

## Devon and Cornwall Police Authority

### MINUTES

A special meeting of the **Human Resources Committee** was held on Monday 6 December 2010 in the Conference Room, Devon and Cornwall Police Authority, Endeavour House, Woodwater Park, Exeter, starting at 10:30hrs.

#### Present:

Chairman: Mr D Money  
Vice-Chairman: Mrs L Price  
Members: Mr D Percival, Mr B Preston, Mrs L Williams.  
Also attending: Mrs L Dunn

#### Officers in attendance:

##### Police Authority

Mrs J Hall-Williams (HR Advisor to the Authority), Mrs E Tanner (Administrator).

##### Police Force

Mr C Haselden (Director of HR), Mr G Cooper (Head of People Services), Mrs C Owen (HR Strategic Development Manager)

#### HR/502 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr M Clayton, Mr J Hart, Mr M Hicks, Mr M Hodge, and Ms J Norton.

#### HR/503 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made in respect of any item on the agenda.

#### HR/504 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- The committee had been convened to consider the one item on the agenda and this meeting was therefore to be restricted to discussion of that item only.

#### HR/505 Consideration to exclude the Press and Public

**Closed Items** (items considered by the Committee with only members of the Police Authority, appropriate officers and expert advisors present, on the grounds that exempt/confidential information may be disclosed.)

**RESOLVED** that the Agenda items detailed in the table below be considered as closed items:

Agenda Item	Minute No.	Report Title	Relevant Act	Relevant Section
5	HR/506	Voluntary Redundancy and Redundancy payments	Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985	Schedule 12A, Paragraph 4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the Authority.

## HR/506 Voluntary Redundancy and Redundancy Payments

The Force policy does not provide for voluntary redundancy as an option when handling redundancy in the workplace. Members considered a report which provided information to enable a high-level review of current redundancy arrangements and made proposals for a voluntary redundancy scheme specifically for achieving a reduction in the number of a discrete group of police staff. There was no expectation that a voluntary redundancy scheme would be applied more generally at this stage.

A paper proposing a voluntary redundancy scheme and to open negotiations on redundancy terms was expected at the full Police Authority on the 10<sup>th</sup> December. It had been assumed that the Authority would expect the Human Resources Committee to have a view on the proposals being put forward and hence a special meeting of the Authority's Human Resources Committee, to which all members were invited, had been called to enable members to review the proposals in advance of the meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup>.

The Committee sought clarity about the scope of the proposals. It was confirmed that the endorsement currently sought was for a voluntary redundancy scheme applied to the discrete group of police staff currently under review, and whether or not such a scheme should be enhanced to make it more attractive. In addition, and as a separate matter, there were proposals for the remit to open negotiations with the trades unions on redundancy compensation, and or severance arrangements including retirements as a result of a need to review the current redundancy scheme generally in light of financial stringencies and affordability over time.

In terms of the review of the discrete group of staff, there was a proposal to reduce 119 posts to 58. The Force were already carrying 10 vacancies, therefore 51 posts would be lost. Managers had indicated there would be interest for voluntary redundancy within this group. In retaining 58 posts, the location of the remaining postholders was critical to ensure the Force could staff the remaining offices. It did not follow that the people who may apply for voluntary redundancy would necessarily be from areas where posts were to be lost. There would be a need for managers to take decisions, based on transparent and pre-published criteria, about those volunteers whose application would be accepted, and those whose application would not and which would ensure retention of the required skills, knowledge and provide the best geographical fit.

It was clarified that some postholders in this discrete group were retired police officers, but were not subject to Regulation A19.

In considering the proposals for a voluntary redundancy scheme, members raised issues which included:

- The risk of challenge should it be decided not to apply a voluntary redundancy scheme more widely. There was a risk, however regular review of policies, including redundancy arrangements is good practice and prevents arrangements from being accepted as common practice.
- Redeployment opportunities - There is the opportunity for redeployment however redeployment arrangements can be complex, relying on numerous considerations and hence further work would be required before the Force was in a position to have identified the opportunities available. Furthermore, because police staff posts have already been cut, opportunities for redeployment were likely to be limited. It was confirmed that short term payments were made towards travelling costs for people who were redeployed further afield.
- The risk of creating bad feeling in the workplace should those who volunteer for redundancy be refused whilst those who do not are made to leave.
- Concerns that the organisation may lose their best people through the voluntary redundancy route.
- Clarity about the process that would be employed in progressing either a voluntary scheme or a compulsory scheme, and the estimated time scales. Further work was required in order to proceed.

At this point, the number of station enquiry office posts to be lost was unknown since the number, location and opening hours of enquiry offices to be kept open was yet to be decided. 30 days consultation was required in accordance with the DTI. Redeployment opportunities needed to be identified and work undertaken to establish the geographical match of people to posts. In due course, up to 90 days notice for some staff with over 12 years service would be required.

- Arrangements should insufficient number of people volunteer for redundancy. It was anticipated that should a voluntary scheme be approved, full pension and redundancy details would be published and expressions of interest would be sought from the discrete group of staff in early January. By the end of January, it would then be clear how many expressions of interest there were, and the locations. At this point, it would be possible to establish whether sufficient expressions had been received, whether all could be approved or whether it would be necessary to go down the compulsory redundancy route.

In considering both proposals, members raised issues which included:

- There was a need to be able to justify to the public anything that appeared to be over generous.
- In considering the range of options for a redundancy scheme it was noted that in terms of the future policy - option 4 would affect higher paid people significantly more.
- Members asked for clarification if the proposal regarding the removal of entitlement for both early retirement pension and redundancy is legal and asked if this information could be provided in the report to the Full Police Authority. Furthermore it was requested that the arrangements for early retirement be made distinct from redundancy in that report.
- The need to progress quickly in order to achieve early savings.
- Whether or not pay in lieu of notice would be considered, and if so the cost / saving implications.
- The exposure to the pension scheme of the proposals.

The Treasurer had undertaken some analysis of the options in terms of cost and was able to give indicative costs for options A-E but more work was required on F and G due to their complexity. Redundancy payments would necessarily need to be funded from reserves, and were included in the medium term financial plan. Information was provided in terms of arrangements employed by other police forces around country where redundancy payments ranged from statutory payments to a multiple of 2.5x for some voluntary schemes.

The next step would be to open negotiations with the trades unions. The understanding was that the trades unions would welcome discussion because there was a realisation that the enhancements applied to the current redundancy scheme was unsustainable and put jobs at risk. It was also understood that the trades unions were in favour of a voluntary redundancy scheme.

Members felt unable to support the final recommendation at this stage and instead recommended a sub-group of members be convened to take this forward. It was also proposed that for clarity, two papers be prepared for the Police Authority meeting – one to focus on the arrangements for the discrete group of staff and relating to a voluntary redundancy scheme, and one to focus on the wider remit of redundancy arrangements throughout the organisation.

## **RESOLVED**

- i. To endorse the use of a voluntary redundancy scheme at the current or prevailing rate for implementing the Station Enquiry Officer review subject to approval of the review by the Police Authority;**

- ii. To agree for a submission of a report to the Full Police Authority to this affect and consider any additional information required.
- iii. In addition and as a separate matter to agree for the Force to instigate negotiations with the trades unions on the redundancy compensation and or severance arrangements, including retirements, for all staff to reflect the current financial stringencies and confirm the negotiation remit referring to the Full Police Authority as necessary.
- iv. That the Full Police Authority establishes a sub-group of Members to meet in January 2011 at the latest, to establish the negotiation remit in (iii) above.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 13.00 hrs