

Report of the Head of Legal Services

8. Approval of Early Retirement

Purpose of report

1. To extend the Scheme of Delegation so as to permit the Chief Fire Officer to determine any applications for early retirement received from officers at Station Commander rank.
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Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the existing delegated authority to the Chief Fire Officer to approve the early retirements, in consultation with the Chairman and Treasurer, in the case of employees whose salary is less than £45,000 be extended to include Officers at Station Commander rank subject to the pension costs still not exceeding £45,000.

Introduction and Background

2. At its meeting on 3 October 2013 the Authority agreed that the Scheme of Delegations to Officers be amended to authorise the Chief Fire Officer to approve early retirements, in consultation with the Chairman and Treasurer in the case of employees whose salary is less than £45,000 and where the pension costs do not exceed £45,000. The aim of this decision was to ensure that Members continued to be involved in scrutinising proposals involving the most senior staff but that other decisions were delegated to the appropriate management level.
3. Members will be aware that the changes in fire cover as part of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) that were agreed at the Fire Authority meeting on 1 October 2014 required a reduction of 44 wholetime firefighters. There are currently 43 uniformed posts that are unsupported by the Authority's revenue budget.
4. On 18 February 2015 the Authority agreed that staff who volunteer for redundancy be offered an enhanced redundancy payment calculated on the basis of actual pay (rather than the statutory maximum) plus 75% enhancement and that this be applied to all staff groups. The Service has sought volunteers for redundancy and early retirement and has received 11 applications. The invitation for redundancy/early retirements has been extended to uniformed staff up to and including Station Commanders. Applications will be dealt with on a case by case basis having regard to the needs of the service, whether individual cases are cost-effective and whether it will assist the Authority in its reduction of uniformed posts as required by the CRMP through the creation of a 'bumped redundancy'.

5. When approving the scheme of delegation in 2013, it had not been envisaged that members would need to be involved in approving cases involving mid-ranking staff Station Commander level. Although a Station Commander's basic salary is less than £45,000, once the flexi-duty allowance is taken into consideration this takes it over that threshold.

Conclusion/Summary

6. It is important that Members should be involved in determining applications for early retirement which affect the most senior staff within the organisation or where the costs are significant. Station Commanders are not seen as coming within that category and it is suggested that any applications for early retirement at this level could properly be dealt with under the scheme of delegation.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues).	Reduction in overall staff numbers in accordance with the Authority's CRMP.
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	None
Risk Management/Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores.	None

Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter).	None.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	None – not applicable.

Supporting Information

Background papers –

The Scheme of Delegations to Officers

Fire Authority papers 3 October 2013 and 18 February 2015

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