



# Minutes

## Human Resources Committee

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Date: 04 April 2014

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service Delivery Centre, Bramley

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Present: Councillor G Thornton (in the Chair); C Burke, P Caffrey, J Cummins (as substitute for Councillor R Grahame), J Dodds (as substitute for Councillor A Wainwright), M Harland, L Holmes, J Hughes (as substitute for Councillor J Hardy), A Taylor, A Wallis (as substitute for Councillor M Khan) and G Wilkinson

In Attendance: None

Apologies: Councillors Grahame, Hardy, Khan and Wainwright

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### **33 Minutes of the last meeting**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the Committee at a meeting held on 17 January 2014 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### **34 Urgent items**

None.

### **35 Admission of the public**

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

### **36 Declarations of interest**

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

### **37 Firefighters' Pension Scheme and New Firefighters' Pension Scheme contribution rates 2014**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Service Support which updated Members on the Government response to the consultation for an increase in employee pension contribution rates in respect of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme and the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme.

It was reported that the rates as detailed in the report now submitted would apply from 1 April 2014 and that further analysis would be undertaken by the Service Support Directorate to identify any impact on groups with protected characteristics who had not joined, or had opted out of, the scheme.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the increase in employee contribution rates with effect from 1 April 2014 in respect of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme and the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme be noted.

### **38 Retained Firefighters' Pension Settlement – access to a modified pension scheme**

The Director of Service Support submitted a report which set out Government's response to the proposed terms of access to a pension scheme for retained firefighters employed by a Fire and Rescue Authority between 1 July 2000 and 5 April 2006. The Authority was duty bound to make all reasonable efforts to locate and contact those retained personnel who were no longer employed and who may be eligible for the scheme.

Members were advised that the cost of the modified scheme would be dependent upon the number of retained firefighters that purchased past service rights together with their service and pay history but that it could exceed £2m for this Authority.

It was reported that, under current funding arrangements, the net cost of pensions was met by Central Government through the pension grant whereas, for part of the period in question, pension costs had been met directly by the respective Fire and Rescue Authority. Due to this and other potential complications in terms of employer contributions and the number of retained firefighters employed by a single Fire and Rescue Authority, Members were advised that the funding issues had yet to be resolved.

All Fire and Rescue Authorities would be obliged to complete an Options exercise by 31 March 2015 which detailed those retained firefighters eligible for access to a modified scheme.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Government's response to the consultation on the Modified Firefighters' Pension Scheme be noted.

### **39 Regulations to introduce a new Firefighters' Pension Scheme – consultation**

Members considered a report of the Director of Service Support which advised of the response to a consultation exercise on the draft regulations for the new Firefighters' Pension scheme to be effective from April 2015.

It was reported that the proposed final agreement, following the results of the Hutton report into the affordability and sustainability of public service pension schemes, had been published in May 2012 after which time a consultation had been undertaken in respect of the draft regulations for the scheme to come into force on 1 April 2015.

Members were advised of the response which had been submitted from this Authority and noted that there were no direct financial implications arising from this particular consultation exercise.

#### **RESOLVED**

- a) That the report be noted; and
- b) That the Government's summary of consultation responses be reported back to a future meeting of the Human Resources Committee.

### **40 Public Sector Equality Duty – annual report**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Service Support which updated Members on the Authority's compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and actions to improve its performance in respect of equality and diversity.

West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority are currently completing a self-assessment against the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework and Members were advised that a further report would be submitted in this regard.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the report be noted.

### **41 Human Resources Activity report**

The Director of Service Support submitted a report which informed Members of the Authority's key areas relating to Human Resources with sickness absence reporting to the end of December 2013.

It was reported that the sickness targets continued to be very challenging and, whilst the forecast was that sickness absence was unlikely to meet the target set for 2013 / 14, it was an improvement on 2012 / 13 performance. Target setting in future years would be given further consideration.

Members remarked upon the results and application of the internal aerobic testing programme and were advised that more work would be done in terms of the response to the outcome of the Firefit review and its application in West Yorkshire.

#### **RESOLVED**

- a) That the report be noted;
- b) That the amendments to the establishment be approved; and
- c) That the outcome of further research into the aerobic testing results in terms of age, minimum standards and projections for the future be submitted for consideration at a future meeting of this Committee.