



# Minutes

## Human Resources Committee

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Date: 17 January 2014

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Birkenshaw

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Present: Councillors G Thornton (in the Chair); C Burke, P Caffrey, R Grahame, J Hardy, M Harland, L Holmes, M Khan, A Taylor, A Wainwright and G Wilkinson

In Attendance: None

Apologies: None

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### **24 Chair's announcements**

The Chair took the opportunity together with Members to congratulate Chief Fire Officer Simon Pilling on the award of the Queen's Fire Service Medal in the New Year's Honours List.

### **25 Minutes of the last meeting**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the Committee at a meeting held on 1 November 2013 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### **25 Urgent items**

None.

### **26 Admission of the public**

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

## **27 Declarations of interest**

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

## **28 Firefighters' Pension Scheme and New Firefighters' Pension Scheme – Employee contribution rates – consultation response**

The Director of Service Support submitted a report which advised of the response made to the Government consultation for proposed increases to employee contribution rates effective from 1 April 2014 for both the Firefighters' and New Firefighters' Pension Schemes.

It was recognised that there were potential implications related to Equality and Diversity issues which had been partially acknowledged in the equality statement published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG). Members were advised that it was proposed that this Authority would take action to address those gaps.

### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the response to the consultation on employee contribution rates for the Firefighters' and New Firefighters' Pension Schemes be noted;
- (ii) That Members be updated when the 2014 employee contribution rates have been determined; and
- (iii) That, with a view to demonstrating "due regard" for the three aims of the General Equality Duty, the Authority undertakes further analysis of employees to identify the impact on groups with protected characteristics who were non-joiners or who opted out of the relevant Scheme.

## **29 Fitness and Capability Consultation**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Support Services which advised of the response which had been submitted in respect of the consultation issued by CLG relating to draft principles regarding the promotion of fitness and the management of capability in Fire and Rescue Authorities. The consultation had been undertaken as a result of ongoing industrial relations negotiations between central government and the Fire Brigades' Union.

Government's intention was to agree a set of principles in order to provide a framework within which each Fire and Rescue Authority would develop and implement its own policies which would be transparent and provide reassurance to individual firefighters on fitness and capability issues.

Members were reminded that the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service already had very high standards of fitness with closely monitored improvement plans and much of what had been proposed in the consultation had already been put in place within the Service. There remained one particularly difficult issue relating to the debate around early retirement to pension in instances where, even in the absence of any specific medical reasons, an individual had failed to maintain a level of fitness.

### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the consultation response as detailed in the report now submitted be noted; and
- (ii) That a further report be submitted to a future meeting outlining the outcome of the Government's Fitness and Capability consultation.

### **30 Accident Statistics 2012 / 13**

Members considered a report of the Director of Service Support which set out accident data from April 2012 to March 2013. The paper included accidents involving employees and non-employees which had occurred on West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service premises or by reason of the Authority's actions and undertakings.

It was reported that the period in question had seen a 24% reduction in the total number of reported accidents. This met all relevant targets set within the Performance Management Activity report and built upon the previous year's reported decrease of 25%. Members were advised that the reductions were above and beyond those which might have been anticipated taking into account the decrease in the overall incident levels and a smaller workforce. It represented an excellent result for the Authority.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the report be noted.

### **31 Corporate Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2013 - 14**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Service Support which updated Members on progress with the Corporate Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2013 – 14.

It was reported that the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority's Action Plan was published on an annual basis which was far in excess of the Public Sector Equality Duty requirement to publish every four years. Members further acknowledged the fact that the Authority endeavoured to make equality and diversity an integral part of everything it did which was reflected in relevant monitoring reports and action plans.

#### **RESOLVED**

That the progress made with the Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2013 – 14 be noted.

### **32 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 September 2013 and other personnel activity to the end of November 2013.

It was reported that it was likely that sickness absence would not be within target in the current year although the target itself had been deliberately challenging and it was noted that the level of sickness was lower than in previous years.

Members remarked upon fitness levels for green book staff, queried the issue of ongoing support for staff retired on ill-health and questioned whether stress or work-related issues were the causes of some sickness absence.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the report be noted;
- (ii) That Members be advised of the levels of sickness absence directly related to stress or work-related issues and
- (iii) That the amendments to the establishment be approved.