier of 2.2 using the actual week's pay.	Reduced to a multiplier of 2 and from Apr 2012 will be a multiplier of 1.75 using the actual week's pay.	Multiplier of 1.75 using the actual week's pay.	No change	No change
Wiltshire FRS	Multiplier of 1 with actual week's pay	Reviewed in 2011 and modified to a multiplier of 1.75 using the actual week's pay.	No change but NB Voluntary Redundancy is with a multiplier of 1.75 and a limit of 52 weeks, Compulsory Redundancy is with a multiplier of 1. Both use the actual week's pay.	No change	Multiplier of 1.75 using the actual week's pay for support staff. No decision on uniformed staff as yet but likely to apply the same rate.

Organisation	Redundancy Compensation Dec 2010	Redundancy Compensation Feb 2012	Redundancy Compensation Jan 2014	Redundancy Compensation Mar 2015	Redundancy Compensation Sept 2016
Dorset FRS	Multiplier of 2.5 using the actual week's pay.	Multiplier of 2.5 using the actual week's pay.	Multiplier reduced to 1.75 using the actual week's pay.	No change	
Avon FRS	Multiplier of 2.5 using the actual week's pay (maximum compensation equivalent to 75 week's pay).	Multiplier of 2.5 using the actual week's pay (maximum compensation equivalent to 75 week's pay).	No change	No change	Multiplier 2.5 using the actual week's pay (subject to the statutory cap) for Green Book staff. At present, there are no plans to review this. No redundancy agreement for Grey Book staff.

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Agenda Item 7

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	HRMDC/16/13
MEETING	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	16 SEPTEMBER 2016
SUBJECT OF REPORT	RETIREMENT & RE-EMPLOYMENT
LEAD OFFICER	Director of People & Commercial Services
RECOMMENDATIONS	<p><i>(a) That the requests for retirement & re-employment as identified in paragraph 2.4 of this report be approved, and</i></p> <p><i>(b) That the distinction between casual workers and employees as set out in section 3.1 of this report is noted.</i></p>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>Previously, the full Authority have prepared a Pay Policy Statement on an annual basis in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act.</p> <p>The Pay Policy Statement requires, amongst other things, for all requests for re-employment following retirement for employees up to Executive Board posts, to be approved by the HRMD Committee.</p> <p>This report provides more information on the Authority's position in relation to retirement and re-employment and sets out specific requests for approval.</p> <p>The report also distinguishes the difference between casual workers and employees.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	Contained within the body of the report.
EQUALITY RISK & BENEFITS ASSESSMENT	The Retirement & Re-Employment Policy has had an equalities assessment.
APPENDICES	Nil.
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	Nil.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The 2016/17 Pay Policy Statement includes the following stated position on the retirement and re-employment of employees:

“8. RE-EMPLOYMENT OF EMPLOYEES

8.3 The Authority will, in principle, allow the re-employment of employees who have retired, subject to a break in service of at least one month, because it is recognised that this often represents an effective way of retaining specialist knowledge and skills without any increase in cost to the Authority (and noting that costs to the Pension Scheme are no more than would be the case for normal retirement). The re-employment of any employee who has retired will, however, be subject to:

- the approval of the Human Resources Management and Development Committee for all employees up to Executive Board posts; or*
- the approval of the full Authority for any Executive Board post-holder.*

8.4 Where retired uniformed staff are re-employed, then the Fire-Fighters’ Pension shall be abated such that the income from the gross annual rate of pay whilst re-employed together with the gross annual pension (after commutation) will not exceed the gross annual rate of pay immediately prior to retirement. For staff within the Local Government Pension Scheme, where an individual is re-employed on the same terms and conditions [salary] as previously, the same abatement rules as apply to those within the Fire Fighters Pension Scheme will be applied. However, the Authority’s policy on Pension Discretions refers to flexible retirement and states that this “may be subject to abatement during such time as the individual remains employed by the Service”. This allows the Authority to use flexible retirement opportunities where key employees may wish to continue working as they get older but step down in grade or reduce their working hours. This can be beneficial to the Authority in retaining key skills, knowledge and experience whilst also reducing costs. The authorisation of any such flexible retirement arrangements will be subject to the approval mechanism detailed above.

8.5 The appointment, or re-employment, of any members of the Executive Board (the Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Director of Corporate Services and Director of People and Commercial Services) will always be subject to approval of the full Authority and any re-employment following redundancy or retirement will be subject to consideration of a robust business case and fully scrutinised against the above criteria.”

1.2 This paper includes details of applications for retirement/re-employment in accordance with the approved policy.

2. **RETIREMENT AND RE-EMPLOYMENT**

2.1 The Service policy on Retirement & Re-employment is linked to workforce planning arrangements. Approval by the Authority of the 2013/14 – 2014/15 Corporate Plan at its meeting on 10 July 2013 (Minute DSFRA/20 refers) required a reduction of 149 wholetime posts. The Service has progressed well with reducing the staffing levels against this target and is likely to achieve the overall reduction in this current financial year.

2.2 The Authority has a balanced budget for the current financial year which supports the existing levels of staff. In light of this, it is considered appropriate for the Service to continue the reduction in staff numbers through natural turnover but at the same time using retirement and re-employment opportunities where appropriate.

2.3 The Firefighter Pension Scheme provides for employees to receive their maximum pension benefits after 30 years' service. As there is no longer a fixed age for retirement, however, it is difficult to predict precisely when individuals are likely to leave the Service. The use of retirement and re-employment opportunities encourages individuals to commit to an end retirement date, giving the Service more control over actual retirement and natural turnover. Through this process, employees have a 1 month break in service before returning on a fixed-term contract - either on a full-time basis or as a job share. In either case, the maximum contract term is normally 12 months. Where employees return on a job share basis, we see an immediate reduction in the workforce staffing levels.

2.4 The Service has received an expression of interest from the following uniformed employees:

Role	Station /Dept	Interested in Job Share	Notes
Group Manager	South Devon	No	
Watch Manager	Greenbank	Yes	
Firefighter	Greenbank	Yes	
Firefighter	Crownhill	Yes	

2.5 There are no additional financial costs for the organisation since these employees have reached the point at which they can retire and are therefore entitled to receive their pension lump sum on retirement. The pension payments would normally be abated if re-employed. In addition to giving certainty as to a leaving date, the retirement and re-employments represent a saving to both the Service and employee as pension contributions are either:

- removed as the employee opts out of future pension contributions, or;
- they are reduced since staff from Firefighter to Watch Manager, who decide to join a pension scheme, will be in the 2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme for which the employer contributions are lower than the previous 1992 Firefighters' Pension Scheme.

2.6 For positions at Station Manager or above, the employee would be eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. Once these employees leave the organisation, the Service will not recruit replacement personnel externally so these reductions will contribute to the required reductions in staffing numbers.

3. **CASUAL WORKERS**

3.1 The Service does, from time to time, use previous employees for casual work including advocates and casual work within support areas of the Service. Such assignments have no mutuality of obligation between the Service and the individual and they are not classed as being an employee of the Service. Such individuals are not being re-employed by the Service and are not, therefore, covered by the Pay Policy Statement. Consequently, there is no requirement to seek the approval of the Human Resources Management & Development Committee to engage such individuals on this basis.

4. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That the request for retirement & re-employment as identified in paragraphs 2.4 of this report be approved and that the distinction between casual workers and employees in section 3.1 is noted.

JANE SHERLOCK
Director of People & Commercial Services