

EMPLOYMENT AND GENERAL COMMITTEE**Monday, 4th December, 2017**

Present:-

Councillor Burrows (Chair)

Councillors Simmons
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Councillors J Innes

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

**26 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' INTERESTS
RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

No declarations of interest were received.

27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Davenport and Wall.

28 MINUTES**RESOLVED –**

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 9 October, 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

29 INNOVATION CENTRES APPRENTICE POSTS

The Development and Growth Manager submitted a report seeking approval to formalise apprenticeship posts at Tapton and Dunston Innovation Centres. These posts would reflect the new Chesterfield Borough Council Apprentice Policy and to establish revised costs of the post within the Innovation Centres budget.

The Committee was informed that for many years the Tapton and Dunston Innovation Centres had hosted Trainee Clerical Assistant posts. These posts enabled trainees to develop skills and experience in an office

environment alongside studying for a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ).

The cost of the trainee posts had been £6,734 per year in line with the National Apprenticeship wage of £3.50 per hour. However, alterations to the rules and guidance around recruiting apprentices and the new Apprentice Policy would mean increased costs for future recruitment. The new policy set wages through the national minimum for age groups and an increase would occur for all ages.

The trainee posts at both Innovation Centres had become vacant in the summer of 2017 which had resulted in low staffing levels. Businesses located within the innovation Centres pay premium rent for additional services from the administration team which were difficult to deliver with low staffing levels. The report detailed the human resource implications and noted that regular lone working could lead to safety issues as the buildings were open to the public.

The report considered the financial implications of the revised costs for the posts. The cost increase would be between £1,058 and £7,696 per centre depending upon the age of the successful candidates. A budget of £15,392 was requested to replace the existing budget for trainees at the centres which reflected the highest possible cost of an apprentice at each centre. If costs were lower than those quoted due to recruitment of younger candidates the resultant saving would be reported in the budget monitoring process.

***RESOLVED –**

That the revised Innovation Centres staffing costs be noted and factored into revenue budgets.

30

CONSULTATION ON 2018 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES

The Electoral Services Manager submitted a report to inform the Committee of the proposals contained in the 2018 boundary review for new parliamentary constituencies in England.

In September 2016 the initial proposals for new parliamentary constituency boundaries had been published by the Boundary Commission for England. These proposals included a reduction in the

number of constituencies from 650 to 600 in the UK and from 533 to 501 for England. Every constituency in England, apart from two specified exceptions, would have an electorate that was no smaller than 71,031 and no larger than 78,507. A 12 week public consultation on the proposals then took place which enabled people to give comments directly to an Assistant Commissioner.

The initial proposals for the East Midlands retained just over 15% of the existing constituencies, the remainder would be new constituencies. There would be a reduction of 11 constituencies down to 10 in Derbyshire. The Boundary Commissions report proposed the inclusion of the Chesterfield Borough ward of Barrow Hill and New Whittington with the Chesterfield constituency. The North East Derbyshire Constituency would disappear and the wards represented by it were allocated between the Derbyshire Dales constituency, a reconfigured Bolsover and Dronfield Constituency and a new proposed constituency of Bolsover and Dronfield.

The revised and current proposals retained the initial proposals for the Chesterfield constituency given the broad level of support. The assistant commissioners considered comments and agreed to review the other Derbyshire constituencies, though the Chesterfield Borough ward of Lowgates and Woodthorpe would move to the revised Bolsover ward.

The report noted the proposals to leave the Chesterfield constituency largely unaltered apart from including an additional Chesterfield Borough Council ward would better represent the administrative area of the borough.

The Boundary Commission would now be consulting on the revised proposals for an 8 week period. The new constituency boundaries were planned to take effect from the next parliamentary election following their acceptance.

***RESOLVED –**

That the secondary proposals for a change to the parliamentary constituency boundaries as they affect Chesterfield Borough be noted and supported.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED –

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

32

LEASEHOLD AND RIGHT TO BUY OFFICER

The Assistant Director for Housing submitted a report seeking approval to review the staffing structure for the delivery of the Leasehold and Right to Buy (RTB) functions within Housing Services.

The RTB function historically had been delivered by the Council's legal service. The operating model for processing RTB applications remained unchanged for many years. After a mistake occurred which could have had large financial ramifications for the council a LEAN review was carried out. Since February 2016 the RTB function had been carried out on a temporary basis by the Leasehold Officer within Housing Services. The funding for additional hours had been met directly by the Housing Revenue Account, when the function was carried out in Legal Services the cost for this work would have been carried out by an internal recharge between the two services.

The RTB process has two clear stages. In the first stage, the application stage, the tenant's Right to Buy entitlement would be established. The property would then be valued and the tenant would be issued with an offer notice which confirmed the price and discount entitlement.

Historically the first stage would be carried out by the Legal Service who issued forms to the Housing Service to collect data and be returned. This data would then be reviewed in a very labour intensive process. On a trial basis these duties had been added to the existing role of Leasehold Officer, as this role had complimentary duties to the RTB function.

The trial had been successful: duplication had been eliminated and the process was more efficient. In the second quarter of 2017/18 45 RTB notices had been issued, of which 98% were issued within the 28 day required timescale. Over the same period 42 Section 125 notices had been issued within the required 8 week timescale.

In the second stage, the legal stage, the tenant would confirm they wished to proceed and appoint a solicitor to complete the legal transfer of

ownership. This process had been retained within Legal Services and delivered by the Property, Procurement and Contracts Legal Executive who incorporated RTB work alongside existing duties. Overall around 4.26 hours per week had been saved in staffing time by resourcing the RTB function in this way.

Since February 2016 there had been a demonstrable increase in the volume of RTB enquiries, applications and sales. For 2017, to the end of September, 117 RTB applications had been received with 74 sales completing compared to 152 applications and 85 sales completing in 2016. It was therefore proposed to increase the establishment of the post by a further 7.24 hours per week and the Leasehold and RTB function to be carried out on a whole time full time equivalent basis. This ensured a telephone or enquiry presence for the whole week and allowed for work to be accommodated more flexibly.

The report proposed that the post of Leasehold Officer be deleted and a new post of Leasehold and Right to Buy Officer be established within Housing Services. The Job Evaluation Panel allocated a Grade 6 to the proposed post, which would be the same as the existing Leasehold Officer.

The financial implications of the proposed changes to the function would add an additional days cost to Housing Service's salary budget. Based on 2017/18 salary figures this would be an additional £5,890 per annum and the extra cost could be built into the 2018/19 Housing Revenue Account budget.

The human resources implications of the proposal would be the deletion of the Leasehold Officer post, as such the postholder would be 'at risk'. The postholder would be ring-fenced to apply for the new post of Leasehold and Right to Buy Officer.

***RESOLVED –**

1. That the post of Leasehold Officer be deleted and a new post of Leasehold and Right to Buy Officer be established within Housing Services.
2. That the permanent establishment of the Leasehold and Right to Buy officer be increased by an additional 7.24 hours per week to make this a fulltime equivalent post.

33 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council Health and Safety Committee held on 20 October, 2017 and the Corporate Accidents and Work-Related Ill-Health Incidents Report from that meeting were submitted.

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes and the Corporate Accidents and Work-Related Ill-Health Incidents Report be received and noted.

34 MINUTES OF EMPLOYER/TRADE UNION COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the meeting of the Employer/Trade Union Committee held on 25 September, 2017 were submitted.

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes be received and noted.