

 Employment Committee 16 September 2008		Agenda Item No.
Title	Voluntary Reduced Time Scheme Review	
For further information about this report please contact	Karen Warren	
Service Area	Organisation Development and Service Improvement	
Wards of the District directly affected	None	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006		
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number		
Background Papers	Equality Impact Assessment Review partial and Full.	

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	No
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	No

Officer/Councillor Approval		
With regard to officer approval all reports <i>must</i> be approved by the report authors relevant director, Finance, Legal Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Relevant Director		
Chief Executive	20-8-08	Chris Elliott
CMT	20-8-08	Chris Elliott, Mary Hawkins, Bill Hunt
Section 151 Officer		Mary Hawkins
Legal	25-8-08	Simon Best
Finance	25-8-08	Gary Walker
Portfolio Holder(s)	25-8-08	Dave Shilton/Les Caborn
Consultation Undertaken		
Please insert details of any consultation undertaken with regard to this report.		
Consultation has taken place with all Directors, Heads of Service and GMB and UNISON secretaries.		
Final Decision?	Yes	
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. **SUMMARY**

1.1.1 As part of the Council's Equality Impact Assessment Review the Voluntary Reduced Time Policy was subject to both a partial and full assessment.

1.2

The Policy was introduced in January 1988 and is open to staff who work full time with at least two years WDC service. The equality impact assessment review has flagged that this is indirectly discriminatory to women who are more likely to work part-time and have a shorter length of service.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 The following main changes are therefore proposed:

- a. removal of full time requirement
- b. reduction of two to one year's WDC service requirement
- c. greater emphasis on managers being satisfied there is no detriment to the service and that the work can be covered
- d. removal of facility to 'exempt' jobs from VRT requests.

3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

3.1 To comply with the findings of the full and partial Equality Impact Assessment of the Voluntary Reduced Time.

- a. Full time requirement indirectly discriminatory to women.
- b. Greater length of service requirement indirectly discriminatory to women. One year chosen as other employment rights, including the right to request Parental Leave are triggered after on year's service.
- c. Requests need to be balanced against the needs of the service – there is no automatic right to agree requests.
- d. Very difficult to exempt a role without having looked at the options and requirements of individuals – a blanket 'no policy' is likely to be criticised if challenged.

4. **ALTERNATIVE OPTION CONSIDERED**

4.1 In light of equal opportunities legislation not amending the policy could not be recommended to the Committee.

5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

5.1 It is not anticipated there will be significant financial implications.

6. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

6.1 The revised Voluntary Reduced Policy supports the Council's commitment to equal opportunities and ensuring that, when possible, employees have the opportunity to combine work with other commitments.

7. **BACKGROUND**

7.1 The proposals were approved at the August CMT meeting and consultation has taken place with both the UNISON and GMB Branch Secretaries.