

AT A MEETING of the HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE held at Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Eastleigh on 20 January, 2010.

PRESENT:

Councillors: K. Chapman (Chairman), P. Galton; R.J. Kimber; Sam Payne; M.J. Tucker; J.K. West; Mrs. P.A. West

25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A. Carew; Mrs J.K. Frankum; and F. Jonas

26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that, where they believed they had a personal or personal prejudicial interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting, they should normally, at the time of the debate, declare their interest and having regard to the circumstances described in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct consider whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 12 of the Code.

27 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26 November, 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

28 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's announcements.

29 DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations to the meeting.

30 ESTABLISHMENT

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer (Item 6 in the Minute Book) on the authorised and actual establishment as of 1 December, 2009.

RESOLVED:

That the changes to the establishment under the Chief Officer's delegated powers contained within the report be noted.

31 TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW

Pursuant to Minute 21 of the last meeting, the Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer (Item 7 in the Minute Book) about a review of their role and terms of reference as requested by the Governance Committee. Members supported the proposed revisions to the Human Resources Committee's terms of reference relating to appeal hearings, training and development plans and to equal opportunity and health, safety and welfare policies. Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED:

That the Governance Committee be asked to consider the following changes to the Human Resources Committee's terms of reference :

- (a) To remove the existing clause within its terms of reference that relates to the Committee's role in respect of appeals and replaces it with a clause that matches the existing policy and practice namely "To act as the Authority's appeal body for appropriate categories of employees in accordance with current agreed policies or where the internal mechanisms do not allow for the matters to be heard by officers. As the appeal body to appoint panels comprising Members of the Committee or the Authority as appropriate. (This to include hearing of appeals relating to: individual dismissals and grievances, and collective disputes)".
- (b) To replace the existing clause within its terms of reference about approving training and development plans with "To ensure the development and implementation of training and development activities to support the future needs of the service. Furthermore to develop and establish mechanisms to support the development of Fire Authority Members".
- (c) To include a new clause within its terms of reference about promoting and monitoring the Authority's equal opportunities and health, safety and welfare policies, the new clause to read "To scrutinise the activities and outcomes of the Service with regards to its general duty to promote equality of opportunity, good relations and positive attitudes to people of different groups, and to eliminate unfair discrimination in employee policies. Also to scrutinise the activities and outcomes of the Service with regards to its general duty to promote health, safety and welfare policies".
- (d) That the Governance Committee note that it is the Human Resources Committee's view that each HFRA Committee should adopt, as part of their terms of reference, the promotion and monitoring of the Authority's equal opportunity and health and safety and welfare policies.
- (e) That the Chairman of the Human Resources Committee present the Committee's comments on this item to the Governance Committee in March 2010.

32 **RE-EMPLOYMENT OF HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE EMPLOYEES**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer (Item 8 in the Minute Book) seeking endorsement to the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Services' policy to continue to offer re-employment to eligible employees.

The Committee discussed the policy in regard to a number of considerations including the retention of talent and experience, the planned recruitment freeze and a diverse workforce. The decision for the continued offer of re-employment was based on a number of factors. The policy was offered as a tool to retain talent and experience by removing the perverse incentive for older staff to leave due to the pre-existing pension regulations. This remained a key consideration. There remains some tensions between actions that support the aim of attracting and retaining experienced older staff and those associated with a more diverse workforce in a wider sense. There was no actual evidence to support the presumption that more people would leave the service if this policy was not in place. Feedback from a selection of those staff who had opted to take the re-employment route identified that they would have remained in the service even if the option had not been available. In part that was to do with the current economic climate and also personal circumstances. There were discussions around the impact this might have on the proposed 'recruitment freeze' that formed part of one of the proposed objectives within the new Service Plan for 2010-2013. The plans that supported this objective, did utilise the current turn-over rates which were based on figures from the last 2 years, during which time the re-employment policy had been in force.

Members requested that the minute of the Senior Management Team meeting on 2 November, 2009 at which this decision was taken be included in the Committee minutes. Accordingly, the SMT Minute reads "Following a long debate, it was agreed to continue with the existing policy for another year, having taken into consideration the current financial context. This decision would be communicated to both staff and representative bodies, including our intention to review this in another year".

In view of this, Members asked that the policy should go formally to the Authority to endorse. Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED:

That it be a RECOMMENDATION to the Authority.

That the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service's policy to continue to offer re-employment to eligible employees be endorsed.

33 **COMPULSORY RETIREMENT POLICY**

The Committee considered and endorsed the report of the Chief Officer (Item 9 in the Minute Book) about the Services' decision to remove the compulsory retirement age of 65 for all employees with effect from 31 March, 2010.

34 CHIEF OFFICER PENSION ARRANGEMENTS

At the request of the Treasurer, and with the agreement of Members, this item was withdrawn from the meeting pending further legal advice, prior to a future report to the Committee.

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