

## FOR PUBLICATION

### Democratic and Elections Apprentice (GV620)

<b>Meeting:</b>	Portfolio Holder – Governance
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Cabinet portfolio:</b>	Governance
<b>Directorate:</b>	Corporate

#### **1.0 Purpose of the report**

- 1.1 To enable recruitment to the new Democratic and Elections apprentice role.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the new role of Democratic and Elections Apprentice / Assistant is added to the establishment and recruitment takes place.
- 2.2 That the funding arrangements described in section 6.0 are approved.
- 2.3 That the Human Resource arrangements described in section 8.0 are approved.

#### **3.0 Reasons for recommendations**

- 3.1 To respond to the succession planning, recruitment and capacity challenges identified within the Democratic and Elections service.

#### **4.0 Background**

##### 4.1 Democratic and Elections Service

The Democratic and Elections Service undertake a range of key democratic, civic and elections functions including committee

administration, overview and scrutiny, member support, member development, civic and ceremonial and all aspects of electoral management. There are currently seven full time roles, two part time and a number of casual hours contracts in place (Chauffeurs).

4.2 There are currently two Member and Civic Support Officer roles on the Establishment. One is full time and one is part time (23 hours). The part time member of staff has recently been successful in securing a full time promotion opportunity in another Council service area, this has created a vacancy. With any vacancy we take the opportunity to consider if the role is still required and if so, could it be delivered in a different way to add more value to the team.

4.3 We have worked with the teams within the service and established a clear need for a role due to capacity challenges and increasing demands across the service, however we have developed an alternative proposal for the role.

#### 4.3 The Democratic and Elections Apprentice / Assistant role

We are proposing to delete the vacant post – 23 hour part time Member and Civic Support Officer and replace with a two year apprenticeship opportunity. For the right candidate this apprenticeship could then be converted to a full time, permanent, scale 4 role. This approach will help respond to the following challenges and opportunities within the service:

- The democratic, member support, civic and elections functions all carry a significant amount of administrative pressures. The development of this apprenticeship/ assistant role diverts the more routine administration activities away from the higher graded staff within the service and creates capacity for emerging challenges
- Increasingly complicated arrangements and requirements for the delivery of members, civic, mayoral and local democracy events and programmes requiring more planning and co-ordination capacity for higher graded specialist staff
- Increased expectations around non-core committees and partnership governance arrangements
- Elections Act 2022 new requirements and burdens affecting all aspects of electoral management
- Succession planning opportunity to feed into future recruitment for higher graded roles within the Democratic and Elections Service

- Offers the opportunity for further development and qualifications for example Association of Electoral Administrators foundation / certificate
- Higher chance of successful recruitment to an apprentice role – we have struggled to recruit to previous part time vacancies within the service

- 4.4 The job description and person specification is attached at Appendix 1. The post will be an apprenticeship opportunity for two years attracting the apprenticeship rate – national minimum wage
- Under 18 £4.81 per hour (£9,254 per annum)
  - 18 – 20 £6.83 per hour (£13,140 per annum)
  - 21 – 22 £9.18 per hour (£17,662 per annum)
  - 23 and over £9.50 per hour (£18,278 per annum)

At the end of the apprenticeship the role will convert to a Democratic and Elections Assistant role which has been job evaluated at Scale 4 (£19,650 – 20,043).

## **5.0 Alternative options**

- 5.1 Alternative options including not to fill the role and recruiting to the current role have been discussed the Chief Executive, Head of Human Resources and Service Director – Finance but due to the issues raised at section 4.3, these options were not taken forward.

## **6.0 Implications for consideration – Financial and value for money**

- 6.1 The current 23 hour Member and Civic Support role attracts a Scale 6 salary (pro rata) £15,763 plus oncosts (20%) £3,153). The apprenticeship role will cost for the first two years:
- Under 18 - £9,254 plus oncosts £1,850 – saving £7,812 per annum
  - 18 – 20 - £13,140 plus oncosts £2,628 – saving £3,148 per annum
  - 21 – 22 £17,662 plus oncosts £3,532 – additional cost £2,238
  - 23 and over £18,278 plus oncosts £3,656 – additional cost £3,656

On a permanent basis the role would attract a Scale 4 £19,650 - £20,043 within oncosts of £3,930 - £4,009. This creates an additional cost of £4,664 - £5,136. Should the role become vacant we will then revert to an apprentice opportunity.

6.2 The likely savings for the first two years will be returned to the general fund, with any additional costs being funded via efficiency savings and new burdens funding within elections management.

## **7.0 Implications for consideration – Legal**

7.1 This new role will provide much needed administrative support responding to the requirements of the new Elections Act 2022 including voter ID, accessibility and overseas voter changes.

## **8.0 Implications for consideration – Human resources**

8.1 The new role will be recruited to in-line with the Council’s recruitment and selection policy.

## **9.0 Implications for consideration – Council plan**

9.1 The Democratic and Elections team provide advice and support around democratic and scrutiny functions enabling the delivery, monitoring and challenge of the Council Plan. Local democracy and civic elements are also key deliverables within the plan.

## **10.0 Implications for consideration – Climate change**

10.1 The Climate Change impact assessment looks solely at Climate Change rather than other environmental impacts, and social, economic, wellbeing measures which are considered under other considerations. We do not consider there to be any specific climate change impacts for this decision.

## **11.0 Implications for consideration – Equality and diversity**

11.1 The new role will be recruited to in-line with the Council’s recruitment and selection policy which includes a range of equality and diversity provisions including the disability confident scheme.

## **12.0 Implications for consideration – Risk management**

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
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Capacity challenges emerging from member and civic workload, non-core committees and election changes.	H	H	New role developed to maximise team productivity and respond to pressures and emerging challenges.	M	M
Additional funding pressures emerging from new role.	H	H	Fully funded proposal developed utilising vacant post and efficiency / new burdens funding.	L	L

### Decision information

<b>Key decision number</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Wards affected</b>	<b>All</b>

### Document information

<b>Report author</b>
Donna Reddish – Service Director Corporate
<b>Background documents</b>
These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.
None
<b>Appendices to the report</b>
Appendix 1 – Job description and person specification.