

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

18 September 2017

Present:-

Councillors Bown (Chair), Best, Chugg (Vice-Chair), Hannaford, Thomas and Randall Johnson

Apologies:-

Councillors Burrige-Clayton

\* **HRMDC/9**     **Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2017 be signed as a correct record.

\* **HRMDC/10**     **Absence Management & Health of the Organisation**

The Committee received for information a report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Improvement (HRMDC/17/9) that set out the Service’s performance in respect of absence management within the organisation for the first quarter of 2017/18.

The report highlighted the sickness absence performance levels for the first quarter of 2017/18 which across all staff was 2.00 days per person as opposed to 2.07 days in 2016/17. This represented an improvement on the previous year although the Service was not complacent with this performance and was continuing to take steps to improve this. The report to the Committee also included additional measures discussed at the previous meeting associated with the Health of the Organisation. These measures including the levels of discipline and grievance cases and specifically those associated with bullying and harassment, the turnover of staff and the number of cases with welfare support.

The Sickness Dashboard was displayed at the meeting which showed the number of staff who were off at any one time rather than average sickness rates and which also distinguished any lost time as a result of workplace injuries.

Reference was made to the level of turnover of On Call staff which was high (there had been 132 On Call staff leavers in 2016/17) and that the Service needed to seek to reduce turnover levels in order to maintain a skilled workforce and reduce the cost of recruitment and training.

In terms of the Action Plan included as Appendix A of the report circulated, it was requested that predicted end dates for the actions be added to the document and the Human Resources Manager undertook to look into this.

**RESOLVED**

- (a) That the Service continues to progress with developing a working environment that is conducive to a high performing, motivated and healthy workforce; and

- (b) That, as part of the Service's performance measures for People and Resources, the report be noted.

□

\* **HRMDC/11 Workforce Culture, Diversity & Inclusion - Quarterly update**

The Committee received for information a report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Improvement (HRMDC/17/10) that gave an overview of the progress made to date towards achieving a more diverse and inclusive workforce and which also highlighted any support that was needed from the Service to facilitate organisational improvement.

The key areas highlighted with in the report were:

- The increased political expectations for the Fire & Rescue Service nationally in terms of workforce reform, increasing the diversity of employees and improved culture of inclusion;
- external drivers in documents such as the Thomas Review and the National Fire Chiefs Council – “An inclusive Fire Service – the twenty first century fire and rescue service”;
- the success of the recent campaign for new firefighters which resulted in the recruitment of 25% female firefighters against a national average of 10% and that a total of 337 females had applied for the vacancies;
- the latest staff survey which was to be published on 18 September 2017 , providing the Service with information on the progress made since 2015 in relation to employee engagement and inclusive leadership/culture;
- The successful outcome in July 2017 when the Service was reviewed against the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) standards at “recognised for excellence” level.

\* **HRMDC/12 Workforce Planning - Apprenticeships**

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Improvement (HRMDC/17/11) that set out the Service's proposed approach to the delivery of apprenticeships in the future and which made recommendations for consideration by the Committee.

**RESOLVED**

- (a) That Apprenticeships becomes an integral part of our People Strategies;
- (b) That the Service works with partner organisations including Skills for Justice, other Fire & Rescue Services and local colleges to ensure that it maximise the training and development opportunities that use the Apprentice Levy funding;
- (c) That the Service appoints a partner to provide a managed service for Firefighter apprenticeships to support the Service;
- (d) That the Wholetime Firefighter recruits training will be in accordance with the new national apprenticeship standards for an Operational Firefighter;

- (e) That the Service continues to progress with Support Staff apprenticeships in areas that it has already identified as where it will have either future skills shortages or staffing needs and that this will include ICT, Fleet Workshops and Business Administration;
- (f) That the Service identifies other new entry apprenticeship opportunities including Community Safety Advocates and On-call staff where these meet the apprenticeship requirements; and
- (g) That, where possible, in-career training is in accordance with the apprenticeship standards.

\* **HRMDC/13 Requests for Retirement and Re-employment**

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Improvement (HRMDC/17/12) that set out details of two applications that had been received for retirement and/or re-employment for approval in accordance with the Authority’s Pay Policy Statement in 2017/18.

The Human Resources Manager advised that there had been an application for retirement and re-employment from an on call firefighter for the first time. It was noted that this would be on the same basis as for wholetime firefighters but there was no end date for the contract as there was no reason to apply this in this instance.

**RESOLVED** that the requests for retirement and re-employment as identified in paragraph 2.5 of report HRMDC/17/12 be approved.

**HRMDC/14 Redundancy Compensation Rates**

The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Improvement (HRMDC/17/13) that gave an overview of the position in respect of the current redundancy compensation rate which was set at a multiplier of 1 based on the actual week’s pay.

The Human Resources Manager informed the Committee that the current rate had been reduced from a multiplier of 2.5 at combination to 2 and then to 1 in September 2015 and that the only other reduction that could be made was to move to a multiplier of 1 based on the actual week’s pay which is the statutory minimum. This would however, be below the level within existing collective agreements and in any event, the Service had no existing plans to further reduce staffing levels at this time as it had reached the requisite establishment level already through voluntary redundancies. It was therefore proposed that the redundancy compensation rate was no longer reviewed annually by the HRMD committee, however if the Service in future sought any further adjustment then this would be brought back to the committee.

The Clerk advised that the recommendation in the report needed to be amended to take out the words in brackets (.....- the statutory minimum) as this was incorrect. Councillor Thomas **MOVED** (and Councillor Chugg seconded):

“that, subject to the amendment of the recommendation in the report as printed to take out the words ....- the statutory minimum ....., the recommendation be approved”.

Upon a vote, the motion was **CARRIED**.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee recommends to the Fire & Rescue Authority that it retains its current compensation rate (a multiplier of 1 using actual week's pay) for all uniformed and support staff and that, in light of this, the compensation rates are no longer reviewed on an annual basis.

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

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.15 am