



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE held on Wednesday, 18 September 2019 at Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service, Sadler Road, Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 2FQ at 12.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Bob Rudd (Chair), Stef Nelson, Stuart Parker and Morgan Tarr

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Recording of Meeting

Members were reminded that this meeting would be audio recorded.

B Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Michael Beanland, Mike Biggin and Dorothy Flude.

C Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of Members' interest.

D Minutes of the Staffing Committee

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Staffing Committee held on 10th June be confirmed as a correct record.

2 RE-EMPLOYMENT AND PENSION ABATEMENT POLICY

The Director of Governance and Commissioning introduced the report which provided Members with information about proposed changes to the policy on re-employment and pension abatement. Changes to the policy were shown in red in Appendix 1 to the report.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the contents of the report be noted and the proposed changes to the policy be approved.

3 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Order 2006, the press and public be

excluded from the meeting for the items of business listed below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A to the Act, see paragraphs indicated:

Item 4: Re-Employment – Specialist Fire Investigator (Fixed Term Appointment)

and

Item 5: On-call Recruitment and Training and Pension Abatement

Paragraphs

- (1) Information relating to an individual
- (3) Information relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

4 RE-EMPLOYMENT - SPECIALIST FIRE INVESTIGATOR (FIXED TERM APPOINTMENT)

The Director of Governance and Commissioning informed Members that, following the fire at Beechmere Extra Care Village in Crewe, officers had decided to create the role of Specialist Fire Investigator to co-ordinate the Service's fire investigation and associated activity as well as to assist in the preparation of any documentation.

Officers were keen to appoint a retired former employee to the role. The Re-Employment and Pension Abatement Policy stated that the re-employment of any employee following retirement would only occur in exceptional circumstances. Officers outlined reasons within the report explaining why they believed there to be exceptional circumstances in this case and sought approval to appoint directly without a competitive recruitment process.

Members stated that they were not generally in favour of reappointing retired employees. However, they were satisfied that the circumstances were exceptional and that officers had provided assurance that the requirements of the Re-Employment and Pension Abatement Policy had been met.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the content of the report; and

[2] the appointment of a retired former employee to the role of Specialist Fire Investigator (a fixed-term position) without an open and competitive process be approved.

5 ON-CALL RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING AND PENSION ABATEMENT

The report contained details of an issue that had arisen concerning pension abatement that could impact upon the recruitment and training of on-call firefighters. Officers sought to secure a decision from Members about the approach to pension abatement in the circumstances.

If re-employed, the pension of a retired firefighter would usually be abated in whole or in part to ensure that the pay in the new role plus the pension did not exceed the pay prior to retirement. In exceptional circumstances Staffing Committee could decide that abatement should not occur. If it did so the Authority was obliged to pay into the pension fund an amount equal to the sum that would have been abated.

Members agreed that the circumstances were exceptional at present and that pension abatement should not take place. They requested officers to report back in January 2020 so that they could review the position.

RESOLVED: That

[1] pension abatement should not take place in the circumstances outlined in the report; and

[2] officers report back on the situation in January 2020.