

# **Committee: Financial monitoring scrutiny task group**

**Date: 16 February 2021**

Agenda item:

Wards:

**Subject: Establishment Control and Vacancy reporting –3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2020/21**

Lead officer: Liz Hammond – interim HR lead

Lead member: Councillor Tobin Byers, Cabinet Member for Finance

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## **Recommendations:**

A. To note the contents of this report

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## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. The last report to this committee reported data was at Q2 2020/21 – data as at 30 September 2020.
- 1.2. This report provides data as at 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2020/21 (data as at 31 December 2020). Subject to timing of committee dates updates are provided quarterly, tied to the financial quarters of 30 June, 30 September, 31 December and 31 March.
- 1.3. The data reflects further work to align iTrent 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. Appendix A shows the position as at 31 December. 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, rather than numbers of posts, and therefore the appendix totals FTEs for budgeted posts, employees, agency workers and vacancies.
- 2.2. The budgeted FTEs at time of revenue budget setting are shown alongside the actual FTE establishment, based on iTrent data and managed through the Establishment Control process. The two figures will vary due, for example, to in-year changes and reorganisations, and due to external funding of posts (as in the case of Regulatory Services, where some

posts are funded by Wandsworth) and posts funded from capital or grants.

- 2.3. Further work has been undertaken to ensure the accuracy of the data including close liaison with Heads of Service to review the detailed establishment for their areas.

The establishment can vary for a number of reasons, including planned budget changes, TUPE transfers in and out of groups of employees, and in-year adjustments due to reorganisations. A number of additional post have been created in response to Coronavirus, including Covid Marshalls and the Track & Trace team in Regulatory Services.

- 2.4. Apprentice data has been excluded as in many 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 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 intended to provide a quarterly update, tied to the financial quarters of 30 June, 30 September, 31 December and 31 March.

- 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, in order to reduce dependency on agency staff. There will be situations where certain specialist roles can only be covered by agency, 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.

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#### **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. Corporate Management Team 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 updates are provided to this committee quarterly, based on data as at 31<sup>st</sup> March, 30<sup>th</sup> June, 30<sup>th</sup> September and 31<sup>st</sup> December each year. Heads of Service 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 25% of the gross General Fund spend in the authority. Having an accurate establishment helps managers plan their service 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**

- Appendix A – establishment analysis including FTE agency workers and vacancies as at 31 December 2020

**12 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12.1 Previous quarterly reports to Financial Management Task Group