

Minutes

People and Culture Committee

Date: 4 April 2025

Time: 10:30

Venue: FSHQ

Present:

Cllr F Shaheen (in the chair), Cllrs Ali, Bruce, Dickenson, Downes, Hinchcliffe, Pollard, Renshaw, Salam and Tulley

Apologies:

Cllr Sutcliffe

29.Minutes of meeting held on 17 January 2025

Resolved

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 17 January be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

30.Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

31.Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

32. Admission of the public

There were no items requiring the exclusion of the public and press.

33.Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

34.Proposed Increase to Establishment

The Director of People and Culture submitted a report to request approval to make the role of Positive Action and Community Engagement Officer a permanent position by adding one full-time equivalent (FTE) green book position to the establishment.

Members challenged the report author on whether young people are made aware of the range of roles available within the Fire Service, alongside that of a Firefighter and the report author confirmed that the initial focus is always on the Firefighter role but that there are plans in place to provide information at all recruitment events on the full range of roles available. Members were advised that applicants failing to secure a position as a Firefighter are also sign posted to these alternative roles.

Members further challenged the report author to provide comparative percentages of female employees to show how the figures have improved and the Chair asked it to be noted that the low percentage of female and BAME Firefighters has always been a concern of the committee and that it was pleasing to note the positive results from the huge variety of positive actions taken.

Members discussed further recruitment challenges, including the reduction in FTE positions during the period of austerity, the low turnover of staff and the growing length of service of existing Firefighters.

Members recognised the importance of the role and the requirement to be able to measure results to indicate the successes it brings to the Service, alongside the wide range of other initiatives currently employed.

Resolved

That the increase to the establishment of one FTE be approved, for the role of Positive Action and Community Engagement Officer to become a permanent position.

35. People and Culture Activity Report

The Director of People and Culture submitted a report which advised Members of the key People and Culture metrics for the reporting period October to December 2024, including establishment strength, sickness absence data and high-level discipline and grievance figures.

Members challenged the report author on the following:

- Availability of on call staff at Silsden Fire Station
- Diversity of the new staff recruited to the Finance team and the recruitment processes used.
- Whether the sickness absence target is realistic.
- Actions being taken to reduce the sickness absence figures

Resolved

That the report be noted.

36. Gender Pay Gap Report 2024

The Director of People and Culture provided a report to update Members on the Gender Pay Gap for the year ending 31 March 2024.

Members were pleased to note that the WYFRS Gender Pay Gap for 2024 is lower than the WYFRS Pay Gap for 2023 and significantly lower than the West Yorkshire Local Authority and National UK Gender Pay Gaps.

Members discussed the challenges faced in maintaining the low figure including the recruitment of more women into the service and the volatility of the Pay Gap.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

37. Spotlight On Reports

The Director of People and Culture provided a report to update Members on the work of the Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Team along with positive action and community engagement initiatives and the work of the Staff Networks.

Members received the reports positively and thanked all the staff involved, especially with the Iftar event which was very well received.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

38. Outcome of the Review of the Wholetime Recruitment and Selection Process

The Director of People and Culture provided a report to highlight to Members the steps taken to improve the recruitment and selection process.

Members challenged the report author on the following:

- The comparisons between the bleep test and the Chester treadmill test and the work done with other Fire and Rescue Authorities and National Standards to ascertain the most relevant test to employ.
- The relevance of the requirement for applicants and employees to have a basic level of Maths and English

Resolved

That the report be noted.

39. Yorkshire and Humber Local Authority Employers' Association Minutes of Meetings held on 21 January 2025

Resolved

That the minutes of the YHEA meeting held on 21 January 2025 be noted.

40. Quarterly Update on the 12 month People Plan

The Director of People and Culture gave an update on the 12 month People Plan and presented a recorded video message updating all staff and Members of the progress made.

Members noted the positive work happening across the Service and thanked the staff involved.

Members discussed the use of the Bradford Factor to monitor sickness absence and noted that all managers have the flexibility to mitigate staff absence and deal directly with staff at their return to work interviews.

Members welcomed the newly introduced Rewards and Recognition Scheme and discussed the most effective ways to promote participation in the scheme.

Resolved

That the presentation be noted.

Chair