

AT A MEETING of the HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY  
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE held at Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service  
Headquarters, Eastleigh on 1 July 2015

**PRESENT:**

The Chairman announced that the press and members of the public were permitted to film and broadcast the meeting. Those remaining at the meeting were consenting to being filmed and recorded, and to the possible use of those images and recording for broadcasting purposes.

Councillors:

p	Ann Briggs	a	Chris Lagdon
p	Keith Chapman	p	Phil Smith
a	Mark Cooper	p	Sally Spicer
p	Liz Fairhurst (Chairman)	p	John Wall (Vice Chairman)
p	Hannah Hockaday		

**88. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies of absence were received for this meeting.

**89. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful of their duty to disclose at the meeting any disclosable pecuniary interest they had in any matter on the agenda for the meeting, where that interest was not already entered in the Authority's register of interests, and their ability to disclose any other pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests in any such matter that they might have wished to disclose.

**90. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The Minutes from the meeting on the 15 April 2015 were agreed to be a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**91. DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations on this occasion.

**92. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman's announcements on this occasion.

### **93. WORKFORCE DATA REPORT**

The Committee received the report of the Chief Officer (Item 6 in the Minute Book), which confirmed the authorised workforce establishment and strength as of 1 March 2015 across all employment groups. Sandy Gregory was introduced to the Committee as taking on the role as the lead HR Business Partner from Graham Love at future Committee meetings.

The Director of Human Resources introduced the report, highlighting that there were currently 71 whole-time temporary promotions which reflected the current period of transformational change, and Members noted that recruitment to specific areas to maintain activity was ongoing. It was confirmed that Green Book numbers were slightly lower but these vacancies were being deliberately held until the outcome of the Risk Review was known.

Members discussed opportunities to backfill vacancies, and it was explained that this helped to increase flexibility in the workforce and also provided development opportunities.

**RESOLVED:**

The Human Resources Committee support the changes to the establishment contained within the report made under the Chief Officer's delegated powers.

### **94. UPDATE ON RECRUITMENT STRATEGY**

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Officer detailing the work underway to develop a new Recruitment Strategy. Initial plans for the new Recruitment Strategy were highlighted to Members and it was confirmed that a further report would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

It was heard that a blended approach to Firefighter recruitment was being developed consisting of external recruitment and transfers from the Retained Duty System (RDS) Workforce and other Authorities. The importance of recruiting the best skills for the job was highlighted and issues such as advertising in-line with equality legislation and possible impact from the Risk Review were discussed.

Members raised questions relating to employment restrictions around Firefighters taking voluntary redundancy and future employment in other Authorities, and the difference between this and an employment transfer between Authorities was explained.

**RESOLVED:**

The Human Resources Committee support the update and look forward to receiving further information in due course.

## **95. SICKNESS ABSENCE**

The Committee received the report of the Chief Officer (Item 8 in the Minute Book) which summarised the key trends and analysis findings relating to sickness absence. The establishment of an Attendance Management Working Group was highlighted, and their development of an Absence Improvement Plan to reduce absence levels was noted. Members discussed the actions arising from the Plan and it was confirmed that the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee would also receive sickness absence figures as part of their performance management remit.

The development of a 'toolkit' to provide guidance for Managers in relation to attendance management was highlighted as well as the importance of "return to work" interviews for staff returning after absence. Members noted wellbeing initiatives which included workshops, and the recent launch of the Employee Assistance Programme which provided all staff with a confidential 24 hour telephone line for medical advice.

### **RESOLVED:**

- a) That the Human Resources Committee agree to oversee the governance of sickness absence as a key area of people performance.
- b) That the Human Resources Committee accept and support the improvement plan and would monitor progress and delivery of actions against it.

## **96. UPDATE ON CHANGES TO FIREFIGHTER FITNESS REQUIREMENTS**

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Officer (Item 9 in the Minute Book) which provided an overview of fitness requirements following amendments issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government, effective from 1 April 2015.

It was noted that six monthly fitness assessments had been implemented to ensure all operational personnel were achieving the expected standard of fitness to effectively perform their role in line with the current Fitness Service Order. Members heard that as well as aerobic and functional testing, operational personnel were required to undertake body composition and blood pressure assessments, which had to be successfully completed and up to fitness compliance within a twelve month period.

Support for staff who failed the fitness assessments was discussed, and Members noted that an 8 week training programme would be implemented to help achieve fitness level requirements, (26 weeks for body composition). It was explained that temporary or permanent redeployment would be implemented if necessary.

**RESOLVED:**

The Human Resources Committee support the changes to the firefighter fitness requirements.

**97. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

That in relation to the following item the public be excluded from the meeting, 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 were present during the item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons set out in the report.

**98. PRINCIPAL OFFICER PAY REVIEW**

The Committee considered an exempt report of the Clerk (Exempt Item 11 in the Minute Book) relating to the Principal Officer Pay Review in relation to the implementation of a local pay award for Gold Book staff with effect from 1 January 2015. It was questioned whether the discussion should be held in public or in private and Members agreed that the discussion should continue in private but that the resolution be public. .

The methodology for the pay review was explained to Members and Members received feedback from the Principal Officer Pay Review Group which had considered the local pay award for the year from 1 January 2015. Members agreed to the proposed local pay award of 1% for Principal Officers in addition to the nationally agreed pay award.

(Summary of an exempt Minute)

**RESOLVED**

The Human Resources Committee agree the proposed local pay adjustment of a 1% award from 1 January 2015 for Principal Officers.