

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

23 March 2018

Present:-

Councillors Best, Coles, Ellery and Healey MBE

Apologies:-

Councillors Chugg and Hannaford

HRMDC/20 Election of Chair

In view of the apology for non-attendance submitted by both the Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee, it was

RESOLVED that Councillor Healey MBE be elected Chair for this meeting.

* **HRMDC/21 Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2017 be **DEFERRED** for signing as a correct record at the next meeting.

* **HRMDC/22 Workforce Culture, Diversity and Inclusion - Quarterly Update**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of Service Improvement (HRMDC/18/19) on current progress with work being undertaken by the Service in planning and delivering cultural change. This work was being driven by the requirements of the proposed new National Framework for England and Wales for reform to be delivered within fire and rescue services and particularly for them to develop and maintain a workforce that was resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse. The focus in future needed to be in four areas, namely promoting an inclusive culture, recruitment, progression and retention.

The Committee considered, in particular, the progress that had been made within Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service in the following areas:

- Inclusive culture/leadership – including the instigation of new Values and Leadership Behaviours, the transparent promotion process that had been undertaken and the development of a new appraisal process;
- Recruitment, promotion and retention – the Service was developing a People Strategy (as suggested by the the Home Office) and as part of this was evaluating the wholetime and on-call recruitment processes to ensure that they were fair, transparent and made full use of the available talent pool in the community. Feedback from a conference attended recently indicated that the Service approach to recruitment was ahead of that of other fire and rescue services, particularly in respect of the recruitment of women to on-call positions.

The Committee was advised that the new inspection regime under Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Police and Fire and Rescue Services would be looking more closely at the Service's equality and diversity statistics so it was important to evidence those areas of workforce reform already undertaken.

* **HRMDC/23 Gender Pay Gap**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of Service Improvement (HRMDC/18/20) to which was appended the first Gender Pay Gap report for the Service. New requirements under the Equalities Act 2010 required all public authorities with 250 or more employees to publish statutory calculations every year on how large the pay gap was between male and female employees.

It was noted that the UK gender pay gap (in favour of men) was 18.1% in April 2016 whilst the gap for all staff groups within Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service was 11%. The Service had instigated an Action Plan to address the pay gap, including:

- Increasing the number of women applying for senior roles in the operational and non-operational workforce;
- Increasing the attraction and recruitment of women into the operational workforce; and
- Retaining women by identifying and addressing barriers to continue and progress their careers throughout their working life.

HRMDC/24 Provision of Vehicles to Employees

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Finance (Treasurer) (HRMDC/18/21) on the Contract Car Hire (CCH) Schemes operated for both uniformed and non-uniformed employees.

The schemes had been subject to review to ensure they remained cost neutral to the Service and that they remained compliant with HMRC requirements while still remaining an attractive benefit to employees. As a result of the review, it was now proposed that the Contract Car Hire Schemes currently offered by the Service be closed and replaced with a car allowance payment for all staff.

RESOLVED that the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority be recommended to approve:

- (a) discontinuation of the Contract Car Hire Schemes for both uniformed and non-uniformed employees;
- (b) the introduction of a Car Allowance option for eligible officers (as defined in the report) who wish to have a vehicle for both business and private use;
- (c) subject to (b) above, consultation with employees on and subsequent implementation of Car Allowance payments and mileage rates on the basis of the options as set out in Appendix A to report HRMDC/17/21;
- (d) payment of an Essential User Allowance, on the basis of the options identified in Appendix A to the report, for other employees not covered by (b) above but who are required to provide a vehicle for business use.

* **HRMDC/25 Absence Management and the Health of the Organisation**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of Service Improvement (HRMDC/18/22) that set out the Service's performance on absence management up to and including January 2018.

The Committee noted that performance for the period April 2017 to January 2018 was 7.26 days/shifts lost as compared with 7.01 days for the same period in 2016/17.

It was noted that a top level review into sickness absence was being undertaken and that a report on the outcome of this would be submitted to the Committee in due course. Absence levels was a key measure for the Service and a specific target was being developed with an average measure of 8 days/shifts lost per person for wholetime, control and support staff.

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

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.40 am

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