

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 27/09/2016

Title:

PROPOSAL TO STRENGTHEN FINANCE SYSTEM SUPPORT CAPACITY

[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Ged Hall]

[Wards Affected: All]

Summary and purpose:

This report seeks approval to take the opportunity to strengthen the Council's finance system technical capacity within the Finance team arising from a recent retirement and vacant senior accountant post.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

This report has the potential to contribute towards the following corporate priorities of the Council:

Value for Money

The proposed change in establishment supports Waverley's strategic aim to ensure that the Council is equipped to provide excellent services to local people and strong community leadership by ensuring the finance systems are fit for purpose, supported and contribute to service efficiencies.

Financial Implications:

The proposed change in establishment aligns staff resources to the change in service delivery methods to generate efficiencies and a budget reduction. The budget saving identified in Paragraph 9 will be considered as part of the overall budget setting process following a review of the wider finance service.

Legal Implications

This report does not have any direct legal implications.

Introduction

1. This report proposes to create a dedicated Business Finance Systems technical post (several finance based IT systems and financial administration support processes). The objective of the post is to foster and facilitate closer working between the Finance team, the IT team and the services to increase financial administration process competency within the services. The outcome being improved officer confidence to self serve increasing finance administration independence and reduce bureaucracy. Also, this post will provide capacity and

expertise to develop systems to improve customer self-service to access information and pay bills.

2. The finance system (Agresso) administration and technical expertise has been resourced historically entirely from within the Finance team.
3. This technical capacity has gradually reduced within the team due to turnover, resulting in no dedicated expertise and an increasing reliance on buying in expertise as required from systems suppliers.
4. The Council's finance system is an important financial management tool and has recently been upgraded with a development plan in place to enhance the systems functionality.
5. The development of the finance systems is important to enable efficiencies to be realised across all services through increased automation of financial administration such as purchase ordering and invoice payment, eliminating double handling and manual processes. Efficiencies in budget management and reporting can also be realised.
6. In addition to the finance system responsibility, the Finance team is also in the process of adopting the responsibility for the Councils BACS (money transfer process) and Adelante cash receipting system from the IT team, due to recent retirements. This is an opportunity to align administration responsibility and expertise for all three systems into the Finance team to build up knowledge and increase resilience.
7. The recent retirement of a Finance Officer (band 6 0.65 FTE) and the resignation of a Senior Accountant (band 5 0.53 FTE) will enable both of these posts to be deleted with the duties of both posts to be absorbed into the existing team and enable the creation of a full time systems analyst role.
8. The creation of a dedicated full-time Business Finance Systems role responsible for the administration of all three systems, including developing the accountancy team's technical knowledge of the systems, will improve resilience.
9. This proposal will result in a reduction in FTE and Finance team budget as shown in the table below.

	FTE	Budget	
Finance Officer	0.65	26,352	Delete
Senior Accountant	0.53	31,032	Delete
Sub Total:	1.18	57,384	
Business Systems Analyst	1.0	41,219	New
Budget Saving	0.2	16,165	

10. The new role will report to the Senior Accountant responsible for the ledgers, reconciliations and finance systems integrity.

Conclusion

11. Creation of the Business Finance Systems role will provide the required resource to secure the finance systems resilience as well as the capacity to continue to develop the finance administration systems to deliver administration efficiencies within the services.

Recommendation

It is requested that the Executive recommends to the Council that

1. the posts of Senior Accountant BD09 (band 5 0.53 FTE) and Finance Officer BB05 (band 6 0.65 FTE) be deleted; and
2. a Business Finance Systems post (band 6 1.0 FTE) be created.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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