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Ref Number	Date Issued	Officer/Dept	Rec'd by Secretariat	Reported to the Executive <i>Personnel Panel</i>
17/06	21.06.06 17/06	J Salt	14.6.06	
Prior to processing this form it must be referenced by the Secretariat				

The Personnel Panel Chairman

Date 21.06.06

Dear Councillor

REQUEST FOR AGREEMENT TO URGENT ACTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 19

I enclose two copies of the standard urgent action form and should be grateful for your agreement to action required urgently in the circumstances set out below. Please contact me if you require further information.

Committee/Panel Personnel

Date of next meeting: 21.06.06

Action proposed: To increase the number of FTE's employed in Revenues and Benefits Services (RBS) by two permanent posts.

Financial/Resource Implications: The proposal will cost in the region of £36,000, but it is anticipated that this will be funded through additional subsidy generated by reducing the level of housing and council tax benefit overpayments as a result of local authority error. There is also the high probability that the level of staff turnover will release sufficient funding to cover the additional staff.

Background information:

The Benefit Fraud Inspectorate Performance Development Team identified that to process the number of incoming new claims and changes of circumstances we currently receive we require 7 staff processing them at any one time. Whilst we currently have 9 on complement, due to holidays, sickness, vacancies and some only being partially trained this has equated to an average of 5.5 during the past few months.

In addition to claim processing, during the year there is other work to be undertaken in order for us to keep up to date with DWP guidance. For example this year we have to introduce the verification framework and change our working practices to accommodate the change in access to DWP information through the RAT (remote access terminal). Due to the number of legislative changes there is also an ongoing requirement for training.

There also continues to be a high turnover of staff in this area and as it is estimated that it takes between 12-18 months to fully train a member of staff to be 100% productive some resilience needs to be built in to the section to reduce the impact of this.

Not least, by having sufficient staff throughout the year we can ensure that housing and council tax benefit is paid quickly to the claimants, thereby reducing overpayments. In so doing we can generate income to the authority by increasing the subsidy received.

Reason(s) for urgency:

There is a need to recruit to these posts as soon as possible to ensure that we can have the maximum impact on reducing overpayments in the current financial year.

Comments of Head of Finance & Business Development:

Financial implications as detailed above . In the unlikely situation that full funding has not been realised during the year this will be considered as part of the final accounts closedown.

Signature: *S. C. Bowick*

Comments of Head of Legal & Democratic Services:

Agreed

Signature: *M. J. Jones*

Comments of other officers consulted:

Signature(s):

Signature:

Please indicate your views in the box below and return one copy to me as soon practicable.

Yours sincerely



(Business Unit Manager/General Manager/Strategic Director)

I agree*/~~disagree~~* with the action proposed

Comments:

Signed: *C. A. Leil*

Date: *13/6/06*

Cllr (insert name)

*Please delete as appropriate

Note 1.

A copy of the completed form should be kept on the project file and the original taken to Secretariat
Note 2.

Date taken to Secretariat: Initials

This form and action taken must be reported to the next meeting of the Executive.

Date reported to Executive: Initials