



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item No:

Date: 04 January 2008

Purpose of Report:

To update Human Resources (HR) Committee on progress over the last three months in implementing the HR Action Plan.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In November 2006 the Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire & Rescue Authority received a report from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) LLP on the status of the Human Resources department. Since that review a number of changes have been commissioned by both Management and the Authority.
- 1.2 As part of ongoing improvements with the HR department, members of the HR Committee have asked for continuous updates on progress. These progress reports were as a result of the findings of the HR Review conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in November 2006.
- 1.3 In addition HR Committee had also requested an update on issues such as sickness absence, formal disciplinaries, grievances, harassment & bullying, employment tribunal cases and staffing numbers. These issues are known as HR metrics.

2. REPORT

HUMAN RESOURCES ACTION PLAN

- 2.1 Members will recall that following the HR Review an interim Head of HR was appointed in January 2007, this assignment concluded in June 2007, and the individual contracted as a HR Operations Manager undertook the duties of interim Head of HR until October 2007.
- 2.2 As part of this arrangement the interim HR Manager has continued to progress the HR Action Plan previously submitted to HR Committee. An analysis of progress to date and future activity is outlined below.

Item & Objective	Progress to Date	Future Plans
1. Formulate & implement process and review for optimum contribution from HR team	Template of HR skills has been produced. This has been used in recently conducted Personal Development Reviews (PDR's) for HR staff. Continue to use template in PDR's for HR staff.	Discharged
2. Review the use of HR support and expertise	Patterns and magnitude of use of external HR support established. Policy to be drawn-up and implemented regarding use of external support throughout NFRS.	Audit undertaken by Finance section. Pending consideration by Strategic Management Team

3. Review and update all HR policies and procedures	45 HR polices & procedures have so far been identified for review, update and creation. To date, 15 policies have been agreed by a joint consultation group, 20 policies have been drafted and are in consultation, 10 have been drafted and are awaiting consultation.	Work will continue to review and agree policies and procedures with the representative bodies. It is anticipated that the review of the CFA Personnel Handbook will be completed by April 2008.
4. Formulate process for efficient & effective dealing with discipline and grievance cases	Ongoing consultation with FBU regarding a locally agreed Discipline and Grievance procedures. Capability procedure completed in draft, pending consultation.	Obtain final agreement on local procedures with all representative bodies by April 2008.
5. Formulate & implement process for PDR's	Discussions have been held with Unison and a PDR format has now been agreed for non-uniformed staff.	Discharged
6. Formulate guidance for dealing with sickness absence and ill-health retirement	Formal review of the new management of Sickness Absence policy & procedure has taken place with the FBU. Revisions are in progress. Discussions still ongoing to establish protocols regarding the management of ill health. Further discussion required in relation to capability issues.	Pending confirmation of national guidance on this issue in relation to pensions benefits, establish jointly agreed protocols with FBU and other representative bodies.
7. Evaluate use of Firstcare	Cross departmental working group established to identify monitoring protocols and staffing/IT requirements and implement transfer of service.	Develop system functionality with AssetCo, implement staffing arrangements, and transfer notification procedures in-house from April 08.
8. Formulate and implement process to manage Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) and communicate as appropriate	Continue work of putting in place EIA and risk assessments for all existing policies. Ensure that all new policies have EIA and risk assessment.	Discharged

9. Optimise relationship with all Trade Unions (FBU, FOA, RFU, Unison)	A joint review has taken place at a regional level of current employee relations practice. The review demonstrated compliance with the NJC best practice protocols adopted after the recent uniformed pay discussions.	Place meeting minutes with Trade Unions on the intranet. ACAS to provide employee relations "health checks" during 2008/09.
10. Produce HR Business Plan for 2007 / 08	HR Business Plan produced.	Discharged

In summary, progress continues to be made in all of the above workstreams.

REVISED HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE

2.3 The Deputy Chief Fire Officer is currently reviewing options for a permanent structure within the HR function, as detailed in HR Committee report 5th October 2007. This review will allow for a full assessment of:-

- current and projected workload between HR Operations and HR Corporate ;
- the span of control of the Head of HR, whether additional posts are required as per previous proposed structures suggested by PWC and previous Interim Head of Human Resources; and
- reporting arrangements within the Department.

2.4 A temporary HR Structure has been put in place for an interim period following the resignation of the interim Head of Human Resources at the end of October 2007. Under the arrangements a Senior Personnel Officer (Operations) has taken on the interim role of Human Resources Manager (Operations). In response to this a temporary Senior Personnel Officer has been recruited to support the Human Resources (Operations) team.

HR METRICS

SICKNESS ABSENCE

2.5 The following represents a reflection of the absence figures for the quarter 1 July – 30 September 2007.

	This quarter	Compared with last quarter	Compared with same quarter of 2006	Cumulative total for 2007/08
Total workforce	1784.5 days lost 2.34 days per employee	1857 days lost 3.9% reduction	1940 days lost 2.52 days per employee	3641.5 days lost 4.8 days per employee
Uniformed (excluding control and retained)	1332 days lost 2.2 days per employee	1400 days lost 5.1% reduction	1510 days lost 2.55 days per employee	2732 days lost 4.53 days per employee
Non uniformed	452.5 days lost 2.9 days per employee	450.5 days lost 0.44% increase	394 days lost 2.4 days per employee	903 days lost 5.8 days lost

2.6 Members will note the continued reduction of overall sickness absence.

DISCIPLINE, GRIEVANCES ETC

2.7 Over the period 1 September – 30 November 2007:

- Disciplinary: 3
- Grievances: 2
- Formal Management Sickness Absence Policy – 2
- Medical Appeals - 5
- Dismissals (including ill health retirement): 2
- Current Employment Tribunal cases: 4 (1x sexual orientation discrimination; 1x sex discrimination; 1x disability discrimination; 1x unlawful deduction from wages). It should be noted the one case was not upheld and the Service is seeking to reclaim associated costs).

STAFFING NUMBERS

2.8 During the period 1 September – 30 November 2007, 28 employees commenced employment, and 10 left the Service. Establishment levels at 30 November 2007 are highlighted below.

	Approved	Actual	Variance
Wholetime	571	584	+ 13 (including 6 secondments), 11 trainees at SDC
Retained	252	201.5 (374 persons)	- 50.5
Non-Uniformed	176	169 + 7 Agency <i>(Fixed Term Established Post – 6 Fixed Term Non-Established Post – 9 Externally Funded Post – 3)</i>	0

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 At the Human Resources Committee meeting on 5 October 2007 the post of Human Resources Services Officer and the 3 posts of Human Resources Services Administrator were approved at their new grades. The post of Human Resources Manager (Corporate) has been re-evaluated, resulting in no change to grade.
- 3.2 These financial implications therefore only consider the interim proposals in respect of the Human Resources Manager (Operations) and the 3 posts of Senior Human Resources Officer.
- 3.3 There will therefore, be an additional cost of £24,100 in 2007/08, which can be covered by the projected underspend overall on Administrative and Support staff pay.
- 3.4 The four pending employment tribunal cases will have financial implications in terms of legal costs. It is unknown as to whether any additional costs will emanate from the claims tabled.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

There are significant personnel implications associated with each workstream. Such implications are considered as part of the project plan in each area.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An initial impact assessment has revealed no specific equality issues (attached at Appendix A) from within the report however each element of the HR Action Plan, revised policies and other actions will be subject to individual Equality Impact Assessment.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

This plan sets about mitigating those risks highlighted within the PWC report “ Review of the Human Resource Function.”

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members endorse the report and the progress made to date, and agree to receive ongoing updates on progress through the Human Resources Committee structure.

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

None.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

INITIAL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Section HR	Manager DCFO BEALE	Date of Assessment DECEMBER 2007	New or Existing N/A
Name of Report to be assessed		HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE	
1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the report.		TO UPDATE HR COMMITTEE ON PROGRESS WITHIN THE HR FUNCTION.	
2. Who is intended to benefit from this report and what are the outcomes?		ALL EMPLOYEES BENEFIT FROM AN EFFECTIVE HR DEPARTMENT.	
3. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the report?		FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY, SMT, HR, EMPLOYEES, REPRESENTATIVE BODIES	
4. Who implements and who is responsible for the report?		HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT	

5. Please identify the differential impact in the terms of the six strands below. Please tick yes if you have identified any differential impacts. Please state evidence of negative or positive impacts below.

STRAND	Y	N	NEGATIVE IMPACT	POSITIVE IMPACT				
Race		x						
Gender		x						
Disability		x						
Religion or Belief		x						
Sexuality		x						
Age		x						
6. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group?			Y	N	7. Should the policy/service proceed to a full impact assessment?		Y	N

I am satisfied that this policy has been successfully impact assessed. I understand the impact assessment of this policy is a statutory obligation and that, as owners of this policy, we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this process.

Signed (completing person)...DCFO BEALE

Date ...DECEMBER 2007.....