

Report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer - Director of Protection and Assets

Update from the Joint Consultative Committee

Purpose of report

1. To inform the Committee of the activities of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) since the last update provided on 3 May 2023.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that the following new and existing items currently under discussion by the Joint Consultative Committee be noted:

- (i) Duty Systems - Day Crewing*
- (ii) Fitness and Attendance Management Policies*
- (iii) Promotion Processes*
- (iv) Industrial Action*
- (v) Core Code of Ethics Steering Group*
- (vi) Time in Motion Review*
- (vii) Cultural Audit Update*
- (viii) Property Update*
- (ix) Project Updates - New Fire Control System, On-Call, and Unwanted Fire Signals, and*
- (x) Pensions Update*

Background

2. The JCC acts as the main route for formal employee consultation. It consists of managers and employee representatives who meet every six weeks to discuss issues of mutual interest. 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 FBU, FOA, FRSA and Unison.
4. The Committee is chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer who is currently responsible for industrial relations. Other management representatives include the Assistant Directors / Area Commanders responsible for Protection, Prevention, Response and Assets, as well as the Head of HR and Development.

Update

5. The Joint Protocol for Industrial Relations SPI provides the framework for communicating, consulting and negotiating with all Trade Unions.
6. Following a review of how the JCC operates, all new items raised at JCC meetings are now categorised under one of the following headings thus enabling a more structured flow of information between management and RBs:
 - For consultation
 - For negotiation
 - Service Policy and Instructions (SPI) undergoing formal consultation
 - Items for information / updates for TU Reps
 - Requests for information / issues raised by TU Reps
 - Other Items
7. The JCC has met on 3 occasions since the previous update delivered to the Committee on 3 May 2023 (24 May 2023, 5 July 2023 and 27 September 2023).

New issues under discussion since the last update

Policies

8. The main focus over the coming months in terms of policies is currently as follows:
 - Fitness Policy - The Health & Safety Working Group have been working alongside HR on the Fitness Policy. The focus is to ensure that support is in place for individuals if they fail a fitness test.
 - Attendance Management Policy - Formal consultation has been completed, comments reviewed, and the policy is now published.
 - Day Crewing Policy. With the agreed move to introduce a revised Day Crewing model at Evesham, Droitwich and Malvern Fire Stations, the Day Crewing Policy has been agreed.
 - Standards of Dress Policy - This policy is being reviewed and when completed will be issued for consultation.

Promotion Processes

9. In the previous Committee update, it was noted that the 2023 programme for promotion processes was published. Since May the following processes have been completed; Station Commander, wholetime Fire Fighter, Crew Commander (Control). Currently a Fire Fighter (Control) and Crew Commander (Control) process is on-going, together with a wholetime Crew Commander process.

Industrial Action

10. Discussions have been held locally concerning industrial action, and the subsequent pay offers, including the work of the Industrial Action Management Group (IAMG).

Core Code of Ethics Steering Group

11. JCC members have been updated concerning the work of the Core Code of Ethics Steering Group.

Time in Motion Review

12. A brief update has been discussed with the group concerning the fire station(s) 'time in motion' review that has completed its first 12 months. It was noted that once the data has been studied it would be shared with the group.

Cultural Audit Update

13. JCC members were provided with a brief update concerning the completion of the independent cultural audit completed by Dr Deborah Willoughby. Additionally, it was confirmed that report recommendations were accepted and were being published.

Property Update

14. A brief overview was provided concerning the progress made in the capital property programme, specifically; Broadway, Redditch and Hereford Fire Stations, and the Strategic Training Facility at Leominster.

Project Updates

15. The main focus over the coming months in terms of projects is as follows:
 - New Fire Control System - An update concerning the procurement process, and collaboration approach to provide a new system.
 - On-Call - This project is progressing with an internal team led by a Group Commander. Station specific recruitment profiles and a rebranding exercise is being completed by a specialist consultancy to target local demographics and assist with on-call recruitment.
 - Unwanted Fire Signals Review (UwFS) - a briefing was presented and papers shared concerning the options being considered concerning the Service approach to UwFS.

Pensions Update

16. The Director of Finance attended JCC on the 27 September 2023 to provide an overview of the current position concerning pensions.

Conclusion

17. 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.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues).	None.
Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	The JCC forum links to the successful discharge of the People Strategy.
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).	Consultation has been carried out on all significant policy changes as per Service procedures.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?).	All significant policy changes are fully supported by EIAs.
Data Protection Impact Assessment (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling).	N/A