

**MINUTES OF HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND CHALLENGE GROUP  
MEETING HELD ON 29 MARCH 2018**

Present: Councillors Y Waheed (Chair), C Atkins, P Downing, T Khan and R Saleem

ACO Z Evans, SOC A Peckham, Ms D Clarke, Mr A Pixley and Mr I Hammett

17-18/HR/40 Apologies

40.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mingay.

17-18/HR/41 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

41.1 There were no declarations of interests.

17-18/HR/42 Communications

42.1 ACO Evans informed the Group that, following an intensive 2-day selection process with 4 candidates, Andrew Hopkinson of Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue had been offered the role of Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

17-18/HR/43 Minutes

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2018 be confirmed and signed as a true record.

17-18/HR/44 Human Resources Programme and Performance Monitoring 2017/18 Quarter 3 and Programmes to date

44.1 In presenting her report ACO Evans highlighted Appendix A. The status of the HR/Payroll System and Services was Amber and this was due to 2 workstream items which had Red indicators relating to synchronisation of data. The payroll system was otherwise fully operational and the status was being kept at Amber to ensure the workstream items were monitored.

44.2 Phase 2 of the ITrent project was on track and marked Green.

44.3 On Appendix B, item EQ1a for new entrants was performing well. EQ1b was at the same status as the previous quarter as there had been no new recruitment. An exception report for item EQ2 could be found on page 5.4 of the report. In the year to the end of Q3, 66 individuals had joined the Service of which 3 had declared

themselves to be of BAME. Within Q3 there had been 21 joiners. 5 had declared their ethnicity as white-British and 16 had not made a declaration. None of the 21 joiners had declared themselves to be of BAME. Members were informed that investigation was ongoing to ascertain the reduction in disclosure to be reported back to the next meeting.

- 44.4 Ms Clarke HRR commented that all indicators related to HR were currently Green which included sickness absence, an important organisational indicator.
- 44.5 SOC Peckham commented that staff development and training had shown good performance in the quarter. Of those indicators which were Amber:
- T3 had achieved 97%, slightly missing the target of 98%.
  - T5 was a challenging target and a small number of individuals could make a significant difference to performance.
  - T6 had missed the target by 1% but was an improvement on previous performance.
  - T8b was 2% below target and was an area requiring continued focus.
- 44.6 He added that T7 was still performing at 100% with a five-year average of 100%, an achievement which few FRAs could match. The measure related to a small number of individuals so even a single loss would have a significant effect on performance.
- 44.7 In response to a question in relation to paragraph 1.2 on page 2 of the report, ACO Evans commented that capacity in the Business Support team was being resolved. She further commented that all HR target indicators were now green.

**RESOLVED:**

That the progress made on Human Resources Programmes and Performance issues be noted.

17-18/HR/45 Proposed Human Resources Indicators and Targets for 2018/19

- 45.1 ACO Evans introduced the new performance indicators for 18/19. There was not significant change to the content of the indicators themselves although the targetting setting rationale had been updated as contained within the appendix. SOC Peckham commented that the targets for training remained unchanged while some had been set to be more demanding.
- 45.2 HHR provided information regarding the OH indicators. In particular explanation was provided as to why the 17/18 results would be carried over to 18/19. The national guidelines on Fitness Training had been revised in 2017 and this had required the development of a new policy in association with the FBU to reflect the introduction of drill ground assessments (DGA) (Minute 17-19/HR/049 below also refers). The length of this process which involved meaningful engagement had had a direct impact on indicators OH1 and OH2. There would be no performance figures for 2017/18 and instead fitness testing would now be conducted during April/May 2018. Consequently the service would not be reporting on 2017/18 performance but instead would carry forward the targets to 2018/19. ACO Evans reassured Members that it remained an ongoing requirement for operational personnel to maintain their fitness levels at all times and performance in this area had risen from 88% to 98%. This was a practical way of realigning the fitness assessments rather than operational employees having to take 2 assessments in quick succession.

**RESOLVED:**

That the proposed suite of Human Resources performance indicators and targets for 2018/19 be endorsed.

17-18/HR/46 New Internal Audit Reports completed to date

- 46.1 ACO Evans commented that the requirement for the FRA to have a Pensions Board was a new requirement. This had required a whole new framework and for staff to learn significant new skills. It was positive that the audit had resulted in substantial assurance. ACO asked for thanks to be minuted to all those involved in the Pension Board development and implementation.
- 46.2 ACO Evans confirmed that it was not possible for Elected Members to sit on the Pensions Board due to the potential conflict of interests, that pension decision makers cannot be a Board Member.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the internal audit report be received.
- 2) That the associated management comments and actions associated with the internal audit report, and which are to be added to the Audit and Governance Action Plan Monitoring report, be endorsed.

17-18/HR/47 Audit and Governance Action Plans Monitoring Report

- 47.1 ACO Evans and SOC Peckham highlighted Appendix A which showed that only one item was due for review in March 2018 and this related to Retained Recruitment. No further action was required on any other targets in this section.

**RESOLVED:**

That progress made to date against the action plans and issues arising be noted.

17-18/HR/48 2017/18 Corporate Health and Safety Objectives progress and proposed 2018/19 Corporate Health and Safety Objectives

- 48.1 In presenting his report Mr Pixley commented that it set out the annual Health and Safety (H&S) objectives for the past year and for the forthcoming year.
- 48.2 Pages 9.2 to 9.3 of his report showed performance against the eight 2017/18 objectives:
1. This had been completed and benchmarked results were available on the intranet.
  2. A psychometric test for driver risk assessment had been developed in association with Cranfield University however, when used on an actual driver assessment course the test did not deliver usable results and would need to be re-designed.
  3. An IOSH course on Leading Safety had been completed by 11 individuals.
  4. Four indicators for Leading Safety had been developed and were ready to be implemented.
  5. Three quarterly meetings of the Accident Investigation Team had now taken place and had proven to be useful.
  6. The IOSH 'No time to lose' campaign pledge in relation to carcinogens at work had been made. National guidelines were also in development.

7. The collaboration working group on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) had made good progress and this objective would be carried forward to 2018/19 for completion.
8. This objective had been on-going for three years and was now complete.

48.3 Pages 9.3 to 9.5 set out the eight proposed objectives for 2018/19 which were to:

1. Discuss the findings of the Safety Climate Survey.
2. Carry out a RoSPA audit of the safety management system – recommended every 4 years and last carried out in 2014 when a level 4 was achieved (5 being the highest).
3. Deliver a safety event information campaign.
4. Produce quarterly road risk information to drivers.
5. Communicate the IOSH 'No time to lose' carcinogenic exposure campaign.
6. Continue to enhance firefighter safety through the PPE collaborative working group.
7. Review Regional Product Pack documents and adopt guidance.
8. Review the Service's Breathing Apparatus training.

48.4 In response to a question Mr Pixley added that an action plan relating to Mental Health was also under development by HR.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the progress made in relation to the Health and Safety objectives set and approved for 2017/18 be noted.
- 2) That the eight proposed Health and Safety Objectives for 2018/19 be endorsed.

17-18/HR/49 Functional Fitness Testing in BRFS, introducing the Drill Ground Assessment

49.1 Mr Hammett gave a presentation on fitness standards and Functional Fitness Testing in BRFS in which he commented that:

- A new system of Functional Fitness Testing had been released with the full support of the FBU and in conjunction with FireFit, the University of Bath, and the CFOA.
- A new Drill Ground Assessment (DGA) was designed to replicate the tasks expected of an operational firefighter and included tasks such as Equipment Carry, Casualty Evacuation and Hose Running.
- The level of fitness required of a firefighter was higher than that required of a Police officer, other than certain specialist Police roles such as Firearms officers.
- The DGA was both gender and age neutral, setting out the requirements for anyone to be able to carry out operational work while avoiding risk to self or others.
- It was recognised that operational fitness was affected by the aging process, by lack of activity and by some medical conditions such as arthritis.
- Where an officer fell below the required fitness standard, support and training would be provided to assist in bringing the individual back up to the required level of fitness. Where necessary sanctions could be, and had been, imposed but the sanction of dismissal had never been required.
- As an indicator of fitness the DGA should be completed within 11.11 minutes, with a 27 second variation. Operational staff should aim for a time of under 10.44 minutes in Full Fire Kit and without exhaustion.
- The existing treadmill test of aerobic fitness would remain the standard test with the DGA being used upon return to work from serious illness or upon failing the treadmill test.

- Treadmill test results fell into 3 categories, Green, Amber and Red based on the aerobic score.
  - If Green the Officer would remain on operational duty.
  - If Amber they would remain on operational duty while receiving support and would be tested using the DGA within 2 weeks.
  - If Red or if they failed the DGA they would be removed from operational duty pending further training and support.
- The DGA would be implemented with effect from 1 April 2018 but had already been used to test officers returning to work.
- There might be potential to demonstrate the DGA to the public at a Positive Action Day depending on the space available.

**RESOLVED:**

That the presentation on Functional Fitness Testing in BFRS be received.

17-18/HR/50 Corporate Risk Register

50.1 Two risks had been identified that fell within the remit of this group and they were detailed in paragraph 2.3 of the report.

- Retirement of a large number of operational officers over a short period of time and the resultant loss of significant experience.
- A failure of staff to meet minimum levels of competence.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Service review of the Corporate Risk Register in relation to Human Resources Policy and Challenge Group be approved.

17-18/HR/51 Review of Work Programme 2017/18

51.1 There were no additional items to be added to the Work Programme other than the inclusion of the expected report on the RoSPA audit at the end of the year (Minute 17-18/HR/048 and proposed objective no. 2 refers).

**RESOLVED:**

That the work programme for 2017/18 and 'cyclical' Agenda Items for each meeting in 2018/19 be noted.

The meeting ended at 11.49 am