

PEOPLE COMMITTEE

(Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority)

31 October 2022

Present:

Councillors Hannaford (Chair), Clayton (Vice-Chair), Cook-Woodman (vice Thomas), Kendall, Peart and Trail BEM.

Also in attendance via Teams:

Councillor Best.

Apologies:

Councillor Thomas.

* PC/22/6

Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2022 be signed as a correct record.

* PC/22/7

Performance Monitoring Report 2022-23: Quarter 2

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of Finance, People & Estates (PC/22/7) detailing performance as at Quarter 2 of 2022-23 against those Key Performance Indicators agreed by the Committee for measuring progress against the following three strategic priorities as approved by the Authority:

- 3(a). Ensure that the workforce is highly trained and has the capability and capacity to deliver services professionally, safely and effectively;
- 3(b). Increase the diversity of the workforce to better reflect the communities we serve, promoting inclusion and developing strong and effective leaders who ensure that we have a fair place to work where our organisational values are a lived experience; and
- 3(c). Recognise and maximise the value of all employees, particularly the commitment of on-call firefighters, improving recruitment and retention.

In particular, the report provided information on performance against each of the following key measures:

- operational core competence skills (beathing apparatus; incident command; water rescue; safety when working at heights or in confined spaces; maritime; driving; and casualty care);
- workforce planning;
- health and safety (accidents [including near misses]; personal injuries; vehicle incidents; and reporting against the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR));

- sickness and absence (including mental health) for wholetime, on-call, support, Control and casual staff, by type of sickness. The report also identified health and wellbeing support offered by the Service and featured benchmarking for sickness absence against comparable, neighbouring fire and rescue services;
- fitness testing (including support offered for red and amber groups) and a review of testing to explore a more inclusive, role-related functional fitness test for operational staff;
- diversity, with a particular focus on the representation of women in the Service as requested by the Committee at its last meeting;
- promoting inclusion, developing strong leaders, living Service values and being a fair place to work;
- grievance, capability and disciplinary issues;
- recruitment and retention (including Pay for Availability benefits); and
- employee engagement.

The Committee welcomed the focus on representation of women in the Service but asked that future reports feature information on the overall picture in relation to diversity and representation within the Service.

*(See also Minute *PC/22/8 below).*

* PC/22/8

Core Competency Performance Review

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Service Delivery (PC/22/11(A)) on the outcome of the review, requested by the Committee at its last meeting, of current performance measures for operational core competency skills.

The report identified the factors impacting on these issues, including that not all operational staff required all core competencies to enable effective and efficient service delivery.

In light of these, it was proposed to amend the competency performance thresholds to:

95% - 100% - Green;

90% - 95% - Amber; and

<90% - Red

and to apply a risk-based impact assessment on failures to meet these thresholds enabling the Committee to contextualise the performance figures in terms of actual impact on front-line services. To facilitate enhanced scrutiny, information would also be provided on any remedial actions proposed to address performance shortfalls.

RESOLVED that the proposal for assessing core competency measures, as identified in Section 3 of report PC/22/11(A) and summarised above, and reporting on this to the Committee be approved.

*(See also Minute *PC/22/7 above).*

* PC/22/9

Gender Pay Gap 2022

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of Finance, People & Estates (PC/22/12) to which was appended the latest Gender Pay Gap report for the Service. The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 required all local authority employers with 250 or more employees to publish, annually, statutory calculations showing the pay gap between male and female employees together with a supporting narrative on the organisation's view of the gap and what actions were proposed to address it.

The latest iteration of the Gender Pay Gap indicated that, for the fourth year in a row, the gap was decreasing. The Service recognised, however, that there were still issues to address in terms of recruitment and retention and in this respect the Service had a People Strategy to make diversity and inclusion integral to its business plan.

* PC/22/10

Apprenticeships

The Committee received for information a report of the Head of Learning, Development & Training (PC/22/13) on Service utilisation of the Apprenticeship Levy introduced in 2015.

The Service currently fully utilised apprenticeship levy funds, with a diverse mix of operational and support staff enrolled on programmes. It was anticipated that levy utilisation of £369,547 would be realised over the next twelve months, with the Service receiving income from the apprenticeship provider for the Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship, thereby securing savings from using this apprenticeship rather than by using a stand-alone route.

In addition to being the first Service in the country to achieve the Operational Firefighter Apprenticeship, use of the apprenticeship programme generally had assisted the Service in reinforcing inclusive learning for those with neurodiverse needs.

* PC/22/11

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) - Action Plan update

The Committee received for information a report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (PC/22/14) outlining progress to date against the Action Plans developed to address both the Cause of Concern and Areas for Improvement identified following the most recent Service inspection by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

The Cause for Concern Action Plan had been submitted to HMICFRS by the deadline of 31 August 2022 and delivery of measures to address this was currently on track, as was delivery of measures to address the Areas for Improvement.

In addition to the report, the Committee received a presentation of how progress to address these matters would be monitored (using Sharpcloud software) and was advised that future reports would, in addition to reporting progress against the agreed timeline, also feature commentary on evidence gathered to ascertain effectiveness in addressing the issues identified.

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

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.30 pm