



Minutes

Human Resources Committee

Date: 08 October 2021

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: Fire and Rescue Headquarters, Birkenshaw

Present: Councillors F Shaheen (in the Chair), G Almas, P Harrand, D Kirton, N Mohammed, M Pervaiz, S Press and J Sunderland

In Attendance: Councillor M Midgley (by remote COVID measures in observer capacity only)

Apologies: Councillors C Anderson and R Downes

13 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 9 July 2021 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

14 Matters arising

None.

15 Urgent items

None.

16 Admission of the public

There were no items which required the exclusion of the public and press

17 Declarations of interest

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest were made in any matter under consideration at the meeting.

18 Appointment of HR Administration Co-ordinator

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Employment Services Officer which sought approval for the permanent establishment of a HR Administration Co-ordinator.

It was reported that Management Board had approved that the post be established on a 12-month fixed-term basis in March 2021. The current postholder had been in-post for six months and Members were advised that it had become apparent how effective the additional post had been within the HR department - the benefits which had been realised to date and those which were anticipated were detailed in the report now submitted. It was reported that the post would be advertised both internally and externally as the current postholder had been successful in finding employment elsewhere within the service.

There was provision in the 2021 – 22 revenue budget for the post and ongoing costs were reported to be £34,211 p.a. (including oncosts).

Members discussed the use of the terminology of 'essential' and 'desirable' in the job specification with the view that this should not deter any suitable applicants from applying for this key post.

RESOLVED

That approval be given to the addition of a permanent Grade 5 HR Administration Co-ordinator post to the establishment.

19 Local Pension Board – proposed amendment to Terms of Reference

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report which invited Members to consider making a recommendation to the Full Authority, in accordance with the Authority's Constitution, for an amendment to be made to the Local Pension Board Terms of Reference.

Members were advised that the Board had operated since its establishment in 2016 with a Terms of Reference which allowed for terms of office for members to be in accordance with the Authority's committee cycle which, in effect, was for 12 months.

Following consideration by members of the Board of the requirements both of their membership and the effective operation of the Board with regard to business continuity, including a commitment to undertake a both formal and informal learning relating to Firefighters' Pension Schemes, a resolution was made at the July 2021 meeting that this Committee be requested to consider a proposal to amend the Terms of Reference to allow for two-year terms of office for its members. Details of the proposed changes were included at paragraph 2.4 of the report now submitted.

RECOMMENDED

That the Full Authority be requested to approve an amendment to the Local Pension Board's Terms of Reference to allow for members' terms of office to be extended to two years.

20 Human Resources activity report

The Chief Employment Services Officer submitted a report which advised of the establishment and strength of West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service together with directorate / departmental sickness absence and personnel activity to the end of June 2021.

Members raised the following specific issues;

- the possible inclusion of retention figures relating specifically to the recruitment of staff from under-represented communities
- support processes in place for employees whose sickness absence is related to mental health issues (the majority of which were reported to be non-work related) and the impact of COVID in this regard
- performance for mental health absences compared to other blue light services and number of days lost across the Brigade

RESOLVED

- a) That the report be noted and
- b) That, whilst acknowledging that the data was formally monitored on a quarterly basis, the most up-to-date figures be made available to Members at future meetings of this Committee.

21 Equality Framework Action Plan update

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Employment Services Officer which provided an update against the Authority's current iteration of the Equality Framework Action Plan. The current Plan, which represented sustained investment in all types of activities, was under review and would be revised from 2022.

The following key areas were highlighted;

- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services assessment of "good" which had only been achieved by a small number of services nationwide,
- Staff survey and employee voice including annual appraisals and smarter working
- Award of Bronze Inclusive Employer accreditation
- Diversity and inclusion initiatives including equality impact assessments, positive action, accessibility and reasonable adjustments

Members raised the specific queries detailed below and were responded to as follows;

- positive action programme and limited conversion to recruitment from under-represented communities – revisions had been made to the recruitment process which would include placing less emphasis on psychometric testing coupled by an increase in face-to-face interviews

- pay rates for new recruits and firefighters 'in development'
- use of the chaplaincy and possible positive impact of an increase in interfaith education across the Brigade
- the reducing relevance of generation-related employment
- involvement of the third sector and other youth-related and community programmes in becoming advocates for the service, and
- use of role models across the Brigade and in recruitment activities for example from the LGBTQ+ and other related staff networks

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

22 Annual Accident Analysis report 2020 - 21

Members received a report of the Chief Employment Services Officer which advised of the Authority's accident performance 2020 – 21 and of progress made in accident reduction.

In consideration of the report Members noted that the year had not been "typical" in view of requirements to include COVID in Health and Safety Executive reporting due to the pandemic's impact on operational and training activities. Taking out the COVID-related figures, Members were advised that accidents (including reportable diseases) were the lowest since these figures had been recorded. In spite of that, however, it was reported that the year's performance overall did support the downward long-term trend and represented a 60% reduction since 2010 – 11.

Members were further advised that, following an analysis of the causes of accidents, a review would be undertaken into manual handling training.

Members sought, and were provided with, further information regarding the following;

- up to date figures covering the previous six-month figures, and
- use of thematic reviews of the causes of individual accidents and the use of associated educational campaigns across the Brigade

RESOLVED

- a) That the report be noted; and
- b) That Officers be thanked for the work undertaken in reducing the number of accidents.

23 Minutes of the Yorkshire and Humber Employers' Association

The Chief Employment Services Officer provided Members with a brief update on the current local government pay claim.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Yorkshire and Humber Employers' Association at meetings held on 8 July and 21 September 2021 be noted.

Chair