

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE 3 MAY 2006

JOINT REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES, CHIEF PERSONNEL OFFICER & FINANCIAL SERVICES MANAGER

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Hall)

CORPORATE SERVICES – SUPPORT TO CORPORATE PROJECT TEAMS

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report requests that the Executive seek Full Council approval for a supplementary estimate from General Fund Reserves of £56,530 to fund temporary additional staffing resources within the Personnel and Financial Services Units to enable support to corporate projects (ie ISIS, Stock Transfer, Vision etc) to continue. It is envisaged that these arrangements will be required for a period of 12 months.

2 Background

- 2.1 At present the Council is engaged in several key projects for example ISIS, Stock Transfer, the Vision for Taunton, Waste Contract Integration etc. So far professional, technical support and advice from services such as Personnel and Finance have been provided within existing staffing resources. However recently the demand of these projects has increased significantly as many major work streams are now coming together within the same timescales.
- 2.2 From a Personnel perspective the people consequences, legal, contractual and in managing relationships and morale, arising from the ISIS and stock options processes are considerable. So far this support has been provided from within existing resources within the Personnel team. The input has been growing steadily since May 2005 and is now set to grow further as these projects develop and reach crucial phases. The impact of this on the personnel team is now threatening to undermine the service and in particular some key initiatives, such as the implementation of the new job evaluation scheme.
- 2.3 The Financial Services Unit are now also finding it difficult to provide adequate support to all of these projects whilst at the same time continuing to provide the various day-to-day functions of the Unit. Examples of which include robust budget monitoring, financial liaison with Headships and statutory duties such as the preparation of the Annual Statement of Accounts etc.

- 2.4 As a result of these pressures this report requests that additional staffing resources be provided to the Personnel and Finance Units for a period of 12 months.

3 Personnel Proposals

- 3.1 The need is for the ISIS and Stock options initiatives together with the Waste Partnership project to have a dedicated full time professional personnel resource. This will enable these to progress without the risk of employment issues being overlooked or inadequately managed and planned. This would involve the fulltime secondment of the HR manager to these projects.
- 3.2 To enable the Personnel Unit to maintain service levels and support other key initiatives such as Job Evaluation, improved sickness management and leadership and management development, a full time professional officer will be required to replace that lost to the above projects.
- 3.3 The current annual cost of the HR Manager is £37,526. It is proposed to promote the current HR Officer and recruit a temporary replacement HR Officer at a total maximum cost of £36,154. A small amount of funding would also be needed for training and recruitment costs of £800. The request is for the Executive to support temporary additional funding of £36,954 to cover the cost of providing this resource over the next 12 months.
- 3.4 There are currently 3 professionally qualified practising HR people within the personnel team. The provision of a full-time HR professional to these projects therefore represents a loss of a third of our capacity at this level.
- 3.5 To put this request into context the following are the expected consequences if the Council does not backfill the transfer of this key member of staff:
1. The job evaluation scheme implementation will not be completed by 31 March 2007 owing to overstretched internal resources and inadequate project management.
 2. Improved information, reporting and management of employee sickness absence cannot go ahead and the benefits of reduced levels of sickness may not be realised.
 3. Day-to-day service levels in responding to new legislation, policy changes and the results of organisational changes, and most crucially managers requests for professional advice and support would be compromised to an unacceptable level.

4 Financial Services Proposals

- 4.1 At present the Financial Services Manager is generally providing high level support to each of the project teams mentioned in paragraph 2.1 above. However given the increasing level of time taken up by the ISIS programme it is doubtful whether this can be maintained throughout the remainder of 2006/07. It is also now evident that projects such as the Vision for Taunton require more full time specialist financial input. In particular the Vision for Taunton requires work to be done on various key work streams, for example:
- Option appraisal,
 - Capital investment modelling,
 - Capital financing options.
- 4.2 In terms of overall expertise in this field this role sits best with one of the Unit's Principal Accountants, however in order to provide both the levels of support required to the Vision as well as maintain the postholders existing management responsibilities there will be a need to create additional resources. The Unit has already recently undergone a mini-restructure in order to provide the necessary financial support to the Housing Transfer project.
- 4.3 The Vision for Taunton will require periodic intensive input over at least the next 12 months and it is therefore proposed that in order to provide sufficient cover that an additional technician level staff member is recruited for 30 hours a week. The cost of this proposal is a maximum of £19,576 for 12 months, including overheads. In 2007 the Unit is expected to become part of ISIS and it is not envisaged that this arrangement would need to continue once ISIS starts.
- 4.4 This temporary arrangement will allow support to continue to be given to Project Groups, allow the Vision for Taunton to receive the specialist advice it requires and will also ensure that there is no decline in service levels provided to other Headships within the Council. The Executive is asked to support this request.

5 Recommendation

- 5.1 The Executive are requested to approve the additional staff resources as outlined in this report and to seek Full Council approval for a supplementary estimate from General Fund Reserves of £56,530 to fund these posts for a period of 12 months.

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