

Post Reductions 2011-12

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Paul Raymond, Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260205 or Louise McKenzie, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (HR), on 01743 260205.

1 Purpose of Report

This report informs Members of the decision to delete several posts from the substantive establishment with effect from 1 April 2011. This is in direct response to the outcome of the Authority's Public Value consultation work with both internal staff groups and wider public stakeholders and the need to save £1.146 million in 2011/12 alone.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report

3 Background

The Public Value consultation carried out during the financial year 2010-11 identified several areas where cost savings needed to be focused in future. In considering the resultant report presented to the Fire Authority in December 2010. Members agreed that in each of the four forthcoming financial years 2011/12 through to 2014/15 a reduction of two non-uniform posts (to an average value of £50,000 per year) and five Retained Duty System posts would be achieved. In addition the proposals for the creation of the District Development Teams have been reviewed to achieve savings.

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

4 Post Deletions 2011/12

Non-uniformed posts:

Following analysis of (current) vacant posts and Brigade Manager discussions, both within their teams and collectively, the following two posts were deleted from the establishment on 1 April 2011:

1 x Road Traffic Collision Reduction Officer
1 x Programme Support Officer

The total (year-on-year) savings generated by the deletion of these posts is approximately £44,500 including salary and on-costs. The balance of £5,500 is covered in 2011/12 by other part-time vacancies which are being held as vacant. 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 five vacant RDS Firefighter posts each year for four years resulting in a total reduction of 20 posts. The RDS establishment provided for 343 'units' and of these we current have 48 units vacant across the county. It is therefore not necessary to specify specific deleted posts and recruitment to stations where staffing is low is continuing but over the four year period we will not recruit to more than a total of 323 unit strength across the county.

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.

District Support Team Station Manager posts:

It was originally intended that the District Support Teams would consist of four Station Managers and four Watch Managers working with the existing Retained Support Officers (RSOs) in four teams of four. Given the current climate and the Public Value work this plan is being revised but the decision has been taken to reduce the number of Station Managers to two and therefore create savings equal to two Station Manager posts (£75,000 plus on-costs). The remainder of the reductions planned for this team are being worked through to achieve the required £148,000 saving.

5 Risks and mitigation

In reducing the non-uniformed establishment by two posts per year for four years we are cutting at an already small section of our workforce. The planned reduction of eight posts over four years will undoubtedly affect the level of support available to the operational aspect of the organisation, although specifically how is hard to quantify until we identify the nature of the posts to be lost in the coming years.

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 us more vulnerable in terms of being able to cover staff absence and illness without affecting delivery.

The risk to the organisation is being mitigated as far as possible by attempting to avoid redundancies and by regularly communicating with our staff about how we are doing and what we are planning. We are also seeking 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.

6 Financial Implications

The savings identified above, will deliver the reductions identified during the Public Value Process, which have been incorporated into the Fire Authority's 2011/12 revenue budget.

7 Legal Comment

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

Officers have considered the Service's Brigade Order on Equality Impact Assessments (Personnel 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 not, therefore, been completed.

9 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

10 Background Papers

Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

15 December 2011, Paper 8 – 2010/11 and Later Years Budget Summary