

Finance and Resources Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 30 October 2014

Acting Up/Secondment Arrangements

Item number 7.10
Report number
Executive/routine
Wards

Executive summary

This report gives an updates on the initial findings from a review of acting up / secondment arrangements across the Council.

Links

Coalition pledges [P27](#)
Council outcomes [CO27](#)
Single Outcome Agreement

Acting Up/Secondment Arrangements

Recommendations

- 1.1 The Finance and Resources Committee is asked to note the current issues regarding the Council's arrangements for acting up/secondments.
- 1.2 The Committee is also asked to note the deliverables of the Workforce Management Controls Project being taken forward in Phase 2 of the Better Outcomes through Leaner Delivery (BOLD) programme.

Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 16 January 2014 the Finance and Resource Committee requested a report on the current position regarding acting up arrangements across the Council. A report was provided on 5 June 2014 which was based on data from eHR on acting up arrangements. This report stated that a review of live acting arrangements was being taken forward as part of the Council's Strategic Workforce Planning approach, which was reported to the Finance and Resources Committee on 7 May 2014.
- 2.2 In the initial stages of the Strategic Workforce Planning project effort was put into base lining the organisation in order to provide managers with accurate charts outlining current organisational structures. The organisational charts which were produced aim to reflect the number of posts, the number of people and the employment status of people currently employed across the Council.
- 2.3 In reviewing the people data required to produce these charts it became clear that, in some cases, the terms acting up and secondment were used synonymously. This report therefore gives an update on both acting up and secondment arrangements currently in place across the Council.
- 2.3 It addition, it also came to light that there are issues regarding the accuracy of the data held on the 'e' HR system and that a significant data cleansing exercise was necessary

Main report

- 3.1 A period of acting up is defined as a temporary arrangement e.g. to cover a period of sickness, maternity leave or whilst a vacancy is being filled. These arrangements should last no more than 12 months. Acting up can only be to a

higher graded post irrespective of whether it is undertaken on a full time basis (100% of duties) or part-time (less than 100%of full duties) basis. To qualify for a full acting up payment, all duties of the higher post must be undertaken. To qualify for a partial acting up payment, the partial acting up duties must merit being graded at a higher grade. A revised job description outlining the revised duties is required and must be evaluated. The evaluation will determine if the partial acting up merits a higher grade.

- 3.2 A period of secondment is also temporary e.g. to undertake a project. In many cases the secondment will be undertaken to support development needs. Any period of secondment must be reviewed regularly and should last no more than 12 months. A secondment should normally be to a post at the same grade. Exceptionally it may be to a higher or lower graded post. If no job description exists for the seconded post a job description outlining the duties is required and this will be evaluated. The evaluation will determine the grade for the post.
- 3.3 If these guidelines are not followed e.g. there is no evaluated job description for the acting up/secondment position there is a high risk of equalities issues arising.
- 3.4 As stated above the Council's people data requires data cleansing. However, it is clear from an initial manual analysis of the data that the main issues are:
- the large number of acting ups and secondments greater than 12 months and in some cases greater than five years; and
 - the continuation of acting up and secondment payments after the expiry date held on the system has past, which results in an employee receiving additional payments after their acting up/secondment has ended or the additional payments do not have the correct authorisation.
- 3.5 Actions to address these issues are being taken forward within the workstream 'Workforce Management Controls' in Phase 2 of BOLD. The deliverables of this workstream are:
- eHR data cleansing;
 - a review of the HR Service Centre (HRSC) processes and controls;
 - a review of auditing/monitoring processes;
 - a review of policies and procedures;
 - a review of authorisation levels within policies and procedures;
 - a communication plan to include a review of workforce information held on the ORB; and
 - an holistic dashboard of management information.
- 3.6 It is anticipated that the data cleansing and follow up actions will take in the region of six months to complete.

Measures of success

- 4.1 The Workforce Management Project aims to deliver improved performance and employee cost savings through more efficient planning, management and monitoring of staff resources.

- 4.2 Documentation with appropriate authorisation will exist for every acting up/secondment arrangement put in place.

Financial impact

- 5.1 It is expected that by tightening up policies and procedures and ensuring these policies and procedures are applied, cost savings will be achieved. The data within the eHR system requires to be cleansed before these cost savings can be identified.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 The Council's acting up/secondment policy and procedure, its application and governance are being examined as part of Phase 2 of BOLD.
- 6.2 The project requires senior management buy in to succeed.
- 6.3 There is a risk that potential benefits are not as great as estimated.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 There is a risk of equalities issues arising from the fact that some employees are acting up/seconded to posts without a job description/job evaluation.
- 7.2 There is also a risk in relation to equal access to acting up/secondments. The review of policies and procedures will address this issue.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There is no direct impact on the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 Public Bodies Duties arising from this report.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Consultation with senior managers is taking place to determine if current acting up/secondments are appropriate and comply with policy.
- 9.2 Engagement and consultation with the Trade Unions will be undertaken as appropriate.

Background reading/external references

[Finance and Resource Committee - 5 June 2014 Acting Up Arrangements](#)

Alastair Maclean

Director of Corporate Governance

Contact: Linda Holden, Interim Head of People and Organisation

E-mail: linda.holden@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 469 3963

Links

Coalition pledges	P27 - Seek to work in full partnership with Council staff and their representatives
Council outcomes	C027 – The Council supports, invests in and develops our people
Single Outcome Agreement	
Appendices	None