



Minutes

Human Resources Committee

Date: 26 March 2021

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: Microsoft Teams

Present: Councillor T Austin (in the Chair), C Anderson, L Cunningham, R Hunt, D Jenkins, D Kirton, N Mohammed, M Pervaiz, F Shaheen and J Sunderland

In Attendance: Councillor D O'Donovan

Apologies: None

35 Chair's announcements

Councillor A Wenham

Members were advised that Councillor Angela Wenham, former chair of the Human Resources Committee, had stepped down as Leeds City Councillor and resigned from the Fire Authority with effect from 22 March 2021 and was, therefore, not present at this meeting. The Committee would carry a vacancy until the next meeting of the Full Authority on 24 June 2021.

RESOLVED

That Angela Wenham be thanked for her commitment and time given to the work of the Authority and for her support of the Diversity and Inclusion Board.

36 Minutes of meeting held on 22 January 2021

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 22 January 2021 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

37 Matters arising

With regard to Min no. 32 of the previous Minutes, the Chief Employment Services Officer took the opportunity to update the Committee about the current position with regard to the Exit Pay Cap reforms. Since the date of the last meeting, Government had rescinded the legislation although it was anticipated that some revised proposals would be forthcoming in due course. As it currently stood, no revisions would be necessary to any of the Authority's relevant policies.

There were no further matters arising from the Minutes.

38 Urgent items

None.

39 Admission of the public

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

40 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter under consideration at the meeting.

41 Pensions update – presentation

The Chief Employment and Services Officer introduced Claire Johnson, Pensions Manager, who provided a presentation which provided Members with an update on the current position with regard to Firefighter pension schemes following the decision in Court that the proposed transitional protections were discriminatory on the grounds of age. Members were advised that the decision would have huge implications for the Authority and was considered a major risk.

The presentation provided a summary of the following;

- evolution of, and background to, the firefighters' pension schemes (1992, 2006 and 2015 schemes)
- recent changes, transitional protections and remedies, and
- implications for West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Members were advised that the Chief Employment Services Officer, in his role as Scheme Manager, had decided to implement the Immediate Detriment Guidance in the absence of further legislation and guidance so as not to have a detrimental effect on current retirees. Government had issued a timetable for implementation of the remedies and transition into the correct pension scheme(s), which should be completed by October 2023.

It was reported that the outcome of the age discrimination case and implementation of the remedies would be very costly to the Authority with both an increase in pension payments for those covered by the transitional protections and anticipated increased employer pension contributions.

Members offered their support for the decision to implement the Immediate Detriment Guidance to those affected by the changes.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

42 Human Resources activity report

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Employment Services Officer 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 December 2020.

Members commented on and sought further information on the support given to those employees who were absent from work due to mental health issues.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

43 2020 Gender Pay Gap report

Members received a report of the Chief Employment Services Officer which presented the pay gap data for 2020.

It was reported that, based on average hourly earnings the Authority, the gender pay gap as at 31 March 2020 was 11.6% which, again, represented an improvement from the previously recorded 14.7%. The median pay gap of 6% was the lowest recorded

The Chief Employment Services Officer responded to the following specific issues raised by Members;

- plans to increase numbers of female and BAME firefighters
- female under-representation in the higher pay bands and the promotions process
- talent management and succession planning

RESOLVED

That the gender pay gap report 2020 be approved for publication on the Government and West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service's websites as statutorily required.

44 Minutes of the Yorkshire and Humber Employers' Association

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Yorkshire and Humber Employers' Association (YHEA) at a meeting held on 21 January 2021 be noted.

45 Any other business

Councillor O'Donovan took the opportunity to thank Angela Wenham, in her absence, for her time on the Fire Authority and also thanked Councillor Austin for her sacrifice and outstanding dedication to public service since her appointment to the Authority in 2007.

Officers echoed the comments and thanked Councillor Austin for her support and wise counsel over the past 14 years during which time there had been some very significant staff and financial challenges faced by the Authority.

Members wished Councillor Austin well for her forthcoming year as Mayor of the City of Wakefield Metropolitan District.

Chair