

Appendices: 0



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

Report Title

Position Statement on Vacant Posts and Interim/Agency Staff

AGENDA STATUS:

PUBLIC

Audit Committee Meeting Date:	13th November 2017
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Finance Directorate LGSS
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr Brandon Eldred

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To present Committee with a position statement as to the numbers of staff vacancies and interims/agency staff engaged.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To consider the contents of this finance report.
- 2.2 To consider whether Committee requires any additional information in order to fulfil its governance role.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 At the meeting on the 14 March 2016 Audit Committee raised a query requesting further information on:
- The number of interim/agency staff and vacant positions currently held at the Council
- 3.1.2 Audit Committee has since received regular reports each meeting on vacancies and interim/agency staff. At the previous meeting on 27th September 2017 additional information was requested to include all

agency/interim staff as well as those covering vacant posts, and information around expenditure incurred in the financial year.

3.2 Interim/Agency Staff and Vacant Positions

3.2.1 The total number of interim and agency staff engaged and those which are covering vacant posts in the establishment.

Directorate	February 2016	August 2017		September 2017		YTD Expenditure
	Covering vacant posts	Total	Covering vacant posts	Total	Covering vacant posts	(£000)
Borough Secretary	9	-	4	5	5	200
Director of Customers & Communities	*13	-	2	2	0	77
Director of Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning	13	-	2	7	3	317
Housing and Well Being	4	-	5	7	4	250
Total	39	-	13	21	12	844

Note : * 6 Posts removed from total relating to Enterprise Contract as costs are being recovered through the contract.

3.2.2 The number of interim and agency staff engaged and the length of engagement is summarised in the table below.

Directorate	September 2017	Length of time engaged				
		<1 month	1-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	12+ months
Borough Secretary	5		3	1		1
Director of Customers & Communities	2	2				
Director of Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning	7		1	3	1	2
Housing and Wellbeing	7	1	1		1	4
Total	21	3	5	4	2	7

3.2.3 The number of staff vacancies is summarised in the table below.

Directorate	Total Posts	Vacancies (March 2016)	Vacancies (August 2017)	Vacancies (September 2017)	Recruiting to	Covered by Interims/ Agency
Borough Secretary	53	11	16	14	2	5
Director of Customers & Communities	170	23	8	6	6	0
Director of Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning	60	13	9	9	1	3
Housing and Well Being	41	5	7	7	6	4
Total	324	52	40	36	15	12

3.2.1 Of the 14 vacancies in the Directorate of Borough Secretary, 1 post has been shortlisted and 1 post is awaiting a start date (end of November). 7 of the posts are currently vacant which are under discussion.

3.2.2 Of the 6 vacancies in the Directorate of Customers & Communities, 6 are in the process of being recruited to and 3 are being covered by casual staff. The museum service are also currently recruiting for a six month maternity cover post.

3.2.3 Of the 9 vacancies within the Directorate of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning, all vacancies are under review pending the medium term resourcing strategy. One vacancy is being advertised.

3.2.4 Of the 7 vacant positions in the Housing and Wellbeing Service, 5 are in the process of being recruited and 1 has successfully been recruited to. Of the 7 interims in post in the Housing and Wellbeing service, 4 are covering vacant posts; 1 is providing the Housing standards Team with extra capacity to identify, license and regulate HMOs pending a mini restructure of the team; 1 is providing maternity leave cover; 1 is working on a special project within the Private Sector Housing Team.

3.3 Choices (Options)

3.3.1 None

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 There are no specific policy implications arising from this report.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 Ongoing monitoring of the Council's budget and capital programme enables early intervention and appropriate remedial action, thus mitigating risks to the Council's financial viability and to its reputation.

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

4.4 Equality

- 4.4.1 There are no specific equalities implications arising from this report.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

- 4.5.1 None at this stage.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

- 4.6.1 Regular reporting of the Council's financial position helps to ensure the proper stewardship of the Council's resources. Active financial management contributes to the delivery of value for money services, enabling public money to be used to maximum benefit.

4.7 Other Implications

- 4.7.1 The responsibility for determining whether agency/interim workers are deemed employees for tax purposes has been that of public sector bodies from April 2017. This will mean that the Council has to assess all individuals who are doing work for the authority against a number of criteria as indicated by HMRC. This is a change from the previous position where the individual has to make the assessment as to whether they are what is known as 'IR35' compliant.
- 4.7.2 Where the Council determines that individuals are inside IR35 then they will have to notify those individuals and the agency that represents them (in the case of NBC this is mostly Guidant) so that personal tax can be deducted at source through a PAYE system rather than leaving it to the individual as either an employee of their own limited company or as a self employed person to calculate and pay the relevant tax.
- 4.7.3 Management have been working with the Council's preferred supplier Guidant and all other agencies to ensure that the new responsibilities are met. All agency and temporary contracts as at April 2017 were reviewed against the criteria to ensure the authority was complying with the change in responsibility.
- 4.7.4 The change in responsibility of determining IR35 compliance to the public sector has had an impact on the interim/consultancy market, and as a result the Council will need to develop its reporting to future Audit Committees.

5. Background Papers

None

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