

KENT AND MEDWAY FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
HUMAN RESOURCES AND EQUALITIES COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Human Resources and Equalities Committee held at Kent Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, The Godlands, Tovil, Maidstone on Wednesday 27 March 2013.

PRESENT:- Mr B R Cope (Chairman), Mr D A Hirst (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A Allen, Mr M J Angell, Mr R B Burgess, Mr A R Chell, Mr D S Daley (substitute for Mr S J G Koowaree), Mr P Godwin, Mr W A Hayton, Mr P J Homewood, Mr T G Mason, Mr M J Northey, Mr R J Parry and Mrs P A V Stockell.

OFFICERS:- The Chief Executive, Miss A Millington; the Assistant Director, Planning and Development, Mr P Flaherty; the Head of HR Services, Mrs K Irvine; the Head of HR Strategy and Policy, Mrs K Banfield; the Head of Organisation Development, Ms R Laurie; the Health and Safety Manager, Mr C Ferguson; and the Clerk to the Authority, Mr S C Ballard.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

24. Minutes – 8 November 2012

(Item A3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 November 2012 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

25. Pay Policy Statement 2013/14

(Item B1 - Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) Members considered the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2013/14, which the Authority was required by the Localism Act 2011 to publish before the start of the financial year.
- (2) RESOLVED that the draft Pay Policy Statement for 2013/14, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved and published on the Authority's website forthwith.

26. Draft Workforce Strategy 2013-17

(Item B2 - Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) The Committee was reminded that, at its meeting on 17 October 2012 (Minute 23), the Authority had approved the approach being taken to develop the Authority's five primary strategies, which would lay the foundations for all future developments to the Service. One of the primary strategies was the Workforce Strategy, and Members considered the principles and projects that had been developed for this.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the draft Workforce Strategy for 2013-17, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved in principle;
 - (b) work continue to progress on the Workforce Strategy prior to its presentation for approval by the Authority in September 2013.

27. Equality Vision 2013-16

(Item B3 - Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) Members were advised that the Authority's Equality Scheme had reached the end of its lifespan and that, although there was no longer a statutory requirement to produce an Equality Scheme, an Equality Vision for 2013-16 had been drafted in order to demonstrate the Authority's ongoing commitment in this area. The opportunity had also been taken to refresh the Authority's Equality Objectives, which were required under the Equality Act 2010. Members considered both the draft Equality Vision and the refreshed Equality Objectives
- (2) RESOLVED that the draft Equality Vision for 2013-16 and the supporting Equality Objectives, both attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

28. Apprenticeship and Cadet Schemes

(Item B4 - Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) Members considered proposals for continuation of the Authority's current Apprenticeship Scheme and for the scoping of a project plan to introduce a Cadet Scheme.
- (2) RESOLVED that:-
 - (a) the proposals for continuation of the Apprenticeship Scheme set out in the report be approved;
 - (b) scoping of a project plan for introduction of a Cadet Scheme, as described in the report, be approved.

29. Proposed Changes to Disciplinary Procedures

(Item B5 - Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) Members considered two proposed changes to the Authority's Disciplinary Procedures intended to ensure that the Procedures were fully aligned with the latest guidance from the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) and reflected current best practice.
- (2) The first change would mean that a decision would be made at the outset as to whether a disciplinary offence was at stage one (minor conduct/behaviour issues, and therefore dealt with locally) or at stages two or three (subject to an independent investigation), but a decision as to whether an offence was at stage two (serious) or stage three (very serious, including gross misconduct) would not now be taken until the independent investigation had been completed.
- (3) The second change would mean that, instead of hearing all appeals at level three, Members (sitting as a Hearings Panel) would in future hear appeals only from senior staff (Green Book staff at Grade 9 and above; Grey Book staff at Area Manager level and above; and all Gold Book staff (the Chief Executive and Directors)). Appeals against dismissal from all other staff would be heard by a panel comprising a Director or Assistant Director plus an independent person from another local authority.
- (4) Following discussion, Mr Parry moved, Mr Hirst seconded, that the recommendation in paragraph 17 of the report be approved.

Carried 11 votes to 1

- (5) RESOLVED that the proposed changes to the Authority's Disciplinary Procedures detailed in the report be approved.

Mr Godwin requested that the Minutes show that he had voted against the motion.

30. Equalities Peer Review - Update

(Item C1 - Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) The Committee received an update on the preparations for an Equality Peer Challenge at the 'Excellent' level against the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework in April 2013, together with the Narrative outlining the Authority's equality and diversity journey which would be submitted to the Peer Challenge team.
- (2) RESOLVED that the contents of the report and the Narrative be noted.

31. Operational Training Facilities

(Item C2 - Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) Members received a report on the Authority's operational training facilities throughout Kent and Medway, and on the development of such facilities in order to ensure greater resilience in delivering the operational training programme.
- (2) RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

32. E-Learning

(Item C3)

- (1) The Committee received a presentation by the Authority's Head of Organisation Development on the use of E-Learning for providing training to the Authority's staff.
- (2) RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

33. Performance Update

(Item C4 - Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) Members were given an update on the ongoing recruitment process for On-Call Firefighters, together with details of progress against the strategic corporate health indicators relating to human resources between April 2012 and January 2013.
- (2) RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

34. Health and Safety Review

(Item C5 - Report by Chief Executive)

- (1) Members received a report on the findings of the internal Health and Safety Review carried out in December 2012. The Health and Safety Manager also gave an oral report on the outcome of the recently-completed Health and Safety Audit of the Authority undertaken by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA).
- (2) RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.