



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Human Resources Committee

HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item No:

Date: 28 March 2008

Purpose of Report:

To update Human Resources Committee on progress over the last three months in implementing the Human Resources 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 (HR) department. Since that review a number of changes have been commissioned by both Management and the Authority.
- 1.2 As part of ongoing improvements within the HR department, members of the Human Resources Committee have asked for continuous updates on progress.
- 1.3 In addition, the Committee had also requested an update on issues such as sickness absence, formal disciplinarys, grievances, harassment and 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 HR Operations Manager undertook the duties of interim Head of HR until October 2007.
- 2.2 As part of this arrangement, the interim HR Managers (Operations/Corporate) have continued to progress the HR Action Plan previously submitted to the Committee. An analysis of progress to date and future activity is outlined below.

Item & Objective	Progress to Date	Future Plans
1. Formulate and 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 (PDRs) for HR staff. Continue to use template in PDRs 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.

Item & Objective	Progress to Date	Future Plans
<p>3. Review and update all HR policies and procedures.</p>	<p>In total 28 HR policies and procedures have been reviewed, updated and agreed through the consultation process. 25 policies and procedures are under active consultation and 9 are in draft awaiting consultation.</p>	<p>It is anticipated that the review of Sections B (Personnel Administration), C (Equal Opportunities in Employment), and D (Conditions of Service and employee benefits) will be completed by 1 April 2008.</p> <p>Work on updating Sections E (Industrial Relations), F (Training and Development), G (Health and Safety and Employee Welfare) and H (Occupational Health) will continue during 2008/9.</p> <p>All agreed policies and procedures are now available to access on the Service intranet.</p>
<p>4. Formulate process for efficient and effective dealing with discipline and grievance cases.</p>	<p>Formal consultation with representative bodies being undertaken in relation to establishment of an agreed grievance procedure. Review of Personnel Handbook disciplinary procedure to be undertaken to ensure consistent approach with Grey Book disciplinary procedures.</p> <p>Capability procedure completed in draft, pending consultation.</p>	<p>Consultation and review ongoing.</p>
<p>5. Formulate and implement process for PDRs.</p>	<p>Discussions have been held with Unison and a PDR format has now been agreed for non-uniformed staff.</p>	<p>Discharged.</p>

Item & Objective	Progress to Date	Future Plans
<p>6. Formulate guidance for dealing with sickness absence and ill-health retirement.</p>	<p>Formal review of the new management of sickness absence policy and procedure has taken place with the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). Revisions are in progress.</p> <p>Discussions still ongoing to establish protocols regarding the management of ill health. Further discussion required in relation to capability issues.</p> <p>HR has provided input to the current Communities and Local Government review of the pensions situation.</p>	<p>Pending confirmation of national guidance on this issue in relation to pensions benefits, establish jointly agreed protocols with FBU and other representative bodies.</p>
<p>7. Evaluate use of Firstcare.</p>	<p>Cross departmental working group established to identify monitoring protocols and staffing/IT requirements and implement transfer of service.</p>	<p>Discharged.</p>
<p>8. Formulate and implement process to manage Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) and communicate as appropriate.</p>	<p>Continue work of putting in place EIA and risk assessments for all existing policies.</p> <p>Ensure that all new policies have EIA and risk assessment.</p>	<p>Discharged.</p>
<p>9. Optimise relationship with all Trade Unions (FBU, Fire Officers Association (FOA), Retained Firefighters Union (RFU), Unison).</p>	<p>Regular informal meetings take place with all the recognised Trade Unions to ensure meaningful early engagement on all employee related matters.</p>	<p>All internal and external briefings to be shared with the representative bodies prior to release.</p> <p>ACAS to provide employee relations "health checks" during 2008/09.</p>
<p>10. Produce HR Business Plan for 2007/08.</p>	<p>HR Business Plan produced.</p>	<p>Discharged.</p>

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 of 5 October 2007. This review will allow for a full assessment of:

- Current and projected workload of 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 3 October – 31 December 2007:

	This quarter	Compared with last quarter	Compared with same quarter of 2006	Cumulative total for 2007/08
Total workforce	2087 days lost 2.67 days per employee	1784.5 days lost 5% reduction	1982 days lost 2.57 days per employee	5728.5 days lost 7.47 days per employee
Uniformed (excluding control and retained)	1622 days lost 2.68 days per employee	1332 days lost 2.2% reduction	1558 days lost Increase of 4%	4354 days lost 7.19 days per employee
Non uniformed	452.5 days lost 2.6 days per employee	No change	424 days lost 2.5 days per employee	1355.5 days lost 8.4 days lost
Long term sickness	Total number of long term sickness cases (defined as 28 days or more) as at 29 February 2008 = 13			

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

DISCIPLINE, GRIEVANCES ETC

2.7 Over the period 1 December 2007 – 29 February 2008:

- Disciplinary: 4
- Grievances: 7
- Formal Management Sickness Absence Policy: 1
- Dismissals including ill health retirements: 4
- Medical Appeals: 6.

The Board of Medical Referees did not uphold the case of two firefighters who had appealed under H2 of the Firefighter Pension Scheme at hearings in October and November 2007.

- Current Employment Tribunal cases: 4 (1x sexual orientation discrimination; 1 x sex discrimination, 1 x detrimental treatment of Trade Union Official). A settlement was reached on the outstanding disability discrimination case at Employment Tribunal.

STAFFING NUMBERS

2.8 During the period 1 December 2007 – 29 February 2008, 19 employees commenced employment, and 19 left the Service. Establishment levels at 29 February 2008 are highlighted below.

	Approved	Actual	Variance
Wholetime	571	581* (579 full time equivalents)	+ 10 (8 FTE) (including 5 secondments)
Retained	252	198 (367 persons)	- 54
Non-Uniformed	176	172 (Fixed Term Established Post – 4 Fixed Term Non-Established Post – 10 Externally Funded Post – 4) (8 Agency staff)	+ 4 (including 8 Agency Staff)

* The wholetime figures do not include three suspended pending appeal.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 At the Human Resources Committee meeting on 5 October 2007 the post of Human Resources Services Officer and the three 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 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. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are significant personnel implications across the HR function. 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 note the progress made to date.

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.....