



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Update on the VFM Review of Security Arrangements in BCC
Date:	22 November 2013
Reporting Officer:	Ronan Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources Gerry Millar, Director of Property and Projects
Contact Officer:	George Wright, Head of Facilities Management Mark McBride, Head of Finance and Performance Charlie Thompson, Principal Consultant, Efficiency Unit

1.	Relevant Background Information
1.1	The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 18 May 2012 agreed that a VFM review of Security should be undertaken, led by the Efficiency Unit and using external specialist consultants, as part of the Efficiency Programme. It was also agreed that Party Group Briefings would be undertaken prior to bringing a report back to SP&R.
1.2	A further report was brought to SP&R Committee on 9 August 2013 which outlined the context of the review and sought permission to initiate Party and Trade Union briefings and these have now been completed.
1.3	The savings realised from the review would contribute to the £2m efficiency target for 2014/15.
2.	Key Issues
2.1	Since the Party Group briefings which were held in August and September, officers have been working up options for the future delivery of the security service and the associated savings.
2.2	A key element of all potential options is the reduction of staff numbers. It would therefore assist the Council in assessing the delivery of potential options if the level of interest amongst staff for availing of voluntary redundancy was established.
2.3	It is proposed therefore to undertake an “expression of interest” exercise for VR for the Security Unit. Such an exercise would not commit the Council or any employee to VR, but would give management an indication of those employees

2.4	who may wish to be considered for release on a voluntary redundancy basis and which of those staff meet the criteria for VR. The Council's trade unions have advised management they are content with this approach.
2.5	Over the coming weeks, officers will scope the potential costs and organisational design implications of staffing changes to support an effective review of the Security function and present this to Committee for its consideration in December 2013.
2.6	Briefings on the outcome of this exercise will be provided to Party Groups as part of the rate setting briefings which have been arranged for early December.
2.7	<p>The Next Steps</p> <p>Members should note; that if approval is given to conduct an 'Expression of Interest' exercise that the implementation of any VR exercise will, of course, be managed effectively and consistently on agreed principles, including the need for effective consultation with staff and trade unions, the business needs of the organisation, available finance and the level of savings which may be achieved.</p> <p>It is therefore proposed that the council authorise officers to carry out the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish criteria upon which VR applications are to be assessed; • Identify those staff likely to be affected by the review in Security; • Invite expressions of interest in VR from those affected staff; • Evaluate which of those staff who express interest in VR that could be released on the basis of the agreed criteria; • Approve VR applications where it is considered reasonable to do so, in line with established principles.

3.	Resource Implications
3.1	Financial Implications: None.
3.2	Human Resource Implications: None at this time as this proposal offers does not commitment either party. The Council's TUs are content with the proposed VR expression of interest exercise..

4.	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	There are no equality or good relations implications associated with this report.

5.	Recommendations
5.1	<p>Members are asked to give approval for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Head of Facilities Management, in conjunction with Corporate HR, to undertake a trawl for expressions of interest in voluntary redundancy, among the employees likely to be affected by the review of Security, in order to ascertain the number of employees who may wish to be released on a voluntary basis. - The Director of Finance & Resources and Director of Property & Projects to update Members further in relation to Security as part of their party briefing sessions already scheduled in for November/December 2013. .

6.	Key to abbreviations
6.1	BCC – Belfast City Council CMT – Corporate Management Team HR – Human Resources IJA – Ian Johnson Associates Limited VFM – Value for Money VR – Voluntary redundancy