

CABINET
4 OCTOBER 2011
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 1 post 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 post requiring approval to fill is 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

- Electoral Services Officer.

3.2 The form attached is an email copy 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 post upon the council's ability to achieve its strategic objectives, the attached form includes 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 post will be filled in accordance with the Council's recruitment policies.

6. Recommendation

6.1 The Cabinet is asked to agree to unfreeze the post as set out in Appendix 1 to enable officers to commence the recruitment process.

7. Suggested reason for decision

7.1 The post presented to Cabinet will support the efficient running of the Council.

Lead officer contact

Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director Organisational Services, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham Telephone: (01634) 332853 Email: tricia.palmer@medway.gov.uk.

Background papers:

Cabinet report 10 December 2002 and 7 January 2003

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	Electoral Services	
POST TITLE	Electoral Services Officer	
GRADE AND SALARY RANGE	D1 £15,792 - £20,528 (incl on-costs)	
POST NUMBER	0088	
LOCATION	Gun Wharf	
DATE POST BECAME VACANT	1 October 2011	
MANAGER POST REPORTS TO	Electoral Services 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	No	
IF TEMPORARY PLEASE SPECIFY DATES FROM AND TO:		
IF TEMPORARY PLEASE GIVE NAME OF EMPLOYEE COVERING VACANCY (if applicable)		
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 post of Electoral Services Officer (ESO) operates within a small team, that is enhanced during peak workload periods by temporary staff to assist with, particularly the processing of household registration forms during the annual audit in preparation for the publication of the Register of Electors. We have found that key to the on-going success in improving the accuracy and completeness of the Register is the recruitment, training and supervision of personal canvassers. We now have 100 such canvassers and during the annual audit the ESO takes particular responsibility for training and supervising them on a weekly basis with the ESO giving priority to this role is enables the rest of the team to process approximately 90,000 forms received over a three-month period. If the annual audit, particularly the personal canvass stage, is not completed comprehensively the accuracy and completeness of the Register to be published on 1 December will be compromised - electors will lose the opportunity to vote and the accuracy of the Register will result in problems in the period leading up to and including Police and Crime Commissioner Elections in November 2012.

Once the Register is published on 1 December 2011, the ESO is then responsible for distributing electronic and hard copies to those entitled to copies – national and local political parties, credit reference agencies and local councillors.

In addition to the preparations for the Police and Crime Commissioner elections, the team will also have to undertake a refresh exercise of all existing postal voters whose postal votes are older than 5 years. This will involve producing and distributing up to 25,000 letters and dealing with all those returned before up to date postal voters lists can be supplied to political parties and other stakeholders in advance of the election.

The Electoral Commission produced a report on establishing electoral services teams and their benchmark for Medway is a team of 4.75 in addition to a full-time manager. The Elections Team is currently staffed at a level of 3 full-time members of staff and a manager. If the ESO post is not filled, the team will be reduced to 2 plus a full-time manager.

Budget Issues

Please indicate:

1. The realisable savings if this post remained vacant until the 31 March 2012.
2. If any savings could be achieved by alternative ways of providing the service.

The savings in this financial year would be in the order of £8954.

No other savings can be identified by providing the service in alternative ways.

Comments from Portfolio Holder

Signed:
Portfolio Holder

Dated:

Signed:
Second Portfolio Holder

Dated:

Signed:
Director

Dated: