

Appendices: Nil



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

Report Title	Position Statement on Vacant Posts and Interim/Agency Staff
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Audit Committee Meeting Date:	15 th January 2018
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 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	October 2017		November 2017		YTD Expenditure
	Covering vacant posts	Total	Covering vacant posts	Total	Covering vacant posts	(£000)
Borough Secretary	9	6	6	7	7	290
Director of Customers & Communities	*13	1	0	2	0	90
Director of Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning	13	8	3	8	3	446
Housing and Well Being	4	8	4	7	3	313
Total	39	23	13	24	13	1,139

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	November 2017	Length of time engaged				
		<1 month	1-3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months	12+ months
Borough Secretary	7	-	2	2	1	2
Director of Customers & Communities	2	2	-	-	-	-
Director of Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning	8	-	-	4	1	3
Housing and Wellbeing	7	1	-	1	-	5
Total	24	3	2	7	2	10

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

Directorate	Total Posts	Vacancies (March 2016)	Vacancies (Oct 2017)	Vacancies (November 2017)	Recruiting to	Covered by Interims/ Agency
Borough Secretary	55	11	13	14	2	7
Director of Customers & Communities	176	23	10	12	10	0
Director of Regeneration, Enterprise & Planning	60	13	9	9	2	3
Housing and Well Being	40	5	7	6	5	3
Total	331	52	39	41	19	13

3.2.4 Of the 14 vacancies in the Directorate of Borough Secretary, 1 post has successfully been recruited to and started in Dec 2017 and the role of Chief Executive has been advertised. 6 of the posts are currently vacant which are under discussion.

3.2.5 Of the 12 vacancies in the Directorate of Customers & Communities, 10 are in the process of being recruited to and none are being covered by interim/agency staff. The 6 vacancies in Customer Services are being covered by casual staff. All the vacancies in the other areas which include call care, town centre operations and environmental health are being covered by existing staff working additional hours.

3.2.6 Of the 9 vacancies within the Directorate of Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning, one post was unsuccessfully recruited to and three posts have been offered up as cost savings. All vacancies are under review pending the medium term resourcing strategy.

3.2.7 Of the 6 vacant positions in the Housing and Wellbeing Service, 4 are in the process of being recruited 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 pending a mini restructure of the team; 1 is providing maternity leave cover; 1 is providing the Homelessness Team with extra support.

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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