

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	HRMDC/20/3
MEETING	HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	21 OCTOBER 2020
SUBJECT OF REPORT	REQUEST FOR RETIREMENT & RE-EMPLOYMENT
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Fire Officer
RECOMMENDATIONS	<i>That the request for retirement & re-employment as identified in paragraph 2.3 of this report be approved.</i>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	The Authority has an approved Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21 in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and which sets out the arrangements for consideration of any requests for re-employment of employees following retirement. This report sets out a specific request for approval from a support member of staff.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	None.
EQUALITY RISK & BENEFITS ASSESSMENT	The Retirement & Re-Employment Policy has had an equalities impact assessment.
APPENDICES	Nil
BACKGROUND PAPERS	DSFRA Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Authority's Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21 sets out the arrangements for consideration of any requests for re-employment of employees following retirement. The re-employment of any employee (up to Area Manager or non-uniformed equivalent) who has retired will be subject to approval by of the Human Resources Management and Development Committee (the Committee).
- 1.2 The Pay Policy Statement sets out that the Authority will, in principle, allow the re-employment of employees who have retired, subject to a break in service of at least one month, because it is recognised that this often represents an effective way of retaining specialist knowledge and skills without any increase in cost to the Authority (and noting that costs to the Pension Scheme are no more than would be the case for normal retirement).
- 1.3 The Pay Policy Statement also notes that the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, published by the Home Office in May 2018, sets out that "fire and rescue authorities must not re-appoint principal fire officers after retirement to their previous, or a similar, post save for in exceptional circumstances when such a decision is necessary in the interests of public safety". In this context, Principal Officers refers to those officers at Area Manager and above, or those with comparable responsibilities to those roles. The Fire and Rescue National Framework also states that fire and rescue authorities will "have regard to this principle when appointing at any level".
- 1.4 For staff within the Local Government Pension Scheme, where an individual is re-employed on the same terms and conditions as previously, the same abatement rules as apply to those within the Fire Fighters Pension Scheme will be applied. However, the Authority's policy on Pension Discretions refers to flexible retirement and states that this "may be subject to abatement during such time as the individual remains employed by the Service". This allows the Authority to use flexible retirement opportunities where key employees may wish to continue working as they get older but step down in grade or reduce their working hours. This can be beneficial to the Authority in retaining key skills, knowledge and experience whilst also reducing costs.
- 1.5 The Service's Executive Board has considered the request within this report for retirement and re-employment and considers that the request is beneficial in helping to retain key skills whilst we seek to bring in new staff through a planned succession process.

2. RETIREMENT AND RE-EMPLOYMENT

- 2.1 The Service policy on retirement & re-employment is linked to workforce planning arrangements. Retirement and re-employment provides us with certainty for the leave date for these employees whilst at the same time providing a suitable rate of staff turnover. It also provides a transition for the employee from full employment into retirement.

2.2 A full-time member of the Procurement Team who is returning from maternity leave has requested a temporary change to their working hours to work 0.5 FTE. This request has been approved on the basis that the Service will backfill the other half of the role on a fixed term contract to maintain capacity within the team. There is currently a comprehensive and detailed Procurement Resource Plan and significant work demands on the Procurement Department to support capital, revenue and project expenditure and non-pay spend reviews, which makes maintaining professional capacity an essential requirement.

2.3 Another member of the Procurement Team has submitted a request for retirement and re-employment on a part-time basis. The re-employment of this professionally qualified Category Manager on a fixed term basis provides flexibility and also enables the department to retain an experienced member of staff to cover the 0.5 FTE temporary vacancy created by the reduced working hours of the maternity returner outlined above. This retirement and re-employment has been considered by the Service's Executive Board and this is now recommended to the Committee for approval.

Role	Position	Station/Dept.	Decision
Grade 7 (support staff)	Category Manager	Procurement	FTC for up to 1 year on 18 hours per week from mid-January 2021

2.4 There are no additional financial costs for the organisation since this employee has reached the point at which they can retire without any strain payment. If re-employed, it is recommended that should the overall earnings following retirement from the pension and re-employment be higher than earnings before retirement then abatement should be applied. This gives the Service certainty as to a leaving date, supports the natural turnover of staff and enables the Service to succession plan for the future.

JOE HASSELL
Deputy Chief Fire Officer