

Report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer

13. Joint Consultative Committee Update

Purpose of report

1. To inform the Policy and Resources Committee of the activities of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) since September 2013.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that the contents of this report be noted, including the following items still under discussion by the Joint Consultative Committee:

- i) the review of the Fire Control structure;***
- ii) Service policy on financial assistance for medical treatment;***
- iii) Out of Service mobilisation; and***
- iv) the potential impact of the Community Risk Management Plan and Fire Cover Review.***

Background

2. The Joint Consultative Committee acts as the main route for employee consultation. It comprises managers and employee representatives who meet on a monthly basis to discuss issues of mutual concern. The JCC is not a decision-making body.
3. Employees are represented on JCC by members from each of the Representative Bodies (RBs) in Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, namely the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), Fire Officers' Association (FOA), GMB Union, Retained Firefighters' Union (RFU) and Unison.
4. The Committee is chaired by the Principal Officer responsible for industrial relations – currently the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Service Support. Other management representatives include the Head of Human Resources and the Area Commanders responsible for Operations and Operations Support.
5. Prior to each meeting, members of the group are asked to submit any new items for discussion and these are added to the JCC 'tracker' which is circulated ahead of the meeting. Each new item is allocated a unique reference number.
6. A 'summary of discussions' is issued after each meeting noting the key points discussed, any agreement reached and identifying any actions agreed.

7. Once all parties agree an item is closed, it is formally signed off by both the JCC Chair and the appropriate Representative Body (or Bodies). This record is retained and forms the 'JCC Consultation Register and Decision Log'.

Update

8. Since its last update to the Policy and Resources Committee, the Joint Consultative Committee has met on four occasions – 29 August, 21 November 2013, 23 January and 27 February 2014.
9. On 18 February, FBU representatives announced that they had taken the decision to withdraw from all HWFRS committee and sub-committee meetings as part of the ongoing pensions dispute. As a result, a number of issues closed at previous meetings, are still awaiting formal sign off by them. However the ACFO, Service Support has continued to meet regularly with FBU officials on an informal basis.
10. There are currently only a small number of items still under discussion and these include the following:
 - v) Review of Fire Control structure: following a review, formal consultation on a proposed new structure in Fire Control has now begun with the FBU.
 - vi) Service policy on financial assistance for medical treatment: Human Resources (HR) are reviewing the current policy with a view to firming up the current arrangements. Financial support will be provided if it is deemed to be cost effective and will expedite the return of an individual to work. Decisions will be on a case by case basis.
 - vii) Out of Service mobilisation: this follows the deployment of HWFRS personnel to other parts of the country during the recent flooding. Clarification around remuneration for this will be incorporated into the out of county deployment policy.
 - viii) Potential impact of CRMP and Fire Cover Review
11. Since the Policy and Resources Committee was last updated, a number of items have been closed down; these include:
 - Review of allowances for non-uniformed staff: this piece of work is now complete and RBs have been fully consulted on any changes which have been implemented as a result of the review.
 - Time allocated to staff for fitness training: meetings between Union representatives and HR now take place on a six weekly basis. The Service continues to support staff in this area and this proactive work has resulted in Improvements in fitness levels across the Service
 - Running costs of Service vehicles: detailed information on this particular subject is now available to staff on the Service's Sharepoint site.
12. Since the start of 2014, the following issues have also been discussed at JCC: police innovation fund, the findings of the health & safety audit carried out in November 2013, music copyright licensing and improvements in staff fitness levels.

13. In addition to items raised via the JCC tracker, the JCC Chair keeps JCC members updated on any key, and emerging, areas of work. These include the impact of changes in pensions legislation and potential collaborative opportunities with partner organisations.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	Paras 10 and 11
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	Paras 10 and 11
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	None
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Paras 10 & 11
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	No, not required – information only

Supporting Information

None

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