



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Fire & Rescue Service

Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Human Resources Committee

RELOCATION SCHEME

Report of Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item No:

Date: 27 January 2012

Purpose of Report:

To advise Members of a measure put in place to mitigate the number of compulsory redundancies arising from the outcomes of the Fire Cover Review.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Fire Cover Review will result in the dis-establishment of retained sections at Edwinstowe, Highfields and Carlton during 2012-13. This will lead to the potential loss of 45 Retained Duty System (RDS) roles. Additionally there is a potential for redundancies to be effected at Worksop station due to a change in cover arrangements, however the impact of this as yet unknown.
- 1.2 The Service is required, as part of statutory consultation measures, to consider ways to mitigate compulsory redundancies. In normal circumstances the Service would seek to re-deploy at-risk employees to other similar roles, however RDS employees are restricted by the requirement to live in close proximity to the station at which they serve and cannot therefore simply be transferred into existing vacancies at other locations.
- 1.3 The Corporate Management Board have recently agreed to offer relocation support to RDS employees at risk of redundancy who are able to move home to take up a vacant role in another RDS section. Such support to be offered as an alternative to redundancy.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The Service already has in place a relocation scheme to provide financial support to Officers required to relocate to the area on appointment or promotion. It is proposed that the relocation scheme for RDS employees will be similar to the existing scheme, which includes a repayment period.
- 2.2 Applications for financial support will be considered where there are longstanding recruitment and retention difficulties at a particular location and where the employee can provide availability which would cover shortfalls in existing provision or fill a skills gap. The Service would exercise total discretion in determining whether to support such an application.
- 2.3 The financial support available would be up to £8,000 per employee (or property if employees purchase a property together), with discretion to increase this amount if approved by the Director of Human Resources and Director of Finance and Resources. Under current HMRC rules relocation expenses which meet the criteria for "qualifying expenses" are exempt from taxation to a maximum of £8,000.
- 2.4 The payment would cover actual expenditure incurred up to £8,000 in total, and cover items such as legal and estate agent expenses, removal and storage expenses, and temporary accommodation costs.
- 2.5 The payment would be made on the basis that all payments would be reimbursable if the employee left the employment of the Service within 24 months of the final payment being made, and subsequently at a reducing rate of 1/24th over the following 24 months. A total repayment period of 48 months.

- 2.6 The application of such a scheme provides an additional measure to reduce the number of compulsory redundancies required, and ensures that competent employees with transferable skills are retained within the workforce.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The cost of this measure will depend upon the number of applications approved by the Service and the total amount spent for each application approved.
- 3.2 An earmarked reserve was created at the end of 2010/11 for the one-off costs of organisational transition. This reserve currently stands at £500k and will be used to meet the costs of the relocation scheme for RDS employees as well as the cost of redundancies.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The human resource implications are set out in the report.
- 4.2 This measure forms part of the Service approach to mitigating the need for compulsory redundancies in addition to other measures that will be considered as part of the formal consultation process with representative bodies.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Trades Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (as amended) sets out clear obligations on employers to consult with representative bodies and those employees affected as part of a statutory consultation process. This should include consideration of measures designed to mitigate the impact of redundancies.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

A failure to follow the statutory consultation process in a redundancy situation may lead to claims of unfair dismissal. Measures taken to reduce the need to make compulsory redundancies would be taken into account by an employment tribunal

when considering whether a dismissal is fair in terms of the application of the legislation. The proposal seeks to offer an alternative to redundancy in approved cases.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of the report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER