



**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE AND CITY OF NOTTINGHAM
FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on **25 OCTOBER 2013** at Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Bestwood Lodge, Arnold, Nottingham NG5 8PD from 10.00 am to 10.35 am

Membership

Councillor Michael Payne (Chair)
Councillor Eunice Campbell
^ Councillor Ian Campbell
Councillor Stephen Garner
Councillor Liz Yates
Councillor David Smith (as substitute for Councillor Ian Campbell)

Members absent are marked ^

Officers in Attendance

Tracy Crump Human Resources Manager
David Horton Strategic Director, Corporate Support,
Nick Linthwaite Human Resources Manager (Service Delivery)
Carol Jackson Constitutional Service Officer, Nottingham City Council

8 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Ian Campbell.

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

10 MINUTES

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2013 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

11 HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

David Horton presented the report of the Chief Fire Officer, updating the Committee on human resources issues within the Service.

The following key points were drawn to the Committee's attention:

- sickness absence rates have decreased by 13.4% across the workforce as a whole during Quarter 1 (compared with the previous quarter). Sickness absence for non-uniformed employees reduced by 10.3% (-48.5 days) which is still above the target figure The average absence for the Quarter (1.5 days) is slightly below the target of 1.56 days per person. Quarters 2 and 3 are likely to be more challenging in terms of achieving targets, due to seasonal illnesses;
- the total cumulative average sick days over the last 12 months was 6.25 days per employee and this compares favourably to the public sector average of 6.5 days, but is higher than the private sector average of 5.8 days;
- target absence figures for 2013/14 are; whole time and control 6 days, non-uniformed 7 days and whole workforce 6.25 days;
- as at 30 September 2013, the whole-time establishment stood at 539.5 FTE against a reduced establishment of 530 posts. The whole-time establishment has been reduced by 10 posts as a result of the Fire Authority's decision to remove the second appliance at West Bridgford;
- a Station Manager and Watch Manager selection process is currently being run to fill vacancies at this level;
- a retained recruitment campaign during the summer has resulted in 14 Retained Duty System (RDS) recruits who will commence training in November, and be posted to various vacancies throughout the County;
- the Service undertook recruitment to new apprenticeship roles during this period. These are 12 month fixed term appointments for young people between the ages of 17 and 24, and Central College have worked with the Service to recruit two people to ICT roles and two to administrative roles. Councillors welcomed the programme as a means of giving both experience and skills to young people and requested that Tracy Crump bring a report to a future meeting of this Committee giving details of the outturn of this pilot programme and the financial implications of continuing it in the future.

RESOLVED

- (1) to endorse the report;**
- (2) that a report be brought to a future meeting of the Committee giving details of the outturn of the apprenticeship pilot programme and the financial implications of continuing it in the future.**

12 REVIEW OF THE HR STRATEGY

David Horton presented the report of the Chief Fire Officer, updating the Committee on the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy 2010-2013.

The following key points were drawn to the Committee's attention:

- projected workforce shortfalls arising from retirements for the period 2013-15 are being primarily addressed through the recruitment of trainee fire-fighters following the Fire-fighter Recruitment Campaign undertaken in 2012. This will result in an initial over-capacity of 11 fire-fighters who will gradually be absorbed into the whole-time establishment as people retire from the service;
- a review of the Retained Duty model is currently in progress and a report will be taken to full Fire Authority at a future date;
- the Service continues to place a high priority on effective communication with its workforce and the representative bodies. This has been achieved through frequent consultation meetings with representative bodies on establishment and structural changes, regular updates to all employees and individual and team meetings. Last weekend the Fire Brigade Union postponed a five hour strike as negotiations continued with the Government;
- the Equalities Team is currently working with managers to prepare for the assessment against Excellent standard of the equality framework in December 2013;
- the revised Fitness Policy is now firmly embedded, with annual fitness testing and 67 Fitness Instructors providing fitness support at stations. Results show that 98.7% of operational personnel achieved a Grade 1 pass;
- a flu vaccination session has been piloted this year on a voluntary basis. Over 70 people have signed up to it with a view to reducing absence resulting from respiratory infections;
- the Cycle to Work Scheme is proving very popular with employees, with 121 bikes being purchased whilst the Scheme was running. Not only is the Scheme financially beneficial to participants but it supports the Service's commitment to improving the fitness of the workforce and following a greener transport policy;
- work on specifying and procuring a new HR system was completed in 2012 which resulted in the appointment of Midland HR and work is currently underway to implement the new Midland HRi-Trent system. The project team are working towards a Phase 1 implementation date of April 2014;

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee thanked the Human Resources Team for their excellent work in relation to the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy.

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report.

13 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The Committee decided to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the remaining agenda 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 outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

14 REGRADING OF POSTS

David Horton presented the report of the Chief Fire Officer, notifying the Committee of applications considered by, and outcomes of, the Job Evaluation Panel in respect of changes to the permanent non-uniformed establishment, during the period July to September 2013 (inclusive).

RESOLVED to note the contents of the report.