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| Your Ref.  Our Ref.  Email  Direct Dial  Direct Fax | VSER  VSER@aberdeencity.gov.uk  01224 522430  01224 522257 | |  |
| 28 February 2017  **Personal – to be opened by addressee only** | |  |
| **Office of Chief Executive**  Aberdeen City Council  2nd Floor  Town House  Broad Street  Aberdeen AB10 1FY  Minicom 01224 522381  DX 529451, Aberdeen 9  [www.aberdeencity.gov.uk](http://Www.aberdeencity.gov.uk) |

Dear Colleague,

**Opportunity to express an interest in Voluntary Severance / Early Retirement (VS/ER)**

As funding for local government continues to decrease and our cost pressures continue to increase, we have a shared responsibility to ensure that the Council makes the right decisions in order to protect the vital services we provide to the people, place and economy of Aberdeen. If forecasters are to be believed, then the financial outlook for the future does not look set to improve dramatically. We therefore, have a duty to design a Council fit for the future which can survive and thrive within the funding available.

I want all staff and trade union colleagues to understand our present and future financial position and so, I have arranged for a briefing to be cascaded across the organisation. I would also encourage you to read the budget report which was considered by the Council on the 22nd February.

The message is clear, but difficult – our revenue budget cannot sustain our present staffing levels. Therefore, we must begin a programme of change that allows us to deliver our vital services in a way that is financially affordable and sustainable. This programme of change was outlined in the Strategic Business Plan which was also considered by the Council on the 22nd February.

The financial message and the need for change is clear and as a result we want to offer people the opportunity to apply for VS/ER. Of course every job lost represents a colleague and that loss will be felt by us all. It is important that we all do what we can to support each other and the Council during what will be challenging times ahead. Everyone deserves to be given time to consider their own personal situation against this changing landscape and to consider how they wish to proceed. And of course, where colleagues choose to take VS/ER, it is important that we recognise and appreciate the service they have given to the Council. At the same time, where an opportunity exists to re-train and to serve the Council in a different way, then we should take such opportunities.

If you are new to the organisation, particularly if you are one of our younger workforce, then you may not have experienced this type of process before. My message to you is that the budget strategy along with our Strategic Business Plan is about making the Council stronger for future years, ensuring that you have a long and rewarding career with us. Please do not hesitate to talk to your line manager if you have any concerns.

The decision of the Council to invite expressions of interest in VS/ER, represents the beginning of the journey to create a Council for the future. I have given trade union colleagues the following personal commitments:

* I will ensure that we are open, honest and transparent in the determination of who gets released as a result of VS/ER. It is vitally important that staff feel there is a fairness within this decision making
* When a manager is considering a request for VS/ER, he/she will consult the team potentially affected by the reduced staffing resource (without disclosing the source of the application). Implications in relation to team workload will help shape the final decision in respect of individual applications
* I will ensure that all individuals leaving the organisation will be treated with respect and their contribution to the Council will be appropriately recognised
* I will ensure that, where appropriate, the opportunity to re-train will be offered

Where you feel that any of these commitments are not being delivered, then please let me know personally.

Enclosed with this letter, are further details of the VS/ER process, including the form you will need to complete if you wish to express an interest in VS/ER. All third tier managers, along with head teachers and heads of service have been invited to attend a briefing session on the detail of the scheme to ensure they are well placed to answer any immediate questions you may have.

I have been open with you, in order to give everyone the opportunity to consider their own plans for the future. I am confident that if we embrace the changes ahead, then we will guarantee a future for the Council thereby ensuring those vital services we deliver are protected. I am fully committed to managing these changes in a way that is both staff and customer centred, as both are equally important to me.

If you have any queries regarding the process please contact the helpline on 01224 522430 or e-mail [VSER@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:VSER@aberdeencity.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely



**Angela Scott**

Chief Executive

**Process for applying for VS/ER**

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| 24 March 2017 | Deadline for VS/ER expressions of interest by employees |
| 17 April 2017 | Initial response issued, including quote where appropriate |
| 28 April 2017 | Deadline for formal applications for VS/ER |
| Mid-May 2017 onwards | * Service management consider all formal applications for VS/ER following financial assessment * Supported applications assessed for final approval |

**Important Notes:**

1. **Expressing an interest in VS/ER is not a guarantee that your application will be successful; particularly where you work in an area or occupation where the Council is experiencing difficulties in the recruitment and retention of staff.**
2. Please note that qualification is dependent upon at least 2 years accrued service at the projected date of leaving. Previous service within the public sector may be relevant for eligibility purposes and this can be checked via the helpline facility.
3. While expressions of interest are sought primarily for the financial year 2017/18, in view of the fact that the Council’s Transformation Programme will extend over several years, you can indicate on the form whether you wish to be considered for VS/ER in 2018/19 and/ or 2019/20, should your application not be successful in 2017/18.
4. VS/ER expressions of interest from teaching staff will be considered by the service in advance of quotations being issued. That is because benefit quotations will require to be prepared by the SPPA and it is unlikely that they will be able to process large numbers of enquiries within the timeframe.
5. VS/ER has been opened up to all employees as part of an open, transparent move to shape the workforce of the future; it will be carried through in the same spirit of transparency and in full consultation with staff, trade unions and other stakeholders.
6. If you are currently in discussion with your manager around ill health retirement or have an ongoing application for VS/ER, please speak with your line manager to gain clarity on your specific circumstances.

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| **EXPRESSION OF INTEREST IN VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE / EARLY RETIREMENT** |

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| Employees who wish to express an interest in voluntary severance/early retirement must **fully** and **accurately** complete this form and return it to VSER, HR and Customer Service, Business Hub 18, Fourth Floor West, Marischal College, Broad Street, Aberdeen, AB10 1AB or [VSER@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:VSER@aberdeencity.gov.uk). Expression of interest does not commit the employer or employee to any further action. If you have any queries please contact the VSER team on [VSER@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:VSER@aberdeencity.gov.uk) or 01224 522430. |

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| 1. | FULL NAME | .............................................................................................................. | | | |
| 2. | JOB TITLE | ………………………………………………………….............................. | | | |
| 3. | EMPLOYEE NO (per payslip) | .............................................................................................................. | | | |
| 4. | E-MAIL ADDRESS | ………………………………………………………………………………. | | | |
| 5. | DATE OF BIRTH | ............................................................................................................ | | | |
| 6. | HOME ADDRESS | ............................................................................................................  ………………………………………POST CODE……………………….. | | | |
| 7. | TEL NO: (HOME/MOBILE) | ..................................... | (WORK) | | ............................…............. |
| 8. | CATEGORY OF EMPLOYMENT: ***(Give the number of hours for which you are employed per week. Please tick to indicate if you also work on a term time contract or annualised hours).***  **Hours per week ………………. Term Time Working** **Annualised Hours**  For employees with more than one contract please specify which contracts you wish to be considered for ……………………………………………………………………………………………… | | | | |
| 9. | SERVICE (e.g. Corporate Governance) | | | ………………………………………………. | |
| 10. | SECTION/TEAM (e.g. Environmental Services) | | | ………………………………………………. | |
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| 11. | YOU WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR 2017/2018, PLEASE INDICATE WHICH OTHER YEARS YOU WISH TO BE CONSIDERED FOR VS/ER | | | **2018/2019** **2019/2020** | |
| 12. | ARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME?  ***(Please tick whichever box is appropriate)* YES NO** | | | | | |
| 13. | ARE YOU A MEMBER OF SCOTTISH PUBLIC PENSIONS AGENCY? ***(employees on teaching terms & conditions)***  ***(Please tick whichever box is appropriate)* YES NO** | | | | | |
|  | SIGNED: ...................................................................... DATE: ...................................................... | | | | | |