



DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	HRMDC/11/6
MEETING	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE, PART 2
DATE OF MEETING	11 APRIL 2011
SUBJECT OF REPORT	REGIONAL CONTROL CENTRE (RCC) STAFFING UPDATE
LEAD OFFICER	Director of People and Organisational Development
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the report be noted.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The Authority has previously agreed the levels of redundancy multiplier that can be used within the Service which has enabled the Service to progress with collective and individual consultations with those staff whose positions have been placed “at risk” as a result of the closure of the Regional FiReControl/Regional Control Centre (RCC) project and other regional staff employed by Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service. This resulted in 31 staff being placed “at risk”.</p> <p>The Service has ring-fenced existing vacancies initially to those staff who have been placed “at risk” to date 12 staff have been offered alternative positions or in the case of Control, extensions to fixed-term contracts.</p> <p>The Service has also sought volunteers who wish to express an interest in voluntary redundancy in accordance with Service policy on Reorganisation, Review, Redeployment and Redundancy. There were 54 expressions of interest but at this stage the expressions of interest were either not suitable positions for staff “at risk” or the financial costs were prohibitive in comparison to the staff “at risk” who in many cases were on fixed-term contracts.</p> <p>The Service could, however, consider further requests for early retirement or retirement on the grounds of efficiency and will continue to explore such options in the future.</p>
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	The costs of these redundancies will be met by the Communities and Local Government Department.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT	None
APPENDICES	None
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS	None

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Service has previously raised with Members, the issue of the redundancy multiplier to be used where there may be compulsory or voluntary redundancies and this was agreed by the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority at its meeting on 14 February 2011 (Minute DSFRA/61 refers) as follows:

- That, once the redundancy multiplier is determined by the Authority, it should be reviewed at least annually to take into account budgetary and financial issue
- That a multiplier of 2 be adopted, to use in calculating redundancy payments arising from either compulsory or voluntary redundancies; and with a view to applying this multiplier in relation to staff eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme i.e, non-uniformed and Control staff plus operational staff at Station Manager or above who have retired and been re-employed.
- That a multiplier of 2.5 be adopted, to use in calculating redundancy payments arising from either compulsory or voluntary redundancies for those “at risk” staff in the Temporary Staff Pool arising from the Regional Control Centre (RCC), other regional staff employed by Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, appropriate RCC Project Team staff and other staff given notice up until the 31 March 2011.
- That it be noted that on the basis of advice received to date, it would appear that other uniformed staff not conditioned to the Local Government Pension Scheme have no entitlement to an enhanced redundancy payment.

1.2 This decision has enabled the Service to progress with collective consultations with the relevant Trade Unions and also the individual consultations with those staff “at risk” of redundancy.

1.3 The reason for placing staff “at risk” is as a result of decisions following the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and the government decision over the Regional FiReControl/Regional Control Centre (RCC) project.

2. COLLECTIVE CONSULTATION

2.1 Since there were more than 20 positions identified as being potentially redundant the Service was required by the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, section 188(4) to undertake collective consultations with the Unions and provide the relevant information in accordance with the Act. There was also a requirement for this information to be detailed within an HR1 form to be sent to the Secretary of State.

2.2 This resulted in the Service placing 31 members of staff “at risk”. The collective discussions with the Trade Unions were amicable and this was assisted by the members agreement on the level of redundancy multiplier to be applied up until the 31 March 2011 which resolved the most contentious issue. The Trade Unions did request that the Service seek volunteers for redundancy in accordance with the Service policy on Reorganisation, Review, Redeployment and Redundancy and this was agreed by the Service.

2.3 The Collective consultations were completed after a 30 day period which ended on the 4 March 2011.

3. INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATION

- 3.1 As well as collective consultation, there is a requirement for individual consultation and each employee placed "at risk" has had an initial meeting to discuss the situation. The employee has the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative at the meetings and has the opportunity to make any representations in relation to the provisional selection for redundancy and discuss any alternative proposals that could avoid the redundancy. If there are issues raised then this is considered by the Service before a final decision is taken. The Service has also provided these "at risk" employees with details of vacancies that have arisen in the organisation. If an employee is interested in being considered for alternative positions then a suitability interview will be held. Where there is more than one employee who is interested then there will be a competitive process. As part of the individual consultation, where there are additional matters to discuss there have been further meetings.
- 3.2 Once a decision is made concerning the selection for redundancy, there is a further meeting to confirm this decision and to place the employee on notice of redundancy. Whilst under notice the Service has continued to seek alternative positions for the "at risk" employees. There were 31 staff placed "at risk" and of these there are 12 who have so far been appointed. This includes 7 control staff who were previously on fixed-term contracts which have been extended. This will enable sufficient control staff to remain in place until the Authority is able to consider the options for our future mobilising arrangements.

4. VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCIES

- 4.1 The Service has in accordance with the Service policy on Reorganisation, Review, Redeployment and Redundancy (4Rs) sought expressions of interest for voluntary redundancy where there was a possibility that there could be volunteers whose position could provide a re-deployment opportunity for a member of staff whose position was at risk of redundancy. There were 54 such expressions of interest from staff within Control, Support Staff (Non-uniformed) and Watch Managers as there are 2 fixed-term Watch Managers who are "at risk".
- 4.2 Members of the Senior Management Board reviewed the list of expressions of interest in accordance with the 4Rs policy which sets out the criteria that will be used to determine whether any expression of interest would be taken further. These are as follows:
- Whether the post would be suitable for redeployment of an employee who may be at risk of redundancy;
 - Whether retraining and/or development would be necessary and whether this would be cost effective;
 - Whether any consequent delay in filling the post would be acceptable; and
 - Whether the financial consequences would be acceptable.
- 4.3 Having considered the criteria, the Service was unable to take any of the expressions of interest forward at this time as they either did not meet the first or fourth criteria. Some of the potential volunteers who are 55 years or over, and within the LGPS could also be considered for early retirement or retirement on the grounds of efficiency and the Service may in the future consider such requests.

4.4 As the Service progresses with the Change and Improvement Programme this is likely to result in an overall reduction in the numbers of staff within the Service. At this point, it has not been determined how this will be achieved and options will be considered as and when appropriate for the organisation.

5. **CONCLUSION**

5.1 At this stage, all “at risk” staff have either been offered alternative positions or placed on notice of redundancy. The individual position for these staff has been difficult but the Service representatives have handled these as sensitively and professionally as possible.

Jane Sherlock
DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT