

Annual Report of the Human Resources Committee

Report of the Human Resources Committee

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1 Purpose of Report

This report advises of the work carried out by the Fire Authority's Human Resources Committee during the municipal year 2008 / 2009.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to note the contents of this report.

3 Background

The Human Resources Committee has not previously provided an Annual Report but, when the Fire Authority agreed its 2009 / 2010 Work Plan, this action was included. Accordingly, this report sets out the work carried out by the Committee from February 2009 to February 2010.

4 Constitution and Meetings

The constitution of the Committee was last reviewed at its meeting on 3 September 2009.

Membership of the Committee is 7, with a quorum of 4. Since Councillor Mrs Holyoak's retirement and following the local elections the Committee has been chaired by Councillor Peter Adams.

During the period of review the Committee has met four times: in February, May and September 2009 and in February 2010.

5 Role of the Committee

The terms of reference for the Committee include considering human resource policy and strategies and staffing requirements and making recommendations to the Fire Authority along with making recommendations on the process for appointments at Brigade Manager level and other defined posts as necessary.

The Committee also deals with equality and diversity initiatives and schemes; grievance related matters and receives reports from the Appeals Committee (formerly the Disciplinary Appeals Tribunal and the Health Panel); and considers requests from staff to undertake outside employment.

The full terms of reference of the Committee can be found in Section 3 of the Members' Handbook or on the Fire Authority's website at:

<http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/docs/cfa/members-handbook/section-3-pdf/04-Human-Resources.pdf>

For ease of reference this report splits the work carried out by the Committee into three main areas:

- Policy and strategy;
- Equality and diversity related matters; and
- Employee-related matters.

6 Policy and Strategy

The Committee has agreed its own work plan and annually considers progress against the People Strategy, having received its most recent update in January 2010. The last year has also seen the approval of a number of policies, which the Committee had asked officers to develop and/or review. These include the Grievance, Capability, Maternity and Mediation policies. The mediation process was also reviewed at the request of the Committee and the new arrangements were agreed prior to implementation.

One key piece of work recommended by the Committee, and subsequently agreed by the Fire Authority, was the re-structure of two Committees, rationalising them into one Committee with a single set of Members. This involved the amalgamation of the Health Panel and the Disciplinary Appeals Tribunal into the new Appeals Committee. This has the benefit of streamlining processes and ensuring better opportunities for Members to maintain their competence through less division of responsibilities.

The HR Committee has also monitored, and, in January 2010, agreed on, the introduction of physiotherapy, in conjunction with a local hospital, to the Service's Occupational Health offering to assist with the prevention and reduction of sickness absence.

In September 2009 the Committee also agreed the modification and updating of the internal disputes resolution process used within the occupational pensions process.

7 Equality and Diversity Related Matters

Under its work plan the Committee receives reports of the work of the Service's Equality and Diversity Steering Group on a regular basis. In addition, the proposed response to the national consultation on the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework was considered and agreed by the Committee.

The last year has also seen the Committee receive reports on the attainment of Level 4 of the Equality Standard for Local Government and on the newly-created Single Equality Scheme and associated action plan.

8 Employee Related Matters

Over the year to February 2010 the Committee has received updates regarding several national matters, including legal cases relating to pensions and terms and conditions, affiliation to the Skills for Justice Skills Sector Council and the legal position around the employment of Members of Police Forces by Fire and Rescue Authorities

The Committee has considered 19 requests made by staff for permission to undertake outside employment.

Employee audit results are also reported to the Committee and, in the last year, it considered both the benchmarking results, showing our Service's high performance in the national Cultural Audit, and the results of, and action plan arising from, the stress audit undertaken in 2009.

9 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

10 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

11 Equality Impact Assessment

This report is purely an update on the work of the Committee for the municipal year 2008 / 2009 and it, therefore, has no impact on people. Accordingly, an Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed.

12 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

13 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk), the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Business Continuity Planning		Legal	
Capacity		Member Involvement	*
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Area Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings		Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	
Financial		Staff	*
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	
Integrated Risk Management Planning			