

Appendix F – Somerset West & Taunton Council Flexible Retirement Policy

1. Employees aged 55 who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme are able to request payment of early retirement benefits whilst remaining in the Council's employment on reduced hours or a lower grade.
2. This right does not apply to employees who are in receipt of a redundancy payment and early pension benefits or who have taken early retirement in the interests of the efficiency of the service.
3. As a guide, a business case for flexible retirement where any reduction is minimal (e.g. less than 20% either in terms of reduced hours or lower grade) may be difficult to objectively justify.
4. Requests for flexible working may be instigated by employees who meet the criteria set out in 1 above at anytime but will only be able to make one request in any 12 month period.
5. An employee should, in the first instance, approach their line manager with a request for reduced hours, more flexible working patterns by putting their request in writing.
6. The manager will notify the HR/People Team and a meeting will be arranged within 21 days to discuss the request from the employee.
7. At this point the HR/People Team will request an estimate of early retirement benefits from the Peninsula Pensions which will be provided to the employee and be used to complete the Flexible Retirement Approval Request Form.
8. The meeting between the employee, manager and a member of the HR/People Team will discuss the request and business case and will only be referred for approval if it is operationally viable.
9. If the request is referred for approval this will be considered by the relevant Director and a member of HR.
10. It should be noted that employees who are retiring in this way before their normal retirement age will suffer an actuarial reduction in their benefits to reflect early payment. In exceptional compassionate circumstances the Council has the right to waive this actuarial reduction.
11. If the request is not referred for approval this will be confirmed to the employee in writing to the employee within 14 days of the meeting. The employee would have the right of appeal against this decision which should be made in writing to the People Business Partner or HR Specialist within 10 days of receipt of the reason for refusal of the request or refusal to waive the actuarial reduction on compassionate grounds where the request is approved.
12. Appeals will be heard by a Director advised by a member of the HR Team.