

WEST YORKSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 30 MARCH 2012 AT FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS, BIRKENSHAW,

Present: Councillors C Townsley (in the Chair); V Binney, A Castle, J Cole, J Dodds, P Harrand (as substitute for Councillor R Brown), J Hughes, A Hussain, M Khan (as substitute for Councillor Wallis and for agenda items 1 – 5 and 8 – E11 only, Min nos. 31 – 35 and 38 – 41 refer) and A McKenna (as substitute for Councillor Hamilton)

Apologies: Councillors Brown, Hamilton, Thornton and Wallis

In attendance: Councillor D Ridgway

31 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Committee at a meeting held on 27 January 2012 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

32 URGENT ITEM

None.

33 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC – SECTION 100A LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the item of business specified below as it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public and press were present during this item, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of the descriptions specified.

AGENDA ITEM NO.	TITLE OF REPORT	MINUTE NUMBER	Description of exempt information by reference to the paragraph number in Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972
E11	Fundamental Organisational review	41	Paragraph 2 (information identifying an individual) of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972.

34 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made in any matter under discussion at the meeting.

35 LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Human Resources which advised of progress made in recent national negotiations on the proposed reform of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

Members were advised that the relevant parties to the negotiations were aiming to reach agreement by April 2013 for a revised LGPS scheme to be in place by April 2014. Details of the objectives on which full consultation would be undertaken were included in the report at paragraph 2.2.

It was reported that changes to the scheme would have a long term impact on employer pension contributions which currently cost the Authority £0.9m per year.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

36 PENSIONS – AUTO ENROLMENT

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Human Resources which informed Members of the requirements of the Pensions Act 2008 relating to pensions auto-enrolment

The new regulations applied to workplace pensions and the obligation for employers to automatically enrol employees onto a scheme unless an employee had actively decided not to join. This automatic enrolment would be required on a rolling 3-year basis and an employer would be required to make a minimum of 3% contribution for each employee in the scheme.

Members were advised that the anticipated staging date for the Authority to comply with the new regulations was February 2013 and failure to comply with prescribed procedures could result in an employer incurring fines of up to £10,000 per day.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

37 FIRE SERVICE COLLEGE – FUTURE OPTIONS FOR SALE

The Director of Human Resources submitted a report which provided Members with

an update on the Future Options project for the Fire Service College.

Members were advised that use of the facility would not be lost to Fire Authorities as Communities and Local Government (CLG) had placed conditions on the sale which included confirmation that the site would continue to offer emergency services training and that existing Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) assets would be made available for use by Government should the need arise.

A recent revision of the pricing structure at the College together with the implementation of flexible training had resulted in a reduction in training costs for this Authority.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the report be noted; and
- (ii) That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Human Resources Committee subsequent upon the sale of the College detailing all the key issues relevant to this Authority.

38 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY - COMPLIANCE

The Director of Human Resources submitted a report which sought Member approval for the publication of the 2012 / 13 Equality and Diversity Action Plan which had been produced in compliance with of the public sector equality duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

A copy of the Plan was attached to the report now submitted and it was proposed to publish the Plan by 6 April 2012. The Plan sought to respond to the requirements of the Act as it related to the public sector duty to have due regard to;

- the elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act
- the advancement of an equality of opportunity and fostering of good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

RESOLVED

That the 2012/13 Equality and Diversity Action Plan be approved for publication.

39 MEDIATION POLICY

Members considered a report of the Director of Human Resources which sought approval of the proposed Mediation Policy which a been designed as a way for employees to resolve workplace disputes in accordance with the ACAS code of practice on discipline and grievance.

It was reported that the Authority now had a number of trained mediators from all levels across the organisation and from both Green and Grey books and it was anticipated that, with the implementation of the new policy, workplace stress and associated health problems would be reduced.

RESOLVED

That the Mediation Policy be approved for implementation.

40 EARLY TERMINATION POLICY

The Director of Human Resources submitted a report which sought approval for an amendment to the Early Termination Policy, originally approved in September 2010.

The amendment related to changes to the terms and conditions of severance in relation to those members of staff who had been formerly employed as Firefighters, subsequently transferring to non-operational posts without a break in continuous service. This currently applied to 17 employees.

Members were advised that, without changes to the policy, this group of personnel would receive inflated benefits with redundancy payments based upon the combined length of Grey and Green book service.

It was now proposed that the grey book period of service would be assessed based upon compulsory severance terms as detailed in the report now submitted. Employment in the green book role would entitle the staff member to receive redundancy based on enhanced terms (paragraph 2.3 in the report refers).

It was reported that the total cost of the previous enhanced package would be £422,700 compared to £277,800 for a revised severance package. The saving had been calculated based on all 17 affected members of staff applying for, and being offered, voluntary severance.

RESOLVED

That approval be given to the amendment of Appendix B of the Early Termination Policy as detailed in the annex to the report now submitted.

41 FUNDAMENTAL ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

(This item was considered as exempt information under Schedule 12A (2) of the Local Government Act 1972 – information identifying an individual)

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Human Resources which advised of the progress with the fundamental organisational review and which sought approval for a revised Green Book structure as detailed in the report now submitted.

It was anticipated that the adjustments to the establishment would deliver annual savings of approx. £2.5m whilst offering maximum support for the frontline strategic transformation of the organisation and service.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the revised Green Book structure as set out in paragraph 2.15 of the report now submitted be approved; and
- (ii) That the implementation timetable as set out at paragraph 3.1 of the report be approved.

Chair