



**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 9 November 2018 from 10.00 am - 11.21 am**

Membership

Present

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

Absent

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Craig Parkin - Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Tracy Crump - Head of People and Organisational Development
Matt Sismey - Equality and Diversity Officer
Gavin Harris - Head of ICT
Catherine Ziane-Pryor - Governance Officer

9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

10 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

11 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2018 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

12 HUMAN RESOURCES UPDATE

Tracy Crump, Head of People and Organisational Development, presented the report which provides detailed statistics of key human resources metrics for the second year quarter period of 1 July to 30 September 2018, with absence data from the first quarter also included.

The following points were highlighted and responses given to members' questions:

- (a) The Service puts a lot of effort into managing ill health with free physiotherapy access, health and fitness advice and mentoring, and support to return to work;
- (b) In Quarter 1, there were 57.5 fewer days sickness absence for full time employees, compared to the previous quarter, but a 22% increase in the 2nd Quarter;
- (c) The Service takes part in the National Fire Chiefs Council sickness absence survey, and NFRS consistently reports below the national sector average for sickness absence;
- (d) Whilst staffing numbers are usually negative, due to the recent recruitment they are temporarily above the approved establishment due to 'front loading' as part of succession planning. As it takes between 18 months and 2 years from recruitment to fully competent firefighters, it is sensible to recruit slightly above the approved level of staffing to take into account projected turnover;
- (e) The first phase passing out ceremony of the new intake will take place on 29 November at 5.30pm at Service Development Centre, Ollerton. If members of the Committee would like to attend, please liaise with Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer;
- (f) There was a good take-up by staff of the Service's offer of a flu jab;
- (g) The progress through the training programme for the new recruits has been included in the Service's social media promotion of the Service, including you-tube footage with links to the Service website. This is the first time the Service has taken this approach but it appears to be of public interest.

Members of the Committee commended the Service for the strong and positive social media presence and how the unity of teams within the Service is so clearly illustrated. The investment in expanding a social media presence has been valuable at spreading safety information, promoting the work of the Service and keeping citizens informed and reassured with regard to incidents such as the recent Cattle Market Fire.

RESOLVED to note the report.

13 WHOLETIME FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT POSITIVE ACTION AND NEXT STEPS

Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which updates the Committee on the outcomes from the whole-time firefighter recruitment campaign and associated positive action measures. Matt Sismey, Organisational Development and Inclusion Manager, was also in attendance and contributed to the item.

The following points were highlighted and responses provided to members' questions:

- (a) Due to the need for re-organisation, it has been 6 years since the Service last undertook a whole-time recruitment although retained recruitment is on-going. This recruitment cycle has been the most comprehensive to date;

- (b) Prior to the recruitment, from June 2017, the Service raised awareness with specific focus in Black, Asian Minority and Ethnic (BAME) communities and women to encourage and promote firefighting as an accessible career and dispel misconceptions;
- (c) Recruitment was launched in March 2018 and the assessments and tests lasted 5 months, with a total of 44 candidates being offered whole-time firefighter jobs with 14 starting in September 2018 and the remainder starting in either January 2019 or later in 2019;
- (d) It is intended that new firefighters will rotate around the Service to ensure that they gain a broad experience of the Service and understand the different aspects of Service activity, including fire prevention work;
- (e) In advance of recruitment, during 2017, a comprehensive schedule of positive action was implemented which included engagement with young people, videos, posters, promotion through partner job teams, festival attendance and the Corporate Games;
- (f) A seconded female firefighter undertook a huge commitment of facilitating regular fitness sessions for potential female candidates so that they are aware of the fitness level required, could prepare and be supported into the recruitment process;
- (g) Of the 599 initial expressions of interest, 44 were successful:

	%	Number
Male	70.5%	31
Female	29.5%	13
White British	81.8%	36
BAME	18.2%	8

- (h) The first passing out ceremony will take place at the end of November, from which new firefighters will be allocated stations with dedicated mentors and off-station support;
- (i) With consideration to staffing projections on the current staffing levels, it is anticipated that the next recruitment campaign will be required in 2021. The future needs of the Service beyond 2021 is yet to be determined, but will need to pay attention to the financial pressures of the Fire Authority.

Members of the committee welcomed the positive action taken which resulted in the Service better reflecting the communities which it serves.

RESOLVED to note the report.

14 EQUALITIES MONITORING

Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the report which provides the Committee with protected characteristic workforce data for the period 1 January to 30 June 2018 and informs the Committee of the work undertaken to improve diversity within the Service.

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

- (a) In the period between 1 January to 30 June 2018:
- (i) Two female operational officers joined the Service, raising the proportion of male to female operatives from 4.58% (32 of 699 posts) to 4.79% (34 of 710 posts), which is in line with National trends;
 - (ii) The proportion of Black, Asian, Minority, and Ethnic (BAME) employees rose from 3.36% (30) to 3.56% (32) but it is noted that 60 employees of the 899 total staffing compliment did not disclose their ethnic origin;
 - (iii) Although there were no changes to the number of employees, as the overall workforce increased, the proportion of Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual personnel dropped from 1.57% (14) to 1.55% (14);
 - (iv) The proportion of disabled personnel reduced from 4.37% (39) to 4.23% (38);
- (b) Her Majesty's Inspectorate Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) will consider workforce make up and terms and conditions as part of the Service-wide inspection during February;
- (c) The Service relies on staff informing it that they have a disability so that appropriate measures can be put in place to support staff;
- (d) NFRS is not unique in that there is still a gap in senior positions where the majority of post holders are white males, but work is on-going to encourage female applicants when vacancies arise with self-development, but the results will take time to emerge;
- (e) To encourage progression through the grades, the Aspiring Leaders Programme is proving popular;
- (f) The Service has previously considered childcare facilities for employees but the dispersed nature of the workforce makes this impractical, however the Service does support a salary sacrifice scheme for provision of childcare vouchers. Due to recent changes to national childcare support, this is only now available to existing users. The way in which people work is changing and if there is to be co-location with partners, then this may provide an opportunity to review childcare options.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the report and continue to support the Service's continued commitment to deliver a more diverse workforce;**
- (2) for Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, to arrange for the feasibility of workplace childcare arrangements to be considered and the findings to be reported to the Committee.**

15 UPDATE ON THE PEOPLE STRATEGY

Tracy Crump, Head of People and Organisational Development, and Craig Parkin, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, presented the regular update report which informs the Committee of the activity since the last report six months ago on the following strategy focus areas:

- Delivering our services;
- Shaping our workforce;
- Outstanding Leadership;
- Workforce development;
- Workforce engagement;
- Positive workplace and culture;
- A safe and healthy workplace;
- Inclusion.

The following points were highlighted and responses provided to Committee members' questions:

- (a) Whilst the Service has been through a lot of changes during the past few years, it may be expected that tensions would exist between the Leadership Team and the Trades Unions, but this is not the case and a good relationship and time is invested to ensure this is maintained;
- (b) The Service needs to ensure that the right number of staff with appropriate skills area in post at the required time and succession planning aims to prevent any workforce gaps appearing;
- (c) The Service is recruiting to more senior posts now and there is a concerted drive to develop and up-skill existing talented and valued staff, with a range of courses and mechanisms in place;
- (d) The project team is working hard to support staff in preparation of the mixed crewing model which is scheduled to be operational during April 2019 at Ashfield and Retford Stations;
- (e) The alternative crewing model (whereby in exceptional circumstances, for low-level incidents and where no alternative can be found, an on-call ridership of 3 firefighters instead 4 is dispatched) is now active and will be closely monitored. The Chief Fire Officer has clearly stated that this will not become the standard practice;
- (f) With regard to the transfer of the control room facility, discussions with staff around issues and concerns are on-going;
- (g) Development and up-skilling of staff is ongoing with initiatives including the 'Aspiring Leadership Programme' and the introduction of adult apprenticeships for which existing and operational staff may be eligible;
- (h) Collaborative training options are proactively being sought.

Members of the Committee welcomed the update and the opportunity of high level paid apprenticeships without the need to accumulate the debt of attending University.

RESOLVED

- (1) to note the report;**
- (2) for the review of the mixed crewing model to be submitted for the Committee's consideration after being implemented for a year;**

- (3) for a review of the apprenticeships schemes and impact on the levy to be submitted for the Committee's consideration.

16 **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.

17 **PROPOSED RESTRUCTURE OF THE ICT DEPARTMENT**

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

RESOLVED to approve the recommendations as set out in the report and added to in the meeting.

18 **HONORARIA PAYMENT**

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

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