

CABINET
17 DECEMBER 2013
RECRUITMENT FREEZE

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Alan Jarrett, Finance

Report from: Neil Davies, Chief Executive

Author: Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director, Organisational Services

Summary

This report brings forward six posts to be considered for approval.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 It is the responsibility of Cabinet to manage income and expenditure to remain within the budget approved by Council.

2. Background

2.1 At Cabinet on 7 January 2003 Members agreed a process by which directors could request approval to fill posts that are not on the list of exempted posts agreed by Cabinet on 10 December 2002. This process was introduced at a time of high concern about overspending as one measure to assist budgetary control. Members have indicated they wish to retain this direct detailed control of recruitment decisions while budgets remain difficult to manage.

2.2 The posts requiring approval to fill are being presented to this Cabinet with the following information: -

- Details of the post including directorate and section, post title, grade and location.
- Length of time post has been vacant.
- Impact on service if the post is not filled with particular reference to services to the public.
- Numbers of posts of this type within the function.
- Realisable savings including any proposals to provide the service in alternative ways, which could also lead to savings.
- Comments from the relevant portfolio holder.

3. Details of the post requiring approval

- 3.1 The following posts are coming forward for approval the details of which are shown at Appendix 1: -

Business Support Department

Blue Badge Application Administrator
Business Administration Support Officer
Customer Relations Manager
Electoral Services Manager
Employer Liaison Coordinator
Senior Electoral Services Officer.

- 3.2 The forms attached are email copies and the Assistant Director, Organisational Services, holds the signed copy. The Job profile and structure chart is also held in HR Services.

4. Risk Management

- 4.1 In order to assess the potential impact of posts upon the council's ability to achieve its strategic objectives, the attached forms include details of the likely impact on the service should the posts not be filled.

5. Financial and legal implications

- 5.1 The recruitment freeze was instigated to support the realisation of savings against the background of a forecast of a significant overspending. It remains important to ensure that where possible the drive to pursue savings continues. It is important that no cover is taken on to fill any posts which have not been identified as exceptions or been given Cabinet approval to be filled.
- 5.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report at this stage.
- 5.3 The posts will be filled in accordance with the Council's recruitment policies.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 The Cabinet is asked to agree to unfreeze the posts as set out in Appendix 1 to enable officers to commence the recruitment process.

7. Suggested reason for decision

- 7.1 The posts presented to Cabinet will support the efficient running of the Council.

Lead officer contact

Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director Organisational Services, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham Telephone: (01634) 332853 Email: tricia.palmer@medway.gov.uk.

Background papers:

Cabinet report 10 December 2002

<http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&MId=1834&Ver=4>

7 January 2003

<http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=115&MId=1835&Ver=4>

CABINET APPROVAL FOR RECRUITMENT TO VACANCIES

Please complete this form, with all required signatures, and return to the Organisational Change Team, HR Services, 3rd Floor, Gun Wharf. You will also need to send an electronic word version to resourcing@medway.gov.uk, so that the approval form can be inserted into the cabinet report. This form is not required for those posts covered by the exemptions list shown below.

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| DIRECTORATE | Business Support | | |
| SECTION | Business and Administration Support Service – Communications Performance and Partnerships | | |
| POST TITLE | Blue Badge Application Administrator | | |
| GRADE AND SALARY RANGE | D2 | | |
| POST NUMBER | 9890 | | |
| LOCATION | Gun Wharf | | |
| DATE POST BECAME VACANT | - | | |
| MANAGER POST REPORTS TO | Christine Last | | |
| *IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER PERMANENT RECRUITMENT | N | | |
| *IS THIS REQUEST TO APPLY TO AN EXTERNAL AGENCY | N | | |
| *IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER TEMPORARY RECRUITMENT FROM AGENCY POOL | Y | | |
| IF TEMPORARY PLEASE SPECIFY DATES FROM AND TO: | 25 December 2013 – 25 June 2014. | | |
| IF TEMPORARY PLEASE GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY (if applicable) | N/A | | |
| WHICH PHASE OF BETTER FOR LESS DOES THIS POST RELATE TO? Phase 1 | | | |
| ARE THERE IMPLICATIONS FOR NOT FILLING THE POST PRIOR TO THE RELEVANT PHASE OF BETTER FOR LESS — N/A | | | |
| NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER: TINA LARBY | | | |

The Blue Badge team process and assess all applications for blue badges from Medway residents. They follow rigorous, time consuming nationally prescribed processes for blue badges introduced in January 2012 which were designed to tighten eligibility and reduce fraud.

The Blue Badge service is supported by one full time, two part time D2 grade administrators and one administrator on fixed term contract (due to end December 2013)- they receive, check and process (end to end) more than 400 applications a month. The team are struggling to keep up with demand and there is always a backlog of end-to-end processing. Such a small team also means that there is no scope to cover holidays or sickness and any absence results in more delay for the customer.

Permission is sought to extend the contract for another six months, or at least until the end of March 2014.

Impact on the service if we do not recruit:

- Vulnerable residents will not receive their blue badges in a timely way which has potential for significant impact on their quality of life
- Applicants requiring further assessment of their eligibility for a blue badge will not receive their badge, or a decision that they are not eligible, within the agreed eight week period
- Those customers requiring further assessment of their eligibility for a blue badge, who are in the greatest need of this concession, will have to wait much longer for their badges.
- Those customers who are automatically eligible for a blue badge will have to wait much longer for their badges.
- There would be an increase in customer dissatisfaction and complaints – and the associated work this generates – this is already an area generating high levels of public, member and MP correspondence.
- There would be an increase in workload for Customer Contact handling calls from customers enquiring about the progress of their applications.

Budget Issues

No alternative ways of working have been identified. Savings have already been achieved in this area as it was reviewed as part of the Better For Less transformation programme.

The funding source for this post is within existing staffing budget.

Comments from Portfolio Holder

Signed:
Portfolio Holder

Dated:

Signed:
Councillor Alan Jarrett

Dated:

Signed:
Director

Dated:

CABINET APPROVAL FOR RECRUITMENT TO VACANCIES

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| | | |
|--|--|--|
| DIRECTORATE | Business Support | |
| SECTION | Business and Administration Support Service – Communications Performance and Partnerships | |
| POST TITLE | Business Administration Support Officer | |
| GRADE AND SALARY RANGE | D2 | |
| POST NUMBER | 9890 | |
| LOCATION | Gun Wharf | |
| DATE POST BECAME VACANT | - | |
| MANAGER POST REPORTS TO | Linda Russell | |
| *IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER PERMANENT RECRUITMENT | | |
| *IS THIS REQUEST TO APPLY TO AN EXTERNAL AGENCY | N | |
| *IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER TEMPORARY RECRUITMENT FROM AGENCY POOL | Y | |
| IF TEMPORARY PLEASE SPECIFY DATES FROM AND TO: | 25 December 2013 – 25 June 2014. | |
| IF TEMPORARY PLEASE GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY (if applicable) | N/A | |
| WHICH PHASE OF BETTER FOR LESS DOES THIS POST RELATE TO? Phase 1 | | |
| ARE THERE IMPLICATIONS FOR NOT FILLING THE POST PRIOR TO THE RELEVANT PHASE OF BETTER FOR LESS — N/A | | |
| NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER: TINA LARBY | | |

The establishment for the hub should be six D2 administrators who provide support for the following frontline service areas:

Adult Social Care

Intake Team, Self Directed Support and Social Care Commissioning

Customer Contact

Revenues and Benefits, Financial Assessment Officers and Greenspaces

Support from the hub includes:

- Meeting arrangement and minute taking – Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and Best Interest, Panel meetings and Voluntary Sector Forums.
- Updating relevant information on the social care system or adding new client and important client information, updating addresses. Volume of Adult Social Care referrals = circa 2,200 a year.
- Direct contact with customer - appointment bookings for Financial Assessment Officers to review customers' contribution to cost of care.
- Respond to customer contact/liaison - daily printing, sorting and despatch of Revenue and Benefit letters. Volume of Revenues and Benefits letters = circa 3,000 a day. Monthly production of review letters for Financial Assessment Officers.

- Disclosure and Barring Service checks for Self Directed Support external customers employing carers/personal assistants.
- Allotment administration and billing.

Currently we are working with 5 out of the 6 administrators. We supported two secondments from this hub into the specialist Adult Social Care arena and this has resulted in one staff member securing a permanent position in the specialist service. The other secondment remains in place until end of September 2014. We have employed an administrator on a fixed term contract. That fixed term contract is due to end on 24 December.

Two other administrators within this hub have now also been offered jobs elsewhere and with a month's notice will be gone by 27 December. This will leave just two permanent D2 administrators from an original establishment of six.

Reductions in staffing levels of this magnitude are not sustainable and will have a direct impact on the customer, frontline services and the council's ability to recoup the costs of care packages.

Permission is sought to extend the contract for another six months, or at least until the end of March 2014 and recruit to at least one of the other three gaps on a temporary basis to take the staffing to a minimum of 4 out of 6 staff. Even at this level staffing will be stretched. We have exhausted all possibilities of deploying staff from other administration hubs due to the lean staffing levels and holding vacancies due to the spending moratorium.

Impact on the frontline services if we do not recruit:

- Financial Assessment Reviews will not take place and the council will not be able to charge for the care packages.
- Referrals via Framework 1 for Intake Take will be delayed and vulnerable clients will be put at risk.
- Revenue and Benefit letters will not be processed and sent out in timescale, which in turn will mean that the council will not be able to enforce any reduction in benefits.
- Minutes from Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults, Best Interest and Panel meetings will be outside statutory timescale at best or potentially not minuted at all.
- There would be an increase in customer dissatisfaction and complaints – and the associated work this generates.
- There would be an increase in workload for Customer Contact handling calls from customers enquiring about the progress of their allotment applications.

Budget Issues

No alternative ways of working have been identified. Savings have already been achieved in this area as it was reviewed as part of the Better For Less transformation programme.

The funding source for this post is within existing staffing budget.

Comments from Portfolio Holder

Signed:

Portfolio Holder

Dated:

Signed:
Councillor Alan Jarrett

Dated:

Signed:
Director

Dated:

CABINET APPROVAL FOR RECRUITMENT TO VACANCIES

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| | | |
|--|---|--|
| DIRECTORATE | Business Support | |
| SECTION | Business Administration and Support Services (BASS) | |
| POST TITLE | Customer Relations Manager | |
| GRADE AND SALARY RANGE | B1 (£22,958 to £30,011) | |
| POST NUMBER | tbc | |
| LOCATION | Gun Wharf | |
| DATE POST BECAME VACANT | N/A – has been covered by secondment | |
| MANAGER POST REPORTS TO | Chris White Head Of BASS | |
| *IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER PERMANENT RECRUITMENT | YES | |
| *IS THIS REQUEST TO APPLY TO AN EXTERNAL AGENCY | NO | |
| *IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER TEMPORARY RECRUITMENT FROM AGENCY POOL | NO | |
| IF TEMPORARY PLEASE SPECIFY DATES FROM AND TO: | N/A | |
| IF TEMPORARY PLEASE GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY (if applicable) | N/A | |
| WHICH PHASE OF BETTER FOR LESS DOES THIS POST RELATE TO? | | |
| Phase 1 | | |
| ARE THERE IMPLICATIONS FOR NOT FILLING THE POST PRIOR TO THE RELEVANT PHASE OF BETTER FOR LESS – IF SO PLEASE INDICATE BELOW | | |
| NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER: Chris White | | |

(* please delete as appropriate)

Impact on Service – please include:-

1. Information on the structure within this function indicating numbers of posts of the same type and how many corresponding vacancies – eg 20 care workers 2 posts vacant.
2. Impact on the service if this post is not filled, with particular reference to services to the public.

This post will be managing the Customer Relations Team. There is only 1 post of this type and 1 vacancy.

The Customer Relations Team, created in BFL Phase 1, deals with the following:

- Processing of Stage 1 complaints for Corporate Services and Social Care;
- Investigating Stage 2 Complaints for Corporate Services;
- Co-ordinating Stage 2 complaints for Social Care
- First point of contact for the Local Government Ombudsman;
- Processing and collation of information for Freedom of Information Requests (Fols) and Subject Access Requests.
- Production of monthly performance reports to Corporate Intelligence and Performance Team
- Assisting with the implementation of the New Complaints Model, website design and publication of new literature.

The Team Currently consists of 3 Customer Relations Officers (C2) and 3 Customer Relations Assistants (D1).

This post was included in the structure agreed in 2011. However priority was given to social care complaints so this post was required to be a qualified social worker. After 3 failed recruitment exercises we do now have a part time social worker covering that aspect of complaints handling. She does not cover other complaints and FOIs which form the bulk of the team's work. This side of the team's work has been overseen by an officer on secondment from elsewhere in the council. This secondment is about to end so it is critical for this customer facing service that the team leader post is recruited to. The team leader will oversee and quality assure the work of the team and ensure responding to complaints and FOIs is given sufficient prominence across the organisation. They will also oversee the ongoing complaints project which will see the roll out of Lagan, the council's customer relationship management system. To all service areas next year so that we can further streamline the complaints handling process and maximise our learning from complaints.

Budget Issues

Please indicate:

1. the realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the 31st March 2014.
2. If any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service.

Realisable savings

£10,000 has been identified from this year's budget to support this new post if recruitment was achieved in January 2014.

Alternative ways of providing the service

The secondment was an alternative means of providing part of the team leader service, and has already been extended once, and cannot be further extended. This is also more expensive as the seconded officer is more highly graded than the B1 post.

Comments from Portfolio Holder

Signed:
Portfolio Holder

Dated:

Signed:
Councillor Alan Jarrett

Dated:

Signed:
Director

Dated:

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| | | |
|--|--|--|
| DIRECTORATE | BUSINESS SUPPORT | |
| SECTION | ELECTORAL SERVICES | |
| POST TITLE | ELECTORAL SERVICES MANAGER | |
| GRADE AND SALARY RANGE | PO1 £35,312-£46,281 (incl on-costs) | |
| POST NUMBER | 3992 | |
| LOCATION | Gun wharf | |
| DATE POST BECAME VACANT | 20 December 2013 | |
| MANAGER POST REPORTS TO | Head of Elections & Member Services | |
| *IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER PERMANENT RECRUITMENT | Y/N | |
| *IS THIS REQUEST TO APPLY TO AN EXTERNAL AGENCY | Y/N | |
| *IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER TEMPORARY RECRUITMENT FROM AGENCY POOL | Y/N | |
| IF TEMPORARY PLEASE SPECIFY DATES FROM AND TO: | 1 Jan – 31 March 2014 | |
| IF TEMPORARY PLEASE GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY (if applicable) | NA | |

WHICH PHASE OF BETTER FOR LESS DOES THIS POST RELATE TO? Delayed 3b

ARE THERE IMPLICATIONS FOR NOT FILLING THE POST PRIOR TO THE RELEVANT PHASE OF BETTER FOR LESS – IF SO PLEASE INDICATE BELOW

Cabinet gave approval to recruit to this post on a permanent basis but unfortunately insufficiently suitably experienced candidates applied for the post when it was advertised in November. It is intended to re-advertise the post in mid-January but the earliest date the successful candidate would be in post (if one is appointed) is likely to be early March.

Cabinet will recall that we are concurrently seeking to fill the post of Senior Electoral Services Officer and unfortunately we will be re-advertising that post in January for the same reason.

From 20 December the Electoral Services team will comprise the Head of Elections and Member Services, a relatively experienced temporary member of staff and 4 other temporary members of staff who are assisting with the compilation of the 2014 Register that must be published on 17 February 2014. In addition to that work, preparatory work for the European Parliamentary elections have started and will continue in earnest from January 2014 onwards.

The Electoral Services Manager would be particularly responsible for the co-ordination of the postal vote processes; routine work on rolling registration and maintenance of postal vote records that will need to continue through much of this period and volumes are increasing.

The team are also undertaking considerable amounts of work planning for the implementation of Individual Electoral registration (IER) that will have significant impact on work processes and volumes of forms.

If a permanent appointee is not in place until early March at the earliest, or at all after the re-advertisement in January, it is essential that the team have a manager with experience and working knowledge of electoral registration and elections in the interim period to assist the Head of Elections and Member Services, particularly with the coordination of the publication of the 2014 Register and the preparations for the Euro elections. Staff with experience and working knowledge of the complex and numerous legislation and statutory regulations governing electoral registration and the conduct of elections as well as the electoral administration software are highly unlikely to be available from the internal temp pool or other recruitment agencies; they are only likely to be available from the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) who provide a consultancy service comprising experienced staff who have worked in this field. It is proposed that the AEA are approached to identify a suitably experienced person to work with the team over the period January to March, including a period of "handover" with any permanent appointee to the post to ensure a smooth delivery of the Euro election arrangements.

NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER: Jane Ringham

(* please delete as appropriate)

Impact on Service – please include:-

1. Information on the structure within this function indicating numbers of posts of the same type and how many corresponding vacancies – eg 20 care workers 2 posts vacant.

2. Impact on the service if this post is not filled, with particular reference to services to the public.

The Electoral Services team comprises 4 full-time posts: 1 x Head of Elections and Member Services for whom electoral registration duties represent about 50% of their work, 1 x Electoral Services Manager, 1 x Senior Electoral Services Officer (SESO) and the Electoral Services Officer (ESO). All except the Service Manager post is vacant with the ESO post being filled on a temporary basis to June 2014 after approval from Cabinet. Two part-time posts of Electoral Services Officer have been held vacant for a number of years to contribute towards required savings.

The work plan for the team has been set out above. The lack of senior, experienced staff has a significant impact on the ability to cover all the work required to fulfill the statutory requirements or best practice standards required. This is particularly the case with the planning and conduct of the European Parliamentary elections, especially the oversight of the electoral database from which elections information and materials are produced, planning of the issue and opening of postal votes and the production of poll cards and coordination of arrangements with the Customer First team to handle all initial telephone calls to the team.

If the annual canvass is not supervised sufficiently, this will have an impact on the scope and accuracy of the register, particularly in low-response areas, resulting in a lower response rate.

If preparations for the introduction of IER immediately after the Euro elections in June 2014, are not completed to the dates and standards required by the Cabinet Office, there are risks to the reputation of the Council.

If applications to register through the monthly additions process are not processed according to the monthly statutory dates, electors will find their registrations delayed, affecting credit checks amongst other things.

Budget Issues

Please indicate:

3. the realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the 31st March 2014.
4. If any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service.

If the AEA is not engaged to provide an experienced manager for the remainder of the financial year savings of approximately £8,800 might be achieved. There are no alternative way of identifying staff with the necessary experience and working knowledge of electoral registration and elections.

Please specify the funding source for this post: revenue budget provision

Comments from Portfolio Holder

Signed:
Portfolio Holder

Dated:

Signed:
Councillor Alan Jarrett

Dated:

Signed:
Director

Dated:

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| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| DIRECTORATE | Business Support Department | | |
| SECTION | Medway Adult Community Learning Service (MACLS) | | |
| POST TITLE | Employer Liaison Coordinator | | |
| GRADE AND SALARY RANGE | Adult Education LNFA 4-12 (£21,107 - £30,462) | | |
| POST NUMBER | | | |
| LOCATION | Rochester Centre | | |
| DATE POST BECAME VACANT | New post under the ESF workforce project | | |
| MANAGER POST REPORTS TO | Dan Mace | | |
| *IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER PERMANENT RECRUITMENT | N | | |
| *IS THIS REQUEST TO APPLY TO AN EXTERNAL AGENCY | N | | |
| *IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER TEMPORARY RECRUITMENT FROM AGENCY POOL | N | | |
| IF TEMPORARY PLEASE SPECIFY DATES FROM AND TO: | November 2013 until November 2014 (12 month contract) | | |
| IF TEMPORARY PLEASE GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY (if applicable) | N/A | | |
| WHICH PHASE OF BETTER FOR LESS DOES THIS POST RELATE TO? Phase 2 | | | |
| ARE THERE IMPLICATIONS FOR NOT FILLING THE POST PRIOR TO THE RELEVANT PHASE OF BETTER FOR LESS – IF SO PLEASE INDICATE BELOW | | | |
| NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER: Hanife Dacosta | | | |

(* please delete as appropriate)

Impact on Service – please include:-

- Information on the structure within this function indicating numbers of posts of the same type and how many corresponding vacancies – eg 20 care workers 2 posts vacant.
- Impact on the service if this post is not filled, with particular reference to services to the public.

We need to recruit under the ESF project an Employer Liaison Coordinator to raise awareness to the local employers/businesses, regarding FREE training that is available under the project. Look at where the training skills gaps are plan and deliver a range of courses that meet the local employers/ employee needs. If we are unable to fill this post we will not be able to reach the allocated targets that have been set and this will have a huge impact on the success of the overall project. With our current staffing we do not have the capacity to fulfill the tasks required. By employing the Employer Liaison Coordinator this will also open up opportunities of working closely with the Regeneration Team at the Council and sharing information with other departments as to what exactly local business are requiring, offer further support to businesses and progression routes.

Budget Issues

Please indicate:

5. the realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the 31st March 2014.
6. If any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service.

Please specify the funding source for this post: ESF Funding under the Workforce Programme. (not funded by the SFA)

Comments from Portfolio Holder

Signed:
Portfolio Holder

Dated:

Signed:
Councillor Alan Jarrett

Dated:

Signed:
Director

Dated:

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| | | |
|--|---|--|
| DIRECTORATE | BUSINESS SUPPORT | |
| SECTION | ELECTORAL SERVICES | |
| POST TITLE | SENIOR ELECTORAL SERVICES OFFICER | |
| GRADE AND SALARY RANGE | C2 £24,649-£33,274 (incl on-costs) | |
| POST NUMBER | 0090 | |
| LOCATION | Gun wharf | |
| DATE POST BECAME VACANT | 15 November 2013 | |
| MANAGER POST REPORTS TO | Electoral Services Manager (also vacant) | |
| *IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER PERMANENT RECRUITMENT | Y/N | |
| *IS THIS REQUEST TO APPLY TO AN EXTERNAL AGENCY | Y/N | |
| *IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER TEMPORARY RECRUITMENT FROM AGENCY POOL | Y/N | |
| IF TEMPORARY PLEASE SPECIFY DATES FROM AND TO: | 1 Jan – 31 March 2014 | |
| IF TEMPORARY PLEASE GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY (if applicable) | NA | |

WHICH PHASE OF BETTER FOR LESS DOES THIS POST RELATE TO? Delayed 3b

ARE THERE IMPLICATIONS FOR NOT FILLING THE POST PRIOR TO THE RELEVANT PHASE OF BETTER FOR LESS – IF SO PLEASE INDICATE BELOW

Cabinet gave approval to recruit to this post on a permanent basis but unfortunately insufficiently suitably experienced candidates applied for the post when it was advertised in November. It is intended to re-advertise the post in mid-January but the earliest date the successful candidate would be in post (if one is appointed) is likely to be early March.

Cabinet will recall that we are concurrently seeking to fill the post of Electoral Services Manager and unfortunately we will be re-advertising that post in January for the same reason.

From 20 December the Electoral Services team will comprise the Head of Elections and Member Services, a relatively experienced temporary member of staff and 4 other temporary members of staff who are assisting with the compilation of the 2014 Register that must be published on 17 February 2014. In addition to that work, preparatory work for the European Parliamentary elections have started and will continue in earnest from January 2014 onwards.

The Senior Electoral Services Officer would be particularly responsible for the co-ordination of the booking of polling stations, recruitment, appointment and allocation of training sessions for all election staff, oversight of rolling registration and maintenance of postal vote records that will need to continue through much of this period and volumes are increasing. The SESO also coordinates all the practical arrangements for the collation of the ballot boxes and significant amounts of materials that accompany them as well as the transportation of the ballot boxes and other equipment to over 100 polling stations.

The team are also undertaking considerable amounts of work planning for the implementation of Individual Electoral registration (IER) that will have significant impact on work processes and volumes of forms and the SESO would be expected to contribute to the development of revised processes and practices to enable IER to be successfully implemented, particularly the on-going requirement for a canvass once the Register is published.

If a permanent appointee is not in place until early March at the earliest, or at all after the re-advertisement in January, it is essential that the team have a practical supervisor with experience and working knowledge of electoral registration and elections in the interim period to assist the Head of Elections and Member Services, and the interim Electoral services Manager (see separate cabinet approval form) particularly with the supervision of the compilation of the 2014 Register and the preparations for the Euro elections. Although much of this post requires organisational skills, it is also essential that the postholder has experience and working knowledge of the complex and numerous legislation and statutory regulations governing electoral registration and the conduct of elections as well as the electoral administration software. Staff with such experience and working knowledge are highly unlikely to be available from the internal temp pool or other recruitment agencies and there will be insufficient resources in the team to provide training and oversight of people inexperienced in electoral registration or elections; they are only likely to be available from the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) who provide a consultancy service comprising experienced staff who have worked in this field. It is proposed that the AEA are approached to identify a suitably experienced person to work with the team over the period January to March, including a period of "handover" with any permanent appointee to the post to ensure a smooth delivery of the Euro election arrangements.

NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER: Jane Ringham

(* please delete as appropriate)

Impact on Service – please include:-

1. Information on the structure within this function indicating numbers of posts of the same type and how many corresponding vacancies – eg 20 care workers 2 posts vacant.
2. Impact on the service if this post is not filled, with particular reference to services to the public.

The Electoral Services team comprises 4 full-time posts: 1 x Head of Elections and Member Services for whom electoral registration duties represent about 50% of their work, 1 x Electoral Services Manager, 1 x Senior Electoral Services Officer (SESO) and the Electoral Services Officer (ESO). All except the Service Manager post is vacant with the ESO post being filled on a temporary basis to June 2014 after approval from Cabinet. Two part-time posts of Electoral Services Officer have been held vacant for a number of years to contribute towards required savings.

The work plan for the team has been set out above. The lack of senior, experienced staff has a significant impact on the ability to cover all the work required to fulfill the statutory requirements or best practice standards required. This is particularly the case with the planning and conduct of the European Parliamentary elections, especially the booking of polling stations, recruitment of staff and collation of ballot boxes all of which are managed from the electoral software and database.

If the annual canvass is not supervised sufficiently, this will have an impact on the scope and accuracy of the register, particularly in low-response areas, resulting in a lower response rate.

If preparations for the introduction of IER immediately after the Euro elections in June 2014, are not completed to the dates and standards required by the Cabinet Office, there are risks to the reputation of the Council.

If applications to register through the monthly additions process are not processed according to the monthly statutory dates, electors will find their registrations delayed, affecting credit checks amongst other things.

Budget Issues

Please indicate:

7. the realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the 31st March 2014.

8. If any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service.

If the AEA is not engaged to provide an experienced manager for the remainder of the financial year savings of approximately £8,800 might be achieved. There are no alternative way of identifying staff with the necessary experience and working knowledge of electoral registration and elections.

Please specify the funding source for this post: revenue budget provision

Comments from Portfolio Holder

Signed:
Portfolio Holder

Dated:

Signed:
Councillor Alan Jarrett

Dated:

Signed:
Director

Dated: