



Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Rightsizing Exercise
<b>Date:</b>	20 November 2009
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Jill Minne, Head of Human Resources.
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jill Minne, ext 3220

<b>Purpose</b>
The purpose of this report is to update members on the three elements of the organisational rightsizing exercise, i.e. voluntary redundancy; vacancy control; and the management of supernumerary employees.
<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
Members agreed an approach to organisational rightsizing at its meeting on 21 August 2009 and asked for further information on vacancy control at its meeting in October 2009.
<b>Key Issues</b>
<b>Voluntary redundancy (VR)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The council initiated a trawl for expressions of interest in voluntary redundancy. This trawl related only to those staff in areas that are potentially affected by the review of centre, ongoing structural reviews, and/or significant revenue losses.</li><li>2. 64 formal applications for VR have been received.</li><li>3. The attached pro-forma is being used to assess every application. Members will note that the pro-forma sets out the criteria and principles which members agreed in relation to the implementation of the VR exercise – i.e. the decision to release anyone on VR is dependent on the needs of the council and we retain the right to decide whether or not to accept an employee's application for VR in accordance with the following principles:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Prioritisation of VR requests will be based on available finance and the level of savings which may be delivered</li><li>▪ The VR will avoid the need for compulsory redundancy</li><li>▪ The employee's post must be redundant or a one to one transferred redundancy can be identified with a clear audit trail linking the person to be redundant with the post to be deleted.</li><li>▪ The potential for redeployment</li><li>▪ The need to ensure that essential skills and expertise are maintained</li></ul></li></ol>

- All other relevant options have been considered.
4. In addition, departments have been asked to identify any vacant posts in their staffing establishment as this is a crucial element of both managing supernumerary staff and assessing whether or not employees may be released on the grounds of VR.
  5. Consultation with TUs is ongoing throughout the process. Individual redundancy consultation is ongoing with supernumerary employees.

### **Vacancy control**

1. In conjunction with the VR exercise we must consider filling posts on a permanent basis in the context of the organisation's need to 'right-size' and/or create an effective corporate centre.
2. Consequently, any vacancy in an area affected by the VR exercise will be held until such times as the outcome of the VR exercise / resultant structural changes are clearer;
3. If the vacant post is unaffected by the VR exercise it will be considered as a potential redeployment opportunity for supernumerary employees or whether or not it could be internally trawled to mitigate against potential redundancy.
4. Only if none of these mechanisms are appropriate, will consideration be given to filling the post via public advertisement.
5. We are also required to implement the RPA vacancy control system, i.e. the council now has to consider trawling some posts in the most appropriate RPA 'restricted pool'.
6. The Council's TUs are consulted throughout the Council's approach to vacancy control.
7. Since the instigation of the VR exercise only 'front-line/ service delivery' posts have been recruited. The higher graded, support type posts (e.g. business support/finance/HR posts) have been put on hold until the outcome of the VR exercise and resultant structural changes are clearer.
8. In addition HR is currently working with departments, BIS and Financial Services to undertake an analysis of staff numbers, budget and spend with a view to agreeing a format for regular reports to committee on this matter. This proposed format will be presented to members in the near future.

### **Supernumerary staff**

1. Supernumerary staff are employees who do not have a substantive post in the organisation structure. Consequently the cost of these salaries is in addition to established salary budgets.
2. Such staff may be released with redundancy payment at any stage while they have supernumerary status; however the Council is actively seeking suitable alternative employment for supernumerary employees.
3. Should suitable redeployment not be found within a reasonable timeframe the Council will have to consider compulsory redundancy for any remaining supernumerary staff.

### **Decisions**

Members are asked to note the process to date and agree that a further report will be brought to December's meeting once evaluation of all the criteria and financial information has been complete.

### **Documents Attached**

**Appendix 1** - VR Evaluation Pro Forma