

Report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Service Delivery

Update from the Joint Consultative Committee

Introduction and Summary

This report is to provide members with an update on activities within the Joint Consultative Committee. The JCC is the means by which the Service and staff representative bodies (Unions) discuss strategic issues affecting the workforce.

Background

1. The JCC acts as the main route for employee consultation. It comprises managers and employee representatives who meet every six weeks to discuss issues of mutual concern. The JCC is not a decision making body.
2. Employees are represented on JCC by members from each of the Representative Bodies (RBs) in Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, namely the FBU, FOA, GMB, RFU and Unison.
3. The Committee is chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer who is currently responsible for industrial relations. Other management representatives include the Area Commanders responsible for Community Risk & Training, Operations and Operations Support and the Head of HR and Development.

Update

4. The Joint Protocol for Industrial Relations SPI provides the framework for communicating, consulting and negotiating with all Trade Unions. This policy is currently being reviewed to better reflect current practice.
5. Following a review, all new items raised at JCC meetings are now categorised under one of the following headings enabling a more structured flow of information between management and RBs:
 - For consultation
 - For negotiation
 - SPIs for consultation
 - Items for Information/Updates for TU Reps
 - Requests for information/Issues raised by TU Reps
 - Other Items

6. Since its last update to the Committee, the JCC has met on three occasions, 4 December 2019, 14 January 2020 and 24 February 2020.
7. New key issues that have been discussed are as follows:

Joint Protocol for Industrial Relations

8. An updated version of the Joint Protocol for Industrial Relations has been drafted and circulated to all Representative Body leads for comment.

Welfare Support Team

9. The HWFRS Welfare Support Team assists and supports employees with long term sickness, grievances, suspensions etc. A 'Time to Talk' day took place on 6 March as well as meetings with support staff, Fire Control and Human Resources.

Positive Action

10. Ahead of a Wholetime recruitment campaign a series of Positive Action initiatives have been developed that are currently being delivered and ready for stations for the Wholetime and On Call Recruits courses. Current statistics for HWFRS stands at 93.1% firefighters who are male and 6.9% for female so this level needs to increase for female firefighters.
11. Proportional support and a number of initiatives such as taster sessions and fitness programmes are being run to promote the firefighting role to women and individuals from ethnic minority communities to show that the role could be for them.

Conclusion

12. The Policy and Resources Committee has responsibility to monitor and review staffing matters discussed by the JCC and as such is required to receive regular reports on these matters. This report provides Members with an update on the current issues under discussion with employee representatives.