

CABINET
7 MARCH 2017
RECRUITMENT FREEZE

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Alan Jarrett, Leader

Report from: Neil Davies, Chief Executive

Author: Carrie McKenzie, Chief People Officer

Summary

This report brings forward 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

Information Governance Officer

Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation

Administration Support Officer x 3

Senior Administration Officer

- 3.2 The forms attached are email copies and the Chief People Officer, 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, Chief People Officer, 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	Legal Services	
POST TITLE	Temp to cover sick leave of Information Governance Officer	
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	Range 2 (£15,241 - £19,356)	
POST NUMBER		
LOCATION	Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4TR	
DATE POST BECAME VACANT	30 January 2017	
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Information Governance Manager	
*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:	30/01/17 – 04/04/17	
IF TEMPORARY PLEASE GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY (if applicable)	Savita Shukla	
NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER:	Perry Holmes, Chief Legal Officer & Monitoring Officer	

(* 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.

The Information Governance team consists of two Information Governance Officers (IGO) and the Information Governance Manager (the latter is a shared post across Medway and Gravesham Councils).

This request is to extend the initial two week authorisation for one temp in the Information Governance Team within Legal Services to cover sick leave.

A temporary member of staff was urgently needed to cover sick leave of one IGO and this now needs to be extended until the end of March on the basis that the member of staff on sick leave has been signed off for a longer period than anticipated, they have

been issued with a Doctor's certificate until mid-March which may yet be extended further. This form therefore seeks approval until the next Cabinet meeting on 4 April to ensure cover if required but the arrangement will end if the staff member returns from sick leave prior to that.

The second IGO left the employment of Medway Council on 3 February 2017, other than the current temp who is providing admin support, there has been no experienced cover available since this date.

Without a temp in place the Information Governance Team would not be able to provide the necessary support regarding Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Subject Access Requests, which, if not dealt with appropriately or within timescales prescribed in the legislation:

- Freedom of Information requests must be responded to within 20 working days.
- Subject Access Requests must be responded to within 40 calendar days.

A breach of the legislation could result in financial sanctions for the Council (up to £500,000), additionally, any sanctions imposed by the Information Commissioners Office are published on its website and thus would also cause reputational damage to the Council.

Budget Issues

Please indicate:

1. the realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the 31st March 2017.
2. If any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service.

While financial savings could be made by not recruiting to the IGO post these savings could be wiped out by just one sanction against the Council if it delays matters.

There is no capacity within the team to absorb the work.

Please specify the funding source for this post: Existing Legal Services budget (4C201)

Comments from Portfolio Holder

Signed:
Portfolio Holder

Dated:

Signed:
Councillor Alan Jarrett

Dated:

Signed:
Director

Dated:

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DIRECTORATE	Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation	
SECTION	Transformation Division Business Administration and Support Service (BASS)	
POST TITLE	Administration Support Officer x 3	
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	Range 2 (£15,241 - £19,356)	
POST NUMBER	9890	
NUMBER OF POSTS	3.0 FTE	
LOCATION	Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4TR	
DATE POSTS BECAME VACANT	December/January/February 2017	
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Range 3 officers in BASS	
*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	Yes if necessary while we secure permanent recruitment	
IF TEMPORARY PLEASE SPECIFY DATES FROM AND TO:	See above, if needed will be in new financial year.	
IF TEMPORARY PLEASE GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY (if applicable)		
NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER: Tina Larby		

(* please delete as appropriate)

Information on structure and post

In previous budget rounds BASS delivered financial savings of £174,000 and £115,000 through efficiencies and staffing reductions. For the start of 2016-17 another £75,000 was delivered through more staffing reductions.

Two Administration Support Officer vacancies have arisen in administration hubs that support frontline Adult Social Care, the Integrated Discharge Team at Medway Hospital, Financial Assessment Officers and the Revenues and Benefits Team. Safeguarding meetings are supported from within these hubs.

The support provided by the hubs is vital to the delivery chain. The range of tasks undertaken by the hubs is diverse and includes:

- Taking minutes and supporting Safeguarding and Best Interest meetings (in excess of 55 a month).
- Processing referrals for Adult Social Care (over 600 a month)
- Transferring data from NHS systems to council systems

- Direct contact with customer – arranging and confirming appointments (between 150 and 200 a month) for Financial Assessment Officers to review customers' contribution to cost of care.
- Responding to customer contact/liaison - daily sorting and despatch of Revenue and Benefit letters (around 3,000 a day).
- Supporting recruitment activity and processing of Disclosure and Barring Service checks for Self Directed Support - external customers employing carers/personal assistants.

We also have one Administration Support Officer vacancy in our administration hub that supports planning, highways, scaffolding, greenspaces, heritage, sport, community safety and environmental health. This hub is extremely busy with significant workload based on statutory duties and timescales, providing essential support to frontline community officers.

The work of this hub includes:-

- Support to the Planning Inspectorate for Public Inquiries and Appeals.
- Minute taking for Member presentations and other strategic meetings such as Community Safety, Emergency Planning and Domestic Abuse.
- Scanning planning applications, representations, decisions, amended plans, S106 legal documents and publishing on website.
- Land charge searches, researching of enforcement and planning history, responding to solicitor and customer enquiries.
- Validating Tree Preservation Orders so that officers have time to approve or refuse tree work, including Conservation Areas.

A mix of full-time and part-time Administration Support Officers in these administration hubs work across three different sites in Medway.

Impact on services

- Minutes from Safeguarding and Best Interest meetings will be outside statutory timescale at best, or potentially not minuted at all.
- Referrals via Framework i for Adult Social Care will be delayed and vulnerable clients will be put at risk.
- Delays in transfers from Medway Hospital that could damage the council's reputation.
- Financial Assessment Reviews will be delayed.
- 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.
- The council risks not being complaint with the Planning Inspectorate timescales.
- Unable to conduct research of enforcement and planning history and unable to respond to solicitor and customer enquiries.
- There would be customer dissatisfaction and complaints – and the associated work this generates.

We cannot carry these vacancies in addition to maternity vacancies, without impacting on the service we deliver to customers and the frontline professionals.

We wish to recruit three FTE to these range 2 posts to be effective in the new financial year.

Budget issues

1. Efficiencies and savings have already been achieved in all areas of BASS year on year since 2012 and in the budget processes of 2014, 2015 and 2016.
2. Funding at bottom of range 2 (currently £15,241per annum) is within existing staffing budget.

Comments from Portfolio Holder

Signed:
Portfolio Holder

Dated:

Signed:
Councillor Alan Jarrett

Dated:

Signed:
Director

Dated:

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DIRECTORATE	Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation	
SECTION	Transformation Division Business Administration and Support Service (BASS)	
POST TITLE	Senior Administration Officer	
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	Range 3 (£19,356 - £24,943)	
POST NUMBER	9892	
NUMBER OF POSTS	1.0 FTE	
LOCATION	Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4TR	
DATE POSTS BECAME VACANT	February 2017	
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Julie Ince	
*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		
NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER: Julie Ince		

(* please delete as appropriate)

Information on structure and post

In previous budget rounds BASS delivered financial savings of £174,000 and £115,000 through efficiencies and staffing reductions. For the start of 2016-17 another £75,000 was delivered through more staffing reductions.

This senior administration officer vacancy is responsible for one or our larger administration hubs providing support to Adult Social Care.

Vital safeguarding meetings are supported from within this hub as well as a host of other meeting support and administration, not least for the Adult Social Care Panel weekly meeting, responsible for agreeing funding for social care support.

The hub senior is responsible for the line management, development, supervision of 11 administrative officers (a range of full and part-time) based in Gun Wharf and also on an external council site. The hub senior has overarching responsibility for ensuring that administrative processes are properly followed and documented to ensure a good and consistent and professional approach.

Permission is sought to recruit to the one FTE Senior Administration Support Officer vacancy to be effective in the new financial year.

Impact on service

It is not possible for our service to manage without this vital senior administrative post for such a large team and the type of work that is undertaken.

We need to comply with council requirements in terms of policy and procedure for management of our administration staff.

We need to provide support to Adult Social Care and it is really important that adult safeguarding documentation as well as other administrative processes are completed.

The role of a senior is also to assist with ensuring that the administration team work in the most cost effective way by reducing volumes of paperwork, print, post and improvement to the ways in which we work.

Budget issues

1. Efficiencies and savings have already been achieved in all areas of BASS year on year since 2012 and in the budget processes of 2014, 2015 and 2016.
2. The funding source for this range 3 post is within existing staffing budget.

Comments from Portfolio Holder

Signed:
Portfolio Holder

Dated:

Signed:
Councillor Alan Jarrett

Dated:

Signed:
Director

Dated: