



Minutes

Human Resources Committee

Date: 05 September 2014

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Birkenshaw

Present: Councillor G Thornton (in the Chair); K Akthar, C Burke, R Grahame, T Hanley, P Harrand (for agenda item nos. 1 – 16 only, Min nos. 1 – 16 refer), A Hussain, B Smith, A Taylor and G Wilkinson

In Attendance: None

Apologies: None

1 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Committee at a meeting held on 4 April 2014 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

2 Urgent items

None.

3 Admission of the public

There were no items which required the exclusion of the public and press.

4 Declarations of interest

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made in any matter under consideration at the meeting.

5 Presentation – An overview of West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service Firefighter Fitness

Members received a presentation about the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service's approach to firefighter fitness including detail of the testing regime and support offered to those firefighters not achieving the required levels. The new testing system which had resulted from the Government's Firefit review is due to be launched in October 2014. A number of possible options for the support of an ageing workforce were referred to in the presentation which included;

- Increased time allowed for fitness training
- Increased regularity of fitness testing
- Specifically designed support programmes, and
- Increased level / inclusion of medical testing / use of physiotherapy services

RESOLVED

That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Human Resources Committee with detail on the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) Firefit Review guidance.

6 2015 Firefighters' Pension Scheme – consultation response

The Director of Service Support submitted a report which informed Members of the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service responses to the latest consultation on the 2015 Firefighter Pension Scheme. The purpose of the consultation had been to ensure that the proposals for change were compliant and consistent with Government's original intent.

Members were reminded that the purpose of the proposed changes to the firefighters' pension scheme was to reduce long term liabilities and the overall cost of public sector pensions. Detail of the West Yorkshire responses to the latest consultation questions was attached as an annex to the report now submitted which included a request that the 2015 scheme be very clear on intentions with regard to pensionable pay.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

7 Firefighters' Pension Scheme and New Firefighters' Pension Scheme : Equality Analysis

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Service Support which presented the outcome of an internal equality analysis for those employees who were not members of either of the two Firefighters' Pension Schemes.

In response to concerns over the Government's original analysis, it was previously agreed by Members of this Committee that West Yorkshire would undertake its own to determine whether there had been an adverse impact on any groups of West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service firefighters following the proposal to increase the employee contribution rates for both the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (1992) and the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme (2006).

Members were advised that results of the analysis indicated that there had been no disproportionate adverse impact on West Yorkshire employees based on gender or ethnicity.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

8 Firefighters' Pension Schemes – Local Government Association (LGA) Technical Support for Fire and Rescue Authorities

Members received a report of the Director of Service Support which set out the agreed funding arrangements for the provision of firefighters' pension scheme technical support to fire and rescue authorities by the Local Government Association (LGA).

Following an unsuccessful bid for funding from Department of Communities and Local Government, the LGA had proposed the establishment of a subscription service to pool funding from Fire and Rescue Authorities for the technical support post. The cost for users of the service would be set at approximately £1 per employee in the pension scheme. Members were advised that the anticipated cost to this Authority would be £1,300 p.a. based on the current establishment and the participation of all Fire and Rescue Authorities in the scheme.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

9 Local Government Pension Scheme – discretions policy

The Director of Service Support submitted a report which set out the requirements for the Authority to amend existing policies to reflect the application of discretions under a range of Local Government Pension Scheme regulations as detailed in an annex to the report now submitted.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

10 Command Training Strategy

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Service Support which advised of the strategy for the delivery of Command Training in West Yorkshire.

In spite of a reduction in the number of incidents, it was reported that revisions to the strategy provided assurance that all officers, possessed and continuously demonstrated competencies required to command at the appropriate level. The strategy not only complied with national guidance but was also widely regarded as best practice within the fire service.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

11 Fundamental Review Evaluation

The outcomes of an evaluation of the Fundamental organisational review were presented to Members in a report of the Director of Service Support.

The significant restructure of West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service had aimed to reduce costs whilst maintaining the highest possible service standards.

Details of each of the objectives of the review and associated impact was detailed in the report now submitted. These had also been reviewed to assess the more general corporate health in terms of the following;

- Customer service excellence
- Equality framework gap analysis
- Workload risk assessment
- Sickness levels
- Grievances, and
- Employee engagement

The cost of implementing the Fundamental Review (which delivers ongoing savings of £2.5m per annum) was reported to be £1.4m.

Members raised the following issues which they requested be monitored and reported back to Committee as appropriate;

- Age profile of workforce and future action to introduce younger people into the organisation
- Employee engagement and interface with representative bodies

RESOLVED

- a) That the report be noted; and
- b) That reports be submitted as appropriate with proposals for the enhancement of employee engagement procedures and action to ensure that the members of the workforce were drawn from all appropriate age groups.

12 Grey, Gold and Green Book Pay Offers

Members received a report of the Director of Service Support which advised of the pay award offers 2014 / 15 for grey, gold and green book employees.

It was reported that both the grey and gold book employees had accepted pay offers as detailed in the report now submitted. The pay offer to green book employees had not been accepted by the relevant representative bodies and a day of action had been arranged for 14 October 2014.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

13 Equality Framework Action Self-assessment and Action Plan

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Service Support which advised of the outcome of the self-assessment against the Equality Framework and the proposed 3-year Action Plan.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

14 Accident Analysis 2013 – 14

The Director of Service Support submitted a report which set out detail and an analysis of accidents which had occurred during 2013 – 14. Recommendations from the review would be incorporated within the Occupational Health and Safety Unit's department objectives.

Members were advised that performance was largely consistent with the previous year and an overall downward trend continued. Some concern was expressed at the meeting at the year-on-year increase in litigation costs associated with minor accidents.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

15 ROSPA Health and Safety Audit – Findings and Recommendations

The findings and recommendation following an audit of West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service's Health and Safety management systems were presented for Members' consideration.

It was reported that a change to the audit process had been implemented and an in-depth self-assessment had been undertaken which it was hoped would be useful when comparing West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service's performance with other Fire and Rescue Authorities.

An Action Plan had been developed to address those areas identified as requiring improvement during the audit process, including;

- Maintenance of robust health and safety procedures
- Management of contractors, and
- Management of planned maintenance

Members were advised that the likely next step would be a peer review of health and safety arrangements across the regional brigades.

RESOLVED

- a) That the report be noted;
- b) That approval be given to the recommendations from the Health and Safety Audit and for the proposed arrangements for managing the required actions; and
- c) That progress reports be submitted to future meetings of this Committee.

16 Corporate Equality and Diversity Action Plans : 2013 – 14 and 2014 – 15

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Service Support which detailed progress made with the 2013 – 14 Equality and Diversity Action Plan and objectives for the 2014 – 15 Plan.

Members were pleased to see that equality and diversity had become embedded and integrated fully into the organisation as a whole.

RESOLVED

- a) That the progress made in the 2013 – 14 Action Plan be noted; and
- b) That the Corporate Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2014 – 15 be approved.

17 Human Resources Activity Report

The Director of Service Support provided a report to inform Members of the Authority's key areas relating to Human Resources to the end of July 2014 and of 3-year sickness absence figures to the end of June 2014.

RESOLVED

- a) That the report be noted; and
- b) That the amendments to the establishment be approved.

Chair