

CABINET

16 JANUARY 2018

RECRUITMENT FREEZE

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Alan Jarrett, Leader

Report from: Neil Davies, Chief Executive

Author: Carrie McKenzie, Assistant Director, Transformation

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

Head of Revenue and Benefits

Lawyer, Child, Adult and Education x 3

Regeneration, Culture, Environment and Transformation

Senior Administration Officer

- 3.2 The forms attached are email copies and the signed copy, job profile and structure chart is 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, Assistant Director, Transformation, 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, DIRECTOR, DIRECTORATE PORTFOLIO HOLDER OR SERVICE MANAGER APPROVAL FOR RECRUITMENT TO VACANCIES

Managers who wish to recruit should raise a Job Reference Number with the Resourcing Team before proceeding with approval. Once all required signatures are obtained it should be returned to the Resourcing Team, Organisational Change Team, Level 3, 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.

JOB REFERENCE NUMBER	B459DT	
RECRUITING MANAGER	Phil Watts	
DIRECTORATE	Business Support Department	
TEAM	Revenue and Benefits	
POST TITLE	Head of Revenue and Benefits	
PAY RANGE	Service Manager (£46,012 - £ 61,096) per annum	
POST NUMBER		
PREVIOUS/CURRENT POST HOLDER	Jon Poulson	
DATE POST WILL BECOME VACANT	31 January 2018	
IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER:	PERMANENT RECRUITMENT	Y
	TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT RECRUITMENT VIA OCELOT PEOPLE SOLUTIONS FROM: / / TO: / /	N
<p>Job Profile must be attached Should you require any assistance with updating job profiles you should contact Resourcing to arrange a meeting before proceeding</p>		
<p>Attach a structure chart to this form that details all established posts, highlighting all vacant posts</p>		
<p><u>Service Impact</u></p> <p><i>Describe the impact on the service if this post is not filled, with particular reference to current employees and services to the public.</i></p> <p>This service manager is responsible for almost 60 FTE, assessing over £100m of benefit claims and collecting around £200m of council tax and business rates, as well as all of the Council's other sundry debt. This post is supported by two range 7 posts and this triumvirate works well in terms of both the strategic and operational management of the service. There are some major initiatives being led within the revenue and benefits service, including, citizens access, e-billing and corporate debt, Furthermore there is a huge amount of work around new rate reliefs and a greater imperative to maximise both local tax revenues and the benefit subsidy.</p> <p>The opportunity for shared management arrangements was explored, however it now appears that there is little appetite for this in the immediate term. The service cannot</p>		

operate without a head of service.

Budget Issues

- *Please indicate the realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the end of the financial year:*
£15k, however it is unlikely that a replacement will be in post before the end of the financial year anyway, given the recruitment timescales.
- *Please indicate if any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service:*
Sharing was explored, but appears to be a non-starter.
- *Please specify the funding source for this post:*
Existing revenue budget

For Externally Funded posts:

- Salary amount allocated to this post N/A
- Reserves allocated in case of redundancy N/A

Comments from Portfolio Holder

With the reduction in Government grant and the shift in the balance of local authority funding towards more locally generated revenues, it is imperative that we have a resilient and well-managed revenue and benefits service and I support recruitment to this post.

Director/Deputy Director

Signed:
Print Name:
Date:

Directorate Portfolio Holder

Signed:
Print Name:
Date:

Councillor Alan Jarrett (only required for Cabinet Approval)

Signed:
Print Name:
Date:

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		
SECTION	Legal Services		
POST TITLE	Lawyer, Child, Adult and Education, People Team, Legal Services x 3		
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	Grade 6 – Salary £35430 - £40741pa plus on costs (estimated at 27% of salary costs)		
POST NUMBER			
LOCATION	Gun Wharf, 2nd Floor		
DATE POST BECAME VACANT	1st December 2017		
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Sameera Khan		
*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: Sameera Khan – Assistant Head of Legal (people team)			

(* 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 for a permanent, 3 full time Lawyers in the People in Legal Services.

The posts have been vacant for sometime now and have been backfilled by various Locums over the period of 18 months. However, due to an increase in caseloads this is beginning to seriously impact on service delivery as Locums are covering on

short term and leaving having gained the experience from working in a local authority.

In addition we have had a spate of permanent staff going on maternity leave which has again impacted on reallocation of work. We currently have 2 Lawyers on maternity leave, one who dealt with Education/SEN work and the other who dealt with child care.

Additionally, we have had 2 Lawyers return from maternity leave. Unfortunately one of the Lawyers who returned has subsequently given formal notice, which is most unfortunate. Consequently, there is no capacity in the team to absorb any additional work as staff are already covering for colleagues.

Going forward it is anticipated that the recruitment of permanent staff will provide some stability in the team.

Care proceeding cases have increased substantially as well as Pre-proceedings which again is impacting on capacity in the team.

Agreement is sought to recruit to these post immediately.

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.

Locum lawyers with experience in this type of work tend to command high hourly rates. Recent experience has shown that the hourly rate is often £40 - £46, so a 37 hour week would cost up to £1702. Using a Locum would therefore be significantly more expensive than recruiting a permanent employee, where the annual salary would be in the region of £41,873 (which divided by 52 gives a weekly figure of £803).

Employment of external solicitors or counsel to undertake work of this type would be much more expensive than a permanent post, with hourly charge-out rates of between £250 - £400.

However due a national shortage of Lawyers we have continued to cover the vacancies via Locums which has meant considerable expenditure for the Legal Team.

Please specify the funding source for this post:

These are existing posts and is therefore currently provided for in the Legal Services department budget. The People Team Lawyer posts are range 6, with a salary of £35,430 - £40 741pa plus on costs (estimated at 27% of salary costs), although this may need to be reviewed, if we are unsuccessful in recruiting suitable candidates.

Medway Lawyer's salary is considerably lower than our neighbouring Boroughs such as Kent who tend to pay their Lawyers substantially more. This was the added factor when we last recruited in 2016 and received any little interest in the vacancies.

Comments from Portfolio Holder

Signed:
Portfolio Holder

Dated:

Signed:
Councillor Alan Jarrett

Dated:

Signed:
Director

Dated:

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	RCET	
SECTION	Transformation Division Business Administration and Support Service (BASS)	
POST TITLE	Senior Administration Officer	
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	Range 3	
POST NUMBER	9889	
NUMBER OF POSTS	1 FTE	
LOCATION	Gun Wharf	
DATE POSTS BECAME VACANT	December 2017	
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Tina Larby	
*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:		NA
IF TEMPORARY PLEASE GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY		
NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER:	Tina Larby	

(* please delete as appropriate)

Information on structure and post

In recent budget rounds Business and Administration Support Service (BASS) delivered savings of £174,000 and £115,000. Further savings of £75,000 were requested from the 2016-17 budget and those savings came from deleting posts - one Senior Administration Officer post and 2.25 FTE Administration Support Officer posts. This financial year we have already delivered savings of £143,000 by staffing efficiencies.

This Senior Administration Officer vacancy is responsible for one of our larger admin hubs providing support to the vulnerable client group of children and adults with a disability.

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. They minute in excess of 55 meetings a month in a variety of locations. Additionally the hub supports Shared Lives – front line regulated service of respite care and supported living provision for adults with disabilities.

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 an external council site. The hub senior has overarching responsibility for ensuring that administrative processes are properly followed and documented to ensure a good consistent and professional approach.

Permission is sought to recruit to the one FTE Senior Administration Support Officer vacancy.

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 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, 2016 and 2017.
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: