

**Minutes of the Meeting of
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
Standards and Human Resources Committee
held on Tuesday, 7 March 2017, at 2.00 pm
in the Oak Room, Headquarters, Shrewsbury**

Present

Members

Councillors Adams (Chair), Barrow, Hosken, Murray, Price (Vice Chair) and Turley

Officers

Rod Hammerton	Chief Fire Officer	CFO
Louise McKenzie	Assistant Chief Fire Officer	ACFO
Germaine Worker	Head of Human Resources and Administration	HHRA
Lynn Ince	Executive Support Officer	ESO
Zoe Gittins	Human Resources Officer	HRO

1 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Mellings

2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None

3 Public Questions

None

4 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the Standards and Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 18 October 2016, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

5 Committee Constitution and Training Needs

This report brought the constitution of the Standards and Human Resources Committee to its Members for review. The report also asked Members to consider whether there was any training or development, which should be undertaken by the Committee in order to fulfil its role.

Resolved that:

- a) Having reviewed the constitution of the Standards and Human Resources Committee, it does not recommend any changes to the Fire Authority; and
- b) There are no training and development needs identified at present.

6 Committee Work Plan 2016/17

This report reviewed progress against the 2016/17 Work Plan for the Standards and Human Resources Committee and put forward a 2017/18 Work Plan for the Committee's consideration and approval.

Members asked if consultancy reports relating to the Police and Crime Commissioner would come to this Committee. The CFO advised that these reports would come to the full Fire Authority through the Strategic Planning Working Group and Strategy and Resources Committee. The CFO also advised that there would be proposal for a review of committees and number of members later in the year.

Resolved that the Committee approve the 2017/18 Work Plan without amendment.

7 Member Development

This report updated the Committee on Member development activity over the past year and proposed training and development activity for the year April 2017 to March 2018.

The Committee asked what training provision would be made for new Fire Authority Members following the Shropshire Council elections in May. The ACFO confirmed that a programme of induction sessions would be planned and provided for new members.

Resolved that the Committee note the backward-looking report and agree the proposed training and development activity for the year April 2017 to March 2018.

8 Review of Role Descriptions and Skills and Competencies

In accordance with the Committee's Work Plan, officers had carried out a review of the Role Descriptions of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee; and Role Description and Skills and Competencies of the Independent Person.

Resolved that the Committee

- a) note the review undertaken by officers of the
 - Role Descriptions of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee; and
 - The Role Description and Skills and Competencies of the Independent Person;
- b) agree the proposed minor amendments; and
- c) recommend the Role Descriptions to the Fire Authority, without further amendment.

9 Review of Protocols

Officers had carried out a review of the Protocols on Member / Officer Relations and Gifts and Hospitality.

The HHRA advised that no amendments were proposed to the Member / Officer Relations Protocol and that the amendments to the Gifts and Hospitality Protocol related to a change to job titles.

Resolved that Committee

- a) note the review undertaken by officers of the
 - Member / Officer Relations; and
 - Gifts and Hospitality;
- b) agree the proposed minor amendments; and
- c) recommend the Protocols to the Fire Authority, without further amendment

10 Code of Conduct Complaints

The Committee noted that, whilst not a legal requirement, it was good practice for Members to receive regular updates on Code of Conduct complaints, even if there had been none. The ESO reported that, during the period 2016/17, the Fire Authority had received no complaints that any of its Members had breached its Code of Conduct

Resolved that the Committee note the update regarding Code of Conduct complaints.

11 Equality and Diversity Memorandum of Understanding

This report provided Members with an overview of the requirements of, and current position regarding the Equality and Diversity Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and other future work arising from the Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG).

The Committee asked if any action needed to be taken locally for example with the Representative Bodies (RBs). The ACFO confirmed that the MoU had been discussed at the Equality and Diversity Steering Group, which the RBs attend so they are aware of it. The RBs were also involved in the national Equality and Diversity workshops.

The CFO explained that a focus group had been held which involved every CFO in the country and the following three main issues identified

- a recognition that, locally, much of this is in Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's gift already but that there are areas for improvement. For example, positive action usage where dialogue should be maintained not just used in relation to recruitment.
- Any actions taken should be linked to national support / awareness raising campaigns and a recognition that national aspirations are not necessarily targets. National advertising
- There is value in national campaigns such as the NHS campaign to encourage male nursing recruits.

Resolved that the Committee note the contents of the report and agree that the Service sign up to the Memorandum of Understanding.

12 Progress on Implementation of the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan

This report updated Members on progress on the main actions identified in the Single Equality Scheme Action Plan from March 2016 to February 2017.

Members congratulated officers on the amount of work undertaken and queried when Gypsy and Traveller refresher training was due. The ACFO undertook to check when this was due.

The Committee queried the use of the phrase 'complete and ongoing' on page 12 of the appendix to the report as it seemed contradictory. The ACFO explained that there had been a change of management in the Prevention and Protection Departments who are now taking forward this issue forward. It would seem that the initial work is complete but the Action Plan is ongoing hence how the status has been phrased.

Resolved that the Committee note the contents of the report.

13 Equality Monitoring Statistics

This report provided an overview of the Service's Equality Monitoring Statistics.

The Committee raised a query regarding the ethnicity classifications on the appendix which it assumed followed census classifications breakdowns. The ACFO explained that ethnicity is a self-declaration category based on what individuals consider themselves to be. The ACFO advised that the Equality and Diversity Officer would check that the current classifications are being used. The CFO commented that there is an emerging English identity and it may be possible to query ethnic classifications with the IFSG because of this. The ACFO also said that officers would investigate the provision of a free text area for completion when employees are stating ethnicity.

Resolved that the Committee note the content of the report and the potential change to reporting date in future years.

14 Reasonable Adjustments Update

This report provided Members with an overview of the reasonable adjustments made to support employees in their work roles.

The Committee felt that this paper showed equality in action and were very happy to support the work being undertaken.

Resolved that the Committee note the contents of the report.

15 Wholetime Recruitment

This report provided the Committee with an update on the recruitment programme for wholetime firefighters undertaken in 2016.

The Committee welcomed what they considered a very good and informative report and praised the use of the online applications process. There were however concerns raised about the wording used in the third paragraph of section 5 on page 3 of the report. The CFO explained that officers did debate the inclusion of this and concluded that it should be addressed in the report.

The ACFO commented that the Service does need to make sure that it is testing the right things in recruitment and that the challenge is to improve representation within the Retained Duty System (RDS). The CFO agreed that there is a recognition that increased diversity is needed but this had been unfortunately phrased within this report.

In response to a question about how the vacancies had been advertised, the ACFO explained that they had been publicised on Facebook and the Service's website only. Applications had been received from all over the country and the successful applicants had included 8 existing RDS staff, 2 of whom were from Shropshire.

Resolved that the Committee

- a) Note the contents of the report; and
- b) Agree to use the statistical information gathered to shape positive action and strategy for future recruitment.

16 Staff Survey Progress Update

This report provided Members with an update on progress following the last Standards and Human Resources Committee meeting on 18 October 2016.

Resolved that the Committee

- a) Note the progress made to date; and
- b) Note the actions planned to address the identified issues.

The Committee noted that it was the last Standards and Human Resources Committee meeting that Councillor Price would attend and thanked him for his involvement with the Committee and the Appeals Panel where his knowledge had been much appreciated. The Committee noted their very best wishes for Councillor Price for the future.

The meeting closed at 3.00 pm

Chair.....

Date.....