

WEST YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2012 AT FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS, BIRKENSHAW,

Present: Councillors G Thornton (in the Chair); R Grahame, S Hamilton, P Harrand (as substitute for Councillor Wilkinson), L Holmes, M Khan, C Townsley and A Wainwright

Apologies: Councillors D Gray, A Taylor and G Wilkinson

9 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS – ACO M Redfearn

The Chair took the opportunity to advise Members that this would be final Human Resources Committee meeting that ACO Redfearn would attend in his role as Director of Service Support (formerly Human Resources) as he was due to retire from the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service in January 2013.

Members thanked him for his work and support during his time as Service Director.

10 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Committee at a meeting held on 6 July 2012 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

11 URGENT ITEM

None.

12 ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC

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

13 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of disclosable pecuniary interest were made in any matter under discussion at the meeting.

14 FUNDAMENTAL ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW – UPDATE

The Director of Service Support submitted a report which advised of the progress made to date with the Fundamental Review and changes to the structure of the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority.

Members were reminded that the review had been undertaken to enable the Authority to continue to deliver its key priorities and functions within the constraints of a reducing budget. The majority of staff who had requested voluntary severance had left the organisation in October 2012. A number of, otherwise displaced, staff had been redeployed into vacant posts on the new structure, 28 employees had been promoted or re-graded and, as at 2 November 2012, it was anticipated that 19 members of staff would be subject to compulsory redundancy on 31 March 2013 – five of whom had chosen to take that route in preference to the enhanced severance package. Members were further advised that preliminary discussions had been taking place with other Fire and Rescue Authorities in the region with a view to creating a larger joint redeployment pool for displaced staff.

It was reported that, once fully implemented, the outcome of the review and the new revised organisational structure would deliver on-going revenue savings of £2.1m with effect from 2013 / 14 and it was anticipated that an additional £0.4m would be saved by the end of 2014 / 15 through revisions to transport, accommodation, IT and communications.

Members sought further information on the following issues;

- Detail of the unfilled specialist posts
- Retraining opportunities
- Staff response to the review
- Anticipated medium and long-term retention of downgraded staff / effect on future staffing levels
- Effect on Equality Impact Assessment of the review
- Pension rights and pay protection
- Detail of the compromise agreement signed by those who accepted voluntary severance
- Use of Remploy in assisting staff seeking alternative employment
- Need to closely monitor and track both stress and sickness levels
- Detail of support provided to those adversely affected by the review

RESOLVED

- (i) That the report be noted;
- (ii) That Members be provided with information on pension protection;
- (iii) That the impact on female and BME employees be reported to the January 2013 meeting of this Committee; and
- (iv) That a report be submitted to the November 2013 meeting of this Committee with results of the on-going monitoring of staff stress and sickness levels following implementation of the review.

15 HR ACTIVITY REPORT

The Director of Service Support (DSS) provided a report to inform Members of the Authority's key areas relating to Human Resources to the end of September 2012 and which sought approval for the reported establishment reductions.

Members considered the impact of the Central staffing team on sickness levels and sought information on the revenue impact of its work in terms of reduction in overtime payments.

Detail of the age profile of the operational workforce until 2020 were included in the report and Members considered this in the light of the current ban on recruitment and anticipated service demands and population increase.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the report be noted; and
- (ii) That the age profile be tracked and reported on an annual basis to this Committee.

16 FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEME 2006 – AUTO-ENROLMENT

The Director of Service Support submitted a report which set out a proposed response to the Communities and Local Government (CLG) consultation on Automatic Enrolment into the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2006.

Any changes to the scheme in terms of auto-enrolment would not have any financial impact on the Authority.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the proposed responses as detailed in paragraphs 2.2.1 – 2.2.3 be approved for submission to Communities and Local Government;
- (ii) That paragraph 2.2.4 be amended so that the Authority recorded its support for opting out by written notice and not for use of the form as set out in the 2010 Regulations;
- (iii) That paragraph 2.2.5 be amended so that the Authority recorded its support for a 3-month timescale in which an employee could give notice to opt out; and
- (iv) That the revised responses at paragraphs 2.2.4 – 2.2.5 be approved for submission to Communities and Local Government.

17 DAY CREWING – CLOSE CALL POLICY

The Director of Service Support submitted a report which updated Members on the performance over the previous 12-month period of the Day Crewed (Close Call) duty system worked at Normanton Fire Station and more recently at Castleford.

Members were advised that, not only had the system provided significant resource savings, but it had enabled the station to be self-sufficient due to the flexibility of its staffing. There had been a marked reduction in sickness levels and the station had maintained standard staffing on 100% of occasions with minimal support from the Central Staffing Team. It was reported that this staffing model was not appropriate for those stations of high activity (750+ incidents p.a.).

In total and taking account of staffing costs and other running costs, the system would deliver annual savings of ca £290,000.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the success of the Day Crewed (Close Call) duty system at Normanton fire station be noted; and
- (ii) That the system be continued as a staffing model in future Integrated Risk Management Plans.

Chair