
REPORT TO:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 7
DATE OF MEETING:	4 JANUARY 2023	CATEGORY:
		RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (CORPORATE RESOURCES)	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	KEVIN STACKHOUSE Kevin.stackhouse@southderbyshire.gov.uk	DOC: h/KS/budgets/budet2324/review of agency costs
SUBJECT:	VACANT POSTS AND AGENCY COSTS	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: FM 08

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the analysis of vacant posts and agency costs as detailed in the report is considered and any recommendations referred back to Finance and Management Committee.

2.0 Purpose of the Report

- 2.1 As part of the Committee's Work Programme for 2022/23, the report provides an overview of the situation regarding vacant posts at the Council, together with the cost of agency staff to cover vacant posts.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 In recent years, the Council has had difficulty in recruiting into posts across a range of services. Over the past year, this has become more acute, where recruitment and retention across local government has been an issue.
- 3.2 This has been more significant in specific services such as Planning, Housing and Waste Collection, where a national shortage of staff is being experienced. This has also led to the rates of pay in other sectors increasing way in excess of the Council's pay structure.
- 3.3 Consequently, the Council is becoming more reliant on employing Agency staff to temporary fill vacant posts and to keep services operational. Where posts can be temporarily covered internally, including overtime provided by other staff, this is the first option.
- 3.4 However, this is not always practical due to the specialist and technical nature of many roles, or there is simply no capacity due to the small size of individual teams, etc.
- 3.5 The Council's Base Budget provides for a 100% full Establishment each year and does not factor in a vacancy or turnover rate. Although vacant posts produce savings against the Budget, agency staff are generally more expensive where day or hourly rates reflect the

temporary nature of employment and market conditions. This additional cost can more than offset the reduction in the salary budget.

3.6 Salary savings and costs are reported to the Finance and Management Committee on a quarterly basis as part of budget monitoring during the financial year. That Committee have become increasingly concerned about the level of vacancies which have impacted on the delivery of some services, in addition to the growing cost of employing agency staff.

4.0 Detail

4.1 **Appendix 1** provides a detailed analysis of vacant posts and agency staff used between 1 April and 30 September 2022. The analysis also shows the number of vacancies filled across Council services in the same period.

4.2 The following headlines are worth noting:

- 46 vacancies have been filled in the period, which is 12% of all posts on the Establishment.
- There were 70 vacant posts as at 30 September 2022, which is 18% of all posts on the Establishment.
- Of these 70 posts, 57 (80%) were being covered by agency staff.
- Overall, the cost of agency staff was £105,000 **less** than the salary savings.
- However, in individual services, the picture is more skewed. The cost of agency staff in Waste Collection, Planning and Housing services is far in excess of salary savings.
- The reverse exists in many back-office, professional and regulatory services where vacant posts are less frequent and are covered internally or potentially, not at all with a consequential effect on service provision.

4.3 **Appendix 2** provides a list of the 70 vacant posts as at 30 September 2022.

4.4 It should be noted that clearly this was the position as at 30 September 2022 and will have changed given recruitment processes on-going in many services and the volatility of current labour markets.

4.5 The next analysis will show the situation up to 31 December 2022, although this report does show the overall trend and highlights the issues faced by the Council.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 As detailed in the report.

6.0 Corporate Implications

Employment Implications

6.1 Given the current issues, recruitment and retention initiatives are being reviewed and reports regarding market supplements for example, are planned for forthcoming Finance and

Management Committees.

- 6.2 In the meantime, recent restructure reports in Customer Services and Planning, have implemented trainee/graduation schemes, together with the employment of Modern Apprenticeships, to sustain staff retention in the longer-term.

Legal Implications

- 6.3 None directly

Corporate Plan Implications

- 6.4 None directly

Risk Impact

- 6.5 Capacity and Resilience is a risk monitored in the Council's Corporate Risk Register as it has the potential to adversely impact service provision.

7.0 Community Impact

Consultation

- 7.1 None

Equality and Diversity Impact

- 7.2 None directly

Social Value Impact

- 7.3 None directly

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.4 None directly

8.0 Background Papers

- 8.1 None

APPENDIX 1

Line No.	SERVICE	Total Headcount	Vacant Posts Filled in Year	Current Number of Vacant posts	Number of Agency Workers Used	Vacancy Savings £	Agency Costs £	NOTES
1	Finance	11	4	0	1	43,191	-942	Vacancies Recruited to
2	Senior Management	6	1	0	0	29,034	0	As above
3	Community Safety	4	0	1	0	8,475	0	Vacant post seconded to - no recruitment in place
4	Pollution Reduction	9	1	0	0	8,718	0	Vacancies Recruited to
5	Grounds Maintenance	35	2	5	0	77,297	0	Covered by Staff Overtime £13k
6	Household Waste Collection	48	0	4	8	53,786	-141,434	Recruitment in progress - Agency also covering long term sickness
7	Street Cleansing	17	0	5	2	90,345	-34,771	Recruitment in progress - Overtime covering vacancies £13.5k
8	Transport Services	6	0	1	0	13,739	-9,346	Vacancy covered by Denis Eagle Mechanic Pool
9	Operational Services Central Admin	9	2	2	1	79,478	-59,950	Recruitment in progress
10	Recycling	18	12	2	8	178,054	-257,914	As above
11	Community Parks & Open Spaces	7	1	1	1	22,937	-31,044	Vacant Post is Tree Inspector - Consultancy Covering Post and recruitment in process
12	Sports Development & Community Recreation	7	1	2	0	41,442	0	Recruitment in progress
13	Grants and Support to Voluntary Bodies	1	1	0	0	2,643		Vacancy recruited to
14	Community Centres	2	2	0	0	26,960	-4,680	As above
15	Rosliston Forestry Centre	7	1	0	0	15,534		As above
16	Promotion and Marketing of the Area	4	0	1	1	28,849	-5,748	Unsuccessful recruitment - options for vacancy being investigated
17	Tourism	3	0	1	0	3,217	0	Recruitment in progress
18	Legal Services	5	1	1	0	14,194	0	Consultancy used to cover post
19	Land Charges	2	0	2	0	35,816	-54,163	SLA with Lichfield District Council to cover service
20	Conducting Elections	4	0	1	0	12,588	0	Restructure pending
21	Democratic Services	2	0	1	1	12,442	-15,859	As above

22	Business Change	4	1	1	0	35,845	0	Recruitment in progress
23	Digital Services	4	1	1	0	5,634	0	As above
24	Personnel/HR	7	2	1	0	14,715	0	As above
25	ICT Support	8	1	0	0	7,477	0	Vacancy recruited to
26	Caretaking	16	1	5	3	21,391	-2,333	Recruitment in progress
27	Customer Services & Revenues	30	0	7	4	94,226	-68,441	Recruitment in progress, new structure including 3 MAs, £56k are Welfare Reform (Reserve) funded
28	Pre-tenancy Services	9	1	1	2	15,267	-53,472	Recruitment in progress
29	Housing Departmental Support Staff	8	1	1	2	5,186	-40,196	As above
30	Responsive Maintenance (DLO Trading HRA)	20	0	8	7	122,577	-154,197	Recruitment in progress - previous attempts unsuccessful
31	Planned Maintenance (HRA Revenue)	8	2	3	4	64,974	-67,797	As above
32	Supported Housing (HRA)	18	3	0	3	19,219	-10,530	As above
33	Managing Tenancies (HRA)	11	1	2	2	23,481	-16,542	As above
34	Planning Delivery	21	2	5	7	90,997	-238,345	Recruitment in progress - New structure pending to help recruitment. Some agency to cover additional work load (funded by Income)
35	Housing Strategy	3	0	2	0	22,028	0	Unsuccessful recruitment - options for vacancy being investigated
36	Development & Regeneration (HRA)	2	0	1	0	17,337	0	As above
37	Planning Policy	7	1	2	0	13,720	0	Recruitment in progress - New structure pending to help recruitment
TOTALS		383	46	70	57	1,372,815	-1,267,704	

LIST OF VACANT POSTS

APPENDIX 2

Post	Department
Tree Inspector	Culture
Leisure Contract Officer	Culture
Health Partnership Manager	Culture
Community Safety Enforcement Officer	Environmental
Grounds Maintenance Operative	Operational
Grounds Maintenance Operative	Operational
Grounds Maintenance Operative	Operational
Snr Grounds Mtce Operative (Cemeteries/Sports)	Operational
Park Attendant (ML Park)	Operational
Refuse Loader	Operational
Refuse Loader	Operational
Refuse Driver / Chargehand	Operational
Clinical Waste Driver	Operational
Street Cleansing Operative	Operational
Street Cleansing Operative	Operational
Gully Tank Driver	Operational
Street Scene Manager	Operational
HGV Sweeper Driver	Operational
Apprentice Mechanic	Operational
Purchasing & Stores Officer	Operational
Business & Resources Manager	Operational
Refuse Driver/Chargehand	Operational
Refuse Driver/Chargehand	Operational
Senior Economic Development Officer	Economic Development
Swadlincote Tourist Information Assistant	Economic Development
Senior Legal Officer	Legal & Democratic Services
Land Charges Technician	Legal & Democratic Services
Land Charges Assistant	Legal & Democratic Services
Electoral Services Officer	Legal & Democratic Services
Senior Democratic & Electoral Services Officer	Legal & Democratic Services
Senior Business Change Officer	ICT & Business Change
Systems Support Analyst	ICT & Business Change
EDI Officer	Organisational Development
Deputy Facilities Supervisor	Property Services
Office Cleaner	Property Services
Customer Services Officer	Customer Services
Customer Services Training & Technical Officer	Customer Services
Customer Services Advisor	Customer Services
Benefits overpayments apprentice post	Revenue & Benefits
Revenues apprentice post	Revenue & Benefits
Debt recovery apprentice post	Revenue & Benefits
Customer Services Administrator fixed term 2 years	Customer Services
Senior Housing Options Officer	Housing
Business Support Officer	Housing

Bricklayer	Housing
Property Inspector	Housing
Apprentice Plumber	Housing
Apprentice Joiner	Housing
Plumber	Housing
Joiner	Housing
Joiner	Housing
Repairs Manager	Housing
Project Officer (Building)	Housing
Project Officer (Mechanical/Electric)	Housing
Project Officer (Heating)	Housing
Housing Officer	Housing
Housing Officer	Housing
Area Planning Officer	Planning
Planning Officer	Planning
Planning Delivery Team Leader	Planning
Senior Planning Officer	Planning
Senior Planning Officer (Design)	Planning
Planning Assistant	Planning
Planning Policy Team Leader	Planning
Housing Development Officer	Housing Strategy
Housing Research Officer	Housing Strategy
Housing Development Officer	Housing Strategy