



**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 23 July 2018 at 10.30am in the Fire and Rescue Headquarters, Barmston Mere, Sunderland

Present:

Councillor Haley in the Chair.

Councillors Bell, Curran, Dodds, Flynn and Pickard

Part I

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stephenson.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 5 February 2018 Part I, be confirmed as a correct record.

Newcastle Pride

The Chair referred to the Newcastle Pride event which had taken place over the weekend and congratulated those who had taken part in the 5km run on Friday night. The turnout for the Saturday event had been the largest ever and the Chair commended the efforts of all those who had helped to make the event such a success.

ACFO Baines reported that 20,000 people had taken part in the parade, which was an increase of between 4,000 and 5,000 on the previous year. The TWFRS event had been in a new venue, which was well organised, and a lot of people visited the blue light stalls.

The Girls' Network

The Committee were advised that a briefing had taken place and a cohort was being sought to begin the programme in September.

Investors in People Update

The Investors in People re-assessment had taken place. This had been a packed day and the assessor had made specific requests to speak to certain individuals and unfortunately this had not included elected Members on this occasion.

Organisational Management Review Debrief

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority), the Strategic Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report to provide an update in relation to the debrief process which was undertaken following the Organisational Management Review (OMR). The debrief aimed to capture areas of good practice, learning and recommendations to support continuous improvement in relation to planning, implementation and communications associated with OMR.

A structured debrief was commissioned by the OMR Board to ascertain the views of Managers, affected personnel and support functions of the OMR process. Three individual debriefs were conducted with the above groups to capture views from a broad range of roles involved within OMR.

A number of areas of good practice were identified which would be considered and taken forward in any future similar change management programmes. The good practice included greater ownership of the process, the phasing of Estates and ICT moves over a seven to eight week period and redeployment interviews which felt less formal.

The debriefs also highlighted areas for improvement associated with management and training, communication and broader general issues. These recommendations were set out in the Appendix to the report, had been allocated to responsible owners and would be monitored and managed through the existing IRMP Ways of Working work stream.

The Chair noted that it was important to learn from the experience of going through the review. ACFO Baines stated that this was the first time that leadership of the review had been given to heads of departments and it could be seen from the limited number of recommendations that this had been a successful process. There had been close working with the trade unions through the various joint consultative fora and there were opportunities to further develop the processes.

2. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the report be endorsed; and
- (ii) further reports be received as necessary.

Firefighter Recruitment

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority), the Strategic Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report on the progress of the current Firefighter recruitment campaign, which aimed to recruit and train twenty new firefighters from October 2018.

ACFO Baines advised that it was the first time that recruitment had been carried out since 2010 and the process was being undertaken in collaboration with County Durham and Darlington and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Services. The recruitment campaign had engaged with over 3,000 members of the community and a targeted social media campaign had received over 90,000 views. Over 1,000 candidates had attended taster sessions for potential recruits.

The registration portal for Firefighter recruitment had opened on 9 July and just under 5,000 applications had been received in a five day period. Following this 4,469 completed registrations were logged, 3,926 candidates had completed the behaviour survey and 2,934 had gone on to the situational judgement section of the process. The portal would close at midnight on 23 July and it was felt that it had been a positive exercise, there was a good level of diversity within the applications and this would place the Service in good stead for future recruitment.

Councillor Dodds commented that he was very pleased to see Tyne and Wear being able to grow the service. He asked whether it might be possible to have information about how many applicants were already in employment and how many were not at the time of application. He acknowledged that analysis may take some time and it was important to get the recruits in place initially.

ACFO Baines stated that information would be brought to the next Human Resources Committee but highlighted that 10% of initial registrations had been from the LGBT community. Employment details were not available currently but this could be built into the process for the future. It would be intended to have another trainee course next year; this would be good for the service, good for trainers and good for operational staff.

Councillor Dodds asked if further recruitment would be a brand new process and ACFO Baines said that historically lists of applicants had been kept for two years, however nothing had been decided as yet.

Councillor Curran welcomed the recruitment of new firefighters, however he added that it would be difficult to achieve diversity over such a small cohort of recruits. ACFO Baines advised that the action for the Service to have an inclusive workforce was about wanting the best from all parts of society and about people driving their

own qualities through the process. The submissions through the portal were not full applications but looked at qualities and attributes using a behavioural and situational questionnaire about how they would deal with certain situations. Following this stage candidates would then be invited in for physical tests, which would further trim the numbers down, and medicals would then be carried out. It was envisaged that the candidates reaching this stage would be in the low hundreds and scores would be aggregated across and the individuals assessed who had demonstrated capability for the role.

Councillor Curran asked if the interview panel had been determined and ACFO Baines stated that a significant piece of work had been done on engaging staff more in recruitment processes and staff from across the organisation had been asked to volunteer for overall panels for engagement. Staff experience and expertise would be used in the selection process.

3. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (ii) further reports be received as appropriate.

Investors in People (IiP) Update July 2018

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority), the Strategic Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report providing an update on the progress made in respect of the action plan following the Investors in People (IiP) annual review on 27 March 2018.

The annual review was not to re-assess the organisation but to ensure that the current accreditation was maintained and that the journey of continuous improvement was being pursued within the parameters of the Action Plan. The review focused on two main areas, Leading and Inspiring People and Managing Performance.

The Assessor held a series of individual meetings and focus groups with staff to explore the progress of the Service and the outcome was that Tyne and Wear continued to be recognised as an Investors in People Gold organisation. The next review would take place in March 2019.

The Chair expressed his satisfaction with where the Services was and where it was going, as evidenced by the Investors in People annual review.

4. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of this report be endorsed;
- (ii) the authority be supported in undertaking the re-assessment process in 2019; and

- (iii) further reports be received as appropriate.

Performance Development Review (PDR) Review and Next Steps

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority), the Strategic Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report to provide an update on the progress of the revised Performance Development Review (PDR) programme.

ACFO Baines advised that the PDR programme built on the existing PDP process and would focus on key objectives and driving the discussion which would go alongside that. The design of the revised PDR process would:

- encourage more meaningful and purposeful conversations to take place between an employee and their line manager;
- maximise return on investment in resources that the Service has already made in the Engage Leadership and Management programme;
- integrate the Leadership Bond behaviours into performance objectives; and
- try an alternative approach to personal development conversations which encourage employees to consider their career aspirations and the actions needed to support them.

Darryl Warden, OD Manager, was in attendance to deliver a presentation on the PDR process. Darryl highlighted the current position for the organisation and how it was influenced by the changing profile of the workforce, technology and social media.

The PDR process was piloted over a seven month period as a cyclical performance review beginning with a look back to the previous year and looking forward to set objectives and an individual development plan for the year ahead. There would be a minimum of three key touch points throughout the year with informal catch ups and formal 1-2-1s where required. The Leadership Bond 360° appraisal would be included at the mid-point review and training and support would be provided throughout the process.

The pilot had been evaluated using three different approaches: informal; through Investors in People; and a formal questionnaire. Darryl advised that the informal feedback had been mostly positive with staff saying that the process was more about them than previously. The Investors in People assessment had talked more about compliance against compromise and the need to ensure that there was quality in the process.

The formal survey had a response rate of 37% from managers and 35% from employees. The survey asked about the individual's progress through the PDR, the value of the guidance, the impact on performance and whether it was a worthwhile investment of their time. People had appreciated the opportunity to have a conversation about their personal performance and managers had like the objective setting.

Participants had been asked to sum up their experience in one word and there had been responses such as 'helpful', 'valuable', 'progression', 'refreshing' and 'positive'. However there were also some less favourable comments such as 'meaningless' and 'cumbersome'.

The next steps for the work were to: -

- share updates with staff on progress;
- develop broader awareness in Strategic Management Group;
- monitor compliance on existing PDPs; and
- develop an implementation plan.

The Chair commented that he would be interested to see the impact of technology in the process as this could be interactive and interesting or excruciating. He also asked if there could be a significant overhead in relation to 360 appraisals.

Darryl Warden advised that the survey comprised 63 statements in total and an instant reaction was expected. Although this sounded like a lot of questions, it was designed to be more fulfilling for participants.

Councillor Pickard noted that clear objectives needed to be set for people to take hold of and that people who wanted to opt out had to be challenged as there were always ways to move the organisation forward.

Councillor Curran acknowledged that questionnaires provided useful feedback but comments made in informal situations were often more meaningful but could easily be forgotten. He also noted that the response rate for the internal questionnaires was not particularly high.

ACFO Baines understood this point and noted that informal conversations were a good temperature check during the trial and it would be worth capturing the comments which were made. The pilot had involved seven teams in seven locations, around 130-140 people from 850 staff so responses to the survey had been received from between 30-40 individuals. This level of response was typical of many organisations and the Service had done well in its efforts to improve returns of employee surveys.

Councillor Dodds suggested that within the Service, some would find it easier to complete the programme than others and asked if any assistance would be given if there were people struggling to complete this due to operational commitments. He agreed with Councillor Pickard's comments that the programme should be about enhancing performance, rather than promotional opportunities. Councillor Dodds queried if the new system would facilitate development through access to training courses.

ACFO Baines said that watch managers would be expected to manage the programme within their workload and to involve the crew managers in this. Managers who managed individuals should complete the PDR process.

ACFO Baines agreed that a number of people did see the current PDP process as a

way of getting a place on a course when it should be about performance and this was the reason for moving to a discussion based approach. One element of the Leadership Bond was about being the best that you could be in your current role. Often people did just want to fulfil their job description but that was still about improving performance and all managers needed to have that conversation with staff.

Lorna Hodson, Human Resources Manager advised that there was a section on the PDR form about career aspirations and the team would look at that and have a mechanism to provide feedback. Councillor Dodds commented that it was helpful to hear that and it needed to be reinforced through the 1-2-1 process.

5. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of this report be noted;
- (ii) the proposals outlined in Section 5 of the report be supported; and
- (iii) further reports or updates be received as appropriate.

Green Book Pay Award 2018-2020

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority), the Strategic Finance Manager and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report on the recently released National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Authorities' Circular NJC5/12/17 referring to the 'Green Book' employee pay award for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2020.

The Human Resources Manager reported that the pay offer had now been agreed for Green Book employees and would see a minimum uplift of 2% from April 2018 and a further 2% in April 2019. The revised pay structure was shown at Appendix A to the report.

A realignment had been carried out in order to address the contraction of pay points at the lower end of the scale and the bottom 12 points had been paired off into six new pay points. The cost of the pay award was estimated at £175,000 in 2018/2019 with provision having been made within the revenue budget. A further cost of £175,000 was anticipated in 2019/2020 which could be met from provision which had been made in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

6. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of this report be noted; and
- (ii) further reports be received as appropriate.

Annual Report of the Pension Board

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority), the Strategic Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted the annual report from the Local Pension Board (LPB).

The Local Pension Board assisted the Tyne and Wear Fire Authority in its role as scheme manager of the Fire Fighters Pension Scheme and the assistance was to: -

- Secure compliance with the Regulations, any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the Scheme and requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator in relation to the Scheme and;
- Ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the Scheme.

Within the Terms of Reference of the LPB there was a provision for the Board to produce an annual report highlighting areas of concern and identifying good practice. The LPB had reported that Board Members had completed the Pension Regulator on line toolkit and had attended a training event from the National Firefighters Pension Advisor. The Board had agreed to invite the Advisor to a meeting during 2018/2019.

The LPB had also received reports in relation to the procurement of a new Firefighter Pension Administrator, West Yorkshire Pension Fund and representatives from the Fund would attend future meetings. The Board had actively contributed to the development of the Firefighter Pension risk register and would develop an action plan for the year ahead.

7. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) Annual Report to Members

The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (Clerk to the Authority), the Strategic Finance Officer and the Personnel Advisor to the Authority submitted a joint report on an update following the 2016 inspection by the Office of Surveillance Commissioner (OSC) of the arrangements made by the Service to ensure compliance with the statutory provisions that govern the use of covert surveillance.

The Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Services must work within the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) with regard to the authorisation of Directed Surveillance and the use of Covert Human Intelligence Sources and the Obtaining of Communications Data outside of urgency provisions.

Further to an inspection of the Authority's RIPA Policy and Procedures by 2016, it was agreed that an Annual Report of all RIPA activity and inactivity would be received by the Committee. It was confirmed that within the period 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018, no requests were received for the use of the Authority's powers under RIPA and therefore no authorisations or refusals had taken place.

The Authority had also responded to an annual request from data from the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) and had made a nil return to all

questions about authorisations during the period.

8. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (ii) further reports be received as required.

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

9. RESOLVED that in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 the public be excluded during consideration of the remaining business as it was considered to involve a likely disclosure of information relating to any individual or which was likely to reveal the identity of any individual, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) or information relating to consultations /negotiations in connection with any labour matter arising between the Authority and employees of the Authority (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4).

(Signed) G HALEY
Chair

