

## **Report of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Director of Prevention 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 4 May 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) Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Contracts/Policy***
- (ii) On Call Bandings***
- (iii) Fitness, Attendance Management and Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policies***
- (iv) Promotion Processes***
- (v) Industrial Action***
- (vi) Review of Three Core Strategies***
- (vii) Current Financial Position***
- (viii) Project Updates – National Operational Guidance (NOG), On-Call, Unwanted Fire Signals and Fire Investigation***

#### **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 4 occasions since the previous update delivered to the Committee on 4 May 2022 (26 May 2022, 21 July 2022, 27 September 2022 and 20 October 2022).

## **New Issues under discussion since the last Update**

### **8. USAR Contracts / Policy**

The USAR contracts and policy has gone through formal consultation and been agreed. However, much of this will depend on the national review of USAR, which the Service is awaiting the outcome of.

### **9. Policies**

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. There is a need to ensure adequate support is in place for individuals if they fail a fitness test, and additional help is being put in place to support this.
- Attendance Management Policy - This has now been finalised and has been completely rewritten and went out for comment mid-October.
- EDI Policy - A new EDI policy went out for consultation, which closed on 5 September and comments received as part of this process are being reviewed.
- Driving at Work Policy - This SPI reflects legislative changes in the Fire Standard (Section 19).
- On-Call Management Policy. This policy has been reviewed and now includes new On-Call bandings and a payment mechanism to support availability. The policy has been through the 3 week formal consultation and has been agreed at SLB.

- Day Crewing Policy. With the agreed move to introduce a revised Day Crewing model at Evesham, Droitwich and Malvern Fire Stations, the draft Day Crewing Policy is due to go out for formal consultation.
- 12hr Duty Systems Policy. Following a successful trial of a variation of the 12hr Duty system, an amendment to the existing 12hr Duty Policy to include the variation as an agreed duty system within the Service is due to go out for formal consultation.

#### 10. Promotion Processes

Discussions have been held around having formalised Promotion Processes Boards similar to those undertaken by the police and a SWOT analysis has been undertaken. Although there is merit through this route it would slow the Service down for a number of weeks so it was agreed that this would not be a viable option at this time. However, a draft programme for processes in 2023 has been produced. An options paper for an On-Call supervisory promotion process has also been drafted due to there currently being a number of on-call temporary positions.

#### 11. Industrial Action

Discussions have been held nationally and the issues around the current 5% pay offer to grey book staff has been discussed. FBU members are considering whether or not to accept the offer via a national ballot.

#### 12. Review of Three Core Strategies

Following a discussion between SLB and Department Heads / Group Commanders, updates have now been made to the Three Core Strategies; Prevention, Protection, and Response.

#### 13. Current Financial Position

A question was asked at JCC as to what HWFRS is doing to assist staff during the current financial situation. The Chair of JCC has invited the Director of Finance to the January meeting to provide members with an overview of the current MTFP position.

#### 14. Project Updates

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

- NOG Competence and Command Excellence - There will be a 'lite' launch in December and then materials rolled out over the next 12/18 months with completion by March 2024.
- Fire Investigation - Discussions have been held with West Mercia Police regarding HWFRS not completing criminal fire investigation work due to the complexity and cost of gaining ISO accreditation.
- On-Call - This project is progressing with an internal team led by a Station Commander, along with three recruitment technicians. A tender

has been agreed for a consultancy to assist in delivering station specific recruitment profiles and a rebranding exercise to target local demographics and assist with on-call recruitment.

## Conclusion

15. 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

<b>Resource Implications</b> (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	None.
<b>Strategic Policy Links</b> (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.
<b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores)	None.
<b>Consultation</b> (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.
<b>Equalities</b> (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	All significant policy changes are fully supported by EIAs.
<b>Data Impact Assessment Data Protection Impact Assessment</b> (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling)	N/A