

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Human Resources Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Friday 14 October 2016 at 10.00 am**

Present:

Councillor J Hillary (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors S Iveson (Vice-Chairman), J Armstrong, A Bonner, J Brown, J Clark, K Dearden, D Hicks, S Morrison, J Robinson, J Shuttleworth, M Stanton, A Surtees and K Thompson

Also Present:

N Orton – Pensions Manager

J Kemp – Human Resources Advice and Support Manager

L Mason – HR Business Lead

S Weston – HR Business Lead

J Walt – HR Business Lead

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Blakey, T Henderson, K Henig, B Moir, R Ormerod and A Turner.

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2016 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

- (i) **Applications for Early Retirement and/or Voluntary Redundancy for Council Employees** (minute numbered 6 refers)

Members were informed that following further clarification the employee at paragraphs 25-27 in the report had withdrawn from the interview process.

- (ii) **Additional Financial Information – Applications for the Early Release of Pension Benefits on Compassionate Grounds** (minute numbered 9 refers)

Bryan Smith, Legal Manager Litigation was in attendance to respond to the Committee's request for additional financial information to be included in the report in order to assist decision-making in respect of applications for the early release of pension benefits on compassionate grounds.

The Officer advised that in 2009 Human Resources Committee had been granted authority to deal with applications based on set criteria. Criteria (a) to (d) related to the individual's personal circumstances and only (e) referred to financial information; the cost to the Council in granting the request. The Committee had authority to exercise discretion against this established criteria and in doing so the Committee should remain objective. Seeking additional financial information from the applicant would add a subjective element to the criteria.

Having discussed the matter with Officers he suggested that it may assist Members if the report included the base pension benefit figures for granting a request with or without reductions, and this would fall within existing criteria (e).

Members welcomed the proposal to include the additional information which the Committee had requested previously. Members considered that applications were determined objectively in line with the criteria but this addition to the report would assist the Committee in making informed decisions.

Resolved:

That the additional information as outlined above be included in future reports to the Committee.

5 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

6 Applications for Early Retirement and/or Voluntary Redundancy for Council Employees

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Corporate Directors Resources, Adult and Health Services, Neighbourhood Services and the Human Resources Advice and Support Manager (for copy see file of Minutes).

Members were informed that the start date in respect of the application at paragraphs 2-5 in the report should read 1 September 2013.

Councillor Armstrong referred to the financial information at Appendix 1 and noted the difference in salary between two of the applicants, despite both employees being on the same grade. The Pensions Manager informed the Member that this was due to the fewer weekly hours worked by one of the employees.

In respect of the applications at paragraphs 12-15 in the report Councillor Robinson sought an assurance that there would be no impact upon vulnerable people who received the service. The Member was informed that the posts were Manager positions and frontline staff would not be affected. Councillor Brown added that this was part of a review of how the whole service was delivered.

Resolved:

That the cases of Early Retirement and Voluntary Redundancy be noted and agreed with effect from the dates specified in the report.

7 Application for Flexible Retirement from an Employee of Children and Young People's Services

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Interim Director Children and Young People's Services and the Human Resources Advice and Support Manager (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:

That in view of the applicant's circumstances and as the cost of the pension strain costs would be met within 6 months, the application for flexible retirement be granted with reductions (option 10(b) in the report).