

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

21 September 2018

Present:-

Councillors Bown (Chair), Best, Clayton, Healey MBE, Randall Johnson and Trail BEM (vice Peart).

* **HRMDC/8** **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2018 be signed as a correct record.

* **HRMDC/9** **Proposed Extension of Secondment of Chief Fire Officer Lee Howell**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Services (HRMDC/18/29) in respect of the proposed extension of the secondment of Chief Fire Officer, Lee Howell, together with details of the initiative and the benefits to the Fire & Rescue Authority.

RESOLVED

- (a) That, subject to receipt of written confirmation from the Avon & Somerset Constabulary of the funding for the secondment extension, the Committee approves the extension of the secondment of Chief Fire Officer Lee Howell to the Avon & Somerset Constabulary as Senior Responsible Officer for the Multi-Agency Integrated Service Analytics Hub (Office for Data Analytics) initiative for a period up to 31 March 2019;
- (b) That it be noted that, in the event of funding by the Avon & Somerset Constabulary for the secondment extension not covering the full period to 31 March 2019, the secondment extension would be for a shorter period and that the Clerk to the Authority be authorised to confirm the contractual details once the funding position was clear;
- (c) That it be noted that, in accordance with the original Authority decision on 20 October 2017:
 - (i) The substantive Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Improvement) (Glenn Askew) will continue as Acting Chief Fire Officer for the Service for the duration of the secondment;
 - (ii) The Acting Chief Fire Officer will undergo an appointment process to determine ongoing temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer arrangements; and
 - (iii) Any further proposed extension of the secondment be subject to a further report to the Authority.

* **HRMDC/10** **Workforce Planning - Apprenticeships**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Service Improvement (HRMDC/18/29) that gave an update on the progress made with the development of apprenticeship opportunities within Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service, providing details of the funding position and also the target set for new apprenticeships.

The Committee noted that the Public Sector Target Regulations 2017 set a minimum average of 2.3% target for minimum average of new starter apprenticeships each year from 2017/18 to 2020/21, based on the number of employees working within the Service. Different apprenticeships attracted varying levels of funding but the new Firefighter apprenticeships could be funded to a maximum of £12k (towards salary and superannuation costs). The levy, based on payroll, was set at 0.5% with a cost of approximately £18k per month to the Service so if the funding available was not utilised with apprenticeships, the Service lost out. With Bridgwater College assisting with administering the process as the provider, the Service had already introduced apprenticeships in the following areas:

- Operational Firefighter Apprenticeships;
- Fire & Rescue sector specific apprenticeships;
- Uniform and support staff apprenticeships; and
- In career apprenticeships.

Although the target for new apprenticeships had not been achieved within 2017/18, reference was made to the barriers to achieving this. The Service had recognised the significant benefits that could be realised with the introduction of apprenticeships within the Fire Service and thus, had set an objective within the Fire & Rescue Plan to provide training for the apprentices to nationally recognised standards.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That the Service continues to progress the apprenticeship scheme.

* **HRMDC/11** **Absence Management Performance Report**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of Service Improvement (HRMDC/18/31) that set out the Service's performance in relation to absence management for the first quarter of 2018/19.

The report highlighted that absence for the period April to July 2018 was an average of 2.52 days lost per person as compared to 2.75 days for the same period in 2017/18. The target for sickness absence for the year was an average of 8 days/shifts lost per person for wholetime, control and support staff. The Service continued to make improvements to absence levels although this seemed to be showing an upward trend during the first quarter of 2018. There had been an increase in all sickness levels for wholetime station based staff but significantly with long terms sickness and further information was being sought on the reasons behind this. Within Control and support staff, the overall sickness levels had improved but with an increase in short term certified sickness with the same position for on call staff.

It was noted that the two most common reasons for sickness across all staff groups were mental health and musculoskeletal which reflected the national position. The Service was continuing work on the review of the Absence Management Policy and associated guidance.

* **HRMDC/12 Workforce Culture, Diversity & Inclusion - Quarterly Update**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Service Improvement (HRMDC/18/32) that provided an update on the work being undertaken in respect of culture, diversity and inclusion within the Service in support of the new Integrated Risk Management Plan and national guidance. Work undertaken so far in 2018/19 included:

- Inclusive culture/leadership:
 - the development of the new appraisal process which should be completed shortly;
 - work on a new People Strategy had now commenced;
 - collaboration with Devon & Cornwall Constabulary and the Royal Navy in organising a menopause Conference
- Recruitment, promotion and retention:
 - The new “Joint the Team, become a Firefighter” launched by the Home Office;
 - The appointment of a new Leadership & Development Manager to develop a comprehensive Leadership Framework for the Service;
 - Stonewall leadership training, a Women’s springboard development Programme and an initial meeting with Exeter University to explore collaboration.

It was noted that Diversity and Inclusion was to be given a greater emphasis on the agenda for the next Local Government Association Fire Conference to be held in March 2019.

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

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