

AT A MEETING of the HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE held at Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service
Headquarters, Eastleigh on 30 January 2013

PRESENT:

Councillors: A. Evans (Chairman) Mrs M. J. Tucker (Vice-Chairman), K. Chapman, S. Darragh, J. Fazackarley, R. Kimber, E. Neal, P. Smith, and J.K. West.

127. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Catherine McEwing.

128. 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.

129. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 November 2012 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the correction of a spelling error, and signed by the Chairman.

130. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations on this occasion.

131. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman announced his intention to change the running order of the agenda, in order to bring forward consideration of Item 9 (Contractual Issue).

132. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That in relation to the following items the public be excluded from the meeting, as it is 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 items 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 reports.

133. CONTRACTUAL ISSUE

[Due to their interest in this item, Fire Service Officers left the meeting]

The Committee considered the report of the Clerk to the Authority (Item 9 in the Minute Book) in relation to a contractual issue.

(Summary of an Exempt Minute)

134. RESUMPTION OF PUBLIC BUSINESS

RESOLVED:

That in relation to the remaining items of business, the exclusion of the press and public (Minute 132 refers) was not applicable and that the restrictions agreed regarding public access to the meeting be lifted.

135. ESTABLISHMENT

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer regarding the Service's establishment as of 1 December 2012 (Item 5 in the Minute Book).

The Director of Human Resources introduced the report, highlighting in particular three key sections relating to the Efficient and Flexible Crewing project, the Retained Duty System establishment and financial implications.

The 20 percent funding by the Authority of an FBU official was questioned and it was confirmed that this was part of the constructive and valuable relationship that the Authority had with the FBU.

RESOLVED:

That the Human Resources Committee accept the changes to the establishment contained within the report, made under the Chief Officer's delegated powers.

136. PAY POLICY STATEMENT

The Committee considered the Chief Officer's Report regarding the Pay Policy Statement (Item 6 in the Minute Book).

The Director of Human Resources introduced the report, noting that the approval and publication of the Pay Policy Statement was a requirement of the Localism Act 2011. Members were advised that the final Statement would be updated to provide an accurate reflection of the position as of 1 April 2013 and therefore may vary a little from the draft included as an appendix to the report.

Comparison data with previous years was questioned and Members were advised that as this was only the second year in which the information had been compiled in this way, further comparisons were not possible.

RESOLVED:

The Committee agreed the following RECOMMENDATION to the Authority:

The Human Resources Committee recommends that the Hampshire Fire & Rescue Authority approve the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Pay Policy Statement.

137. FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT PLANS FOR 2013/14

The Committee received the Chief Officer's Report regarding the recruitment of Wholetime Firefighters to Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service in 2013/14 (Item 7 in the Minute Book).

The report was introduced by the Director of Human Resources who reminded Members that recruitment plans were contingent on the wider financial implications resulting from reductions in funding through the Comprehensive Spending Review.

The four strands of the plan's blended approach to filling vacancies were highlighted. The options of short, fixed term contracts for Retained Firefighters, the permanent recruitment of Retained Firefighters, the transfer of Firefighters from other Fire and Rescue Services and the direct recruitment of new Firefighters were explained and it was noted that there were advantages to each option, depending on the situation and requirement. It was confirmed that in the case of direct recruitment, there was no prioritisation for candidates from any particular background, however it was acknowledged that individuals with a previous relationship with the Service through, for instance, the Princes Trust, may find themselves well placed to understand the objectives of the selection process. Members were reassured that new external recruitment was widely publicised in advance.

The retirement situation for Firefighters was questioned and it was noted that there was no fixed retirement age, although the requirement to be fit to work applied. Based on experience, it was expected that around 85 percent of Firefighters retired in the normal timescale.

RESOLVED:

That the Human Resources Committee supports the plan prepared by the Establishment Board to manage the authorised establishment levels of Wholetime Firefighter roles and endorses the multi-faceted approach to fill vacancies in both the short and long term.

138. THE NATIONAL JOINT COUNCIL FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Officer regarding engagement with the National Joint Council through its existing democratic mechanisms (Item 8 in the Minute Book).

The Director of Human Resources explained the difficulties in effective and co-ordinated communication between Fire and Rescue Services, the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) and the National Joint Council (NJC). In particular, it was hoped that the proposals in the report would facilitate the promotion of a number of nationally agreed priorities for Fire and Rescue Services to the NJC. It

was confirmed that the draft national priorities included: changes relating to role maps, leave general allowances, occupational health, grievance procedures and the encouragement of more flexible hours, duty and reward systems.

The existing structure of the NJC was explained and Members questioned why the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service was not directly represented. It was agreed that the influence available should be used to promote the national priorities and it was furthermore felt that this was a complex and influential structure that had a direct impact on Hampshire and that it would be of benefit to all Authority Members to better understand the mechanisms of the NJC.

RESOLVED:

That the Human Resources Committee would seek to influence the agenda for changing national Terms and Conditions through existing democratic mechanisms that will benefit both Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and Fire and Rescue Services more widely, as per the report.

That a representative of the National Joint Council be invited to a future Member Awareness Session.