

South Ayrshire Council

Joint Report by Head of Finance, ICT and Procurement
and Head of Legal and Regulatory Services
to Service and Performance Panel
of 22 November 2022

Subject: Corporate Support Services Capacity Issues - Update

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on progress and outcomes so far achieved through the addition of temporary resources.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Panel:

2.1.1 considers the progress and outcomes achieved through the addition of temporary resources; and

2.1.2 note the various challenges being encountered in terms of recruiting staff to these temporary posts.

3. Background

3.1 At its meeting on 26 October 2021, the Leadership Panel:

3.1.1 approved the creation of 11 temporary posts within the Corporate Support teams for a 24-month period, at a cost of £0.842m, funded from uncommitted reserves; and

3.1.2 noted that a report would be brought to the Service and Performance Panel in December 2022 to consider the progress and outcomes achieved through the addition of these temporary resources.

4. Proposals

4.1 Members are asked to consider the progress and outcomes achieved so far through the addition of temporary resources, as detailed in [Appendix 1](#).

4.2 One of the most significant challenges being encountered in utilising the approved resource is the ability to recruit staff. As identified in [Appendix 1](#), despite approval being given in October 2021, it has taken between six and nine months to recruit staff to the various posts via several rounds of advertisement. In one case the post remains vacant despite a number of attempts to recruit. Unfortunately this appears to be indicative of the overall market conditions in terms of public sector job

recruitment at present. This may be exacerbated to a certain degree by the posts being temporary in nature which may be a less attractive option in the job market.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Of the funds provided, £0.174m has been spent to date, Of this £0.036m was spent in the 2021/22 financial year and £0.138m so far spent in 2022/23 to 30 September 2022.

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 Not applicable.

8. Risk

8.1 Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations

8.2.1 There are no risks associated with rejecting the recommendations.

9. Equalities

9.1 The proposals in this report have been assessed through the Equality Impact Assessment Scoping process. There are no significant potential positive or negative equality impacts of agreeing the recommendations and therefore an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required. A copy of the Equalities Scoping Assessment is attached as [Appendix 2](#).

10. Sustainable Development Implications

10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to Commitment 1 of the Council Plan: Fair and Effective Leadership/ Leadership that promotes fairness.

13. Results of Consultation

- 13.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.
- 13.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Ian Davis, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Human Resources and ICT, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

Background Papers **Report to Leadership Panel of 26 October 2021 - [Corporate Support Services Capacity Issues](#)**

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Date: **9 November 2022**

Corporate Support Services Capacity Issues – Update

Service area	Post	No. of posts	Grade	Date appointed	Progress on actions taken and outcomes achieved
Communications	Comms Officer	2	Level 7	21 March 2022	<p>Social Media - The trend during Covid for people to use social media for council news has continued to grow. Social media followers have increased significantly since March 2022, (from 34, 593 to 53, 247 followers across 6 channels). The 2 Assistant posts play a key role in managing the high volume of interactions, comments and questions on these channels as well as creating engaging and high-quality content. The team would not be able to manage this volume without the additional resource.</p> <p>Design – The Communications Assistants play a key role in supporting the in-house design service, providing an average of 15 hours of design work per week, including the production of South Ayrshire Council magazine. To outsource this work services would pay approx. £35 per hour, resulting in a saving of £15,750 to date. The demand for in-house design continues to grow and this in house provision represents better value than outsourcing design work.</p> <p>Communications Campaigns – Demand on the service continues to grow. Assistants have played a key role in the design and delivery of 50 communications campaigns and activity since 1 April 2022. Assistants play a key role in evaluating the effectiveness of campaigns, including carrying out social media analytics.</p> <p>Employee Comms – Assistants played a key role in the development and delivery of employee comms enabling the</p>

Service area	Post	No. of posts	Grade	Date appointed	Progress on actions taken and outcomes achieved
					<p>launch and ongoing development of the employee corporate Yammer channel.</p> <p>Additionally, the roles provide significant support for press releases, speechwriting, media liaison, arranging photo calls and advertising.</p>
Employee Services	Employee Service Administrator	3	Level 5	<p>1 on 22 Nov 21</p> <p>1 on 17 Jan 22</p> <p>1 on 31 Jan 22 but left 25 Sept 22*</p> <p>*replacement 1 on 10 Oct 22</p>	<p>Difficulty filling and required to re-advertise. One person was already in a temporary contract covering maternity leave and we then extended the contract when the maternity leave ended. One of the temp employees stayed in position for 8 months and then we re-advertised and managed to fill it from another internal temp quite quickly.</p> <p>The temporary employees are carrying out the agreed duties. The additional positions have helped the workload pressures, but it is anticipated that the teams are still 4 FTE below what is required for the current workload.</p>
Finance	Senior Accountant	1	Level 12	n/a	<p>Unable to appoint despite two separate attempts to fill the posts in , December 2021 and March 2022. The post remains unfilled at present with the workload being absorbed within the current compliment of staff. This is impacting on the incumbent staff who are working beyond capacity at times which is unsustainable in the long term. The result of this affects the output of the HSCP finance team in supporting the partnership. A further 3rd round of recruitment for the position is currently being considered.</p>
ICT	Assets and Compliance Officer	2	Level 4	<p>7 March 2022</p> <p>*28 Feb 2022 but left post on 9 June 22</p> <p>(* now currently vacant)</p>	<p>There were no difficulties in filling the roles, beyond a low volume of candidates. the successful applicants have proved to be valuable assets working on Improvements in asset & compliance distribution.</p>

Service area	Post	No. of posts	Grade	Date appointed	Progress on actions taken and outcomes achieved
	DevOps Engineer	1	Level 10	17 Jan 2022	Regulatory and legislative compliance including but not limited to security patching and development of automated services. I would note that the removal of the post will generate service delivery challenges moving forward.
Legal	Solicitor	2	Level 11	3 May 2022	<p>The two posts were advertised (internally and externally) and we were hopeful that although temporary, the 2 year contract and flexibility for home working would attract a number of candidates. However we only received a small number of applications and were only successful in recruiting one solicitor, despite readvertising.</p> <p>The additional resource of the temp solicitor in the Property & Contracts team has allowed for capacity to be improved within the team to provide legal advice in areas such as Ayrshire Growth Deal, community empowerment, property projects and contract disputes, as well as generally in more “business as usual” work such as sales/purchase/leasing and advice to Panels. In addition, the new solicitor has provided significant legal advice across the summer to the Housing team in connection with the implementation of the Short Term Let legislation.</p> <p>However the team continues to be under pressure from competing demands and requirements of service departments, in particular in relation to Common Good title checks and investigation work, and a request to try a 3rd round of recruitment for the 2nd position is being reviewed by the Head of Service.</p>
Total FTE		11			

South Ayrshire Council Equality Impact Assessment Scoping Template

Equality Impact Assessment is a legal requirement under the Public Sector Duty to promote equality of the Equality Act 2010. Separate guidance has been developed on Equality Impact Assessment's which will guide you through the process and is available to view here: <https://www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/equalities/impact-assessment.aspx>

Further guidance is available here: <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/assessing-impact-and-public-sector-equality-duty-guide-public-authorities/>

The Fairer Scotland Duty ('the Duty'), Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, came into force in Scotland from 1 April 2018. It places a legal responsibility on Councils to actively consider ('pay due regard to') how we can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions. [FSD Guidance for Public Bodies](#) in respect of the Duty, was published by the Scottish Government in March 2018 and revised in October 2021. See information here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-duty-guidance-public-bodies/>

1. Policy details

Policy Title	Corporate Support Services Capacity Issues
Lead Officer (Name/Position/Email)	Tim Baulk, Head of Finance, ICT and Procurement – tim.baulk@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

2. Which communities, groups of people, employees or thematic groups do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this policy? Please indicate whether these would be positive or negative impacts

Community or Groups of People	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
Age – men and women, girls & boys	-	-
Disability	-	-
Gender Reassignment (Trans/Transgender Identity)	-	-
Marriage or Civil Partnership	-	-
Pregnancy and Maternity	-	-
Race – people from different racial groups, (BME) ethnic minorities and Gypsy/Travellers	-	-
Religion or Belief (including lack of belief)	-	-
Sex – (issues specific to women & men or girls & boys)	-	-

Community or Groups of People	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
Sexual Orientation – person’s sexual orientation i.e. LGBT+, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, heterosexual/straight	-	-
Thematic Groups: Health, Human Rights & Children’s Rights	-	-

3. What likely impact will this policy have on people experiencing different kinds of social disadvantage i.e. The Fairer Scotland Duty (This section to be completed for any Strategic Decisions). Consideration must be given particularly to children and families.

Socio-Economic Disadvantage	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
Low Income/Income Poverty – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	-	-
Low and/or no wealth – enough money to meet Basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future	-	-
Material Deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure/hobbies	-	-
Area Deprivation – where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of transport)	-	-
Socio-economic Background – social class i.e. parent’s education, employment and income	-	-

4. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that the policy will support the Council to:

General Duty and other Equality Themes Consider the ‘Three Key Needs’ of the Equality Duty	Level of Negative and/or Positive Impact (High, Medium or Low)
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Low
Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not	Low
Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. (Does it tackle prejudice and promote a better understanding of equality issues?)	Low
Increase participation of particular communities or groups in public life	Low
Improve the health and wellbeing of particular communities or groups	Low
Promote the human rights of particular communities or groups	Low
Tackle deprivation faced by particular communities or groups	Low

5. Summary Assessment

Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required? (A full Equality Impact Assessment must be carried out if impacts identified as Medium and/or High)	YES NO
Rationale for decision: This report provides an update on progress and outcomes achieved through the addition of temporary resources. Members' decision on this has no specific equality implications	
Signed : Tim Baulk Date: 17 October 2022	Head of Service