

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND CIVIL DEFENCE AUTHORITY

22nd NOVEMBER 2004

1. **UPDATE ON THE OPERATION OF THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS
FOR RE-ENGAGEMENT OF UNIFORMED PERSONNEL
FOLLOWING RETIREMENT**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

THAT the Authority note the report.

2. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted to update the Authority on the operation of the new arrangements it approved in 2003 for the re-engagement of uniformed personnel following retirement.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At the meeting of the Fire Authority on 17th February 2003, the Authority approved new arrangements for the re-engagement of uniformed personnel following retirement under the terms of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme.
- 3.2 The new arrangements were introduced as a consequence of the premature retirement of competent uniformed personnel due to the financial disincentive contained within the Pension Scheme of continuing in service after thirty years. Under these arrangements, personnel would be allowed to retire and receive their lump sum commutation. The pension would then be frozen and the employee would be re-engaged under the same pay and conditions as previously held. The contract of employment is reviewed annually until the compulsory age of retirement under the Pension Scheme.

- 3.3 These arrangements were considered to be beneficial to the Authority in that: it would not lose experienced staff prematurely; it would not have to incur the costs of replacing the individual; and payment of the pension would be abated. The individual would continue in the employment of their choice without having to make further pension contributions.
- 3.4 In approving the new arrangements, the Authority asked for an update report on the operation of the new arrangements after twelve months. Unfortunately, this has been delayed due to the firefighters' industrial dispute over pay and conditions.
- 3.5 Since the new arrangements have been in place, three uniformed employees have applied for re-engagement and all have been accepted. This has involved a Firefighter, a Leading Firefighter and a Divisional Officer. There have been no problems with the operation of these arrangements.

4. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

The re-engagement of employees under the arrangements enables firefighters to remain in employment until the compulsory age of retirement without being disadvantaged by the perverse terms of the statutory Firefighter's Pension Scheme.

5. **CORPORATE AIMS SUPPORTED**

The principal corporate aims supported by the information in this report are as follows.

1. To meet the Authority's statutory duties, standards and expectations.
2. To create a financial plan which operates within budget, to ensure the most efficient use of resources.

6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The course of action recommended in this report does not raise issues which should be drawn to the attention of the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

7. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There is no certainty that the three uniformed employees would have retired (rather than be re-engaged) if the new policy had not been introduced. However, on the basis that the employees would have retired, the Authority is saving approximately £49,000 abated annual pension payments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Authority Meeting 17th February 2003 - Minute 10/03
Human Resources Department Files

F. J. E. SHEEHAN
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER