

Post Reductions 2012-13

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

This report provides an update on the progress made against the decision to delete several posts from the substantive establishment in direct response to the outcome of the Authority's Public Value consultation work. Members will recall that this work resulted from the need to save approximately £3 million over 4 years commencing in April 2011.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the content of this report

3 Background

The Public Value consultation carried out during the financial year 2010-11 identified several areas for cost savings. In considering the resultant report, presented to the Fire Authority in December 2010, Members agreed that in each of the 4 forthcoming financial years 2011-12 through to 2014-15, a reduction of 2 non-uniform posts (to an average value of £50,000 per year) and 5 Retained Duty System (RDS) posts would be achieved.

It should also be noted that prior to the Public Value work in 2010, a freeze was instigated allowing recruitment only to essential and Retained Duty System (RDS) vacancies, and allowing posts which have become vacant through internal changes or leavers to be held as vacant subject to review.

This approach has continued throughout 2011 and whilst essential posts have been advertised eg IT vacancies, all posts have continued to be reviewed as they become vacant.

4 Post Deletions 2012-13

Non-uniformed posts:

Following analysis of current temporary and vacant posts and Brigade Manager discussions, both within their teams and collectively, the following permanent reductions were deleted from the establishment on 1 April 2012:

- 1 x Outreach Vehicle Driver (half post)
- 25% Youth Officer post
(the remainder being diverted to continue youth work)
- 1 x Area Command Administrative post
(intended to be part of the new Group Support Teams but posts now deleted for savings)

The total (year-on-year) savings generated by the deletion of these posts is approximately £41,500.

A further £5,000 per year (approx) has been saved through changes to the arrangements made for photography services, which whilst it is not a deletion it has resulted in year-on-year savings.

The balance of £3,500 is covered in 2012-13 by other posts which are being held as vacant or having delayed recruitment applied.

The aim is to achieve an average reduction of £50,000 per year over the period to March 2015.

Retained Duty System Firefighter posts:

The Public Value work resulted in the agreement to delete 5 vacant RDS Firefighter posts each year for 4 years resulting in a total reduction of 20 posts.

The RDS establishment at April 2010 provided for 343 'units' and 5 were deleted at April 2011, with a further 5 being deleted from 1 April 2012, taking the RDS establishment down to 333 units from that date. This has not had any direct impact on staff as we continue to run under establishment within the Retained Service and recruitment is therefore continuing.

The total savings generated by the deletion of these posts is in the region of £25,500 to £28,500 dependent upon the cover provided and the level of activity undertaken.

5 Post Deletions 2011-12

Posts deleted in the last financial year were notified to the Human Resources Committee at its meeting in April 2011. In summary, 2 posts were deleted generating year-on-year savings of £44,500 with the balance being met by other part-time vacancies having been held vacant

6 Risks and Mitigation

As explained last year, in reducing the non-uniformed establishment by 2 posts per year for 4 years the Service is cutting at an already small section of our workforce. The planned reduction of 8 posts over 4 years will undoubtedly affect the level of support available to the operational aspect of the organisation.

It was identified through the Public Value work that the deletion of non-uniformed posts carried with it risks in terms of reducing the capacity of the Service to deliver against its aims and objectives, a potential impact on staff morale, an expectation that the workloads of remaining staff may increase to compensate for the deleted posts, and that it may make the Service more vulnerable in terms of being able to cover staff absence and illness without affecting delivery. We continue to be mindful of these risks and to consider any potential implications.

The risk to the organisation is being mitigated as far as possible by continuing to avoid redundancies and by regularly communicating with our staff about how we're doing. The Service have, and continue to seek to fill priority vacant posts internally leaving those 'donating' posts vacant and therefore potentially subject to deletion. This approach aims to protect those roles which are critical to the day to day support of the broader Service and its aims, although it has been less useful as an option recently as we have had a need to recruit specialist technical staff.

7 Financial Implications

The Head of Finance has been consulted in the preparation of this report and is in agreement with the figures stated.

8 Legal Comment

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

9 Equality Impact Assessment

Officers have considered the Service's Brigade Order on Equality Impact Assessments (HR 5, Part 2) and have determined that there are no discriminatory practices or differential impacts upon specific groups arising from this report. An initial Equality Impact Assessment has therefore not been completed.

10 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

11 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.