

Report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Director of Response and Protection

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 26 January 2022.
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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) The Mental Health at Work Commitment***
- (ii) Hybrid Working Trial***
- (iii) Day Crewed Duty System Review***
- (iv) Policies***
- (v) Job Evaluation***
- (vi) 12 Hour Day Duty System trial at Hereford Fire Station***
- (vii) Review of Corporate Communications***

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 26 January 2022 (25 November 2021, 13 January 2022 and 3 March 2022). It should be noted that the original update was prepared for the December 2021 meeting that was rescheduled, hence the difference in the date range between the JCC meeting dates and Audit and Standards Committee updates.

New Issues under discussion since the last Update

8. New key issues that have been discussed are as follows:
9. The Mental Health at Work Commitment

HWFRS has signed up to a new Mental Health at Work Commitment which comprises of 6 key strands. This Commitment builds on, and considers, the good work already carried out in this area with a view to redefining an action plan, creating new objectives to address the 6 key areas/strands.
10. Hybrid Working Trial

The Hybrid Working trial has been extended to the end of March 2022. A questionnaire will be sent out to staff to evaluate the success of the trial and, based on feedback, a proposal will go to SMB with a view to incorporating this into formal policy.
11. Day Crewed Duty System Review

Members of the Senior Board Management recently met with station-based staff at all three Day Crewed locations to discuss a set of proposals to address some areas of underperformance identified within the current crewing arrangements.

12. Policies

The main focus over the coming months in terms of policies is currently as follows:

- Fitness SPI (being progressed by the Health & Safety Working Group)

13. Job Evaluation

The Assistant Director for Prevention advised JCC that a final report has now been received from the external consultant with recommendations for the Service to consider. The Head of HR & Development has shared the report with Unison with additional meetings booked to discuss next steps.

14. 12 Hour Day Duty System trial at Hereford Fire Station

The Assistant Director for Response advised that a report has been received from managers based at Hereford station who are enjoying working the revised duty pattern. Work is now underway between Representative Bodies and managers to finalise and agree the variation to the duty pattern in policy.

15. Review of Corporate Communications

An internal communications review has now been completed. The overall response was very good from all sections of the workforce with over 250 members of staff completing the survey and circa 80 staff providing individual feedback over Zoom or face to face. An action plan will now be developed and shared with all staff, along with the full report.

Conclusion

16. 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 (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.