

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

10th January 2013

Report of: Strategic Director: Corporate Services

Title: Staffing Implications of Proposed 2013/14 Council Budget

Ward: N/A

Officer Presenting Report: Mark Williams, Service Manager: Corporate HR

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RECOMMENDATION

That the committee are asked to note the staffing implications of the proposed budget for 2013/14 and the action that will be taken to mitigate the need for compulsory redundancies.

Summary

The report highlights the measures that officers are taking to limit the need for the Council to make compulsory redundancies.

The significant issues in the report are:

- The Council will continue to seek to manage workforce reductions through vacancy management and the use of voluntary severance. Compulsory redundancies will only be used where all other options to reduce headcount have failed.

1. Policy

1.1 The Council's Budget for 2013/14 will be set by Full Council in February 2013.

- 1.2 The Council has in place a set of legally complaint procedures to deal with workforce reductions.

2. Consultation

2.1 Internal

The proposed budget for 2013/14 will be published on 7th January 2013. There will be wide-ranging consultation with stakeholders including trade unions.

Trade Unions were briefed by the Mayor on 7th January 2013.

2.2 External

Not applicable

3. Context

- 3.1 The Mayor published his proposed budget for 2013/14 on Monday 7th January 2013. As these committee papers were published on the 3rd January 2013, the detailed staffing implications are not contained in this report. By the time this meeting takes place, the implications will be in the public domain and a verbal update will also be provided at the committee.
- 3.2 Since the beginning of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review was implemented from 2011/12, the Council has had to deal with year on year workforce reductions. The Council faces another very difficult settlement for 2013/14. The high level implications have been well documented, with a headline spending reduction/income increase requirement of £36 million for next year alone. To date, the Council has mitigated the need for large-scale redundancies through vacancy management and the use of voluntary severance. Compulsory redundancies have only been used as a measure of last resort. Managing further workforce reductions will become increasingly challenging. Through better and improved workforce planning through resource plans and the joined-up management of all the Council's Change Programmes, it is anticipated that the workforce reductions can be managed without the need for significant job losses, although it is likely that the number will be higher than in previous years.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 Officers are developing improved tools and resources for service managers to enable them to mitigate the need for job losses in their team through reduced people budgets. Some of the improved advice

will cover matters such as:-

- Using alternative approaches to reduce voluntary overtime spend.
- Promoting flexible retirement where employees are eligible. This is also a means of retaining expert knowledge in the organisation.
- Reminding managers of the benefits of our worklife balance scheme
- Allowing employees to buy more annual leave which benefits the employee and saves the Council money.

4.2 This guidance will include online case studies showing the benefits of some of the working practices. The guidance is being developed in collaboration with trade union colleagues and it is intended to publish the tools and resources by the end of February.

5. Other Options Considered

5.1 Not applicable as the report is for information and discussion only.

6. Risk Assessment

6.1 At this stage, the risks associated with this report are low. However, as proposals are developed and when the staffing budgets for 2013/14 are finalised, this is likely to change.

7. Public Sector Equality Duties

7a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:

- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
- ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);

- encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

- iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
 - tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.

7b) Equalities Impact Assessments will be developed in any workplace where there is a requirement for workforce reductions. All HR policies have impact assessments and are regularly monitored.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal None sought

Financial

(a) Revenue

None sought

(b) Capital

N/A

Personnel None arising from this report

Appendices: None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers: None