

Appendices: Nil



**NORTHAMPTON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

Report Title

Position Statement on Vacant Posts and Interim/Agency Staff

**AGENDA STATUS:**

**PUBLIC**

<b>Audit Committee Meeting Date:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> June 18
<b>Policy Document:</b>	No
<b>Directorate:</b>	Finance Directorate LGSS
<b>Accountable Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Brandon Eldred

### 1. Purpose

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

### 2. Recommendations

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- 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.
- 2.3 To note that whilst efforts are being made to reduce the number of agency and interim staff at present. As NBC heads toward a Unitary environment, there may be a need to increase the use of agency and interim staff.

### 3. Issues and Choices

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#### 3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 A Finance report is presented to Cabinet quarterly (including the outturn report) which are then brought to the first available Audit Committee meeting following their production.
- 3.1.2 At it's 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

### 3.2 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	January 2018		February 2018		YTD Expenditure
	Covering vacant posts	Total	Covering vacant posts	Total	Covering vacant posts	(£000)
Borough Secretary	9	7	7	7	7	422
Director of Customers & Communities	*13	5	1	4	1	148
Director of Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning	13	8	2	8	2	627
Housing and Well Being	4	7	3	7	3	386
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1,583</b>

**Note :** \* 5 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	February 2018	Length of time engaged				
		<1 month	1-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	12+ months
Borough Secretary	7	-	-	3	3	1
Director of Customers & Communities	4	1	3	-	-	-
Director of Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning	8	-	2	2	-	4
Housing and Wellbeing	7	-	1	1	-	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>

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

Directorate	Total Posts	Vacancies (March 2016)	Vacancies (Jan 2018)	Vacancies (Feb 2018)	Recruiting to	Covered by Interims/ Agency
<b>Borough Secretary</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Director of Customers &amp; Communities</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Director of Regeneration, Enterprise &amp; Planning</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Housing and Well Being</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>13</b>

3.2.1 Of the 14 vacancies in the Directorate of Borough Secretary, the Chief Executive and the Political Assistant roles has now been filled. Start dates were March/April 2018.

3.2.2 Of the 14 vacancies in the Directorate of Customers & Communities, 10 are in the process of being recruited to and 1 is being covered by interim/agency staff who has been in place for 2 months. Two of the vacancies in Facilities Management are for apprentice roles which are being advertised via Qube, the new supplier. The Post Room vacancy is not being recruited to at the moment as assessment of the roll out of Electronic Records Management across the organisation takes place. 1 agency staff member is covering holiday for cleaners and porters and 1 is covering holiday and paternity leave for the Post Room. The interim staff member working within Town Centre Operations is also covering someone on long term sickness. The vacancies in the other areas are being covered by existing staff working additional hours.

3.2.3 Of the 6 vacancies within the Directorate of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning, two posts have been unsuccessfully recruited to on several occasions and one post has been successfully recruited to, with a starting date of early April 2018. All vacancies are under review pending the medium term resourcing strategy.

3.2.4 Of the 5 vacant positions in the Housing and Wellbeing Service, 4 are in the process of being recruited to and 1 has successfully been recruited to. Of the 7 interims, 3 are covering vacant posts; 2 are providing the Housing standards Team with extra capacity to identify, license and regulate HMOs; 1 is providing maternity leave cover; 1 is providing the Homelessness Team with extra support. Following agreement of the Business Case for the expansion of the Housing Enforcement Team, 2 of the interims above, have been successfully appointed to 2 posts within the Housing Enforcement Team – start date for both was 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

### **3.3 Choices (Options)**

3.3.1 None

## **4. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **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.

4.2.2 There is a risk now that the Northamptonshire area is destined to deliver a unitary solution that it will become increasingly difficult to attract recruit new staff, with an added risk that as time progresses, some key staff may seek to move on. Therefore there may be an increase in agency and interim staff both to deliver core activities, but also provide backfill if officers are seconded to unitary projects.

### **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**

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None

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