

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

5 November 2019

Present:-

Councillors Best, Hannaford (Chair), Peart, Thomas, Wheeler and Vijeh (Vice-Chair)

Apologies:-

Councillor Clayton

\* **HRMDC/6**     **Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2019 be signed as a correct record.

\* **HRMDC/7**     **Absence Management Performance Report**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of Service Improvement (HRMDC/19/10) that set out the Service's performance in relation to absence management for the period April to August 2019.

The following points were noted during discussion on this report:

- current performance in respect of absence was 3.09 days/shifts lost as compared with 3.37 days/shifts lost for the same period in 2018/19. This was also the lowest level achieved since 2013/14 (2.76 days/shifts lost). The Head of Human Resources advised the Committee that the Service was in a good position and ahead of target;
- that the Service would need to develop a target for absence for On Call staff but was still collecting data presently and would report to a future meeting on this matter;
- In terms of the different staff categories, absence for On Call staff had increased slightly in the period April to August 2019 from 4.79 days to 5.24 days when compared with the same period in 2018/19. The RAG rating was still amber, however, despite performance being only 9.4% worse than in 2018/19. The Committee enquired as to whether this may be due to motivational issues arising as a result of the proposed changes in service delivery under the Safer Together Programme that had been consulted upon during the summer of 2019 and if so, what course of action the Service was taking to mitigate against this. The Head of Human Resources replied that this was possible but that the Service had taken steps to support staff through this period. The Service had established a range of supporting mechanisms for staff and had increased the number of officer visits to stations.

- Comparative data with other fire and rescue services together and the national statistics from the Chartered Institute for Personnel & Development (CIPD) would be submitted to the Committee in due course;
- Work related injuries were monitored via the Health & Safety department and a separate report was included on the agenda for this meeting for reference;
- It was suggested that the way in which the data for sickness rates by post type was not the most helpful way of reporting sickness absence to the Committee.

Councillor Thomas **MOVED** (seconded by Councillor Peart):

“that an additional recommendation be added to the report to the effect that future sickness rate charts were RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated against the current target for absence (8 days/shifts lost) and no longer against the previous year actuals”.

The motion was **CARRIED** unanimously.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (a) that future sickness rate charts were RAG rated against the current target for absence (8 days/shifts lost) and no longer against the previous year actuals; and
- (b) Subject to (a) above, the report be noted.

#### \* **HRMDC/8 Health, Safety & Welfare Report**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of Governance & Digital Services (HRMDC/19/11) that set out the approach being taken by the Service in respect of the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees with both proactive and reactive monitoring and its performance in this area during 2019/20.

The report was a new report presented to the Committee to reflect the importance being placed on the health, safety and wellbeing of its staff. The Department for Communities and Local Government had set out a framework entitled “Health, Safety and Welfare for the Operational Environment” and the Service had aligned its practices to this. This required clear and positive safety leadership and to this end, the Chair of the Fire & Rescue Authority would be signing an annual Health, Safety and Welfare Policy statement jointly with the Chief Fire Officer.

The new approach facilitated the provision of more information for the Committee regarding the Service's performance in this area. The Service's Health and Safety Manager advised the Committee on how the Service was managing health safety and welfare of its staff through both the proactive and reactive monitoring of incidents. The following points were noted:

- Proactive monitoring – this involved the use of a safety management system audit together with workplace inspections and assessment. In 2018/19, the Service had 45 audit areas where it was not compliant but by quarter 2 of 2019/20 (July to September 2019) this had been reduced to 4. In quarter 2 of 2019/20, the Service had 11% of workplace inspection and assessments overdue against a target of 0%;
- Reactive monitoring – the Service undertook monitoring via the Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) which required the reporting of certain types of work related safety event outcomes such as, amongst others, the death of a worker/non-worker from a work related accident, specific injuries to workers such as fractures, amputations, loss of sight, over 7 day injuries and reportable occurrences such as carpal tunnel syndrome.

In 2019/20 to quarter 2, the Service reported 6 over 7 day injuries, 3 dangerous occurrences and 2 specified injuries. The Service also monitored the number of personal injuries together with vehicle incidents. In quarter 2 of 2019/20, the Service recorded 48 personal injuries compared with 59 in 2018/19. On vehicle incidents, the Service recorded 105 vehicle incidents to quarter 2 of 2019/20 as compared with 188 in 2018/19;

- Work was ongoing in respect of enhancing the Service's safety event reporting mechanisms and a cultural survey had been commissioned in order to ascertain any work necessary to improve the safety culture.

The Committee noted that this was the first report to the Committee on health, safety and welfare and that future reporting would evolve as new mechanisms were implemented.

\* **HRMDC/9 People Strategy & People Development Project**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Service Improvement (HRMDC/19/12) that introduced the People Strategy to the Authority and set out how it had been created. The report also informed the Committee of the associated work undertaken under the People Development Project within the Safer Together Programme.

The Head of Human Resources advised the Committee upon the steps taken in preparation of the People Strategy. The Service had undertaken workshops and this had resulted in the following areas of focus within the strategy:

- Leadership;

- Inclusion;
- Ways of working;
- Learning and development; and
- Wellbeing.

The Committee received a presentation at the meeting that set out the process involved at the workshops held together with an explanation of the content of each of the strategic themes.

The Head of Human Resources further advised that the Strategy was prepared following the workshop and following feedback from staff and consideration of the Safer Together Change & Improvement Programme. A final version of the Strategy was then prepared and endorsed by the Service's Extended Leadership Team for publication online. A Monitoring and Review group involving a cross section of staff and Trade Union representatives has been established in order to assess the Service's progress on implementation of the Strategy.

The Area Manager (Organisational Development) advised the Committee that the People Development Project under the Safer Together Programme was in progress currently. This project was moving towards completion of a business case to introduce a more joined up approach to how the Service ensured it was recruiting, retaining, supporting and developing the very best people with the right skills, experience, passion and commitment to support these changes both now and in the future.

The three key workstreams within this project were:

- Inspiring leadership;
- Building career pathways; and
- Developing our people.

The Area Manager (Organisational Development) advised the Committee that the overarching Leadership Strategy had been prepared in line with the National Fire Chiefs Council's Leadership Strategy. The presentation at the meeting covered the work that had been undertaken to date during the Project.

\* **HRMDC/10 Workforce Culture, Diversity & Inclusion - Quarterly Update**

The Committee received for information a report of the Director of Service Improvement (HRMDC/19/13) that set out the progress made in the second quarter of 2019-20 towards achieving a more diverse workforce and a more inclusive working environment.

The Committee noted the following points in terms of:

Inclusive culture/leadership:

- The People Strategy had been published and linked to this, the Diversity & Inclusion Plan for 2019-20 had also been published. This would give a focus to diversity and inclusion objectives for future years to reflect the aims in the People Strategy;
- A Fairness & Respect Policy and “living the values” guidance had also been published to provide a framework for staff in terms of the Service’s culture and how staff were expected to treat one another;
- The People Impact Assessment (PIAs) project had undergone extensive trials and learning points had been identified as a result. Wider implementation of the PIAs would be instigated shortly;
- A Dignity at Work review had been instigated by the Estates Department to identify whether Service premises complied with legal requirements and provided dignity for staff in their work locations. The lightweight Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) project had found that many female operational staff had not been issued with or wearing female specific PPE and this would now be addressed.

Recruitment, Promotion & Retention:

- In support of both the Integrated Risk Management Plan and the Fire & Rescue Plan, multiple initiatives had been instigated or were planned to increase diversity in the workforce;
- In terms of On Call, an analysis of the relative levels of success in recruitment practices had been completed. The findings had been utilised to review and refine the On Call recruitment process and the role of service delivery within this;
- A Recruitment Working Group had been established and was working towards the planning of positive action, initiation of new recruitment processes and preparation of a communications plan;
- The Government Equality Office had released guidance in respect of how to reduce the gender pay gap, highlighting the importance of creating an inclusive culture and supporting women’s careers and progress for part time workers. Within this, a sponsorship programme had been instigated for women and the Service was collaborating with Devon & Cornwall Constabulary, Dorset Constabulary and Devon County Council to facilitate implementation of the Programme.

Community Inclusion:

- In relation to the recent consultation exercise in respect of the Service Delivery Operating Model proposals, a wide range of consultation exercises had been undertaken within local communities;

- Specific engagement events were undertaken with groups of people who may be impacted by the proposed changes to the Service delivery model such as the Devon Disability Network, Taunton Together and the Gypsy and Traveller community;
- An internal Consultation & Engagement Task to Finish Group had been established to increase the efficiency and consistency of campaign messages and also to prevent consultation overload.

The Committee enquired as to the percentage of white, British, heterosexual male applicants in previous recruitment exercises. The Diversity & Inclusion Manager advised that she did not have this information to hand but she was aware that it was a high percentage. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer added that it was recognised that recruitment had been dominated largely by white, British, heterosexual males as in other fire and rescue services and that national work was ongoing via the NFCC to address this. The Service was aware of the need to work on this actively but this was not an issue that would be solved in the short term. It was anticipated that the work being undertaken within the Service on its People Strategy would assist with retention as well as recruitment of staff but it was recognised that there were challenges to be overcome in terms of culture.

\* **HRMDC/11 Requests for Retirement and Re-employment**

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Service Improvement (HRMDC/19/14) setting out requests for retirement and re-employment in accordance with the approved Pay Policy Statement for 2019/20. The Committee also considered an additional request for retirement and re-employment as set out within a supplementary report (HRMDC/19/14(a)).

**RESOLVED** that the requests for retirement and re-employment as set out within reports HRMDC/19/14 and HRMDC/19/14(a) be approved.

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

The Meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.07 pm