

CABINET

6 JUNE 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 6 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

Paralegal – Legal Services (People)
Information Governance Officer

Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation

Admin Support Officer x 2
Apprenticeship Manager
Customer Relations Team Compliance and Monitoring 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

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Recruitment Freeze Forms

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>

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 forward 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 overleaf.

DIRECTORATE	Business Support Department	
SECTION	Legal Services	
POST TITLE	Paralegal - Legal Services (People)	
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	Range 3 (£19,356 - £24,943) per annum	
POST NUMBER	0065	
LOCATION	Gun Wharf, Chatham	
DATE POST BECAME VACANT	2 September 2016	
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Assistant Head of Legal People	
*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:		
IF TEMPORARY PLEASE GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY (if applicable)		
WHICH PHASE OF BETTER FOR LESS DOES THIS POST RELATE TO? Phase Two		
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: Perry Holmes, Chief Legal Officer		

(* 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 request is to replace a permanent, full-time childcare Paralegal in the People Team in Legal Services. This is the third resignation in a paralegal post in recent months. Two out of the three have obtained a training contract elsewhere which is the next stage in their career to qualify as a solicitor. Head of Legal is liaising with HR re the possibility of offering more training contracts to avoid this turnover of staff but in the meantime the post needs to be filled. Cabinet has approved recruitment for the previous two posts and interviews took place in August 2016.

This is an existing post which became vacant on 2 September 2016, when the current post holder left.

Agreement is sought to recruit to this post permanently to ensure cover for pre-proceedings cases carried by paralegals in the team and to provide vital support to lawyers carrying care proceedings matters. The current paralegal in this post holds 8 cases of her own and supports one of the more experienced childcare lawyers in the team who also carries a full care proceedings caseload.

After careful consideration it has been concluded that the team cannot absorb their colleagues cases when she leaves as well as provide the requisite support to the linked lawyer due to the continuing high number of cases held across the team. It is essential to recruit to this post.

Since September 2014 Medway Council has seen a significant increase in the number of cases being issued each month as summarised below:

- 1 January 2014 – 30 April 2014 Medway Council issued care proceedings on 9 children/9 families.
- In the same period in 2015 Medway Council issued care proceedings on 70 children/34 families.
- In the last 4 months of 2015 (between 1 Sept- 31 Dec 2015) Medway Council issued care proceedings on 71 children/ 43 families, i.e. the same level as the first third of 2015.
- 1 January – 30 April 2016 Medway Council issued care proceedings on 30 children / 21 families.

The People Team currently hold 69 Care Proceedings cases, 63 Pre-Proceedings Cases and a further 56 “other” live cases (these figures relate to sibling groups, not individual children – the number of individual children is much higher).

This averages 9 cases per Paralegal. In addition to carrying their own cases the Paralegals provide 121 support to their linked lawyer in progressing care proceedings.

The introduction of paralegals has also been instrumental in improving the team's performance in the preparation of court bundles for all hearings. Prior to employing Paralegals, Medway Council was repeatedly criticised by the courts for the late delivery and quality of court bundles as our admin team were unable to cope with the volume of work. This is now much improved with the majority of bundles being delivered on time and in good order. Any reduction in the number of paralegals risks delays in bundles and progressing court cases.

Budget Issues

Please indicate:

1. the realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the 31st March 2018.
2. If any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service.

While financial savings can be made by not recruiting to this vacant post these savings could be wiped out by just one costs order made against the Council if it delays care proceedings matters, which is a real risk if this post is left vacant.

There is no capacity within the team to absorb the caseload carried by the Paralegal about to leave.

A locum paralegal would not be cost effective. The hourly rate for locum paralegals averages £24 per hour.

Based on this hourly rate of £24 working a 37 hour week the locum fees will be £888 per week. If a locum was employed on this basis for 6 months this amounts to £23,088 which is much more expensive than a permanent paralegal who can be employed for a year for £19,356.

Please specify the funding source for this post:

This is an existing post and is therefore currently provided for in the Legal Services department budget. The People Team childcare Paralegal post is range 3, with a salary of £19,356 - £24,943 pa plus on costs (estimated at 27% of salary costs).

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	Legal Services	
POST TITLE	Temp to cover vacant post: Information Governance Officer	
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	Range 2 (£15,332 - £19,472) per annum	
POST NUMBER		
LOCATION	Gun Wharf, Chatham	
DATE POST BECAME VACANT	30 January 2017	
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Information Governance Manager	
*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	Yes	
IF TEMPORARY PLEASE SPECIFY DATES FROM AND TO:	02/05/17 – 31/07/17	
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:-

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 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 authorisation for one temp in the Information Governance Team within Legal Services to cover a vacancy.

A temp was urgently needed to cover a vacancy for one IGO and this now needs to be extended until the end of July on the basis that the request to recruit to this post is being made to Cabinet.

The other IGO has recently returned from long term sick leave and the team has a

backlog of work to address.

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 needs to be 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 June 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:
Within existing 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		
POST TITLE	Administration Support Officer x 2		
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	Range 2 (£15,332 - £19,472) per annum		
POST NUMBER	9890		
LOCATION	Gun Wharf, Chatham		
DATE POST BECAME VACANT	Post 1 permanent - June 2017 Post 2 maternity leave – July 2017		
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Julie Ince		
*IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER PERMANENT RECRUITMENT	Yes		
*IS THIS REQUEST TO APPLY TO AN EXTERNAL AGENCY	Y/N		
*IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER TEMPORARY RECRUITMENT FROM AGENCY POOL	Yes		
IF TEMPORARY PLEASE SPECIFY DATES FROM AND TO:	Until permanent can be secured		
IF TEMPORARY PLEASE GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY (if applicable)			
NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER: Julie Ince			

(* 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.

These two posts sit within one administration hub. The hub comprises – 1 senior (currently vacant and amidst recruitment process), with 3 full time and 4 part time officers.

This hub supports Adult Social Care. A key element of work in this team is ensuring that Adult safeguarding meetings, funding panel meetings, best interest meetings and professional meetings are minuted to a high level of accuracy and quick turnaround. Additionally they support Shared Lives and the front line respite care and supported living provision for adults with disabilities (both of these are regulated provision). This administration team work on-site at Gun Wharf and off-site both in the respite care provision and in taking minutes at other locations. Additionally, the team are also involved with other daily work to ensure that in excess of 30,000 council tax letters

per month are sorted ready for despatch.

The impact of not filling the permanent administration vacancy, together with the forthcoming maternity leave vacancy will mean that important minutes of meetings will not be able to be fully supported and turn around times will be affected. Adult social care rely upon important administration support to ensure they are able to concentrate on the tasks they need to undertake with our customers, frequently on visits and other related work.

Not filling the posts will also put the remainder of the team under an unreasonable pressure and demand. The team are already short staffed due to a previous maternity cover and previous promotion into a new post for the senior administration, so it is vital that these vacancies are filled.

Permission is sought therefore to recruit :

- 1 permanent Range 2 administration support officer;
- 1 fixed term administration support officer to cover maternity leave from July 2017.

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.

These posts would be funded from within existing budget at Range 2. Realisable savings if these two posts were vacant until 31/3/2018 would be £20,442

1. Efficiencies and savings have already been achieved in all areas of BASS since 2012 and in the budget processes every year since.
2. Funding at bottom of range 2 (currently £15,332per annum) 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	Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation	
SECTION	Medway Adult Learning	
POST TITLE	Apprenticeship manager 0.5fte	
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	tbc – expected to be Range 4 (£24,943-£30,372)	
POST NUMBER	New post	
LOCATION	MAE, Gillingham centre	
DATE POST BECAME VACANT	New post	
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Programme manager, Workskills	
*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:	1-year fixed term contract initially	
IF TEMPORARY PLEASE GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY (if applicable)		
NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER: Caroline Richer		

(* 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.

1 post, 1 vacancy

Failure to recruit to this post will limit the service's ability to increase delivery of apprenticeships and income generation from this funding stream.

Budget Issues

Please indicate:

1. the realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the 31st March 2018.
2. If any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service.

There is no capacity within the current structure to carry out this work and grow the provision. To not recruit risks the current MAE Apprenticeship programme due to insufficient staffing to cover the management of the programme and employer relationships and any future increase in this area of work to maximise funding under the new apprenticeship levy arrangements.

Please specify the funding source for this post: external funding - ESFA

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	
POST TITLE	Customer Relations Team Compliance and Monitoring Officer	
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	Range 2 (£15,332 - £19,472) per annum	
POST NUMBER	9911	
LOCATION	Gun Wharf, Chatham	
DATE POST BECAME VACANT	2 May 2017	
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Customer Relations Team Leader	
*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	
NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER: Michele Pink		

(* 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.

This Customer Relations Team Monitoring Officer post became vacant on 2 May 2017. We request permission to permanently recruit to this vital post (of which there is only one) which looks after the council's Stage 1 corporate complaints. This post provides a pivotal role between officers of the council and members of the public who wish to complain or provide feedback relating to a council service. Responding at Stage 1 requires a diligent set of skills to ensure that each complaint is acknowledged and responded to within set deadlines, and that the response is issued in a language and style that is accessible to all of customers. The liaison with services and customers is vital to ensure that all relevant information and clarification of issues is covered. Getting it right at Stage 1 helps to ensure customer satisfaction and prevents our customers from having to escalate their complaint to stage 2. Good management of complaints not only ensures improved customer service but also

supports in learning and encourages improvements of the council's services. The Customer Relations Team forms part of the Business and Administration Support Service (BASS) and provides a coordination, support and advisory service to all council services in responding to the complaints.

This post is responsible for the co-ordination and presentation of data to managers across the council. Receiving data about timeliness and type of complaint provides invaluable information to help us improve our services across the council. Supported by the team leader, the stage 1 monitoring officer may meet with complainants in person to take their initial complaint, or with complaint handlers and senior managers across the council to better understand more complex complaints and to provide a coordinated response. This is a fast moving area, with frequent deadlines and direct contact with the public. It forms an important part of the face of the council to residents and customers who are dissatisfied with a service they have received.

If the post is not filled there is a danger that deadlines will slip and we will lose faith with our promise to customers through the customer charter commitment. We currently pride ourselves on a good reputation for acting professionally as intermediary between customer and services and ensuring we adhere to deadlines and we do not want this to be jeopardised.

Budget Issues

Please indicate:

3. the realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the 31st March 2018.
4. If any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service.

If post remained vacant from 2.5.17 to end of financial year, savings would be £10,221.00

Efficiencies and savings have already been achieved in all areas of BASS year on year since 2012 and in the budget processes every year since.

Please specify the funding source for this post:

Funding at bottom of range 2 (currently £15,332per annum) is within existing staffing budget.

Comments from Portfolio Holder

Signed:
Portfolio Holder

Dated:

Signed:
Councillor Alan Jarrett

Dated:

Signed:
Director

Dated: