



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: 10 October 2008

Purpose of Report:

To update the 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 As part of its remit the Human Resources Committee of Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority receive regular updates on human resources (HR) issues within the Service. This includes issues such as sickness absence, formal discipline, grievance, health and safety, employment tribunal cases and staffing numbers. These issues are known as HR metrics.
- 1.2 Reports are on a quarterly basis and allow the HR Committee to analyse ongoing issues and offer their guidance and scrutiny where applicable.

2. REPORT

HUMAN RESOURCES ACTION PLAN

- 2.1 To ensure that the Service continually makes progress within the HR department, an action plan has been produced. Managed by the HR Managers (Operations/Corporate) the analysis of progress and future activities are outlined below.
- 2.2 A proposal for a revised HR structure was presented to the Fire and Rescue Authority on Friday 5 September 2008 and was approved. Consultation with trade unions now the structure has been approved will commence and new posts advertised. The revised structure will build on current interim arrangements and ensure that the department has greater capacity to deal with the HR issues within the Service. Further reports on the implementation of this structure will be presented to the HR Committee at future meetings.

Item & Objective	Progress to Date	Future Plans
1. 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>2. Review and update all HR policies and procedures.</p>	<p>The majority of HR policies and procedures have now been reviewed and updated. There are currently nine policies in the formal consultation process, and five in draft awaiting consultation.</p>	<p>On the completion of consultation on the 14 policies currently under consultation or in draft, the main body of work on updating HR policies will be at an end. Continued work will need to be undertaken on an ongoing basis to review and update the policies in line with changes to legislation or national/local agreements.</p> <p>The development of new HR policies will be built into future HR Business Plans.</p> <p>The CFA Personnel Handbook (orange book) requires a limited review of certain sections, some of which fall within the L&D and Occupational Health remit. Work will be undertaken to transfer unchanged sections of the Handbook to the intranet.</p>
<p>3. Formulate process for efficient and effective dealing with discipline and grievance cases.</p>	<p>No progress has been made since the last report on agreeing a local discipline and grievance procedure which covers all Service employees. Consultation is still ongoing with representative bodies.</p>	<p>The imminent changes to the statutory disputes procedure (within the Employee Relations Act) which are expected to come into force from April 2009 will impact upon grievance and disciplinary procedure, with resolution through mediation a cornerstone of the new requirements. A report to Committee on the way in which the Service will implement the changes will be submitted once details of the ERA have been finalized</p>

Item & Objective	Progress to Date	Future Plans
<p>4. 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>5. 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>Panel minutes will be placed on the intranet for all employees to view.</p> <p>ACAS to provide employee relations "health checks" during 2008/09.</p>

In summary, progress continues to be made in all of the above workstreams. There are currently nine policies undergoing consultation with the representative bodies and a further five in draft awaiting consultation.

HR METRICS

SICKNESS ABSENCE

2.3 The following represents a reflection of the absence figures for the Quarter 1: 1 April 2008 – 30 June 2008.

Absence	This quarter	Compared with last quarter	Compared with same quarter of 2007	Cumulative total for 2008/09
Total workforce (162 employees)	1203 shifts lost (1.56 average)	1780 shifts lost Reduction 577 32%	1857 shifts lost (2.4 average) Reduction 654 35%	1203
Uniformed (128 employees) excluding control and retained	896 shifts lost (1.49 average)	1195 shifts Reduction 299 25%	1400 shifts lost Reduction 504 36%	896
Non uniformed (34 employees)	307 shifts lost (1.78 average)	585 shifts lost Reduction 278 47%	450.5 shifts lost Reduction 143 5 days 32%	307
Long term sickness	Number of employees on long term sickness (defined as 28 days or more) between 1 April 2008 – 30 June 2008 = 28			

DISCIPLINE, GRIEVANCES ETC

2.4 Over the period 1 June 2008 – 31 August 2008

- Disciplinary: 3
- Grievances: 13
- Formal Management Sickness Absence Policy: 0
- Dismissals including ill health retirements: 5
- Medical Appeals: 2 pending
- Current Employment Tribunal cases: One individual has raised 2 cases, one for discrimination on grounds of his sexual orientation dated 13 October 2006 and one for discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, disability and sex by association dated 12 May 2008
- Breach of Contract - Crown Court (16 July 2008)
- Previous Employment Tribunal application submitted on the basis of sex discrimination has been settled (July 2008)
- Previous Employment Tribunal submitted on the basis of unfair dismissal has been withdrawn by ex-employee (August 2008)

STAFFING NUMBERS

2.5 During the period 1 June 2008 – 31 August 2008, 41 employees commenced employment, and 17 left the Service. Establishment levels at 31 August 2008 are highlighted below.

	Approved	Actual	Variance
Wholetime	571	573 (571.65 full time equivalents)	+2 (+0.65 FTE) (including 6 secondments)
Retained	252	206.25 (374 persons)	- 45.75
Non-Uniformed	176	179 <i>Established Post – 156</i> <i>Fixed Term Non-Established Post – 8</i> <i>Externally Funded Post – 4</i> <i>Agency staff - 11</i>	+ 3
Control	26.5	38.5 <i>Established post – 26.5</i> <i>Internal Funded post – 2</i> <i>External Funded post - 10</i>	+ 12

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from the revised HR structure. Specific details regarding the posts and salaries from new roles will be presented to the HR Committee at its next meeting.
- 3.2 The one pending employment tribunal and breach of employment case 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

Following consultation with the trade unions, work will commence on the implementation of the revised HR structure. The Service will ensure that all relevant processes and protocols with regard to equality and fairness, employment law and other legislation are complied with.

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. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

A regular reporting system on the management of HR ensures that the Service and the FA are aware of any developing issues and are agile enough to react appropriately to mitigate risks of employment tribunals and other claims against the organisation.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members endorse the report and note the progress made to date.

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

None.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

INITIAL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

<i>Section</i> HR	<i>Manager</i> ACFO BEALE	Date of Assessment September 2008	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)...ACFO BEALE

Date ...September 2008.....