

Overview and Scrutiny Commission – financial monitoring task group

Meeting date 30 August 2018

Establishment Control and Vacancy reporting

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Recommendations:

A. To discuss and comment on the contents of this report

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The last report to this committee reported data as at Q3 2017/18, 31 December 2017.
- 1.2. This report provides data as at 4th quarter 2017/18 (data as at 31 March 2018) and 1st quarter 2018/19 (data as at 30 June 2018). It is intended to provide quarterly updates to coincide with the financial monitoring reports, with quarter 2 coming to the 13 November 2018 and Quarter 3 to the 25 February 2019 meeting.
- 1.3. The data reflects further work to align iTrent, our personnel and payroll system, agency workers and interims with the established posts they are covering.
- 1.4. A mechanism is in place to convert agency workers to Employees, subject to safeguards to ensure there is no conflict of interest and that named individuals are not hired via agency on an interim basis and then offered direct employment with no competitive selection.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. Annex A shows the positions as at 31 March 2018, and Annex B the position as at 30 June 2018. The appendices show vacancies not filled by direct employees, and vacancies not filled by either a direct employee or an agency worker/consultant. The size of establishment is measured in terms of authorised Full Time Equivalents (FTEs), rather than numbers of posts, and therefore the appendix totals FTEs for budgeted posts, employees, agency workers and vacancies.
- 2.2. A change was made in the last reported quarter to also show the budgeted FTEs at time of revenue budget setting alongside the actual FTE establishment, based on iTrent data the report dates. The two figures can vary due, for example, to in-year

- changes and reorganisations, TUPE transfers in and out, due to external funding of posts and posts funded from capital.
- 2.3. Work continues to ensure the accuracy of the data including close liaison with Heads of Service to review the detailed establishment for their areas.
 - 2.4. Apprentice data has been excluded as in most cases they are at present centrally funded on a case by case basis and do not form part of the formal establishment.
 - 2.5. The base data behind these statistics is now being circulated to DMT officers on a monthly basis so that they are up to date on the current establishment and vacancy position, and have the opportunity to address any errors or corrections. Subject to the timing of committee dates it is then intended to provide a quarterly update in future, tied to the financial quarters of 30 September, 31 December and 31 March (date to be agreed).
 - 2.6. HR provides information to Standards and General Purposes Committee on agency and interim usage.
 - 2.7. HR has strategies in place to address recruitment to hard to fill roles, reduce dependency on agency staff. There will be situations where certain specialist roles can only be covered by agency, there is a short term need for project support and shorter term usage of agency to cover vacancies during periods of planned organisational change.
 - 2.9. A Temp to Perm mechanism is in place whereby agency workers or interims can be converted to direct employment, subject to safeguards to ensure there is no conflict of interest and that named individuals are not hired via agency or an interim basis and then offered direct employment with no competitive selection. Appointment to senior roles which require member-level involvement will continue to be dealt with in the normal way. The aim is to encourage agency workers, particularly those in hard to fill roles, to become Employees. Any such conversions will only be to posts that have been subject to full establishment control processes.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Without accurate establishment data, the Authority cannot appropriately plan for the future service or workforce needs. There is also a need to be able to report on unfilled substantive posts, and to monitor and control the use of agency workers to cover unfilled vacancies.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. Merton Improvement Board and the Workforce Strategy Board are kept up to date on work to refine the technical establishment and ensure robust establishment controls remain in place.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. Subject to the timing of committee dates it is proposed to provide a quarterly update to this committee, based on data as at, 30th June, 30th September 31st December and 31st March each year. Heads of Service will receive a monthly update of establishment details in their area so that they can address any corrections required.

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Employees account for 15% of the gross General Fund spend in the authority. Having an accurate establishment helps managers plan their service, account for their costs and ensure delivery of staff related savings and financial implications.
- 6.2. As a result of the earlier technical establishment exercise and ongoing establishment controls, each post will be linked to appropriate budgetary provision.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

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

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. There are no specific human rights, equalities or community cohesion implications arising from this report.

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. There are no crime disorder implications arising from this report.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. There are no specific risk or health and safety issues arising from this report.

11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

- Annex A – establishment analysis including FTE agency workers and vacancies as at 31st March 2018
- Annex B – establishment analysis including FTE agency workers and vacancies as at 30th June 2018

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 12.1 NONE

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