



**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

Item 11

MEETING	Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Authority
DATE OF MEETING	23 June 2016
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Staff transition outcome
STATUS OF REPORT	For open publication
PURPOSE OF REPORT	For information
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	As Members are aware, the combination process has required a fundamental re-engineering of the organisational structure, along with the negotiation of a single pay and grading system for corporate staff. This process has been achieved through the close involvement of staff and their representative bodies. This paper provides an update on the outcome of corporate staff transition process which has been a very challenging but successful exercise to date.
RISK ASSESSMENT	None for the purposes of this report.
COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	None for the purposes of this report
BUDGET IMPLICATIONS	None for the purposes of this report
RECOMMENDATIONS	It is recommended that Members note the outcome of the corporate staff transition process associated with the combination.
BACKGROUND PAPERS	None
APPENDICES	None
REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT	Derek James, Director of corporate services. email: derek.james@dwfire.org.uk Tel: (01722) 691072

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The combination has required a fundamental review of the organisational structure and the adoption of single pay and grading policy. This work has involved all corporate members of staff along with all non-station based uniformed personnel. This paper provides an overview on the outcome of the corporate staff transition process which has been the more contentious and challenging component of the migration towards a single organisational structure to support the new Service.

2. Process

- 2.1 As Members are aware, the redesign of the organisation structure was driven by the need to both meet the new vision and to secure the financial savings outlined in the agreed business case. A comprehensive process was established that fundamentally challenged the existing respective structures. This involved senior and middle managers from both former Services redesigning departments to achieve these objectives. These proposals were heavily scrutinised by the joint leadership team to ensure that frontline service delivery was fully protected and where possible strengthened. The joint senior leadership team were also anxious to ensure that a strategic approach to securing financial savings was adopted rather than a simplistic 'top slicing' exercise undertaken.
- 2.2 To support the proposed organisational structure a new approach to corporate staff job descriptions was agreed along with the development of new job descriptions for all proposed roles. In addition, a new pay and grading policy was developed and negotiated. This work was supported by specialist consultants who had worked with the Scottish fire and rescue service during their own transition. Throughout this period, senior managers continued close relations with representative bodies to ensure a fair and affordable structure that met the financial expectations in the agreed business case.
- 2.3 These proposals, along with the proposed staff transition process were then the subject of significant consultation with representative bodies and staff. This consultation period was supported by a comprehensive internal engagement strategy. This involved detailed information being made available both electronically and hard copies along with an extensive programme of staff briefings; individual consultation meetings and regular newsletters. Close relations were maintained with representative bodies who engaged their regional personnel. To help minimise compulsory redundancies, applications for voluntary redundancies and early retirements were widely promoted and carefully considered.
- 2.4 Following the consultation period, senior management considered each and every comment raised during the consultation process and provided an individual response. To ensure full transparency all comments and their associated response was made available to all staff. Further collective and managerial briefings were then held to announce the final structure.

2.5 In early January the transition process was formally commenced and since this time an intense programme of work has been maintained involving a structured and transparent process of matching and slotting of existing staff to the new structure. Throughout this period staff and their representative bodies have been fully engaged with regular progress reports being considered by the shadow Policy and Resources committee.

3. Outcome

- 3.1 The process has involved staff being directly matched into roles or offered suitable alternatives. Where there were more people than roles, a restrictive match was established and a competitive selection process initiated. Unsuccessful candidates were then either offered suitable alternatives or considered displaced. Displaced members of staff have been able to apply for new roles. In all cases staff have been supported by HR advisors.
- 3.2 To ensure that the transition was fair and objective, staff could appeal against any decision made by the matching panel which in all cases comprised of a senior manager from each of the former Services. Only 20 members of staff appealed throughout the transition process with 13 of these decisions being upheld by an appeals panel. A number of these appeals were associated with the decision to refuse voluntary redundancy as the new Service still required a role that an individual would have been matched to.
- 3.3 To date 162 members of staff have been directly matched into role, with only 13 members of staff identified as subject to the restricted match process and only 1 situation with 2 members of staff requiring a competitive selection process. Officers have been able to achieve this low number by accepting 19 applications for voluntary redundancies.
- 3.4 There have been 34 displaced members of staff, 31 of which have now been offered a suitable alternative role. In the vast majority of cases staff have successfully completed or are completing a trial period. There are 2 cases where staff are appealing against this offer arguing that they are not suitable alternative and a management judgement is currently being determined on this situation.
- 3.5 Outside of the top team, only 1 compulsory redundancy has been affected and a further 3 are envisaged, although this is still subject of further management consideration and staff consultation.
- 3.6 The Service continues to recruit to new permanent roles or to fixed term roles to support the transition to single ways of working that will realise the required business case savings. This recruitment process is expected to be concluded within the next few months.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The staff transition process was proved to a very complex, challenging and at times very emotional period for staff and managers alike. Officers and Unison believe that the process has been a very successful one. As one would expect, it will take time for the new structure to fully embed once the recruitment process has been completed. The Policy and Resources Committee will be overseeing the cultural and organisational development programme to help embed the new structure and to foster a one-team approach going forward.

DARRAN GUNTER

Chief Fire Officer

23 June 2016