

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No 9

MEETING: 16TH FEBRUARY 2015

SUBJECT: FIREFIGHTER ESTABLISHMENT

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, THE CLERK TO THE
AUTHORITY, THE FINANCE OFFICER AND THE PERSONNEL ADVISOR TO THE
AUTHORITY**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an update to members on the Firefighter (Grey Book) Establishment and the projected leaver's profile.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will be aware that due to the financial challenges facing the Authority, TWFRS have had a recruitment freeze in place for Grey Book staff over the past 4 years.
- 2.2 The aim of the freeze was to assist the Authority in meeting any establishment reductions required with minimal impact upon existing staff.
- 2.3 Over this period the Service have continued to monitor the profile of those leaving the Service to ensure that the establishment is maintained at an operational level, whilst at the same time providing sufficient flexibility to support future reductions in line with the IRMP and the Authority's HR Plan.

3 LEAVERS PROFILE (Grey Book)

- 3.1 Over the past 3 years the profile of leavers has started to change, with a very small increase in resignations and some timing changes to retirements.
- 3.2 In previous years many retiring staff remained with the Service for a considerable time beyond the point of their individual retirement date; more recently there has been an increased number of staff retiring closer to their earliest retirement date. This change in behaviour has been sufficient to change the retirement profile and resource planning within the Service.
- 3.3 The retirement projections for the next 3 years provides sufficient flexibility to allow the Authority to continue to reduce the Grey Book establishment in line

with the Authority's HR Plan, reducing the establishment in a managed way, in line with the IRMP implementation plan. Members should note that the projected number of leavers for the next 24 months may impact upon Service delivery, due to potential short-term staffing shortages.

4 WORKFORCE PLANNING

- 4.1 Operational effectiveness and Firefighter safety has always been of the highest priority. To reduce the impact of the projected reductions on the operational establishment the Service will need to secure staff with the necessary skills and experience.
- 4.2 Considering the projections, the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) can confirm that up to 20 Firefighters will be needed this year.
- 4.3 As the deficit in staffing is largely due to retirements, the Service will focus upon securing experienced, qualified Firefighters from other Local Authority Fire and Rescue services, this programme will begin with immediate effect.
- 4.4 With the addition of up to 20 Firefighters, the existing leavers profile will still enable the establishment changes required by the IRMP to be managed within the Authority's HR Plan.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The risk management implications of this report are addressed in section 8.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial implications associated with this specific report.

7 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 In securing the appropriate resources, the Authority's equal opportunities policy will be employed in enhancing the diversity of the workforce.

8 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Establishment is required to maintain operational effectiveness. Whilst the Establishment design takes account of the usual staffing fluctuations, the projected vacancies are expected to exceed this profile. Securing experienced resource over the next 12 months is therefore essential to maintain Operational effectiveness.



9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The Authority is recommended to:

- a) Note the contents of the report;
- b) Receive further reports as appropriate.

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