

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Human Resources Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Friday 9 December 2016 at 10.00 am**

Present:

Councillor J Hillary (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Armstrong, J Blakey, J Brown, D Hicks, S Morrison, K Shaw and K Thompson

Also Present:

J Kemp – Human Resources Advice and Support Manager
N Orton – Pensions Manager
J Walt – HR Business Lead
S Weston – HR Business Lead

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Iveson, J Clark, K Dearden, T Henderson, K Henig, B Moir, R Ormerod, J Robinson and A Surtees.

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 November 2016 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

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

The Committee considered a joint report of the Corporate Directors Adult and Health Services, Regeneration and Local Services and Resources, and the Human Resources Advice and Support Manager regarding applications for Early Retirement and Voluntary Redundancy (for copy see file of Minutes).

In response to a question from Councillor Armstrong in respect of the applications at paragraphs 2-5 in the report, the Member was informed that the leaving dates of the employees had been staggered to ensure continuity of service.

Following a question from Councillor Thompson with regard to the employee at paragraphs 6-8 in the report, the Committee was informed that there were other services located in the buildings to be vacated by the Team, and savings would be accrued from the realignment of staff from three buildings to one. The HR Business Lead, Adult and Health Services advised that she would provide details to the Member. Councillor Brown noted the minimal cost for the early access to pension and was informed that this was due to the age of the employee, who at 62 was close to being eligible for the receipt of pension benefits without reductions.

Councillor Armstrong queried the leaving date of 31 March 2017 in respect of the employees at paragraphs 13-16 in the report and was informed that the restructure of the service was ongoing and would be completed by this date. The Member was also informed that the application was not linked to MTFP savings; the service was undergoing a restructure as a result of a diminishing demand for the service and the post would be permanently deleted from the establishment.

With regard to the application at paragraphs 17-20 in the report Councillor Brown pointed out that paragraph 18 made a general statement about the impact changes to the NPPF and Welfare Reform measures would have on Councils in terms of affordable housing provision, when this was not the case for all local authorities.

Resolved:

That the cases of Early Retirement and Voluntary Redundancy be noted and agreed with effect from the dates shown in Appendix 1.

7 Application for Early Release of Pension Benefits on Compassionate Grounds from a Former Employee of the Transformations and Partnerships Service

The Committee considered a joint report of the Corporate Director Transformations and Partnerships, and the Human Resources Advice and Support Manager which requested the Committee to consider an application for the early release of pension benefits on compassionate grounds (for copy see file of Minutes).

Members discussed the case at length and Councillor Brown noted that it was unusual that, in accordance with pensions regulations, there was no option for the applicant to access her pension with reductions when she left the scheme. The

Committee considered the applicant's circumstances against the agreed criteria and determined that the application should be viewed compassionately.

Resolved:

That the application for the early release of pension benefits be granted on compassionate grounds without reductions (option 6(b) in the report).