

Report of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer – Service Delivery

Update from the Joint Consultative Committee

Purpose of report

1. To inform the Committee of the activities of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) from the last update provided on 6 May.
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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) Additional contract banding for on-call***
- (ii) Development Programmes***
- (iii) Time to Change - Employer Pledge***
- (iv) IQMPs***
- (v) Covid Update***
- (vi) Top 12 Policies/SPIs***
- (vii) Joint Protocol for Industrial Relations***
- (viii) OH Tenders***
- (ix) Update on PCC Business Case***
- (x) Job Evaluation***

Background

2. 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.
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 Deputy 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

5. 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 following the Trade dispute lodged by the FBU in 2019 to better reflect current practice.
6. 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 undergoing formal consultation
 - Items for Information/Updates for TU Reps
 - Requests for information/Issues raised by TU Reps
 - Other Items
7. Since its last update to the Committee, the JCC has met on 4 occasions - 14 May 2020, 25 June 2020, 1 October 2020 and 12 November 2020.

New Issues under discussion since the last Update

8. New key issues that have been discussed are as follows:

Additional On-call Contract Band

9. The Service has identified that an additional 'band' of 60 hours to complement those already within the On-call staff contract would be beneficial to assisting management of on-call availability. A formal request to negotiate this change will now be sent to the representative bodies and a further update on the negotiations will be provided to the next JCC meeting.

Development Programmes

10. Human Resources have been asked to look at how the Service delivers development programmes across the board for both uniformed and support staff i.e. behavioural, technical and experiential learning. This will be an overriding strategy with development programmes below it. The preferred way forward is to look at non-traditional ways of undertaking this work.

'Time to Change' – Employer Pledge

11. The Employee Engagement and Wellbeing Officer, is working on this Pledge which focuses on Health and Wellbeing and breaking down barriers. She is working closely with a representative from the Time to Change group and it is hoped moving forward to have mental health ambassadors. This work links to work with the Welfare Support Team and there will then be an overarching Wellbeing Plan that sits above this. A working party has been set up to undertake this work and an action plan also drafted. Updates to continue at JCC and via the Service Bulletin.

IQMPs (Independent Qualified Medical Practitioners)

12. JCC was asked whether the IQMP process could be made less onerous. Human Resources have confirmed that they are currently trying to tighten up the current process and this will form part of the Occupational Health tender process moving forward. The Service needs to look at how IQMPs link into the Capability Policy whilst there are also complications around the pension schemes.

COVID Update

13. JCC members were provided with an update of the current situation relating to COVID within the Service

Previous Issues under Discussion

Top 12 Policies/SPIs

14. HR Department continues to work with the representative bodies to update Service Policies and Instructions. An initial priority list of 12 policies was identified that are now being progressed. The Grievance Policy has been issued for formal consultation and was reviewed in light of the Trade Dispute lodged by the FBU in 2019. As policies are updated and agreed, the priority list is re-evaluated

Joint Protocol for Industrial Relations

15. A full review of the Joint Protocol for Industrial relations has been carried out and the new document issued for formal consultation. A review of the Protocol was requested following the Trade Dispute lodged by the FBU in 2019.

OH Tenders

16. JCC has been informed on the tender process for a new occupational health provider and the issues faced in running the process during the lockdown period.

Update on PCC Business Case

17. It has been agreed that in light of recent developments, this update would be closed and revisited once a new/updated business case is submitted.

Job Evaluation

18. It has been requested that the Service revisit the job evaluation process for non-uniformed support staff with particular emphasis on the 'points to pay' scales to ensure that it reflects current practices and is fit for purpose. The HR Dept is currently progressing the review and will report findings in early 2021.

Conclusion

19. 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)	None
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)	None
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	None