

report

meeting	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY	
	HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE	
date	6 July 2007	agenda item number

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

RANK TO ROLE UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Members on the progress of the rank to role conversion for uniformed staff.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The move from a rank based structure to one based on roles was initially agreed in principle following the Fire and Rescue Service pay dispute of 2002/2003. Formal agreement was circulated via National Joint Council (NJC) Circular 13/2003, which ratified the move to seven firefighting roles.

2.2 Initial implementation was done by assimilation of previous grades to the new role based structure. In December 2003, NJC Circular 15/2003 advised that negotiations were still outstanding and that a detailed migration of staff would not be appropriate until the completion of all negotiations.

3. REPORT

3.1 On 24 August 2005 NJC Circular 09/05 finally confirmed the agreement on the substantive move from rank to role, as well as issuing guidance necessary to complete the task.

3.2 Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS) began its process of rank to role assessment in September 2006. The process involved the assessment of all uniform staff grades against a template to determine which role was most appropriate. The roles available were :

- Firefighter
- Crew Manager
- Watch Manager
- Station Manager
- Group Manager
- Area Manager

3.3 Whilst there was a reasonable match between the transition for "operational" grades, those staff on day duties and in specific roles had to be subject to a full and detailed process. This included the formation of a full job description, which was then evaluated against the role maps to determine the grade. This followed the process as identified in NJC Circular 09/05.

- 3.4 Where individuals did not agree with the outcomes of the process, an appeal mechanism was used. In all, NFRS dealt with 42 appeals and the Chief Fire Officer heard 11 personal hearings.
- 3.5 The outcome of the Rank to Role process is that the vast majority of jobs were confirmed as per NJC Circular 13/03; no jobs were assimilated to a lower role than that outlined and eight jobs (thirteen people) were assimilated to a role higher than that outlined.
- 3.6 The next stage of the process is to determine the job sizing. 'A' and 'B' determinations are in place to differentiate between job sizes in the same role within the NJC agreed role maps from Watch to Area Manager. Accordingly a pay differential between the two job sizes is reflected in the NJC pay scales.
- 3.7 A joint management/trade union workshop has been held to ensure that a methodology for the job sizing process can be agreed. At present consultation regarding a collective agreement is being undertaken before a project team is formed to undertake the outstanding work.
- 3.8 Following the job sizing process it is recommended that a job evaluation panel process is developed, as is the case for non-uniformed NFRS staff. This will ensure that all posts are kept up to date with changes should the roles develop over time. It is also intended to develop a clear policy on the payment of additional responsibility allowances.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Where roles have been assimilated to a role higher than that outlined in NJC Circular 13/03, costs have been incurred. However, due to pay protection as part of the 2003 National Pay agreement only three of the thirteen staff concerned are now being paid higher salary and are in receipt of back pay. This cost has been covered from existing contingencies and revenue released from a recent restructure.
- 4.2 There are further implications regarding the job sizing process. These are as yet unclear, but the Service has made estimates as to potential costs.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

There have been implications arising from this process and personnel whose role has been upgraded have benefited. The Service has followed the NJC guidance on this matter to ensure that all concerned can support the process. Rank to role in this format is a "one-off" process and therefore once concluded, all normal criteria will apply to any future vacancies.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Potential equalities issues have been dealt with through dialogue and process. Where individuals have received an upgrade, this has been achieved by following NJC guidance.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

The Service's requirement to move to a role based structure has been in place since 24 August 2005. Failure to have completed this task could have left the Service open to criticism via external audit processes such as the Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That Members note the contents of this report and the current progress towards the completion of the rank to role process.
- 8.2 That Members receive an update, with full details, once the process has been completed.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION

- National Joint Council Circular 13/03
- National Joint Council Circular 15/03
- National Joint Council Circular 09/05

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