



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE OUTCOMES

Report of the Chair of the Human Resources Committee

Agenda No:

Date: 28 May 2010

Purpose of Report:

To report to Members the business and actions of the Human Resources Committee meeting of Friday 23 April 2010.

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1. BACKGROUND

As part of the revised Governance arrangements the Authority have delegated key responsibilities for Human Resources (HR) to the Human Resources Committee. As part of those delegated responsibilities the Chair of the Human Resources Committee and the Management lead report to the Authority on its business and actions as agreed at Fire and Rescue Authority meeting 1 June 2007.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on Friday 23 April 2010 are attached to this report at Appendix A. The following summarises the main points of the papers discussed at the meeting.
- 2.2 The Committee were firstly in receipt of a report which updated Members on human resources issues within Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service. The report provided detail around human resources metrics (sickness absence); discipline and grievance; and staffing numbers. It was resolved that whilst the report be endorsed and progress noted, a benchmarking exercise should be undertaken with other 'family group' Fire Services and with the City and County Councils to compare sickness absence figures and a simple matrix be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.
- 2.3 An urgent item was introduced to the meeting and the Chair was of the opinion that this item, although not included on the agenda, should be considered as a matter of urgency in accordance with Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, in view of the special circumstances that the decision to appoint an Intranet/Internet Officer could not wait until the next meeting of the Committee as it was an area identified by the Audit Commission for urgent attention. Consideration was therefore given to the report and the appointment as detailed in the report was approved, it being noted that the cost would be met from the efficiency savings contingency.
- 2.4 Conversion of posts was the subject of the next report before the Committee and it was resolved that the changes to the establishment arising from post conversions during the period April 2009 to March 2010, with the additional cost of £85,407 being met from the budget provision for operational support, be noted.
- 2.5 A further report was considered regarding the employee discount scheme. The Committee resolved that the success of the 'My Advantage' scheme offering Service employees access to on-line discounts for a number of shops and services in year 1 be noted, and a further report be submitted in due course on the effectiveness of the scheme as an employee benefit prior to renewal of the license in 2011.

- 2.6 For the remaining item, the Committee were asked to consider exclusion of the public pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972. This was endorsed and the Committee went on to note a report regarding the regarding of posts.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All financial implications were considered as part of the original reports submitted to the Human Resources Committee.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

All human resources and learning and development implications were considered as part of the original reports submitted to the Human Resources Committee.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An initial equality impact assessment has identified no specific aspects relating to a disproportionate effect in respect of the key equality strands.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

A correctly functioning HR department and policies are key to the delivery of an effective service. Failure to achieve this may result in a poor service and poor results through Comprehensive Performance Assessment and other audit processes.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of this report and the business undertaken by the Human Resources Committee.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

Councillor Alex Foster
CHAIR OF HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

FOR NOTE

APPENDIX A



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES

of meeting held on **23 APRIL 2010** at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge, from 10.00 am to 10.55 am

Membership

- Councillor Foster (Chair)
- ^ Councillor Cross
- Councillor Grocock
- Councillor vacancy
- Councillor Wheeler

Members absent are marked ^

Councillor Cooper attended the meeting as an observer.

22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Cross.

23 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 22 January 2010, copies of which had been circulated, be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were made.

25 HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Fire Officer, copies of which had been circulated. With regard to the low number of grievances (9) a mediation process was currently being agreed with the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service which it was hoped to introduce next year and should help to reduce the figure further. The process would involve the Service training its own internal mediators.

Even though the overall sickness absence figures for the Service were down, the figures for non-uniformed staff had continued to rise in quarter 3. The Human Resources and Occupational Health Teams had investigated the short-term absence but there was no evidence of a common reason for absence or that sickness was concentrated in particular job roles. During quarter 3 nine non-uniformed staff had been absent on a long term basis (more than 28 days) but 8 of these had now returned to work and one had left the Service's employment. Consequently, the quarter 4 figures showed a significant reduction in non-uniformed absence, reducing from 268 days in quarter 3 to 35 in quarter 4. If the end of year figures showed an annual average absence of around 6 days per employee, which they were on course to do, the sickness absence would have been halved in 2 years and would be one of the lowest in the country. It was possible that the introduction of 'fit notes' by GPs in addition to 'sick notes' could help to reduce absence further as one of the options could be employees returning to work earlier on reduced hours for a temporary period.

RESOLVED

- **that the report be endorsed and the progress regarding Human Resources issues be noted;**
- **that a benchmarking exercise be undertaken with other 'family group' Fire Services and with the City and County Councils to compare sickness absence figures and a simple matrix be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.**

26 URGENT ITEM – INTRANET/INTERNET OFFICER

The Chair of the meeting was of the opinion that this item, although not included on the agenda, should be considered as a matter of urgency in accordance with Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, in view of the special circumstances that the decision to appoint an Intranet/Internet Officer could not wait until the next meeting of the Committee as it was an area identified by the Audit Commission for urgent attention.

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Fire Officer, copies of which had been circulated.

RESOLVED that the appointment of an Intranet/Internet Officer on the terms detailed in the report be approved, it being noted the cost would be met from the efficiency savings contingency.

27 CONVERSION OF POSTS

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Fire Officer, copies of which had been circulated.

RESOLVED that the changes to the establishment arising from post conversions during the period April 2009 to March 2010 with the additional cost of £85,407 being met from the budget provision for operational support be noted.

28 EMPLOYEE DISCOUNT SCHEME

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Fire Officer, copies of which had been circulated, together with the leaflet 'My Advantage' detailing the benefits and discounts available for Service staff and their families, copies of which were passed around the table.

RESOLVED that the success of the 'My Advantage' scheme offering Service employees access to on-line discounts for a number of shops and services in year 1 be noted and a further report be submitted in due course on the effectiveness of the scheme as an employee benefit prior to renewal of the license in 2011.

29 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED that, pursuant to section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining item as it contained information relating to individuals and was likely to reveal the identity of those individuals and having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

30 REGRADING OF POSTS

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Fire Officer, copies of which had been circulated.

RESOLVED that the applications considered by, and outcomes of, the Job Evaluation Panel in respect of changes to the permanent non-uniformed establishment during the period January to March 2010 (inclusive) be noted.