

Executive Officer Contract Amendments

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

To review the contractual arrangements for Executive Officer Leave allowances and Gold book Terms and Conditions surrounding Vehicle allowances.

2 Recommendations

The Strategy and Resources Committee is asked to note the content of the report with regard to Brigade Manager leave allowance and Gold book vehicle allowances.

3 Background

Following the restructure of the Executive team and arrangements for covering the Gold Rota, the current contracts issued to Brigade Managers are not all aligned. In particular, they do not accurately reflect the appropriate leave allocation with regard to the new working arrangements. These working arrangements require the 3 Executive Officers to be available 24/7 on a continuous duty pattern, with a 3 day period of Rota (off-duty) in any 3 week period.

In NJC Gold book terms and conditions, the contract states; "A Brigade Managers' leave allowance should not be less than that of an Area Manager".

Under NJC Grey Book terms and conditions, an Area Manager is entitled to 35 days of "A" scale leave, 2 days of "B" scale leave, 3 days of Long Service leave and Public Holidays. This is calculated on the basis that the shift pattern of an Area Manager is such that leave is taken in weekly blocks. Some of these days fall on primary shift days and some secondary ("A's" and "B's") and any Rota days (off-duty days) which fall in that block of leave are included in the overall leave calculation. For example; if there are 3 Rota days and a weekend in a 2 week period of booked leave, these 5 days are included as part of that leave and subsequently 12 days are removed from the Officer's leave entitlement.

The reference to Public Holidays refers to 8 National Public Holiday periods per year. When an Officer (Area Manager) is on-duty on any Public Holiday, they are able to take the same number of days back in lieu of that working day. When a Public Holiday falls on an Officers normal "office working day" (8.5 hr shift) Officers would take this as one of their 8 public holiday leave days. When the public holiday falls on a full-duty day (24) the day in-lieu is added to the officers leave allowance and they can take the day flexibly elsewhere in their diary.

Because of the difference in Executive Officer shift pattern arrangements to those of an Area Manager and the requirement to be available for Authority, Directorate and Operational duties, Brigade Managers are able to take their leave allocation as individual days of leave.

Contractually, a Brigade Manager is entitled to 35 days of "A" scale leave, 3 days of Long Service leave and Public Holidays. The reference to Public holidays is in the same context as that of the Area Manger terms, however, in reality due to the 3 week cycle of the Executive Officer Rota, a Brigade Manager is only likely to ever work 2, or at most 3 Public Holidays across a 12 month period (8 Public holidays divided by the three officers). It is also unlikely they would be able to take the day back in-lieu due to the organisational commitments of the role.

Under this premise, negotiations with Brigade Managers has produced a proposal to agree 2 days per year to be included in each Officers' contract to reflect the requirement to work on Public Holidays, and when doing so, the overall leave entitlement reflects the requirement to work Public Holidays with no additional leave returned to the Officer. This equates to a total leave allowance of 38 days plus 2 days for Public Holiday commitment working. This could be seen as a reduction in allowance from that of an Area Manager, but as explained above, due to the difference in shift patterns, is more reflective of working practices, and gives clarity for contractual purposes.

4 Gold Book Vehicle Allowances

Operational response Officers require a suitable vehicle to respond to incidents as Incident Commanders. The specification of these vehicles is constantly reviewed to ensure the vehicles meet the needs of the organisation. There are a number of models to provide these response vehicles, including Lease schemes, provided cars and other types of allowance. The functional specification of the vehicle will determine the vehicle model and the costs of the scheme. As Officers need the use of the vehicle to respond out of hours, they are required to take the vehicle to and from work to their home address when on call.

Currently, Officers who wish to take advantage of using a vehicle for personal use are able to enhance the base specification of the response vehicle through a lease scheme. Subsequently, they pay any additional costs associated with that vehicle from their own wages.

In Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, Grey book allowances are agreed at £3605 per year of lease costs towards the provision of an operational response vehicle. This is the baseline allowance for a lease company to provide a vehicle which meets the minimum requirements. Separately negotiated terms for Gold

book staff have a slightly higher baseline specification and an agreed associated Lease allowance. Currently in SFRS this is £4313.

Due to the proposal for a move to a fleet of provided cars, local negotiation with Brigade Managers and Grey book Managers has resulted in an agreement to create a single provided scheme with an agreed organisational specification, allowing the Service to procure and provide vehicles, whilst managing the financial costs through Capital budgets. This removes the need for a two-tier allowance across all Officer groups.

Brigade Managers recognise the need for a single specification, and to lead the process by example, adopting a Service specific response vehicle which is the same, whatever level of Officer is responding. This agreement aligns the allowances which would then be offset against the provided car annual costs. This in effect, removes the allowance from both staff groups and is reflective of a single vehicle specification which is fit for purpose and necessary for the organisational response role.

5 Collaboration

These are locally agreed terms and conditions and therefore collaboration does not apply.

6 Financial Implications

The alignment of the Officer Vehicle specification supports the overall savings proposed in the proposed purchase of a fleet of response vehicles.

7 Legal Comment

The agreed actions as proposed by this report affect Gold book negotiated terms and conditions and would be included in Brigade Manager contracts and associated Service Brigade Orders.

8 Initial Impact Assessment

An Initial Impact Assessment has been completed.

9 Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report. An e-EQIA is not, therefore, required.

10 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

11 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.