

## HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the  
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
held in the Fire and Rescue  
Headquarters, Barmston Mere,  
Sunderland on THURSDAY 23 April  
2015 at 1.30 pm

### **Present:**

Councillor Bell in the Chair.

Councillors Haley, Mole, Price, Mortimer and Renton.

### **Part I**

#### **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Wright, Stephenson and Chief Fire Officer Capeling.

#### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **Minutes**

26. RESOLVED that the minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 2 February 2015, Part I be confirmed as a correct record.

#### **Stonewall Workplace Equality Index – Action Plan Update**

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report to provide Members with an update of the feedback received from Stonewall in relation to the Authority's 2015 Workplace Equality Index (WEI) submission.

Area Manager Robson reported that a meeting had taken place with the Authority's Stonewall representative, during February 2015, where detailed feedback on all aspects of the WEI was provided. Feedback received from Stonewall was very positive and TWFRS performed very well and attained 37<sup>th</sup> place, out of almost 400 organisations applying for the index.

Area Manager Robson reported that specific strengths and development actions were identified. The Authority continued to perform outstandingly well in Community Engagement, Policy and Line Management processes, which was a completely new criteria for 2015 and the Authority had gained full marks.

Actions for improvement included Procurement, Staff Engagement, Training and the Staff Feedback Questionnaire.

Councillor Mole acknowledged the benefits of taking part in the WEI.

Councillor Haley noted that historically the TWFRS had been ranked within the top ten and had now dropped. Councillor Haley questioned whether there was any additional resources required to ensure improvement. Area Manager Robson explained that the TWFRS had implemented the Action Plan and was looking at events and forums and, how they could share best practice. These areas were being assessed to ascertain the resources required.

Assistance Chief Fire Officer Baines reported that the Strategic Management Team, were due to consider the benefits and affordability of all external assessments as part of the ongoing financial challenges the Authority faces.

27. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (ii) further reports would be submitted to the Committee as appropriate.

### **Review of the Secondary Employment and Pecuniary Interests Policy and Procedure**

The Chief Fire Officer and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report to inform Members of the proposed revisions to the Secondary Employment Procedure and seek approval to implement the procedure as revised.

Assistant Chief Fire Officer Baines reported that the Secondary Employment and Pecuniary Interests policy had been reviewed to ensure roles and responsibilities were delegated appropriately. The policy was amended three years ago, to protect against potential issues of conflict and this review was to ensure continued protection for the Authority.

The Personnel Advisor to the Authority noted that the policy, as well as protecting the Authority, was a safeguard for employees.

Councillor Bell stated that with the new trading companies she believed this was a grey area and the Authority now had a clear, transparent policy.

28. RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the contents of the report be noted;

- (ii) the Secondary Employment and Pecuniary Interests procedure (April 2015) was Approved; and
- (iii) further reports would be submitted to the Committee as appropriate.

### **Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FPS) 2015 – Employer Contributions from 1 April 2015**

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and The Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report informing Members of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 Employer Contributions from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.

Area Manager Robson reported that the Pension Scheme 2015 had been introduced from April 2015 and explained that a number of schemes would be replaced by this, including the FPS 1992 Scheme and NFPS 2006 Scheme. The paper outlined the contribution rates for the new scheme.

Members were informed the outcome of the implementation of the Pension Scheme contribution changes were expected to realise a financial saving for the Authority, but this position would be monitored as there were a number of factors which would impact upon this. Any saving would be reported to the Authority.

Members confirmed they had no questioned.

29. RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the content of the report be noted; and
- (ii) further reports would be submitted to the Committee as appropriate.

### **The Firefighters Pension Scheme – Scheme Manager Obligations and Discretions**

The Chief Fire Officer, the Clerk to the Authority, the Finance Officer and the Personnel advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report advising Members of the scheme managers obligations and discretions that apply to the Firefighters Pension Scheme (England) Regulations 2014 (the 2015 Scheme) prior to reporting these discretions to the Fire Authority.

Area Manager Robson reported that the scheme manager obligations and discretions were published, by the Local Government Association, three weeks prior to implementation, on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 and listed the scheme managers' discretions. The late presentation of information relating to the enactment by DCLG had resulted in significant challenges in presenting information to the Authority in a timely manner, so that priority decisions regarding scheme manager discretions could be made prior to the 2015 Scheme coming into force.

Area Manager Robson reported that in total there were 52 discretions listed within the LGA document. The scheme manager (Fire Authority) would have some time to consider the majority of these but the following would need to be considered as a matter of priority:

- Delegation (Regulation 5)
- Pensionable Pay (Regulation 17)
- Contributions during absence from work due to illness, injury, trade dispute or authorised absence (Regulation 111)

Area Manager Robson invited Members to relay and views and comments on the document through Kate Edmunds.

Assistant Chief Officer Baines advised that the discretions would be presented at the next full Fire Authority meeting in June 2015, for consideration. This would also include the Authority's consideration of which elements of the requirements might be delegated to the HR committee.

Councillor Bell acknowledged the time constraints and the number of discretions implemented.

30. RESOLVED that: -

- (i) the content of the report be noted;
- (ii) further reports be submitted to the Committee as appropriate; and
- (iii) views and comments on the Scheme Manager Obligations and Discretions would be provided to Kate Edmunds.

### **Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation Order) 2006**

31. RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during consideration of the remaining business as it was considered likely to reveal the identity of an individual, or the disclosure of exempt information relating to any consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Authority and employees of the Authority (including the Authority holding that information) (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraphs 1, 2 and 4).

(Signed) J. BELL,  
Chairman.

### **Note: -**

The above minutes comprise only those relating to items during which the meeting was open to the public.

Additional minutes in respect of other items are included in Part II.