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**TO: SPECIAL EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE
12 FEBRUARY 2014**

**REVENUE BUDGET 2014/15 – EMPLOYMENT IMPLICATIONS
(Director of Corporate Services – Human Resources)**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to identify the staffing implications arising from the budget proposals for 2014/15. This has been considered by CMT and will also have been to Special meeting of the Local Joint for consultation. The Special Employment Committee will now consider it before it then goes onto full Council on 26 February for confirmation along with the complete budget papers.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Employment Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 **Approve the deletion of the posts identified in Exempt Appendix B with effect from the dates indicated.**
- 2.2 **Agree that the postholders are declared redundant in accordance with the terms set out in that Exempt Appendix with the costs being met from the Structural Changes Fund (subject to any redeployment opportunities offered to those affected).**
- 2.3 **Delegate to the Director of Adult, Social Care, Health & Housing, in consultation with the Chairman, the authority to make decisions on the future of the posts identified in Exempt Appendix C who are affected by any decision taken by the Executive on 11 February in respect of the Dementia Team.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To allow the Council to agree a budget and set a legal Council Tax for the financial year 2014/15.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The construction of the Council's savings package is the end product of a long budget review process which looked at a significant number of different options before the final proposals were agreed for consultation. At this stage in the process, the Council Tax recommended by the Executive to Full Council is dependent upon the full implementation of all of the proposals, the financial impact of which are included in the overall budget.

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5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 5.1 To achieve a balanced budget in 2014/15, the Council is proposing to make economies of £4.5 million. The Executive's proposals for bridging that gap have been the subject of consultation with various Member groupings. During December and January, they were subject to further consultation with the public and other stakeholders and were due to be recommended on 11 February by the Executive to the Full Council meeting scheduled for 26 February.
- 5.2 The budget proposals focus, as far as possible, on making savings and efficiencies in areas which will have the least direct impact on services to residents. Against a backdrop of the Council having made significant savings since 1998 and having the 3rd lowest Council Tax of all Unitary Authorities in the country, this has not been possible in all areas. Inevitably in developing a package of budget proposals to deliver savings on the scale needed in 2014/15 there will be some impact on staff. Under the Council's constitution, employment issues are not Executive functions and the Employment Committee needs to effect the employment related decisions embodied within the overall budget. The staffing implications in 2014/15 are, however, at a relatively low level compared to previous years.
- 5.3 All staff who are potentially affected by the emerging proposals were fully briefed by managers during November 2013 and received a formal "At Risk" letter in early December. More in-depth meetings with those employees were held by departmental HR staff and managers responsible for the service to talk directly to them and to accord with the agreed Organisational Change timetable. A copy of that Protocol is attached as Appendix A; this follows a similar approach to previous years.
- 5.4 The proposals impact on the following areas with the detail outlined in Exempt Appendix B:
- 5.5 **Children, Young People and Learning**

(a) **Support to the Management Team**

The proposal is to reduce administrative support to the Management Team with the deletion of one PA providing direct support to the Chief Officer: Strategy Resources and Early Intervention.

There will be less administrative capacity to provide direct support to the Chief Officer: Strategy Resources and Early Intervention, although separate project support work will be provided from within the department. Additionally, there will be a reduction in the capacity of PA support to the Management Team during absences, with remaining staff needing to absorb some new aspects of work.

STAFFING IMPACT: 1 POST.

Ref 1 in Exempt Appendix B.

(b) **Extended services and support to families – Nepali Community Support**

There is a joint funded post with Corporate Services which provides support to the Nepali community to help them to orientate themselves on arrival to this country, to integrate into the wider community and to access statutory and voluntary services including youth centres/activities, children's centres, schools, housing and benefits.

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The effect will be reduced support for Nepali families in a variety of ways including reducing working with schools and less help with accessing housing benefits and employment.

STAFFING IMPACT : 1 POST.

Ref 2 in Exempt Appendix B.

(c) Performance Management and Governance

This service includes responsibility for school places planning, school capacity returns, copyright and licensing, school data returns, surveys/consultation and the development of SLA's for trading with schools on the SLA online system. The proposal is to delete one Senior Performance Analyst.

The introduction of the online system has streamlined some of the processes around managing the school SLAs but the responsibility for the system will transfer to another officer. Although the responsibility for the remaining activities will also be re-allocated, this will result in a reduced capacity to respond to queries from schools on these issues. Some tasks will no longer be undertaken or be reallocated.

STAFFING IMPACT : 1 POST.

Ref 3 in Exempt Appendix B.

(d) Extended Services and support to families – Family Information Service (FIS)

The FIS provides an impartial information and signposting service on childcare and other services that support parents and carers of children and young people up to the age of 20. It also works with organisations and professionals who support families.

The more transactional activities will be reallocated to the business support team which will enable the remaining manager to absorb the management of the FIS team. There are existing synergies between the Early Years and Childcare teams, business support team and FIS so front line service will be largely unaffected.

STAFFING IMPACT: 1 POST.

Ref 4 in Exempt Appendix B.

(e) Family Support/Parenting

Parents and families in Bracknell Forest benefit from a range of support from staff within CYPL based on assessed needs. A review of the services provided has identified some potential duplication and the opportunity for rationalisation.

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A detailed analysis of current budgets and levels of service is currently taking place to ensure all funding streams are used efficiently and effectively. The outcome will be a potentially improved service for parents and families through greater coordination of the services on offer.

Whilst there are no immediate changes to the establishment it is anticipated that a report on the staffing implications of this review will be brought to a future meeting of the Employment Committee.

5.6 Corporate Services/Chief Executive's Dept

(a) Customer Services staffing review

The service redesign work being carried out by Housing and Benefits has resulted in Customer Services no longer managing and supporting Housing and Benefit customer interactions at Time Square Reception. However, more work has been taken on by Customer Services in the Contact Centre with the booking of Birth and Death Registration and Nationality Checking appointments and facilitating customers in purchasing copy certificates; further work to support the Registrar service is planned.

The accommodation moves at Time Square will result in Customer Services supporting face to face customer interactions for the Registrars Service, Revenue Services and School Admissions. In addition some work is transferring to Customer Services as a result of changes in the administration of Concessionary Travel. Also, with the relocation of the telephone contact centre to Time Square, the implementation of the Auto Operator service for external calls, and the shift to online services we envisage a reduced requirement for supervisory support. Stemming from this, a staffing review has resulted in a reduction in the number of supervisory posts while strengthening the support service, to enable the implementation of a new IT system.

STAFFING IMPACT : 2 POSTS.

Ref 5 in Exempt Appendix B.

(b) Members & Mayoral Services – Review of Mayor's car service

The proposal is to cease to employ a civic driver and end the lease on the civic car.

An external chauffeur service would be used for about 60% of engagements which would provide both the appropriate staff and vehicle. The Mayor would self-drive to the remaining engagements

STAFFING IMPACT : 1 POST.

Ref 6 in Exempt Appendix B.

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(c) **Chief Executive's Office**

The structure of the Performance and Partnerships team has been reviewed. This has led to a reduction in the requirement for expertise at a strategic level. The redundancy would have been implemented from 1 April; however, the Head of Performance and Partnerships is on maternity leave and will not return until August at the earliest. Therefore, the redundancy will be delayed until September in order to provide adequate cover for the service.

STAFFING IMPACT : 1 POST.

Ref 7 in Exempt Appendix B.

5.7 **Environment, Culture and Communities**

(a) **Business Systems – Business Support**

The department's four major IT systems; Confirm, M3, Uniform and Library IT are currently each supported by one business support analyst acting as overall system administrator. When housing moved to Adult Social Care, Health & Housing in April 2012, only half a post moved back instead of the full post that joined the department, when housing was part of ECC. This part time post was increased to full time as the team had a large workload for 2012/13 including leading the capital project to link M3 to Smart Office. This continued in 2013/14 as projects to introduce new modules such as Confirm dashboards were rolled out. As a result of funding limitations, expansion of systems is no longer viable and therefore the proposal is to reduce the business support analyst posts from 4 to 3 with one officer, together with the business support manager, supporting each major IT system.

STAFFING IMPACT : 1 POST.

Ref 8 in Exempt Appendix B.

(b) **Road Safety**

The Road Safety programme is delivered within the Transport Development section in the Planning & Transport Division of ECC. The programme is delivered currently by one full time officer and one part-time officer, with temporary staff as required for significant events. The service is not statutory but does deliver effective training and advice on road safety such as early driver education, refresher sessions for older drivers and road safety awareness events. The proposal is to reduce the staff contingent for delivering this service to one full-time officer only, removing the part-time post. This will result in less capacity and a reduced road safety programme: however, there will still be a full-time staff member delivering an agreed programme. There is a small supporting revenue budget which can provide some temporary assistance for larger events and other staff, as available, can also assist to cover, in part, the loss of the part-time post.

STAFFING IMPACT : 1 POST.

Ref 9 in Exempt Appendix B.

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(c) **Business Systems – Information Support**

There has been an overall reduction in workload for central departmental administrative support in ECC due to policy changes in the department, particularly around mobile phones. This has resulted in a significantly reduced workload for the Performance and Resources Administrator which can be absorbed within the existing administration team. The proposal is, therefore, to reduce the level of departmental central administrative support by the removal of this post.

STAFFING IMPACT : 1 POST.

Ref 10 in Exempt Appendix B.

(d) **Smartcard**

There has been significant development work in relation to the Council's Smartcard over the last few years which has been led by the Smartcard Development Manager. The focus is now on consolidating the progress made which means that the hours of the Development Manager can be reduced. The proposal is therefore to grant flexible retirement to the postholder and reduce the post from full time to 3 days/week.

STAFFING IMPACT : REDUCTION TO 0.6 FTE.

Ref 11 in Exempt Appendix B.

5.8 **Adult Social Care, Health and Housing**

- 5.8.1 In line with the overarching modernisation strategy for Older People's Services in Bracknell Forest, a range of services have been remodelled to take a more focused approach to respond to this period of intense change in social care. Also the Council is facing a challenging period with an increasing demand for social care services with the associated resource issues. A recommendation is being put forward to the Executive on the 11th February to commission the support for people with dementia from the independent sector and to suggest that the Council should no longer directly provide this service; this supports the key elements within the strategic direction for Older Peoples Services.
- 5.8.2 By ceasing to provide support through the in house Home Care Service for people with dementia, the Council can significantly reduce costs, whilst at the same time stimulating the development of a stronger, more sustainable and more diverse social care market. This is of significance as personalisation has brought about changes in the profile of services, with people choosing to employ their own personal assistants and therefore being less reliant on Council provided services.
- 5.8.3 Following on from agreement by the Executive Member on the 25th November 2013 to consult on the future of the service; the Borough Solicitor advised that as the number of people supported by the service was low it would not be necessary to consult with the wider community. A Team Manager undertook one to one consultation with relatives of the people who use the service and individual letters and e mails have also been received. Staff briefings with union representation, have been held and staff have also been offered one to one consultations. A report represent staff and union views has been received and staff have also met separately with the Executive Member for Social Care.

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- 5.8.4 The dementia home care service employ a full time Assistant Team Manager, a full time Care Coordinator and 13 Support Workers (12.5 FTE in total). The service is costly in comparison to that commissioned from the independent sector, and there are significant issues around the sustainability of a small stand-alone service. However, the staff group as a whole have a record of long term service within Bracknell Forest and their skills are valued.
- 5.8.5 Only after the decision from the Executive will the 15 staff posts be the subject of the Organisational Change Protocol with an end date likely to be 30th April 2014. As was the case in February 2012 in dealing with the staff implications arising from the closure of Ladybank and the Home Support Team, the Employment Committee is not able to take any decisions on the staffing implications ahead of the final decision by the Executive on the future of the Dementia Service. Therefore in line with the approach taken in 2012, it is recommended that the Committee delegate the final decisions on the future of the staff employed in the Service to the Director of Adult Social Care, Health & Housing in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee with the final position reported back to the Committee at their next meeting. It should be noted that action has already been taken within the department to freeze posts so it is anticipated that redeployment opportunities will be made available to many of those affected.

Attached as Exempt Appendix C is a full list of the staff potentially affected with the possible full severance costs.

The Process

- 5.9 When considering budget reductions, officers first scrutinise the requirements for a particular service or function ie whether it could be changed/reduced/reshaped or what the impact would be if it were no longer provided. Having done so and made a judgement in that context, they then consider what the staffing impact will be. Where staffing reductions in multi-occupancy posts are required, if no suitable voluntary redundancies/early retirements emerge, the method of selecting employees for available posts follows the Council's Redundancy Handling Procedure and takes into account the following factors:

- Skills/experience
- Attendance/disciplinary record
- Length of service

Any recommended redundancy or severance payments thereafter will be brought to the Special Employment Committee meeting on 12 February and will be made in accordance with the relevant legislation and/or statutes, and the Council's Policy on Early Retirements and Redundancies.

Conclusion

- 5.10 Excluding proposals in ASCH&H, the total number of Full Time Equivalentents affected by these proposals is 8.8. It should be noted that there are a significant number of currently vacant posts across the Council which will also be removed from the establishment without affecting current staff though removal of these will have a budgetary effect; these total 12.7 FTE's.

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As the process of actively seeking redeployment opportunities will continue right up to the termination date, some staff will secure alternative posts with the Council between the date of decision on redundancy and the effective date of 31 March 2014.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 Nothing to add to the report.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 In order to balance the budget the Council must achieve savings of £4.5 million in 2014/2015. A necessary part of achieving these savings is the reduction in staffing levels some of which has to be achieved through the redundancies outlined in this report. Although not all of the proposed savings impact on staff, the saving in salary costs directly linked to the proposed redundancies total £331,000.

Any redundancy and capitalisation costs will be met from the Structural Changes Fund which currently stands at £1.9 million. As can be seen from Exempt Appendix B severance costs for the posts indicated in the report will total no more than £188,000. This means the overall payback period will be approximately 7 months. The payback period has been calculated using salary costs only. In practice, actual savings can be more (because there are further non-salary related savings associated with the proposal) or less (because the service will be delivered by lower cost staff).

As can be seen from Exempt Appendix C, if all the posts were made redundant the total would be no more than £124,000 making the total payback period 4 months. In both instances the totals may reduce as the result of the take up of redeployment opportunities.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 An Equalities Screening Record Form has been completed in accordance with Council policy and is attached as Appendix D. Service EIAs have been prepared and have been considered by Members when approving the budget.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 Failure to implement proposals involving staff reductions will result in significant alternative savings needing to be found in the Council's budget. There may be resource capacity issues in parts of the organisation as a result of these measures which will need to be managed.

7 **CONSULTATION**

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Employees affected have been individually consulted. Trades unions have been formally consulted throughout the process commencing with statutory consultation letters (14 November 2013) and including a special meeting of the Local Joint Committee on 12 February.

Background Papers

Agenda and minutes of Executive – 13 December 2011 and 21 February 2012.
Equality Impact Assessment.

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