

report

meeting	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY	
	HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE	
date	5 January 2007	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

HUMAN RESOURCES ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

At its meeting on 7th July 2006 the Human Resources Committee received details of the annual service plan objectives for the Personnel and Training sections. Members asked for further information regarding the prioritisation of items within the plans and a brief position statement for high priority items. At the committee meeting of 6th October 2006 a report was presented detailing those elements from the Personnel Service Plan. This report reviews those items established under the Learning and Development Service Plan.

2. BACKGROUND

The Service Plan uses the template established by the Service for the presentation of its departmental business plans. This establishes a relative priority for each Key Success Area in the range High, Medium and Low. This reflects the legislative, organisational and strategic importance of delivering key objectives within a prescribed timescale.

3. REPORT

The High Priority items for Learning and Development Section and the drivers for the actions are:

3.1 Assessment and Development Centre's (ADC's) – Supervisory and Middle Manager (completed 5/12/06) - To have systems in place to test the potential for personnel to perform at a higher level and to identify development needs for each individual.

3.1.1 Position statement: Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service has played a significant part in developing the East Midlands Regional ADC process. For an individual to progress to a higher managerial band they must initially undertake a test known as an IToP (Initial Test of Potential), those who are successful are then eligible to attend the ADC. This process assesses candidates in a variety of managerial situations and the behaviours exhibited by the candidates are observed and scored against the agreed Personal Qualities and Attributes (PQA's) for the relevant role. The outcome enables an individual to be given an individual development programme tailored to their needs.

3.1.2 The process is now fully established and two supervisory level ADC's and one middle manager level have now been completed. To achieve this, a team of assessors and roleplayers have been trained and, equally importantly, development programmes have been established to support candidate's post-ADC. It is worth noting that the East Midlands Regional

ADC process has been held up as 'best practice' by the national workforce development team.

3.2 Retained Duty Staff Development Programme (completion date September 2007) - To establish a development programme for retained duty personnel that is suitable for modern role and is accessible to relevant personnel.

3.2.1 Position statement: A review of existing training provision, compared to the Regional basic skills concept, has been completed. This has resulted in a draft proposal for a modularised sequence of basic training, being submitted to Safety Services for consideration. ACFO Dave Horton has agreed with the proposals and given the go-ahead for the project to progress.

3.2.2 A retained development group has been established and this group has been instrumental in developing these proposals and is a major driver behind the project.

3.2.3 Budget bids have been made for 2007/08 to ensure that management development, the development of assessors and access to NVQ's can be made available to RDS personnel.

3.3 Centre Accreditation (completed September 2006) - To receive external verification for SDC to award National Vocational Qualifications.

3.3.1 Position statement: The SDC assessment centre has recently (September 2006) gone through the external verification process, provided by Edexcel. The outcome was extremely successful with the centre being given the top grade (Grade A) from the previous Grade B.

3.3.2 The centre has now been accredited to provide the following NVQ awards

- Firefighter – Operations in the Community
- Control Operations
- Watch Manager
- Fire Safety (Level 3)
- Assessor (A1)
- Internal Verifier (V1)

The next stages will be to develop Fire Safety (Level 4) and the Learning and Development awards.

3.3.3 The processes that have been developed to satisfy the NVQ requirements will be used to support assessments of competence for other roles where NVQ's currently do not exist. A report on the methodology for development and assessments within the service has been approved by SMT. This approach has the built-in assurance that all competence assessments will be in line with the published Code of Practice.

3.4 New Dimensions (completion date March 2007) - To implement a system of training to ensure equipment and vehicles supplied by central government as part of the 'new dimensions' programme are introduced into the service and maintained operationally available.

3.4.1 Position statement: The High Volume Pump initial training has been fully delivered to retained firefighters from Ashfield, Blidworth and Newark fire stations. The associated awareness training for other operational personnel has also been fully completed. A series of continuation training has been established to ensure the maintenance of competencies

3.4.2 The Mass Decontamination Re-Robe (MDR) training has been completed in November 2006 and the MDR vehicle is now operationally available, based at Newark Fire Station.

3.4.3 A new type of chemical protection suit has been developed this is known as PRPS. The training for operational personnel in the safe use of this suit has been initiated and is due for completion in March 2007.

3.5 Vector Command and Control Simulation (completion date May 2007) - To develop command and control training for operational incident commanders.

3.5.1 Position statement: The 'Vector' unit is a computer based simulator to enable operational commanders to receive training, guidance and assessment in command and control procedures. The unit has now been purchased and is based at SDC. Approval has been given for the recruitment of a specialist vector facilitator and this recruitment process has begun. Additionally, a Trainer from the current establishment at SDC is in the process of familiarisation with the unit. It is expected that the unit will be used for command training in the early part of 2007.

3.6 Safe Working at Height (completion date 1st October 2007) - To deliver training to operational personnel in the equipment and techniques associated with safe working at height.

3.6.1 Position statement: Currently, there are a minimum of 75% of wholetime personnel who have received the requisite training for the new equipment. This is the agreed figure to maintain the equipment operationally available.

3.6.2 The programme of re-visits to catch the remaining personnel has been put on-hold, in a decision taken jointly with Safety Services, in order to prioritise other areas (increasing wholetime establishment).

3.6.3 The programme for training RDS personnel has also been suspended and is now due to commence in Feb 07, to be completed by Oct 07.

3.7 Phase Two Personal and Performance Review process (completion date April 2007) - To develop and implement a 'maintenance of competency' framework and develop the current PDR process to become 'appraisal and review'.

3.7.1 Position statement: The current operational Training and Assessment Plans (TAPS) have been adapted and amended and are currently being piloted at Ashfield and Stockhill Fire Stations. This continues to be a paper-based system.

3.7.2 Competency Portfolio's have been produced for the roles of Firefighter, Crew and Watch Manager. These are also currently being piloted at Ashfield and Stockhill as they fit in with the new TAPS system. On reviewing the pilot, portfolios will be developed for the roles of Station, Group and Area Manager.

3.7.3 The current PDR process (guidance and the associated paperwork) is available on the intranet. A spreadsheet has been circulated to Districts to enable them to submit the relevant PDR information to the Learning and Development Section to feed into the production of training plans. Training on the methodology for carrying out PDR's has been incorporated onto the management development programme. Work is ongoing to identify an appropriate process for developing the current PDR system into an 'appraisal' system.

3.8 Middle Managers Development Programme (completed September 2006) - To establish and introduce a middle manager development programme.

3.8.1 Position statement: A development programme for middle managers has been created, this follows an agreed Regional structure but retains flexibility to allow for local aspects to be addressed and for the programme to be tailored to suit individual development needs. The development programme has been cross-referenced with the IPDS Middle Manager Development Modules and is in line with the IPDS system. Those personnel who successfully completed the middle manager ADC are now working on this development programme.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications have been considered as part of the implementation plan for each item and have been incorporated into budget estimates for 2006/07.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

Personnel implications have been assessed as part of the implementation plan for each item.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Equalities implications have been assessed as part of the implementation plan for each item.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

7.1 As many of the priority items are formed as part of national initiatives or form part of the delivery of strategic corporate objectives, there is a significant risk to the organisation if the Service fails to deliver within the established timescale.

7.2 The Service scored a '2' in the "people" element of CPA. The progress made will be assessed within Direction of Travel and should show progress to the Audit Commission on how the organisation is addressing their previous concerns.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Human Resources Committee note the progress made by the Learning & Development section and continue to support its development needs.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION

None.

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