



**MINUTES OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE held on 14 July 2014 at Fire Service HQ, Winsford.**

**PRESENT:** Councillor J Joyce (Chair)  
Councillor E Johnson  
Councillor S Nelson  
Councillor D Topping

**PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**1 Declaration of Members Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

**ITEMS REQUIRING DISCUSSION/DECISION**

**2 Talent Management Framework**

The Head of People and Development gave a presentation to Members on the proposed new approach to talent management in Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The key elements of the framework included:

- Workforce planning
- Identification of key risk posts
- Talent Management priorities:
  - Step in:**
    - Sourcing and holistic attraction strategy
    - Brand identity and personality
    - Brand experience
    - Pro-active talent spotting and flexible recruitment
    - Youth engagement and recruitment initiatives
    - Robust selection and onboarding processes
  - Step forward:**
    - Integrate and develop
    - Nurture internal talent
    - Engage
  - Step Up**
    - Retain and develop

Members discussed the framework and were happy to support the proposed approach presented.

**RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the proposed new approach to talent management be noted.**

### **3 Introduction of 'Step into Work' Programme and Launch of Pilot Apprenticeship Scheme**

The Head of People and Development presented this report which provided details of the introduction of the 'Step into Work' programme which would incorporate and extend the current range of youth engagement initiatives on offer by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) to improve skills and the employability of young people. The report outlined the programme and the initiatives that would be included.

The Head of People and Development provided a brief overview of the three key recruitment initiatives for young people. These were the launch of apprenticeship and traineeship schemes and the introduction of a talent pool.

#### **Apprenticeship Scheme Pilot**

It was proposed that the apprenticeship scheme pilot be initially launched in two areas; Workshops and Community Safety. The Workshop Vehicle Technician apprenticeship would be a 2 year apprenticeship and the apprentice would be given time off to undertake an NVQ level 2 qualification in Vehicle Maintenance and Repair (Heavy Vehicles) on a day release basis. The Community Safety Advisor apprentice would be a 1 year apprenticeship with day release to undertake either a dedicated apprenticeship qualification, which had recently been developed by Skills for Fire and Rescue, or an NVQ level 2 in Customer Services. The Head of People and Development explained that the dedicated NVQ level 2 on the Community Fire Safety Framework was proposed for delivery from September 2014. However if this qualification was chosen it was proposed that the Service would collaborate with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service and use Salford College as, due to the specialist nature of the qualification, the viability of a locally run course was unlikely.

Members discussed the proposals and it was noted that Members would prefer qualifications to be obtained from local colleges (within Cheshire) where possible and the difficulties for young people travelling outside the area to college were also noted. However Members felt that the preferred option for the Community Safety qualification would be the dedicated qualification as the training would be more focussed and relevant to the Fire Service. The Head of People and Development commented that she had noted Members views and would review the college provision and the logistics of travelling outside Cheshire to determine the best options. A Member also commented that the Service should be promoting the use of apprentices to contractors when letting contracts such as those required for the land and buildings programme.

#### **Traineeship Scheme Pilot**

The traineeship scheme pilot proposal was a 6 month appointment on a 3 month rotation between HR and Communications. This would enable the Service to trial the concept of shorter term traineeships whilst giving the trainee a more varied work experience opportunity. A Member asked if traineeships would be offered on full-time fire stations and the Head of

People and Development explained that the scheme would be extended if the pilot proved successful.

### **Introduction of Talent Pool**

The Head of People and Development concluded by detailing the talent pool proposal which would comprise of individuals who had engaged successfully in any of the Service's 'Step into Work' Youth Engagement Programmes. Individuals within the talent pool would be treated as internal candidates for the purpose of gaining access and having the opportunity to apply for posts across the Service up to and including Scale 4.

Members welcomed the proposals which would open up opportunities for young people into the Service and were happy to endorse the approach. The Head of People and Development was thanked for the work she had done on the framework and Members looked forward to receiving regular updates on the programme.

### **RESOLVED: That**

**[1] the proposals detailed in the report be endorsed.**

## **4 Industrial Action Recognition Payments**

This report had been prepared to obtain Member endorsement of the intended approach to the making of payments to employees that had worked during periods of industrial action and referred to as industrial action recognition payments within the report.

The Chief Fire Officer explained that the report set out the proposed approach to the making of payments to staff that provided/supported critical resilience arrangements during periods of strike. The payments would be to recognise the levels of commitment and to acknowledge the fact that without this cover it would have been very difficult for the Authority to fulfil its statutory responsibility and maintain high levels of reassurance to its communities. In order for the industrial action recognition payments to be fair it was considered that the amount of cover provided by each individual should be the determinative factor when calculating the sums payable. Bandings were proposed based on the number of strikes worked to determine a % of basic pay to be used to carry out the payment calculations and the model proposed was detailed in the report.

The Chief Fire Officer explained the financial implications of making the payments and also provided details of costs and savings incurred during strike action up to the end of May. He explained that the paper had been written prior to the announcements of the current strike action and suggested that the same methodology should be applied again. However it was proposed that if there were two separate periods of strike action within a 24 hour period then this would be classed as one strike worked for the purposes of the calculations for industrial action recognition payments. He also informed Members that the current round of strikes were more difficult to manage and would be more costly for the Service so the situation would need to be reviewed again if further strike action was announced.

Members commented that the Authority had a duty of care to residents to provide cover and supported the approach detailed in the report.

**RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the approach to the making of industrial recognition payments outlined in the report be endorsed; and**
- [2] the Chief Fire Officer be authorised to make further industrial action recognition payments as necessary (reflecting the approach outlined in the report and discussed at the meeting).**

**5 'Re-employment' – Driving Instructor Post**

The Head of People and Development introduced this report which sought Members approval to appoint an individual, who retired (from another fire and rescue service) and was in receipt of a pension, to a Driving Instructor position.

The Re-Employment and Pension Abatement Policy was approved by Policy Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2014. It states that the 'Re-Employment of any employee following retirement will only occur in exceptional circumstances'. The approval of Members was required in all but a very limited category of cases and this case was being treated as 're-employment' requiring Member approval, although strictly it fell outside the Authority's recently approved Re-employment and Pension Abatement Policy.

The Head of People and Development explained that the report set out the business case for this appointment, as required by the policy and provided brief details of the role and the specialist skills required. She explained that the post had been advertised internally and externally and that following the recruitment and selection process Mr A was the preferred candidate to fulfil the role. It was noted that any decision to abate Mr A's pension rested with his former Service and there were no financial implications for this Authority. The individual involved was aware of the issue and, if permission was given to employ Mr A, the Service would formally notify his former Service of his appointment along with confirmation of his salary for pension administration purposes.

**RESOLVED: That**

- [1] the appointment of Mr A into a Driving Instructor position be approved.**