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

12 December 2017

Present:-

Councillors Bown (Chair), Chugg (Vice-Chair), Peart and Thomas.

Apologies:-

Councillors Best, Burridge-Clayton and Hannaford.

* **HRMDC/15** **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2017 be signed as a correct record.

* **HRMDC/16** **Absence Management & Health of the Organisation**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of Service Improvement (HRMDC/17/14) on absence performance of the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service during the first two quarters (i.e. April to October) of the current (2017-18) financial year. The report identified sickness levels and direction of travel by reference to three categories (self-certified sickness; short-term sickness; and long-term sickness) for wholetime staff (both station based and non-station based), Control staff, support staff and on-call firefighters.

On average, employees had taken 4.98 days of sick leave between April to October 2017 compared to 4.71 days for the previous year. For wholetime staff, overall sickness levels were slightly higher than last year with a slight increase in long-term sickness. There had been a significant increase in both short-term certified and long-term sickness for Control staff. There had been an overall reduction in short-term certified and uncertified sickness for support staff but long-term sickness remained worse than for the same period in the previous year. There had been an decrease in long-term sickness for wholetime non-station based staff but an increase in short-term sickness. The most common reasons for sickness for all staff were mental health issues and musculoskeletal problems. This reflected the national position.

The Service action plan aimed at improving absence management would be refreshed and this work would be supported by a temporary Human Resources officer, to be appointed in January 2018 and with a focus on absence management policy and well-being. As part of its initiatives to promote a healthier workforce, the Service had this year offered free flu vaccinations to all its staff and was currently undertaking a twelve-month trial using vocational fitness tests for operational staff.

* **HRMDC/17** **Retirement and Re-employment**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Service Improvement (HRMDC/17/15) on requests received for retirement and re-employment. The Authority's approved Pay Policy Statement for the current (2017-18) financial year required such requests to be approved by this Committee.

The Human Resources Manager reported that, following publication of the agenda for this meeting, a further request for retirement and re-employment had been received along with clarification on one of the two of the initial requests for retirement and re-employment. To this end, a revised table setting detailing all three requests for retirement and re-employment was circulated at the meeting.

RESOLVED that the requests for retirement and re-employment as identified in the revised table circulated at the meeting by the Human Resources Manager be approved.

HRMDC/18 Localism Act 2011 - Pay Policy Statement 2018-19

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Services (HRMDC/17/16) to which was attached the proposed Pay Policy Statement to operate for the Authority for the forthcoming (2018-19) financial year. The Localism Act 2011 required such a Statement, setting out the Authority's policy towards a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce (particularly senior staff and the lowest paid employees), to be approved prior to the commencement of each financial year and published, as a minimum, on the Authority's website.

The report identified that the principal differences between the proposed iteration and previous versions of the Pay Policy Statement related to the stated salaries of senior officers on the Service Executive Board and changes in the structure of this Board. Salaries of other staffhad been reviewed and amended to reflect nationally agreed pay increases.

In debating the proposed Pay Policy Statement for 2018-19, Members questioned whether it was necessary for requests for retirement and re-employment of employees up to Executive Board posts to be approved by this Committee or whether scope existed to delegate this in some way. It was felt that this could be explored at a future meeting.

RESOLVED

(a). that the Authority be recommended to approved the Pay Policy Statement to operate for the forthcoming (2018-19) financial year, as appended to report HRMDC/17/16;

(b). that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the scope for delegating approval for the retirement and re-employment of employees up to Executive Board posts and pending this either:

(i) a recommendation be made to the Authority to effect in in-year variation to the 2018-19 Pay Policy Statement; or

(ii) amendments be incorporated into the Pay Policy Statement to operate for 2019-20,

as necessary.

* **HRMDC/19 Workforce Culture, Diversity and Inclusion**

* a **Quarterly update**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of Service Improvement (HRMDC/17/17) on progress in planning and delivering cultural change in the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service ("the Service"). This included development of a new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy informed by national guidance and aligned to the Service Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and work being undertaken to develop a Service Target Operating Model (TOM).

The report featured, amongst other things:

- information on workshops undertaken in the Service during July and August on Service values;

- interim results from the 2017 staff survey;
- appointment statistics from the 2017 wholetime recruitment process and information on apprenticeships within the Service; and
- the proposed Service response to the new legislative requirement to publish, from April 2018, information on the pay gap between male and female employees.

* b **Positive Action**

The Committee received, for information, a report of the Director of Service Improvement (HRMDC/17/18) on positive action initiatives, in terms of wholetime recruitment, on-call recruitment, retention, progression and promotion, aimed at securing a more diverse and inclusive workforce for the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service ("the Service").

Securing a more diverse and inclusive workforce, with relevant knowledge, experience and perspectives, would assist the Service in identifying and meeting the needs of increasingly diverse communities, especially in relation to prevention and protection initiatives.

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

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 4.07 pm