

## Report of the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Personnel Policy

**NEW POST – SENIOR ACCOUNTANT (CAPITAL AND PROJECTS)**1. Purpose of report

To seek approval for the creation of a new Senior Accountant (Capital and Projects) post within the Finance Services team to provide a dedicated support for the Council's key strategic capital projects.

2. Recommendation

**Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that a new Senior Accountant (Capital and Projects) post be approved at Grade 10 (subject to job evaluation) to be funded from a capital salaries recharge to the Capital Programme and a phased reduction of the Finance Services agency budget.**

3. Detail

The Council has been successful in securing significant central government funding for economic development regeneration schemes, including Stapleford Towns Fund, Shared Prosperity Fund and Levelling Up Fund for Kimberley. These schemes, alongside the Council's ambitious Housing Delivery Programme (funded in part by Homes England grants), have resulted in a significant increase in both the value and complexity of the capital programme into the foreseeable future. It is imperative that robust financial management and accounting arrangements are in place to ensure strong good governance, risk management and value for money is achieved. Furthermore, the Council needs to comply with the respective regulations, grant conditions and accounting standards.

A management review has identified that the increase in workload and added complexity of these schemes significantly increases the risk posed for the capital programme (e.g. risk associated with non-compliance with grant conditions). The Accountancy team is not presently resourced to fully manage this risk or to provide the level of support required by the respective project managers to achieve the full potential of the schemes. This was acknowledged in discussion during the recent LGA Peer Review.

It is proposed that a new post is created within Finance Services, focusing primarily on supporting the delivery of the Stapleford Towns Fund, Kimberley Levelling Up, Shared Prosperity Fund, Housing Delivery Programme and any future similar large scale and/or grant funded schemes. A list of potential responsibilities is provided in the appendix. It is proposed that around 70% of the cost of this new post would be funded by the capital programme (i.e. capital salaries) given that the primary responsibilities are related to these schemes.

In order to develop the skills potential within the Accountancy team, it is proposed that this opportunity is offered to internal candidates in the first instance. If an appointment was secured from within Finance Services, the

subsequent vacancy in the junior position would be converted into a Finance Apprentice post, which would provide a saving of around £4,000 per annum.

In addition, it is proposed that a phased reduction in the Finance Services agency budget (created to provide additional support at financial year-end with the production of the Statement of Accounts) is implemented over the next three financial years to further meet the cost of the new post.

The result of the above would produce only a nominal uplift in costs over the next three years for the Finance Services pay budget (dependant on variables such as future pay awards). A financial analysis can also be found in the appendix.

#### 4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows: The cost of the proposed Senior Accountant (Capital and Projects) post at Grade 10 is £46,750 at 2023/24 budgeted pay rates including oncosts. The addition of this post to the establishment would be funded directly from a capital salaries recharges to the capital programme and a phased reduction in the current agency budget. The nominal net cost will be contained within the overall establishment budget. Further details are provided in the appendix.

#### 5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer were as follows:

Section 16 (Reorganisation of a Department or Service) of the Redundancy and Reorganisation policy states:

In such circumstances, Heads of Service should finalise the proposals, job descriptions and person specifications in liaison with HR. HR may need to evaluate jobs prior to any proposals for reorganisation in accordance with the Council's Job Evaluation procedures. Consultation should then be held with the trade unions before a report is prepared for Cabinet. Approval of any changes to establishment must then be given by Cabinet.

#### 6. Human Resources Implications

The comments from the Human Resources Manager were as follows:

HR support the potential addition of an apprentice post.

#### 7. Union Comments

UNISON would support the creation of the new post, which would provide a development opportunity for internal candidates and a reduction in agency costs. We are very pleased to see the proposal to create a new apprentice post, which we fully support.

8. Data Protection Compliance Implications

There are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

9. Equality Impact Assessment

As there is no change to policy an equality impact assessment is not required.

10. Background Papers

Nil

## APPENDIX

**NEW POST – SENIOR ACCOUNTANT (CAPITAL AND PROJECTS)**Role and Responsibilities of Senior Accountant (Capital and Projects)

The primary responsibilities of the new post would include:

- Support on financial management, budgetary control and relevant accounting arrangements for the delivery of the Stapleford Towns Fund and Kimberley Levelling Up Fund schemes.
- Support on financial management, budgetary control and relevant accounting arrangements for the delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund schemes.
- Support on financial management, budgetary control and relevant accounting arrangements for the bidding towards and delivery of any future large scale and/or grant funded schemes.
- Assisting the Head of Finance Services and the Chief Accountant with providing financial management, budgetary control and relevant accounting arrangements for the Housing Delivery Programme.
- Providing financial management support and advice to all Council services in proactively seeking out grant funding, match funding and other external financial contributions opportunities and supporting managers with submitting bids.
- Support across the Council to maximise the income from and use of Section 106 contributions, particularly for the Environment and Climate Change and the Planning and Economic Growth services and for the Housing Delivery Programme
- Monitoring of the Right to Buy one-for-one receipts and other Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital receipts to ensure retention conditions are complied with and best value for money achieved in the application of those receipts

Dependant on the resource demands of the above, as secondary responsibilities the post may also:

- Support the Head of Finance Services and the Chief Accountant in regular accounting and finance activities, particularly in the production of the annual revenue and capital budget estimates and the financial year-end closedown and external audit of the Statement of Accounts.
- Support the Head of Finance Services and the Chief Accountant in the efficiency and improvement and system development projects within Finance Services.

Financial Implications

The cost of the proposed Senior Accountant (Capital and Projects) post at Grade 10 is £46,750 (bottom of scale) at estimated 2023/24 pay rates including oncosts. The addition of this post to the establishment would be partially funded from capital salaries recharges (around 70% charged accordingly to the Stapleford Towns Fund, Shared Prosperity Fund, Levelling Up Fund and the Housing Delivery Programme accordingly); the potential conversion of a junior post into an apprentice post if an internal candidate within the current Finance Services team was successful; and a phased reduction in the current agency budget. The nominal net cost will be contained within the overall establishment budget.

The table below shows the additional revenue cost to the Finance Services establishment budget for the next three years.

<b>Finance Services Salaries Budget</b>	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £
New Senior Accountant (Capital and Projects) proposed at Grade 10	46,750	48,603	50,511
Vacant Junior Post (Grade 5)	(31,900)	(32,538)	(33,189)
New Finance Apprentice (Grade 2)	27,750	28,305	28,871
<b>Gross Additional Cost</b>	<b>42,600</b>	<b>44,370</b>	<b>46,194</b>
<b>Funding</b>			
Capital Salaries (70% recharge)	(32,725)	(34,022)	(35,358)
Phased reduction in Agency Budget	(10,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)
<b>Net Additional Cost</b>	<b>(125)</b>	<b>5,223</b>	<b>5,836</b>