

Report

Report to:	Corporate Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	1 October 2008
Report by:	Executive Director (Corporate Resources)

Subject:	Best Value Review - Recruitment Administration
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise the Committee of the outcome of the Best Value Review of recruitment administration and to request approval for the proposed improvement plan.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the current devolved structure is changed and recruitment administration is carried out within a centralised recruitment team;
- (2) that the procedural improvements identified at 7.2 and 7.3 be approved; and
- (3) that the recommendations contained in the improvement plan (Appendix 1) be approved.

3. Background

- 3.1. Recruitment policies were reviewed during 2007 and a new policy and handbook were issued early in 2008. The Council introduced its own recruitment website and electronic back office processes in 2006.
- 3.2. There is a national trend away from traditional methods of recruitment administration and this was demonstrated by the introduction of a National Recruitment Portal in June 2008, managed by the Improvement Service, as part of the efficient government and shared services agenda. South Lanarkshire Council will move to this website, and the back office technology it provides, during September 2008. The functionality of this technology has been considered during this review.
- 3.3. Despite the introduction of e-recruitment, recruitment processes continue to be administratively demanding and a more strategic and service based approach would enable greater emphasis on frontline operational personnel activity.
- 3.4. The Council has experienced difficulties in recruiting quality candidates in some key areas over recent years. It is important that our processes are streamlined and consistent to ensure they meet candidates' expectations and promote a positive image of the Council.

4. Review Methodology

4.1. The Group involved in undertaking the review of recruitment administration:-

- ◆ consulted with stakeholders
- ◆ analysed the current devolved structure and identified the resources applied to delivering recruitment administration
- ◆ examined current procedures, from authorisation of vacancies to appointment, and identified areas for improvement. Consideration was given to other personnel transactions
- ◆ benchmarked with other organisations, both public and private sector
- ◆ considered options and identified recommendations where efficiencies could be achieved

5. Current Position

- 5.1. Personnel Services was the subject of one of the first Best Value Reviews in 1998. Personnel Services is delivering a devolved service delivery model. Since then the organisation has developed organically with an increase in the number of personnel posts due to initiatives such as maximising attendance.
- 5.2. E-recruitment was first introduced in South Lanarkshire Council in 2006 and this was further developed with the introduction of the National Portal in September 2008. The introduction of this new technology makes centralisation of recruitment an issue that can now be addressed.
- 5.3. A total of 1,611 vacancies were filled during 2007/2008 and we received 15,000 applications for these posts. 749 posts were advertised on the website and, in addition, bulk recruitment was undertaken by Social Work Resources. Education Resources carry out a large recruitment exercise each year for teachers and Community Resources has an annual recruitment exercise for seasonal staff. There are also Graduate and Modern Apprenticeship recruitment campaigns. All of this recruitment has been considered as part of this review.
- 5.4. The approximate resource and indicative costs applied to recruitment administration are detailed at section 8.1 (table 1). With the exception of Housing and Technical Resources, employees involved in the recruitment administration process are also involved in other personnel transactions. The table identifies the full time equivalent of employees involved in the recruitment administration process. The possibility of driving similar efficiencies from these other administrative transactions was examined. These are identified within the Human Resources Management System (HRMS) Self Service Project, People Connect, which will achieve sustainable efficiencies in most of these transactions.
- 5.5. As the People Connect project rolls out, transfer of non-online versions of each activity will be assessed for suitability for delivery by a centralised team.
- 5.6. The audit and analysis of current processes demonstrated areas of strength and raised a number of areas for improvement. Some of these improvements are possible as a result of new technology. These improvements are detailed in the improvement plan (Appendix 1).

6. Options

- 6.1. The following options were considered as part of this review:-
 - ◆ status quo
 - ◆ centralisation
 - ◆ partial centralisation of some processes

- ◆ outsourcing
- ◆ shared services
- ◆ various options in terms of improving procedures

7. Proposals

7.1. Following an analysis of all of the options, centralising recruitment administration was identified as the most efficient option for the following reasons:-

- ◆ administrators become experts dedicated to recruitment administration leading to less errors and less involvement of more senior officers releasing them to deliver frontline personnel services
- ◆ greater accountability than having multiple points of responsibility and varied administrative practices
- ◆ cost reduction and high quality service delivery can be achieved from economies of scale and transactional efficiencies should accrue
- ◆ better corporate performance through standardisation and simplification of processes, without compromise, by moving to maximum automation
- ◆ delivery of improved transparency, quality and completeness of data
- ◆ the creation of a platform for the personnel modernisation agenda and any future shared services, both internally and externally
- ◆ standardise candidate experience, improving the image of the Council and promoting as an employer of choice
- ◆ more effective administration of job pools, workplace transfer, redeployment and equality issues

7.2. We are in early discussion with Housing and Technical Resources regarding the involvement of the Customer Contact Centre in the work and co-location of the centralised recruitment administration team.

7.3. Following a detailed analysis the following changes will achieve sustainable efficiency savings in relation to printing, paper transactions, postage and advertising costs. There will also be a reduction in administrative workload.

- ◆ **Electronic shortlisting of candidates**
Shortlisting packs will no longer be required, resulting in a considerable saving in administrative time, paper and photocopying
- ◆ **Greater use of online assessment tools**
Using online assessment tools will reduce the amount of applications going forward to managers for shortlisting. This will achieve a saving in management time and a more objective selection process
- ◆ **Introduction of job pools for high turnover posts**
This will reduce advertising costs, improve candidates experience and reduce management time in the selection process e.g. approximately 185 clerical vacancies are advertised each year and each appointment costs approximately £380 in management time to shortlist and interview i.e. £70,300. By using job pools and selection tools this cost can be reduced to £41,435

7.4. Other areas of work identified within the Improvement Plan were:-

- ◆ the advertising process is the subject of a lean event
- ◆ the use of The Works for internal advertising is subject to further review

8. Employee Implications

- 8.1. Centralising the recruitment administration team will require the establishment of a dedicated team with one team leader. This team will be resourced from existing positions with a reprioritising at Grade 3 from administrative process to frontline personnel activities. Efficiencies will be achieved by centralising the team and better utilisation of available technology.

The following table identifies both the current and proposed full time equivalent employees required.

Resources (table 1)

Current Numbers	Proposed Numbers	Post Title	Grade & Level	SCP Range	Hourly Rate	Annual Salary
16.5	14	Clerical Assistant	Grade 1 Level 1-4	SCP 1 - 28	£5.81 – £8.69	£10,603- £15,858
6	6	Personnel Assistant	Grade 2 Level 1-4	SCP 27 - 57	£8.56 - £13.38	£15,621 - £24,417
2.5	1	Personnel Officer	Grade 3 Level 1-8	SCP 46 - 80	£11.36 - £18.84	£ 20,731 - £34,381

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1. There are direct savings which will result from centralising the recruitment administration team, developing job pools and introducing online shortlisting as follows:-

Employee Costs	£37,912
Material Costs	£ 1,000
Advertising costs	£18,000
Total Savings	£56,912

- 9.2. These efficiencies are achieved by reducing 2.5 clerical posts through more efficient practices and eliminating the need to prepare shortlisting packs. Fewer adverts will be required as a result of job pools and a reduction in the use of paper as a result of online shortlisting and job pools.

- 9.3. Non cashable benefits have also been identified as a result of better utilisation of online assessment tools, use of job pools and electronic shortlisting. This will result in:-

- ◆ 1.5 Personnel Officers released from recruitment administration to deliver in other areas
- ◆ managers saving time during the selection process will be able to refocus on delivering frontline services

10. Other Implications

- 10.1. The proposals identified will reduce the need for paper-based transactions, printing, postage and delivery therefore contributing to the sustainability agenda.

11. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 11.1. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

11.2. Consultation took place with the Trade Unions.

Robert McIlwain
Executive Director (Corporate Resources)

18 August 2008

Link(s) to Council Objectives

- ◆ Accountable, effective and efficient
- ◆ Excellent employer
- ◆ Sustainable development

Previous References

None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Detailed Best Value Review Report Recruitment Administration

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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APPENDIX 1

IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Recommendation	Actions required	Responsibility	Timescale
Centralisation of Team	Identify Location Arrange redeployment Identify any skills gaps Address any skills gaps Identify appropriate equipment Arrange to move to location	Best Value Group Best Value Group Personnel Managers Best Value Group Best Value Group Best Value Group	Feb 2009 April 2009 April 2009 By June 2009 Feb 2009 By June 2009
Pilot Job Pools	Establish and map process Advertise the posts Monitor success of pilot Establish methods for feedback	Corporate Personnel Corporate Personnel Corporate Personnel Corporate Personnel	Oct 2008 Nov 2008 Nov 08– Apr 09 Oct 2008
Online shortlisting	Develop competency framework online Establish communication strategy Implement communication strategy Arrange training and coaching for managers	Corporate Personnel Best Value Group Best Value Group Best Value Group	Feb 2009 Oct 2008 Oct 08 – Oct 09 Feb 2009
Improve advertising process	Organise LEAN event Review advert style Include interview date in initial advert	Corporate Personnel Corporate Personnel Best Value Group	Oct 09 Sept 2008 Feb 2009
Review method of advertising internal posts	Discuss Works with CCPA Discuss options with Personnel Managers Agree recommendations Implement recommendations	Corporate Personnel Corporate Personnel Corporate Personnel Corporate Personnel/CCPA	Nov 2008 Dec 2008 Feb 2009 April 2009
Introduce telephone interviewing	Develop technology Establish process Identify appropriate tests of competency for individual posts Identify staff to carry out telephone interviews Arrange training Organise communication strategy	Corporate Personnel Best Value Group Best Value Group Best Value Group Best Value Group Best Value Group	April 2009 June 2009 Oct 08 – Apr 2010 May 2009 June 2009 July 2009 – Apr 2010
Improve monitoring	Review all monitoring and identify duplication Develop process for gathering information Develop technology to meet all reporting needs efficiently	Best Value Group Best Value Group Corporate Personnel	Dec 2008 Feb 2009 April 2009

APPENDIX 1

Improve management of dual process	Develop processes to ensure application forms can be scanned in to back office Identify posts where there will be a dual process Identify ratio of hardcopy to online forms	Best Value Group	Dec 2008
		Best Value Group	Dec 2008
		Best Value Group	Dec 2008
Reduce shortlisting by developing online assessment tools	Identify appropriate tests for appropriate competencies Identify which competencies will be tested by this method for each individual post Identify the weighting given to these tests Establish how screening questions and branching questions will be used to test competencies for individual posts. Develop the technology to ensure tests are a streamlined part of the selection process. Ensure communication with candidates is appropriate regarding tests.	Best Value Group	Feb 2009
		Best Value Group	Apr 2009
		Best Value Group	Apr 2009
		Best Value Group	Apr 2009
		Corporate Personnel	Jun 2009
		Best Value Group	Jun 2009