

**Minutes of the Meeting of
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
Human Resources Committee
held on Thursday, 12 October 2010 at 2.00 pm
at Headquarters, Shrewsbury**

Present

Members

Councillors Adams (Chair), Mrs Blundell (from 2.30 pm), Hartin (Vice-Chair), Kiernan and Picken

Officers

Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Human Resources), Corporate Services Manager, Equality and Diversity Officer and Human Resources Manager

1 Election of Chair

It was proposed by Councillor Kiernan and seconded by Councillor Hartin

That Councillor Adams be elected Chair of the Human Resources Committee.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Adams was duly elected Chair to hold office for the ensuing year.

2 Appointment of Vice-Chair

It was proposed by Councillor Picken and seconded by Councillor Adams

That Councillor Hartin be elected Vice-Chair of the Human Resources Committee.

There being no other nominations, Councillor Hartin was duly elected Vice-Chair to hold office for the ensuing year.

3 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Mrs Barrow and Price.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Non-Exempt Minutes

Members received the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 27 May 2010.

It was proposed by Councillor Picken, seconded by Councillor Hartin and

Resolved that the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting, held on 27 May 2010, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record

6 Public Questions

No questions, statements or petitions had been received from members of the public.

7a Human Resources Committee Constitution, Training and Meetings

This report brought the latest version of the Committee's constitution to the notice of its Members and asked them to consider whether there was any training or development, which should be undertaken by the Committee in order to fulfil its role. Finally, it asked Members to consider whether the meetings of the Committee could be reduced from three to two per year.

The Chair felt that it would be useful for Members to receive a briefing on the Equality Act 2010 and its implications for the Fire Authority. The Committee agreed but felt that this should be offered to all Members and take place immediately prior to the next meeting of the Authority on 4 November. The Equality and Diversity Officer advised that he had already prepared a briefing note on the Act, which he would circulate to Members.

It was proposed by Councillor Hartin, seconded by Councillor Kiernan and

Resolved that the Committee:

- a) Note the constitution of the Human Resources Committee;
- b) Agree that a briefing for Members on the Equality Act 2010 take place, as outlined above; and
- c) Recommend to the Fire Authority that the meetings of the Committee be reduced from three to two per year

7b Member Training and Development

This report brought the Committee's attention to the process currently in place to evaluate Member training and development needs and asked the Committee to review that process and make recommendations in this respect to the Fire Authority.

The Committee felt that Members should be involved in shaping their own development and the Training and Development Questionnaire used previously should, therefore, be retained. They asked that it be sent out to each Member and that the Chair of the Authority be made aware of those Members, who did not complete and return it.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Human Resources) pointed out that there would be elements of core training, which would be provided for all Members and specific training required for each Committee. It might not be possible, however, particularly in the current economic environment, to meet all of the training needs highlighted by individual Members in the Questionnaire. Recognising this to be the case, the Committee agreed that, when completed Questionnaires had been returned, Committee Chairs would liaise with officers to draw up an appropriate Member training plan.

It was proposed by Councillor Adams, seconded by Councillor Hartin and

Resolved that the Committee:

- a) Note the process currently in place to evaluate Member training and development needs; and
- b) Recommend to the Fire Authority that the existing Training and Development Questionnaire be sent out to all Members, following the return of which Committee Chairs liaise with officers to draw up an appropriate Member training plan

8 Performance against the Fire Service Equality Framework: Gap Analysis Outcomes and Action Plan

This report provided the Committee with an analysis of shortfalls in evidence of Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's meeting the 'Excellent' standard in the Fire Service Equality Framework, and the action required to demonstrate that these criteria are met.

The Committee discussed the Equality and Diversity Members' Charter and agreed that the seven elected Members, who had not yet signed up to the Charter be asked to do so, when attending the next meeting of the Fire Authority. The Committee also agreed that, at the same time, Members should be asked to sign a waiver to enable Service officers to obtain from Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Councils details of Council training attended by Fire Authority Members. This would provide evidence of equality and diversity training and avoid possible duplication in provision, so saving time and money.

Councillor Mrs Blundell arrived at this point (2.30 pm) and apologised for being late.

It was proposed by Councillor Hartin, seconded by Councillor Kiernan and

Resolved that the Committee:

- a) Note the contents of the report;
- b) Agree to continue to use the Fire Service Equality Framework as the basis for measuring progress on equality and diversity work in the organisation; and
- c) Agree to implement cost-neutral improvements in obtaining evidence to support the Service's compliance with the 'Excellent' level in the Fire Service Equality Framework

9 Members' Engagement with Equality and Diversity

This report highlighted the need to evidence elected Members' engagement with Equality and Diversity (E&D) as an outcome of the E&D Framework Gap analysis and feedback on Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service's 2009 submission to the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index.

The Committee agreed that it would be helpful for the Fire Authority's Equality and Diversity Champion, Dr Jones, to be the point of contact for the collation of evidence relating to Member engagement with E&D. The Committee also felt that it would be useful for Members to be provided with a rolling calendar of forthcoming events, including E&D events, which they might wish to attend. Officers undertook to post details of such events on the Members' area of the website and to organise an awareness session to enable Members to make the best use of the website.

Subject to the above, it was proposed by Councillor Hartin, seconded by Councillor Picken and

Resolved that the Committee agree to:

- a) The distribution of an annual Members' Equality and Diversity Engagement survey in order to collate relevant activities on an annual basis, to start in September 2010;
- b) A subsequent annual report to the Authority on Members' Equality and Diversity activities during the preceding year;
- c) Recommend to the Authority that it support Members' attendance at Equality and Diversity training; and
- d) Recommend to the Authority that it support Members' representing the Authority at relevant community events

10 Telford Race, Equality and Diversity Partnership 2010/11 Service Level Agreement and Payment

This report informed the Committee of the progress of Telford Race, Equality and Diversity Partnership, as requested by the Fire Authority, and brought to the attention of Members the draft 2010/11 Service Level Agreement negotiated with Telford Race, Equality and Diversity Partnership.

It was proposed by Councillor Pickens, seconded by Councillor Adams and

Resolved that the Committee:

- a) Approve the draft 2010/11 Telford Race, Equality and Diversity Partnership (TREDP) Service Level Agreement and approve the payment of £5,000 to TREDP, after signature of the Service Level Agreement by TREDP; and
- b) Agree that TREDP be requested to change its name as a matter of urgency to Telford Human Rights, Equality and Diversity and to develop its remit to cover all equality strands

11 Investors in People Review

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Human Resources) gave a verbal report to bring Members' attention to the recent review, in which the Service had maintained its 'Investors in People' status.

The assessor conducting the review had stated that the Service's feedback was "overwhelmingly positive" and his report indicated that there had been continued improvement in many areas. The Assistant Chief Fire Officer read the following quote from the report:

"People recognise that there is a culture throughout the organisation that values them and supports them in their roles. There is a strong sense that people recognise that management will listen to, and act upon, their views, and this makes people feel recognised for their contribution."

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Human Resources) advised that, at the end of his report, the assessor had stated that he would like to congratulate the organisation for the successful way in which it is continuing to maintain the services it provides in what is clearly a very challenging economic climate.

Resolved that the Committee note the verbal report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Human Resources)

12 Progress on Equality Impact Assessments

This report updated Members on implementing Equality Impact Assessments, and identified those still outstanding from years 1 and 2 in the three-year Equality Impact Assessment implementation plan.

Resolved that the Committee note the contents of the report

13 Equality and Diversity Steering Group Update

This report provided the Committee with a summary report on the work of the Equality and Diversity Steering Group from May to August 2010.

Resolved that the Committee note the contents of the report

14 Progress on Implementation of the Single Equality Action Plan

This report updated Members on the progress to August 2010 of actions identified within the Single Equality Action Plan, which is monitored through the Directorate Business Plans.

The Equality and Diversity Officer advised that the Black History Month two-day event at the Hive in Shrewsbury (referred to on page two of his report) had been cancelled, because funding had been withdrawn.

Resolved that the Committee note the progress on the actions in the Single Equality Action Plan

The Human Resources Manager had previously advised the Committee that Equality and Diversity Officer, Jonathan Hyams, would soon be leaving the Service, as his contract to cover maternity leave was coming to an end. Members thanked Jonathan for his work with the Service and wished him well in the future.

15 Local Government Act 1972

It was proposed by Councillor Pickens, seconded by Councillor Hartin and

Resolved that, under the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined by the provisions of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, by virtue of paragraphs 1 and 2

16 Applications to undertake Outside Employment

This exempt report informed Members of three applications from Fire Authority employees to undertake outside employment.

The first application was proposed by Councillor Pickens and seconded by Councillor Hartin.

The second application was proposed by Councillor Kiernan and seconded by Councillor Pickens.

The third application was proposed by Councillor Hartin and seconded by Councillor Mrs Blundell.

It was then resolved that the Committee confirm the provisional approvals for the three applications, previously given by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Human Resources Committee.

The meeting closed at 3.10 pm.

Chair.....

Date.....