

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

RECRUITMENT FOR ON-CALL FIRE-FIGHTERS AT LANCASTER FIRE STATION 03 FEBRUARY 2015

REPORT OF THE HR AND OD MANAGER

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider a request from Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service for support with their recruitment of on-call fire-fighters.

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) **That Personnel Committee considers the request received from Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A request has been received from the Service Delivery Manager, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Services (LFRS), for the City Council, as a large employer in the District, to support LFRS with their recruitment of on-call fire-fighters in Lancaster. The criteria for which is that retained fire-fighters live or work within approximately a five minute distance from the fire station.
- 1.2 LFRS have advised that they have secured a £2.4 million funding bid for a new fire station in Lancaster and one of the fire appliances will be crewed by on-call fire-fighters.
- 1.3 The Assistant Chief Fire Officer attended Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on the 11 June 2014 as the request of the Committee to discuss the proposed reduction in Lancaster Fire Station capacity.
- 1.4 Following the meeting, at the request of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Chief Executive wrote to the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, expressing the Committee's concerns at the proposals. A copy of that letter and the reply from the Chairman of the Lancashire Fire Authority are attached at **Appendix A**.
- 1.5 The following Notice on Motion to Council was considered by full Council at its meeting on the 22 October 2014

“This Council notes with regret the decision by Lancashire Combined Fire Authority (CFA) to reduce cover at Lancaster Fire Station from two full time appliances to one full time appliance with the other to be staffed by retained (part time) crews with an up to 5 minute slower response time.

This Council believes that this cut in services is a direct result of the Government's cut to the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service budget. The loss of this full time appliance and others in Lancashire, is inevitable unless the funding cuts are reversed.”

1.6 Council resolved to:

1. *To lobby local Members of Parliament and the Government to ask for the funding cuts to be reversed.*
2. *To join with other Lancashire Councils in collaboration with the Lancashire CFA to campaign for adequate funding for Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.*

2.0 Proposal Details

2.1 If Personnel Committee are minded to agree to the request to support LRFS in their recruitment drive for retained fire-fighters, internal communication methods will be used, such as providing staff with leaflets and access to posters and using the intranet.

3.0 Implication as an employer

3.1 The Council applies all the statutory obligations in relation to time off work for public duties.

3.2 Employees in the Army Reserves or other reserve forces have certain protections under employment law if they're called up for service. Employers of reservists also have particular rights and obligations in this situation – eg they may be able to claim financial assistance or apply for an exemption.

3.3 The duties of an On-call Fire-fighter are not covered by any statutory arrangements, therefore an officer's external (other) employment in a role of “On-call Fire-fighter” would be treated in the same way as any other external/additional employment.

3.4 The Council's Code of Conduct, Part 7 - Codes and Protocols, Officers' Code of Conduct, Para 7 Outside Commitments (Appendix B) defines the boundaries within which outside commitments are managed.

3.5 Like any employment, care would have to be taken to ensure that any external obligations to the role of “On-call Fire-fighter” did not conflict with the duties of an Officer of the Council.

3.6 If the Personnel Committee were minded to support the recruitment drive by LRFS, it is not anticipated that this would place a strain on Council resources. However, given that the Council may be seen as actively promoting these roles, there may be an expectation amongst officers that the Council in some

way endorses employment in such posts, without further consideration of the potential impact on Council services or regard for the provisions set out in the Officer Code of Conduct. These issues can be addressed by proper promotion of vacancies and clear communication between Lancaster City Council and LFRS.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

Impact assessment is covered in the report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Services would be required to manage any resource implications arising from within existing budgets.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources:

The HR & OD Manager is the author of the report. The HR implications are set out in the body of the report.

Information Services:

N/A

Property:

N/A

Open Spaces:

N/A

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

In the absence of the Monitoring Officer, the Deputy Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no observations to make on this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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Ref: CE/SH/ES/Cttees/Personnel – 1.

