



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held at Fire and Rescue Services HQ, Bestwood Lodge, Arnold Nottingham NG5 8PD on 25 January 2019 from 10.03 am - 10.41 am

Membership

Present

Councillor John Clarke (Chair)
Councillor Vaughan Hopewell
Councillor John Longdon
Councillor Jackie Morris
Councillor Mohammed Saghir

Absent

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Councillor Brian Grocock
Craig Parkin - Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Tracy Crump - Head of People and Organisational Development
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

20 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

21 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2018 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

22 HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Tracy Crump, Head of People and Organisational Development, and Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, jointly presented the Human Resources Update report which provides detailed statistics of key human resources metrics for the third quarter of 1 October to 31 December 2018.

The following points were highlighted and members' questions responded to:

- (a) There has been a recent focus on sickness absence by HR, Occupational Health and Managers in which the paperwork requirements were reviewed and revised to ensure that quality information on absences can be collected;
- (b) There has been a significant decrease in sickness absence by 22% on the previous quarters absence;
- (c) Whilst harassment and bullying are ranked as zero instances, this is a reflection that such reports would not have entered the formal process. There has been a positive change in culture in that initial reports of harassment and/or bullying have risen as staff are more confident to step forward, challenge behaviours and support colleagues against inappropriate behaviour. Where issues are raised, informal resolution mechanisms are activated before the issue is formally registered. Often it turns out that there has been a misunderstanding and the issue can be amicably resolved. Part of the culture change may be that whereas before, reporting inappropriate behaviour was seen as a weakness, there is now a better understanding of mental health and the impact that such behaviour can have;
- (d) The predictions of the Workforce Profile were correct, in that 23 members of staff left the Service and this is balanced by the level of the new intake of recruits;
- (e) Tax changes in 2010 regarding the firefighter pension scheme do not allow a retiring employee to then immediately re-enter the workforce, even under different terms. As a result, and to retain some of the wealth of experience of retiring staff, for those interested in continuing involvement with the Service such as in a retained firefighter role, it is advised that once retired, they take a break of at least 6 months and then consider applying. In this mutually beneficial method, the wealth of experience is not lost to the Service.

RESOLVED to note the report.

23 PAY AND GRADING REVIEW (GREEN BOOK)

Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which sets out proposals for a change to the grading structure for employees employed under NJC for Local Government Services (Green Book) conditions of service, to take account of the outcomes of national pay negotiations.

Following the engagement of a consultant to advise the Service on the most appropriate way forwards, The Committee is requested to consider two options regarding a local grading structure and a national model, with a recommendation to select the local model to the Fire and Rescue Authority for adoption as there are no 'overlaps' in pay with regard to different grades.

Concerns have been raised that if the national model were adopted, the presence of pay overlaps across grades could leave the Service open to challenge with regard to gender and age implications, whilst the local model provides a simplified and transparent 5 increment stage within each grade and there are no pay overlaps.

Consultation with Trades Unions has been positive towards the local model option.

RESOLVED for the proposal to apply a local grading structure, set out as Option 2 within the report, is approved and recommended to the Fire Authority as the basis for a collective agreement with UNISON.

24 APPRENTICESHIP UPDATE

Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, and Tracy Crump, Head of People and Organisational Development, jointly presented the report which updates the Committee on the positive progress of apprenticeship schemes within the Service.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) The initial application for the Service to become an accredited trainer was unsuccessful but the Service has now secured the services of Sheffield College as an approved trainer and so will be able to access the apprenticeship levy;
- (b) The Service will continue to work towards becoming recognised as an approved provider and at the time of refusal there had not been capacity to provide feedback on the unsuccessful application, but it is understood that other Services were in the same position and a different approach will be applied for the next application;
- (c) each year 4 support role apprenticeships are funded from the levy and where substantive support role vacancies appear, apprenticeships will be considered;
- (d) The Service does try to ensure that jobs can be offered/are available to apprentices once the apprenticeship is successfully completed;
- (e) If the Service can successfully qualify as an approved provider, there are no apparent reasons why the apprenticeship course could not be offered to other Fire and Rescue Services.

Members of the Committee welcomed the success of the apprenticeships.

RESOLVED to note the report.

25 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining items in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the basis that, having regard to all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

26 EXEMPT MINUTES

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2019 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

27 REGRAIDING OF POSTS

Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendation as set out in the report.