

## **CABINET**

**29 JUNE 2010**

### **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 4 posts to be filled.

#### **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: -

## **Regeneration, Community & Culture Directorate**

- Head of Safer Communities
- Head of Waste Services

### **Business Support**

- Service Support Assistant
- Benefit Development Officer.

3.2 The forms attached are email copies and the Assistant Director, Organisational Services, holds the signed copy. The Job description 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**

Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director Organisational Services, Civic Centre, Strood

Telephone: (01634) 332853

Email: [tricia.palmer@medway.gov.uk](mailto:tricia.palmer@medway.gov.uk).

### **Background papers**

Cabinet report 10 December 2002 and 7 January 2003

## Appendix 1

### CABINET APPROVAL FOR RECRUITMENT TO VACANCIES

Please complete this form to request approval from Cabinet to recruit to vacancies and return to Jane Bowpitt, HR Services, Gun Wharf. This form is not required for those posts covered by the exemptions list.

DIRECTORATE	Regeneration Community and Culture		
SECTION	Safer Communities		
POST TITLE	Head of Safer Communities		
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	Service Manager £39,015-£56,007		
POST NUMBER	0489		
LOCATION	Civic Centre, Strood		
DATE POST BECAME VACANT	February 2010		
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Assistant Director Frontline Services		
*IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER PERMANENT RECRUITMENT	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
*IS THIS REQUEST TO APPLY TO AN EXTERNAL AGENCY	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
*IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER TEMPORARY RECRUITMENT FROM AGENCY POOL	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
IF TEMPORARY PLEASE GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY (if applicable)			
NAME:			
NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER	Andy McGrath		

(\* 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 post manages the Safer Communities Service. This includes, Safer Communities, Trading Standards, Environmental Health, CCTV and Telecare. This includes management of 80 staff and a high level of partnership working.

The post is one of four Service Manager posts in Frontline Services (Highways, Capital Projects and Road Safety, Waste Management). These posts are filled.

The post is being covered by the Assistant Director Frontline Services in the short term.

If the post is not filled then there is a very significant risk to the Council's strategic priorities for a safe communities and a clean and green environment. These are also vital to ensure an excellent quality of life for Medway residents.

## Budget Issues

Please indicate:

1. the realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.
2. If any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service.

If the post remains vacant until 31 March 2011, there would be a saving of approximately £30,000. The level of experience of a successful applicant, if external, would mean that the post would be unlikely to be filled before the end of September 2010 in any event.

There are no alternate ways of providing the service without filling the post as the role is necessary to provide effective management.

## Comments from Portfolio Holder

I support the need to recruit a Service Manager to lead this important area of work.

Signed: .....  
Portfolio Holder

Dated: .....

Signed: .....  
Second Portfolio Holder

Dated: .....

Signed: .....  
Director

Dated: .....

## CABINET APPROVAL FOR RECRUITMENT TO VACANCIES

**Please complete this form to request approval from Cabinet to recruit to vacancies and return to Jane Bowpitt, HR Services, Gun Wharf. This form is not required for those posts covered by the exemptions list.**

DIRECTORATE	Regeneration Community and Culture		
SECTION	Waste Services		
POST TITLE	Head of Waste Services		
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	Service Manager £39,015-£56,007		
POST NUMBER	4352		
LOCATION	Civic Centre, Strood		
DATE POST BECAME VACANT	2006/07		
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Assistant Director Frontline Services		
*IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER PERMANENT RECRUITMENT	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
*IS THIS REQUEST TO APPLY TO AN EXTERNAL AGENCY	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
*IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER TEMPORARY RECRUITMENT FROM AGENCY POOL	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
IF TEMPORARY PLEASE GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY (if applicable)			
NAME:			
NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER	Andy McGrath		

(\* 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.

This is the only post of this nature in the Waste team. This is a high profile front line service that is consistently the most highly regarded by the public. Failure to fill this post will result in major strategic and operational decisions being impeded; including final procurement, mobilisation and the transition and implementation of the significant changes over the next 2+ years of the new waste contracts. The service is such that it needs a dedicated senior manager to oversee the ongoing contract, budget (circa £20m pa) and daily management. This post is also the key link between the political and operational aspects of this key service.

**Budget Issues**

Please indicate:

1. the realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.
2. If any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service.

There are no saving to be achieved as a senior officer acting currently fills this post up.

Pervious management structures via remote service managers have been tried and have proved unsuccessful, as this service requires day-to-day hands on senior manager with the ability to make major decisions on a regular basis.

**Comments from Portfolio Holder**

Signed: .....  
Portfolio Holder

Dated: .....

Signed: .....  
Second Portfolio Holder

Dated: .....

Signed: .....  
Director

Dated: .....

**Please complete this form to request approval from Cabinet to recruit to vacancies and return to Jane Bowpitt, HR Services, Gun Wharf. This form is not required for those posts covered by the exemptions list.**

DIRECTORATE	Business Support Department		
SECTION	Medway Revenues & Benefits Service		
POST TITLE	Service Support Assistant		
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	D2 (£15,039 - £19,126)		
POST NUMBER	5250		
LOCATION	Finance, Level 2 Gun Wharf		
DATE POST BECAME VACANT	17 January 2010		
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Allison Snell Senior Service Support Officer		
*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 GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY (if applicable)			
NAME:			
NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER	Patrick Knight Revenues Manager		

(\* 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.

This post is one of three support assistant posts within the Systems & Controls section of Medway Council.

The post is responsible for ensuring that all daily computerised batch jobs for Medway Revenues and Benefits Service (MRBS) are correctly administered including the running of benefit payment runs of £2m+ a week. In addition, the post provides support for the Document Image Processing & workflow system and all future system development.

The post is critical in the administration of controls for MRBS in accordance with the audit framework with particular regard to Revenues and Benefit payments. This in turn forms a critical part of the Benefit Service.

The post also contains an element of front line service in relation to lost and replacement benefit cheques and the issue of Revenue discount & exemption reviews.

If this post was not filled the controls relating to both benefits and revenues would occur to a far lesser extent than required by the Council's own audit control framework. The risks are that there could be delays in the payment of Housing Benefit which could have a direct and detrimental effect on the more vulnerable members of the community; an increase in the number of

incorrectly awarded discounts & exemptions resulting in losses in the Collection Fund.

### Budget Issues

Please indicate:

1. the realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.
2. If any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service.

1. Full year 2010/11 saving of £18,973 (based on bottom of Scale D2 incl. on costs, superannuation and NI with no pay award).

2. Agency more expensive than permanent staff.

### Comments from Portfolio Holder

Although a support post this is part of a team that is critical for maintaining the robustness of the council tax and benefits systems. To remain unfilled for any lengthy period increases the risk of a system failure that could have serious consequences given the nature of the business and the turnover of over £300 million.

Signed: .....  
Portfolio Holder

Dated: .....

Signed: .....  
Second Portfolio Holder

Dated: .....

Signed: .....  
Director

Dated: .....



**Please complete this form to request approval from Cabinet to recruit to vacancies and return to Jane Bowpitt, HR Services, Gun Wharf. This form is not required for those posts covered by the exemptions list.**

DIRECTORATE	Business Support Department		
SECTION	Medway Revenues & Benefits Service		
POST TITLE	Benefit Development Officer		
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	C2 (£19,621-£26,276)		
POST NUMBER	5248		
LOCATION	Finance, Level 2 Gun Wharf		
DATE POST BECAME VACANT	21 February 2010		
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Steve Candy Senior System Development Officer		
*IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER PERMANENT RECRUITMENT	<b>Yes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
*IS THIS REQUEST TO APPLY TO AN EXTERNAL AGENCY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b>
*IS THIS REQUEST TO COVER TEMPORARY RECRUITMENT FROM AGENCY POOL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b>
IF TEMPORARY PLEASE GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY (if applicable)			
NAME:			
NAME OF RECRUITING MANAGER	Patrick Knight Revenues Manager		

(\* 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.

<p>This is a key post within the Systems &amp; Controls section of the Medway Revenues and Benefits Service.</p> <p>The post is responsible for co-ordinating benefit related programmes including benefit policy, procedure and training for 85 staff within Medway Revenues and Benefits Services (MRBS), which result from frequent changes in legislation, DWP Guidance notes, system changes and the results of quality checking.</p> <p>The post is critical in ensuring that policy, procedures and training is in place concerning the complex areas of Benefits. This therefore forms a critical part of the Benefit Service.</p> <p>If this post was not filled it could affect result in delays and quality issues in the payment of Housing Benefit. This in turn could have a direct and detrimental effect on the more vulnerable members of the community.</p>
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**Budget Issues**

Please indicate:

1. the realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.
2. If any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service.

1. Full year 2010/11 saving of £31,590 (based on previous postholder scale point of Scale C2 incl. ER's superannuation and NI with no pay award).
2. Agency more expensive than permanent staff.

**Comments from Portfolio Holder**

The legislative and regulatory framework for housing and council tax benefit is extremely complex and changes frequently. To ensure that staff are equipped to handle this the MRBS team have had a dedicated training resource for some time. The accurate payment of benefit is a crucial frontline function directly impacting upon the more vulnerable members of our community. This is a cost effective solution to meeting the training needs of the function and ensuring that the public are well served. I support the recruitment.

Signed: .....  
Portfolio Holder

Dated: .....

Signed: .....  
Second Portfolio Holder

Dated: .....

Signed: .....  
Director

Dated: .....