

DEVON AND CORNWALL POLICE AUTHORITY

MINUTES

A meeting of the **Human Resources Committee** was held on 19 November 2008 in the Conference Room, Police Authority, Endeavour House, Pynes Hill, Exeter, starting at 10:00hrs

Present

Chair Mr D Money

Members Mrs J Norton, Mr J Rowe (until agenda item 7), Mrs L Dunn, Mr G Hicks and Mrs V Pengelly.

Officers in Attendance

Police Authority

Mrs E Zoestbergen (Policy Officer), Mr C Schofield (HR Advisor to the Police Authority)

Police Force

Mr C Haselden (Director of Human Resources), Mr P Skedgell (CPA), Mr P Tucker (HR Strategy Manager) Mr G Cooper (Head of HR), Supt Grafton (Head of Learning and Development Unit) and Miss C Ambrose (HR Manager in the Projects Team) (From Agenda Item 8)

HR/366 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs L Price.

HR/367 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made in respect of any items on the agenda.

HR/368 Chairman's Announcements

- The Chairman informed the meeting that from 1 November 2008 Miss J Norris has been seconded to the QUEST Team for a period of 6 months.
- He went on to discuss the issue of the recent loss of data by the British National Party (BNP) which has resulted in the exposure of the names and addresses of its members. It seems that nationally there is a small number of serving police officers on that list. The Chairman stressed that at this particular moment in time there were no more facts available. The Director of HR provided a further update by adding that although the BNP is not a proscribed organisation its activities very probably might not be compatible with being a police officer or a member of police staff. If any members of staff in our Force or Authority were to be involved then this would have to be addressed on a case by case basis.
- The Chairman asked for the latest update on staffing and redundancy issues. The Director of Human Resources (HR) provided an update, including a brief background for the benefit of new members, explaining the increase of 200 police officers to the front-line and the dis-establishment of 196 police staff roles. Redundancies are an inevitable outcome of this process, although he stressed that the Force has worked very hard to keep these to a minimum. Formal notices of redundancy will be sent those members of staff within the next couple of days.

The Chairman underlined the real impact of this painful process on those members of staff involved, explaining to Committee Members that the Police Authority has been closely involved with this process, applying appropriate scrutiny throughout. He thanked the Force for their transparency and co-operation in this matter.

The Head of HR then provided a more detailed breakdown of the 3 tranches of the deselection process and explained that some of the aforementioned 196 posts are currently vacant and that some are occupied by temporary staff. He also added that wherever possible the staff involved would be re-deployed into other roles. He stressed that there has been extensive consultation and partnership working with all staff unions and the partnership group. Furthermore the process of (de)selection has been fully explained to all members of staff

involved. The Programme Board on 25 November will confirm the decision to give formal notification of redundancy to those members of staff for whom it has not been possible to secure an alternative job at this stage. An individual meeting will take place between those concerned and their manager to explain the position and to consider their response. Based on the outcome of the meeting a decision will be made as to whether to progress to the issuing of a formal notice of redundancy.

The Head of HR explained that both the HR department and an external organisation (Penna) are available to staff affected by way of help and support. From the 26 November the Force will provide those members of staff with time off and appropriate support to assist in finding other employment. He underlined that this needs careful handling, as it is a sensitive issue and a media strategy has been developed, as there is likely to be media interest once the news is in the public domain.

The Chairman requested to know how many staff names would go to the Programme Board and the Head of HR explained that there are 30 in total. However, this includes several staff who are currently on work trials in new roles and is also dependent on the outcome of the pilot project with pre-charge case review.

Members of the Committee, in light of the importance of this process, sought reassurance from the Force that the correct procedure has been followed and that the lessons from the earlier Job Evaluation process have been learnt and applied. The Head of HR reassured members and said he was confident that the process was procedurally sound and that the appropriate support to staff had been, and will be provided. This view was confirmed by the HR Advisor to the Police Authority.

- Finally the Chairman highlighted the lack of direction surrounding the Police Authority's Diversity workgroup. He expressed his concern about the lack of clarity as to its membership, its work remit, its relationship to the Human Resources Committee and how it will go about its business. He told the Committee that he would now seek a formal discussion with the Chief Executive as to how this issue can be resolved.

HR/369 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2008 were considered. Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- Page 2: the meaning of HR/354 bullet point 6 'sexual orientation monitoring'

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2008 be confirmed as a correct record subject to adding more information to HR/354 bullet point 6 'sexual orientation monitoring' to clarify its meaning within this context.

HR/370 Christian Police Association (CPA)

A representative from the Christian Police Association (CPA) gave a presentation on the aims and objectives of the local CPA. He explained that the national CPA was founded 125 years ago. The Devon & Cornwall Constabulary CPA has 160 members and its overarching aim is to provide support to colleagues. Issues discussed during this presentation included:

- 1st May which is the National Day of Prayer for the Police.
- The Easter and Christmas Carol Services.
- The 'Adopt a Cop' scheme – where communities pray for their local police officer or PCSO.
- Family Resource Boards – which offer books (free of charge) designed to provide practical tips and skills to people on a variety of things, for example how to raise teenagers, how to manage your finances etc. It has proven to be very popular as the CPA has given away in excess of £14,000 worth of books in the last 2 years.
- The CPA receives its funding from local churches and its members.

- An update on the Street Pastor Scheme, which is practical, on-the-street response by local church volunteers.
- The CPA has good working relationships with all other staff associations.

The Chairman highlighted the success of the recent Remembrance Day Service held at Middlemoor and indicated that the Police Authority would also like to consider laying a wreath on behalf of the Authority from 2009.

The Chairman thanked the representative of the CPA for the interesting presentation and for taking the time to attend the HR Committee meeting.

RESOLVED

To note the contents of the presentation

At this point the Chairman asked the Director of HR and the HR Advisor to the Police Authority to provide an update on the key issues facing HR in the Force for the benefit of the new members of the HR Committee. A briefing/update paper was circulated which is in effect a follow-up to paper endorsed at the HR Meeting on 19 September 2007. It was explained that the paper provides an update on the current position in relation to each of the items that were listed in the original report.

The Chairman mentioned that the HR Advisor to the Police Authority and himself have a meeting with HMIC next week as part of the re-inspection of HR.

HR/371 Equal Pay Claims

The Director of HR introduced a report informing members of the current position regarding equal pay claims lodged with Devon & Cornwall Constabulary in September and October 2008. The equal pay claims lodged are in relation to changes to allowances in shift / weekend working brought about as a result of the recent introduction of the Staff Handbook. This is a difficult exercise bringing with it a huge amount of work tied to strict deadlines. The Head of HR explained to members that there are 305 Equal Pay Claims at present although this number could well increase in future.

The Chairman asked whether the HR department has the capacity to address this equal pay claims' workload especially in the light of the current force modernisation programme. The Director of HR assured the Committee that they are able to deal with this at present by adjusting other priorities though the position in the longer term would need to be reviewed. Members were informed that the Force is currently seeking counsel's legal advice on this issue. Once received their course of action will be determined. He added that the media has already picked up on this issue and all agreed that an appropriate media strategy would need to be developed and put in place.

A lengthy debate followed about the existence of any legal precedents and the Police Authority's and Force's legal duties. The Head of HR confirmed that this is a particularly current and evolving topic; legal precedents are still being set and that it is a matter of waiting to see what comes out of this process.

Members requested benchmarking information as to the equal pay claims lodged with other Forces and the Head of HR confirmed that most other Forces have no such claims. The reason for this is historical in that in 1992 decisions were made with respect to weekend working payments that in the view of the claimants now were discriminatory.

The Vice-Chair enquired as to the potential costs involved. The Head of HR informed the committee that a person claiming might potentially be entitled to 6 years' back pay. He confirmed that the Treasurer is sighted

on the potential financial implications, although it is impossible to provide an exact financial calculation at this time.

RESOLVED

To note the current position

HR/372 Force response to the HMIC Thematic Report 'Leading from the Frontline'.

The Director of HR introduced the Force's response to the HMIC Thematic Report 'Leading from the Frontline'. The Force was asked to respond to the thematic report by way of a matrix that would allow the Force to assess their current position. The matrix was completed by a working group and the lead on this important piece of work is the Assistant Chief Constable (TP). There are some blanked-out sections that refer to recommendations for action by various national agencies. The matrix will be updated at regular intervals so progress can be duly noted.

The HR Advisor to the Police Authority pointed out that there are considerable developments taking place in the area of Leadership, which provide close links with the Leadership Programme and the HMIC Thematic Recommendations. He requested that it would be beneficial to have a Learning and Development update report tabled at the next HR Committee Meeting.

The Committee expressed their interest in the Leadership Programme and asked for reassurance that leadership potential at all levels of the Service is nurtured in Devon & Cornwall Constabulary. The Head of the Learning and Development Unit informed members that he is drafting a proposal for consideration by the Chief Officer Group, which will address how the Force manages and nurtures members of staff with high potential. The Director of HR explained that this would be a wider approach than the current HPDS (Higher Potential Development Scheme) which is run by the NPIA and is only available to a very limited number of officers.

The Chairman then raised the issue of the Police Authority's Appraisal Scheme as it seems unclear as to what is being done at this point in time.

Members clarified the use of 'next month' in the matrix and asked if this could be made more specific. They also asked for an update on section 24, which refers to a business case in relation to the Duty Management Strategy. The Director of HR was unable to provide an update at the meeting but informed members that he would provide one at the earliest opportunity.

The Vice-Chairman commented on the fact that despite the thematic's initial focus on Sergeants only, it was very positive to see that this matrix encompasses all ranks in the Force. Training plays a crucial role in progressing these recommendations and there needs to be close scrutiny of this process. Members discussed how the HR Committee could scrutinise and monitor progress on HMIC's recommendations including undertaking the necessary reality checks. The Chairman suggested that he set a meeting with the HR Advisor to the PA, the Director of HR and the HR Committee Administrator in order to discuss the best way forward.

RESOLVED

To note the current progress in addressing the areas identified within the HMIC report 'Leading from the Frontline'

HR/373 Ill-Health Retirement - Police Officers

The HR Manager in the Projects Team introduced a brief report, which provided an update to Committee members on the process for review of continued permanent disablement for officers following ill health retirement from the Force which this Committee has been very keen to see progress.

The Director of HR underlined that it will not change the rules of the original reward and that these new proposals are not financially driven but that this is all about supporting those that need support and ensuring that our money is spend appropriately. However, although there are many clear-cut cases, there needs to be a specific focus on those 'grey areas' where there may be a need for a specific focus.

The Director of HR clarified that under current legislation it is the Police Authority who determines when a review is undertaken however he suggested it might be useful to give the Force delegated powers in particular circumstances so they can act on the Police Authority's behalf when required. The Chairman suggested that he set a meeting with the HR Advisor to the Police Authority, the Director of HR and the HR Committee Administrator in order to clarify this process and agree the way forward.

RESOLVED

To confirm the proposed review process as stipulated in the briefing paper.

HR/374 Performance Indicators for Human Resources

The Chairman introduced the report on the performance indicators, which provides an overview of performance for Human Resources management in Devon & Cornwall Constabulary. He explained to new Committee members that the HR Strategy Manager and the Police Authority's Policy Officer meet before Committee meetings to discuss and agree a process for the content and production of this report. This allows for a greater level of analysis and scrutiny to be undertaken to inform Committee members of the various issues. Implementation of this process will continue through the remainder of the financial year.

The Director of HR invited feedback on the contents from all members but reminded them that this is very much 'work in progress', and that it will need some time to settle. The HR Advisor to the PA advised the Committee to focus on sickness absence as although it is stabilising, it is doing so at a level that is above the national average. It needs to be decreased, which in itself will contribute to the Force becoming a top-performing Force by 2012.

Other issues raised with regards to the information pack were in relation to:

- Number of police officers on duty (actual numbers as compared to expected numbers)
- Training information
- Personnel transfers in the Force
- Benchmarking information to make for example the SPIs and HR ratios sections more meaningful
- The use of 12 monthly rolling figures and reporting time-frames, which might well need to be different for different topics
- Further use of trend data
- Highlight areas of good practice, both from an external and internal perspective

The Director of HR informed the Committee that the HR department is working with consultants to look at HR efficiency. And there is a continuing need to focus on attendance management. He informed members that the overall commentary and analysis in Section A needs to explain what is happening and why, and contain actions and notes as to how these issues are being addressed. There is a real need to keep the report balanced, providing the right information to members at the right level.

RESOLVED

- (i) To note the current state of development in creating a HR performance report, in particular the presentation of Sickness Absence Data and Attendance Management.
- (ii) To consider further areas for further analysis for future consideration by the Committee

The Director of HR informed members that the FSA and UNISON had approached the Force to offer independent financial advice and support to staff and officers to help them cope with the current 'credit crunch'.

The Chair requested an update at the next meeting on the progress being made to host the Senior Women in Policing (SWiP) Conference, which is to be held in Devon next year.

The meeting closed at 13:10hrs