

Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee

16th September, 2013, at 12.30 pm
at Fire Service Headquarters, Vauxhall Road, Birmingham

Present: Councillor Chambers (Chair);
Councillor Spence (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Delaney, Eustace, Hogarth, Tranter and
Wright.

Apology: Councillor Young.

Observer: Councillor Shackleton.

20/13 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd July, 2013 be approved as a correct record.

21/13 **Workforce Profile Indicators 2012/2013**

Further to Minute No. 18/13 where the Committee considered the analysis of organisational performance against 'The Plan' for the fourth quarter of 2012/2013, the Director of Human Resources gave an update on the reasons for the deterioration of performance for the following performance indicators:-

- the percentage of women firefighters (PI 20) – due to a typographical error, the number of women firefighters employed by the Service was 70 and not 7 as previously advised. The 2012/2013 target percentage for women firefighters was 4.5%. The actual outturn was 4.3%. This however, did not represent deterioration in performance although the way this indicator was defined had now changed as female Fire Control staff in uniformed posts were no longer recorded as uniformed. The actual number of women firefighters had not changed since April 2012;

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- the percentage of uniformed staff from ethnic minority communities (PI 21) – the way in this was being defined had now changed, for example, those staff who had not specified their ethnicity were no longer being included in the count of those who were from black or ethnic minority backgrounds which had resulted in reducing the reported percentage of uniformed staff from black and ethnic minority communities. In April 2012, there was 209 uniformed staff from black or ethnic minority communities as opposed to 201 now. The analysis provided reassurance that there were no underlying adverse trends;
- the percentage of non-uniformed and Fire Control employees from ethnic minority communities (PI 22) – similarly, the way in which this performance indicator was defined had now changed. There were 88 non-uniformed and Fire Control staff from black and ethnic minority communities. In April 2012, the figure was 89 employees. Again, the analysis provided reassurance that there were no underlying adverse trends;
- the number of all staff from ethnic minority communities (PI 23) - performance against this indicator was taken from performance indicators 21 and 22 above. Therefore, whilst there appeared to have been a reduction in performance, the slight reductions in the reported percentages were due to changes in the definition used to calculate the percentages. Like-for-like comparisons using a consistent definition did not raise issues of concern.

It was reported that recently, a recruitment exercise had been undertaken to appoint 55 firefighters. Once the process had been completed, a report on the outcomes from the recruitment and selection process would be submitted to the Committee. This supported the Committee's work programme to undertake a detailed review of the recruitment process for the Service to ensure any areas for improvement were identified in readiness for the next recruitment exercise.

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22/13 **Equality and Diversity Quarterly Update**

It was agreed to defer consideration of the equality and diversity quarterly update to the next meeting of the Committee.

23/13 **Dispute Resolution**

The Committee received a report setting out the number, type and outcomes of discipline and grievance hearings and other dispute resolution including employment tribunal activity which had occurred during the period 1st January, 2013 to 30th June, 2013. Details of any collective grievances and any failure to agree or consult were also submitted.

The report also provided a summary of lessons learnt, taking into account issues raised by Trade Union, Representative Bodies, line managers and human resource practitioners.

24/13 **Feedback from Public Consultation Review Working Group**

The Chair gave an update on the work of the Public Consultation Review Working Group.

The Group had felt that the public consultation on the Community Safety Strategy was an appropriate area to review and officers had seen the value in investigating the process undertaken.

Following on from the last meeting of the Group on 9th September 2013, a number of gaps had been identified in the consultation process applied in the past.

In order to address the gaps that had been identified, it was now proposed to extend the timeline for completion of the review to the spring 2014. This would enable a more meaningful and fit for purpose process to be established for the next consultation process undertaken by the Service.

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Work Programme 2013/14

The Committee noted its work programme for 2013/2014. The Clerk reported that the review of the recruitment process would be included within the work programme.

The Chair also felt that as part of the Committee's role to monitor the member development programme, the Committee should review a personal development review form that members would complete to identify their respective skills set. This would help to ascertain whether any gaps in the process could be identified and whether the form was still fit for purpose.

(Meeting ended at 1.10 pm)

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