

**MINUTES OF HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP  
MEETING HELD ON 21 MARCH 2017**

Present: Councillors C Atkins, J Mingay (Vice-Chair) and Y Waheed (Chair)  
GC J Clayton, ACO Z Evans, SOC G Jeffery and Robert Jones

16-17/HR/40 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ayub and Downing.

16-17/HR/41 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

16-17/HR/42 Communications

The Chair advised that it was Jackie Green's last meeting of this Policy and Challenge Group before her retirement.

Members expressed their thanks for her help and support and wished her a happy retirement.

16-17/HR/43 Minutes

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2017 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

16-17/HR/44 Human Resources Performance Monitoring 2016/17 Quarter 3 and Programmes to date

ACO Evans submitted the report for the third quarter of 2016/17 on Human Resources programmes, projects to date and performance against Human Resources performance indicators and associated targets.

ACO Evans reported that the new HR and payroll system had gone live in February 2017. The transition to the new system had been supported by the Payroll team, Human Resources team and project team, largely within the team's existing capacity, and that many members of staff had worked additional hours to ensure that the work was completed within tight timescales. The new payroll system had introduced a number of improvements to the user experience and will continue to do so with the development of the self service system.

Members recognised that a smooth transition to a new system required a great deal of work and requested that their acknowledgment of the hard work undertaken be recorded.

The Group considered the performance report for the quarter and the exception reports that had been provided.

Mr R Jones, the Service's Diversity Adviser, reported that EQ2 (recruitment of minority ethnic staff across the whole organisation) had missed its target by 4%. This was an improvement

from the previous quarter and work was continuing to raise awareness of vacancies within the Service amongst local community groups. A visit was planned later in the week to a mosque in Bury Park, Luton. The Service were also working with the Police with joint access to Bury Park Community Centre. Consideration would also be given to advertising in publications such as the Daily Jang to reach a range of community groups in the County.

The progress made in recruiting women to the Service, including positive action events at fire stations such as the one recently held at Toddington, was discussed. It was suggested that the Group receive an update on the Service's Positive Action Plan.

Ms D Clarke, Head of Human Resources, advised that performance against HR1 (percentage of working time lost due to sickness) was reporting as amber for the second consecutive quarter. Analysis had identified that there had been an increase in long-term sickness, with 12 employees currently off on long-term sickness. The Service supported all individuals off on long-term sick leave with a view to help them return to work as quickly as possible. The situation would continue to be monitored.

It was noted that the sickness rate excluding long-term sickness had been provided for information.

In response to a question, Ms Clarke advised that the annual indepth analysis of absence would be submitted to the next meeting of the Group.

GC Clayton reported on the training indicators that were rated amber or red.

T3 (percentage of station based operational staff that have attended Water First Responder courses within the last three years) had missed its target by 1%. PDRPro had identified that 18 personnel had not completed the course at the end of quarter 3, 8 of whom were now nominated to attend refresher courses. Work was ongoing with Station Commanders to ensure that the remaining personnel were booked onto courses. 100% of the personnel at Bedford Fire Station maintained their water technician training as that station supported both local and national flood rescue capability.

T5 (percentage of station based operational Emergency Care for Fire and Rescue trained personnel that have attended a requalification course within the last three years) measured the performance against the requirement for every station and Watch to meet the requirement of 60% or more of personnel trained. The indicator was currently missing its target by 15% as four Retained stations and one Watch were not achieving this requirement. This equated to one firefighter per station and was the result of Watch moves and Retained Duty System appointments.

The Training and Development Centre worked closely with Station Commanders to identify and nominate individuals requiring the training. 48 places were being made available during Quarter 4 and it was anticipated that performance would improve to amber for the final quarter.

T8b (percentage of Retained Duty System personnel attainment in maintaining core, operational safety critical training modules within a rolling 12 month period) and T8c (percentage of Safety Critical Maintenance training programme completed by Control personnel via PDRPro within last 12 months) had missed their targets by 5% and 6% respectively. It was recognised that both indicators were being impacted by a small number of individuals whose personal percentage figures were lower than average. Senior and line managers were provided with information to enable them to identify individuals for monitoring and support to improve performance against this indicator.

GC Cook reported that H3 (number of 24 hour cover periods lost to accidents per 1000 Retained Duty System (full time equivalent) employees) was reporting as red due to an injury to an individual sustained at an operational incident in 2015/16. If the cover periods lost due to this injury were removed there would have been no cover periods lost and the indicator would have met its target.

The Group was advised that the individual concerned had now returned to work.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the progress made on Human Resources Programmes and Performance be acknowledged.
2. That the additional work and effort by the Human Resources Team in ensuring a smooth transition to the new HR and payroll system be acknowledged.

16-17/HR/45 Proposed HR Indicators and Targets for 2017/18

ACO Evans introduced the proposed suite of Human Resources performance indicators and associated targets for 2017/18 for incorporation into the Service's performance management framework.

Mr R Jones, the Service's Diversity Adviser, reported that it was proposed that the targets for EQ1a (percentage of new entrants to the Retained Duty System to be women), EQ1b (percentage of new entrants to the wholetime operational staff to be women) and EQ2 (recruitment of black and minority ethnic staff across the whole organisation) be set at 2% above the average five-year performance rate, with the target for EQ3 (parity in retention rates between BME and white employees (all staff)) set at 1% above the five year average. No change was proposed to the target relating to EQ4 (parity in retention rates between men and women (operational staff)).

Ms D Clarke, Head of Human Resources, advised that the target for HR1 (the percentage of working time lost due to sickness) was being set using the mean average public sector absence as reported in the 2016 Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development annual survey, 4.3%. She added that the new HR systems would calculate sickness absence more accurately and this may impact on the percentage reported.

In relation to the indicators measuring turnover, HR2a (turnover excluding retirement or dismissals- excluding retained) was being set using the average performance over the last three years plus 1%. This had led to a decrease in the target from 6% to 5%. The target for HR2b (turnover excluding retirement or dismissals –retained only) remained unchanged at 10%.

It was suggested that the target for HR3a (percentage of returned appraisal documents to HR within 3 months of reporting year- all staff) remained at 90%, although the target was now amalgamated so there were no separate targets for different sections of the workforce.

It was proposed that the targets for the occupational health and organisational development (training) remained unchanged as it was acknowledged that there were already quite stretching.

GC Cook advised that the target for H1 (number of serious accidents (over 28 days) per 1000 employees) had been set to achieve a 5% reduction on the five year average and it was proposed that this would be set at 3.78. A 10% reduction on the five year average for H2

(number of working days/shifts lost to accidents per 1000 employees (excluding Retained Duty System employees) was also being proposed.

The target for H3 (number of 24 hour cover periods lost to accidents per 1000 Retained Duty System employees) had been set to achieve a 10% reduction on the five-year average as there had been an upward trend over the last two years. The proposed target for 2017/18 was 781.80.

**RESOLVED:**

That the proposed suite of Human Resources performance indicators and targets for 2017/18 be endorsed.

16-17/HR/46 Audit and Governance Action Plans Monitoring Report

ACO Evans introduced her report on progress made to date against current action plans arising from internal and external audit reports. The two actions listed had been completed subject to follow up audit.

**RESOLVED:**

That progress made to date against the action plans be acknowledged.

16-17/HR/47 2016/17 Corporate Health and Safety Objectives Progress and Proposed 2017/18 Corporate Health and Safety Objectives

GC Cook introduced an update on the progress to date on the 2016/17 Annual Corporate Health and Safety Objectives and proposals for the 2017/18 Annual Corporate Health and Safety Objectives.

The report included detailed progress reports on all eight objectives. Some of the objectives were being carried forward into the next year. Achievements during the year included the procurement of new thermal imaging cameras, the further development of PDRPro and the completion of a Service wide Health and Safety climate survey.

An objective to incorporate the use of a driver risk assessment into Emergency Fire Appliance driving courses had been included as it was noted that there had been an increase in the number of vehicle collision reports in 2016/17 as the result of slow speed manoeuvring collisions. Work was ongoing to identify the reasons for this increase and to implement actions to reduce the frequency of this type of collision.

In response to a question, GC Cook reported that 'No Time to Lose' was a national initiative to manage the risks associated with exposure to potential carcinogens in the workplace.

**RESOLVED:**

That the progress made in relation to the Health and Safety objectives set and approved for 2016/17 be acknowledged and the eight proposed Health and Safety Objectives for 2017/18 be endorsed.

16-17/HR/48 Corporate Risk Register

GC Cook presented the update on the review of the Service's Corporate Risk Register in relation to Human Resources. There had been no changes to individual risk ratings. There was one update as follows:

CRR25 (if operational personnel either individually or collectively at any or all levels do not meet the minimum level of competence to safely deal with the full range of incidents which may be encountered, particularly areas of competencies related to: - Incident Command – Use of Breathing Apparatus – Compartment Fire Behaviour – Water related incidents – High-Rise incidents – Work at Height – then there is the potential to cause significant injury or even deaths to our staff: 12 new wholetime firefighters would be undertaking a Foundation training course in June and were expected to attend stations in September 2017. Six transfers in had also been recruited, who brought with them previous operational experience. All safety critical training performance was managed through PDRPro and reports for Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 would be developed through this process.

**RESOLVED:**

That the review of the Service's Corporate Risk Register in relation to Human Resources be noted and approved.

16-17/HR/49 Review of Work Programme 2016/17

The Group received its work programme for 2016/17. It was suggested that a report on the Positive Action Plan be added to the work programme for the Group's meeting in September 2017.

In response to a question, ACO Evans advised that any significant changes or updates relating to the collaboration of blue light services would be reported to the full Fire and Rescue Authority.

Concern was expressed about the number of Members nominated to this Policy and Challenge Group. It was suggested that the minimum membership of any Group or Committee of the Authority should be 6 Members and that this should be considered prior to the Authority's Annual General Meeting in May 2017.

**RESOLVED:**

That the work programme be received, with the addition of the Positive Action Plan to be submitted to the Group's meeting in September 2017.

The meeting ended at 11.13 am