

CABINET

5 APRIL 2016

RECRUITMENT FREEZE

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Alan Jarrett, Leader

Report from: Neil Davies, Chief Executive

Author: Carrie McKenzie, Head of HR & Organisational Change

Summary

This report brings forward 8.5 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

Senior Electoral Officer x 2

Electoral Officer x 2.5

Democratic Services Officer

Children & Adults

Graduate Business Information Officer x 2

Quality Assurance 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

Carrie McKenzie, Head of HR & Organisational Change, Gun Wharf, Dock Road,
Chatham Telephone: (01634) 332261 Email: carrie.mckenzie@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, 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 Department	
SECTION	Electoral Services	
POST TITLE	Senior Electoral Services Officer (Seso) And Electoral Services Officers (Eso)	
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	SESO (Awaiting Banding But Likely To Be Range 3 £19241 - £24794); ESO Range 2 £14821 - £19241)	
POST NUMBER	Seso 0090; Eso 0088	
LOCATION	Gun Wharf	
DATE POST BECAME VACANT		
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Electoral Services Manager	
*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:	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? NA ARE THERE IMPLICATIONS FOR NOT FILLING THE POST PRIOR TO THE RELEVANT PHASE OF BETTER FOR LESS – IF SO PLEASE INDICATE BELOW See impact below		
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 – e.g. 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 are responsible, amongst other things, for the planning and conduct of all elections in Medway, the production and maintenance of the register of electors, including the annual canvass, the assessment of applications to register, and the maintenance of postal and proxy vote records, including advising postal voters if their postal votes were not included in the count after each election and regular signature refresh exercises. They also undertake the annual review of polling districts and polling places, including the assessment of suitable premises to use as polling stations.

Individual Electoral Registration (IER) came into effect from 10 June 2014, and the transitional arrangements which were put in place have had a huge impact on the way the Electoral Registration Officer is expected to carry out the annual canvass and identify and assess whether applicants are eligible to be registered. There is an expectation of increased activity around data matching, data mining, and checking of other records to improve the accuracy and completeness of the register. The two-stage registration process results in nearly three times as many forms being produced and processed during the annual canvass period.

There are scheduled elections in 2 of the next 4 years, including likely combined Local/Parish and European Parliamentary elections in 2019 and combined General and PCC elections in 2020, along with a parliamentary constituency boundary review taking place between 2016 and 2018. There is also the likelihood of a Community Governance Review to establish Rochester Town Council.

The permanent staffing structure of the team comprises the following posts:

1 x Head of Elections & Member Services (of which about 50% of the time is spent on electoral services issues),
1 x Electoral Services Manager,
1 x Senior Electoral Services Officer, and
2 FTE x Electoral Services Officer – 1 FTE has been held towards the vacancy savings target since 2006.

The post of Senior Electoral Services Officer became vacant in 2009 and after two rounds of recruitment no appointment was made because of the lack of suitably experienced candidates; the post has been covered by the Electoral Services Officer on an "Acting up" basis for nearly two years.

The permanent staff in post are not sufficient to process the paper and on-line applications to register and other workload outlined above and the core team has been enhanced since 2006 with a number of temporary staff to assist. Initially this was only during peak times such as the run up to elections and the annual canvass, but due to the intense schedule of elections and the introduction of IER, they have been engaged all year round for the last 3 or 4 years.

Whilst these temporary staff have been invaluable, it is not a robust or long-term solution to the staffing of the team and is costly - temporary staff often leave at short notice after significant amounts of time have been invested in training them, and often during peak times of work, particularly during an election cycle. The internal temp agency often struggle to fulfil our requirements with staff suitably experienced and skilled. The Electoral Services Manager post was only filled on a permanent basis in April 2014 by someone who did not have elections or electoral registration experience and often spends more time dealing with day to day issues rather than planning and monitoring due to the lack of senior staff. This situation has led to a lack of resilience

in the team and a vesting of all the technical knowledge and experience in the Head of Elections and Member Services who has other duties and responsibilities for member services and the Mayor's office. Arrangements have also been made when necessary to supplement the experience of the team by the use of an experienced elections professional consultant from the Association of Electoral Administrators but this was costly and also not a long-term solution.

With this in mind a review has been undertaken to formulate a long-term staffing structure which will enable the team to successfully meet the challenges facing electoral registration and elections.

The electorate in Medway varies between 185,000 and has been as high as 193,000 with significant areas of deprivation, low response and engagement rates; with 112 polling stations and over 700 staff needed to assist with elections, the core team are facing the same sorts of challenges as those in some London Boroughs and currently have staffing levels lower than those of some of our neighbouring Borough and District Councils in Kent.

It is proposed therefore to seek approval to (a) permanently fill the current Senior Electoral Services Officer post; (b) fill 1.5 FTE Electoral Services Officer posts (1 FTE is already in the staff complement) and (c) to create and recruit a permanent appointment to a second Senior Electoral Services Officer post. All of these changes can be met from within the current budget and leave a balance of approximately £20000, would limit the need for temporary staff to only cover peak workloads and enable the team to develop expertise and skills in election procedures and practices, data matching and mining, the management and maintenance of the property database and electoral registration and elections software, and better plan for a more comprehensive annual canvass.

A structure chart showing the current situation and the proposed structure is attached.

Budget Issues

Please indicate:

1. the realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the 31 March 2016.
2. If any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service.

Please specify the funding source for this post:

The 4C225 Electoral Services current budget available in 2015-16 (and expected to be available in 2016-17):

Admin staffing £108,975 (including £20,200 towards vacancy savings target)
Temporary staff £51,411
Canvassers £72,154
Total available £232,540

The revised staffing structure will cost
Admin staffing £137,158
Temporary staff £23,976 (for peak times)
Canvassers £50,000
Total costs £211,134

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 Department		
SECTION	Democratic Services		
POST TITLE	Democratic Services Officer		
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	Range 6 (£35 643 – £40 985)		
POST NUMBER	3865		
LOCATION	Gun Wharf		
DATE POST BECAME VACANT	16 May 2016		
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Head of Democratic Services		
*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:	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?			
Not applicable			
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: Julie Keith			

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

The Democratic Services Team consists of the Head of Democratic Services, 6.45 fte Democratic Services Officers and two Democratic Services Support Officers (who also provide members services reporting to the Head of Elections and Members Services).

The work of this team relates to statutory member level decision -making directly connected to the major programmes and functions of the authority. One of the existing very experienced (0. 59 fte) Democratic Services Officer has resigned in order to take up a new job in another organisation. This post holder supports Cabinet

meetings among other duties. In order to sustain current levels of service delivery agreement to recruit to this vacancy is requested.

In the event that another of the existing team members may wish to reduce their hours to take on the 0.59 fte role, approval is also sought to recruit to a consequential full time vacancy.

Beyond a reduction in member level activity there are no alternative options for meeting the gap created by this vacancy. The responsibilities assigned to professional Democratic Services Officers require a high level of experience, a detailed knowledge of the law and procedures for local authority meetings together with an ability to exercise excellent judgement and political skills. Any reduction in capacity within Democratic Services cannot be absorbed by others in the team given existing workloads, the ongoing and unpredictable demand for unplanned activity in support of the Council's decision-making processes and the role played by the team in supporting Scrutiny Task Groups.

Budget Issues

Please indicate:

1. the realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the 31st March 2016.
2. If any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service.

This vacancy will arise on 16 May 2016 and it is hoped to recruit a new post holder to join the team as soon as possible after that date in order to be able to sustain required levels of support for member level meetings. Democratic Services Officers are graded at Range 6 under the new pay and grade scheme. Gross pay (including on- costs) for 1FTE in Range 6 is £47 405 – £54 510. The cost of a 0.59fte is £27 969 – £32, 160.

Please specify the funding source for this post:

This vacancy can be funded from within the existing budget for Democratic Services

Comments from Portfolio Holder

Absolute support for this recruitment.

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DIRECTORATE	Children and Adults		
SECTION	Performance and Intelligence		
POST TITLE	Graduate Business Information Officer		
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	£20,000		
POST NUMBER	10966		
LOCATION	Gun Wharf		
DATE POST BECAME VACANT	1 st January 2015		
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Joe Knappett		
*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:	N/A		
IF TEMPORARY PLEASE GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY (if applicable)	N/A		
NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER: Chris McKenzie			

(* 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 within the Performance and Intelligence Team is one of a number of Business Information Officer posts that support services across Children and Adults. This particular post is a vital role, supporting the Children's Social Care Division with their use of performance data and information to continue to drive improvements in performance. This post also has key responsibility for leading on the submission of the Council's statutory return for Children in Need (CIN Census)

The recruitment of a new Graduate Business Information Officer will provide additional capacity to the team, which means that we will not need to replace an Interim Performance Analyst who is leaving the team at the end of March. Two other vacancies in the team will be held vacant at this time pending a re-organisation of the team.

Recruitment to this post will also enable to re-allocation of other resource to support the programme to deliver significant cost savings in Children's Social Care.

Budget Issues

Please indicate:

3. the realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the 31st March 2016.
4. If any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service.

The post will not be recruited to until the new financial year.

Please specify the funding source for this post:

The post will be funded from the Performance and Intelligence Team staffing budget.

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LOCATION	Gun Wharf		
DATE POST BECAME VACANT	1 st January 2015		
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Joe Knappett		
*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:	N/A		
IF TEMPORARY PLEASE GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY (if applicable)	N/A		
NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER: Chris McKenzie			

(* 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 within the Performance and Intelligence Team is one of a number of Business Information Officer posts that support services across Children and Adults. This particular post is a vital role, supporting the School Effectiveness and Inclusion Division to improve the strategic use of data/intelligence, which was a key area for improvement in the School Improvement Ofsted inspection.

The recruitment of a new Graduate Business Information Officer will provide additional capacity to the team, which means that we will not need to replace an Interim Performance Analyst who is leaving the team at the end of March. Two other vacancies in the team will be held vacant at this time pending a re-organisation of the team.

Recruitment to this post will also enable to re-allocation of other resource to support the programme to deliver significant cost savings in Children's Social Care.

Budget Issues

Please indicate:

1. the realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the 31st March 2016.
2. If any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service.

The post will not be recruited to until the new financial year.

Please specify the funding source for this post:

The post will be funded from the Performance and Intelligence Team staffing budget.

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DIRECTORATE	Children and Adults	
SECTION	Commissioning	
POST TITLE	Quality Assurance Officer	
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	Range 3 (£19,126 - £24,646)	
POST NUMBER	11630	
LOCATION	Gun Wharf	
DATE POST BECAME VACANT	6 December 2015	
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Head of Access to Resources	
*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? N/A		
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: Wendy Edward		

(* 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 is to recruit one full-time Quality Assurance Officer. Within the structure of Access to Resources, there are one full time Quality Assurance Officer responsible for ensuring the efficiency of adults' placements (this is vacant) and two 0.5fte Quality Assurance Officer posts (one of these is vacant) responsible for ensuring the efficiency of children's placements. There is currently no Officer in post ensuring the placements of vulnerable adults meet quality standards. Having no officer responsible for ensuring the safety of vulnerable adults who are placed by the Council's

placements team puts Medway at significant risk.

Budget Issues

Please indicate:

1. the realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the 31st March 2016.
2. If any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service.

This post became vacant in December 2015. If this post was to remain vacant until March 2016, there would be savings of £5,272. This post is vital to ensuring that compliance visits are done to ensure the quality of service provision for vulnerable adults within Medway. Failure to do so could result in litigation against the authority. We have a statutory duty to QA placements and if we do not do this it could cost the Council.

Please specify the funding source for this post:

100% funding from the Council's Access to Resources Team