



Cleveland Police

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UNISON comments on proposed Early Retirement / Redundancy Payment Policy

UNISON believes that there has been a lack of consultation and an unnecessary haste to get this policy implemented.

While we recognise that the paper which was to be tabled at the Police Authority Policy & Resources Panel on 27th October makes reference to UNISON consultation, in the absence of any financial data we were of the understanding that the reduction from 104 weeks to 66 weeks would be sufficient to give the Force the savings it was looking to achieve.

If, as is apparent by the recommendation in the aforementioned paper, the savings were not satisfactory we would have expected a further meeting to take place, where we could have considered alternatives and hopefully reached a consensus.

We feel that the proposed recommendation is totally unacceptable for the reasons mentioned in the report: namely that the Force is in a completely different position in respect of the number of staff likely to be at risk and the budget arrangements (and therefore the restraints) are unique to Cleveland.

When 514 Police Staff were outsourced to Steria on 1st October 2010 they were given a contractual guarantee of no compulsory redundancies for 10 years, and the then Chair of the Police Authority and the Chief Constable gave similar assurances to staff remaining with Cleveland Police (both verbally and via e-mail). With this reduction in the numbers of staff employed by the Force there will be a reduction in liability.

In addition to this retained police staff who receive shift allowances and weekend enhancements have had their shift patterns manipulated to reduce their allowances, making substantial savings for the Force, but reducing their pay by up to £,2000 per annum.

The timing aspect gives cause for grave concern, as a significant number of the Cleveland work force is now made up of Police Community Support Officers, and with the funding for these posts is ring-fenced until 2013, we cannot see any reason why this policy should be rushed through.

As mentioned in the report any substantial changes to the redundancy calculator would have a significant impact on staff morale, particularly at a time when the Force will be attempting to attract staff currently on redeployment with Steria back into employment with the Force.

There is no mention in the report on any variation in calculations for voluntary redundancy as opposed to compulsory redundancy, and this would need to be fully considered.

Finally as we know Winsor Part 2 is likely to contain recommendations on redundancy possibilities for Police Officers, and with this in mind we believe it would be premature to alter current arrangements as this would inevitably lead to a two tier workforce.

All told and taking these factors into consideration we feel it would be more beneficial in the long term for the proposed option to be put on hold and the payment issue referred back to UNISON for further consultation and hopefully agreement.

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