

## **CABINET**

**15 DECEMBER 2015**

### **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 1 post 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 post is coming forward for approval, the details of which are shown at Appendix 1: -

#### **Business Support Department**

Legal Support Assistant

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 post as set out in Appendix 1 to enable officers to commence the recruitment process.

### **7. Suggested reason for decision**

7.1 The post 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](mailto: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>

Cabinet report 7 January 2003

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

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 Recruitment Freeze Forms

## CABINET APPROVAL FOR RECRUITMENT TO VACANCIES

Please complete this form, with all required signatures, and return to the Organisational Change Team, HR Services, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Gun Wharf. You will also need to send an electronic word version to [resourcing@medway.gov.uk](mailto: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	BSD		
SECTION	Legal Services		
POST TITLE	Legal Support Assistant		
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	Range 2 (£14,821 - £19,241) per annum		
POST NUMBER	8208		
LOCATION	Gun Wharf		
DATE POST BECAME VACANT	31/12/15		
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Chris King		
*IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER PERMANENT RECRUITMENT	Y		
*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:			
IF TEMPORARY PLEASE GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY (if applicable)			
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			
N/A			
NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER: Chris King, Legal Practice Manager			

(\* 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.

<p>There are 4 Legal Support Assistants in the Legal Support Team and 2 of these posts are now vacant, (two members of staff have resigned). This post carries out administrative duties for the Legal Services team, which includes, processing post, sealing legal documents, file - opening, closing &amp; archiving, administering and reconciling a cheque book account, administering KPIs, preparing court bundles, processing invoices, reconciling land registry transactions, co-ordinating training courses and administering the legal case management system. This team also provides administration support to Category Management for the Procurement Board.</p>
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The team also provide PA services to the Head of Legal and the Assistant Director – Legal & Corporate Services. The PA role involves diary and email management, arranging meetings and booking rooms, taking and writing up meeting minutes, printing packs of meeting papers, often acting as the first point of telephone contact and other PA duties as and when required.

The Head of Legal Services and the AD (Legal & Corporate Services) manage a number of teams comprising of approximately 115 staff and oversee and provide a range of services which involve liaising with councillors and members of the public. The AD (Legal & Corporate Services) is also the Monitoring Officer and this team provides PA support for this role.

One of the most important roles for the Legal Support Team is the preparation of court bundles for childcare lawyers. Because of the increase in childcare cases, the increase in social workers and the increase in childcare lawyers (Legal Services have 5 supernumerary lawyers in an already busy team) this area of work has significantly increased and the support team are consistently struggling to cope with the demand for court bundles. If this vacancy is not filled it will have a big impact on the team's ability to prepare childcare bundles.

## **Budget Issues**

Please indicate:

1. the realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.
2. If any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service.

The annual cost of this post is £18,281 (incl on-costs). So the cost to 31/3/16 will be approximately £4,570.

The Legal Support team is already under-resourced and if this post remains vacant they would struggle to fulfil their basic duties for the legal team and certainly would not be able to provide PA services to the Head of Legal and the Assistant Director – Legal & Corporate Services. They would also struggle to continue to provide admin support for the Procurement Board and meet the demand for court bundles. It will also be necessary to arrange temporary cover whilst the recruitment process is taking place.

**Please specify the funding source for this post:** Legal Services Salary Budget

## **Comments from Portfolio Holder**