

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Personnel Committee

16th October 2017

Report of the Head of Transformation, Mr Andrew Thomas

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All wards

Revised staffing structure - Library Service

1. Purpose of the Report

To seek Member approval for a revised staffing structure for the library service:

- a. Create post of Library Assistant 37 hours - Grade 3
- b. Amalgamate 2 x 15 hours Library Assistant post to 30 hours - Library Assistant (Glynneath) - Grade 3
- c. Confirm Children's Literacy Officer (Project officer) as a Permanent 37 hour post - Grade 6

Delete the following post:

- d. Reference librarian, 37 hours Grade 5

2. Executive Summary

The proposal to amend the staffing structure reflects operational changes which have proved necessary following the Library service review in 2013 and the requirement to make additional financial savings from the service in 2014-15 and subsequent years. To ensure continuity of service and meet the authorities' statutory duty in providing a public library service, it has proved necessary to make a number of temporary amendments to the staffing structure which are now presented to members for approval.

3. Background

Compliance with meeting the statutory provision for public libraries in Wales is interpreted via the Welsh Public Library Standards (WPLS) issued by Welsh Government which provide detailed guidance on aspects of the service for local authorities. In terms of staffing Neath Port Talbot currently operates its library service on one of the lowest staffing levels in Wales and well below the recommended minimum level as set out in the WPLS. Every vacant post within the library service is monitored and where possible further savings and efficiencies are made taking into account alternative ways of delivering the service and implementation of new technology. The service has been successful in developing professional staff and expertise within the authority.

4. Proposals

i) The specialist post of Reference librarian (grade 5) at Neath library be deleted, as much of the information role of this post has been superseded by the impact of the internet. In addition, Library staff are better trained to deal with a wider range of enquiries. It is proposed to replace this post with a generic post of Library Assistant (grade 3).

ii) That the 2 x 15hour library Assistant posts (grade 3) at Glynneath library, one of which is vacant be combined to 1 x 30 hour post (grade 3). This will enable continuity in service provision and allow the library staff to develop a wider range of activities.

iii) That the post of Project Officer (Grade 6) which was initially externally funded, but from 2013 has been fully funded from the library service budget now be confirmed on the library service structure permanently.

Since 2010, this post has evolved into a Children's Literacy Office and acts as an essential link between NPT schools and the library service.

iv) That following consultation with the unions, the above posts detailed above be ring fenced to the employees within the library service currently at risk as per the Managing Change in Partnership Procedure.

5. Financial Impact

The proposals will be funded through the existing library service budgets and will not impact on other services within the Council. The saving achieved of £7,815 being the difference between the grade 5 post and the proposed new Library Assistant post (grade 3)were given up at that time as part of the FFP/Saving Strategy for 2016/17. Please see Appendix 1 for a full Financial Appraisal.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment screening form was completed to assist the authority in complying with its Public Sector Equality Duty. The screening indicated that there was no requirement to carry out a full equality impact assessment.

7. Workforce Impacts

The recommendations in relation to staffing matters comply with employment legislation and the Council's own employment policies.

8. Legal Impacts

Implementing the recommendations of this report will enable the Council to meet its statutory responsibility in providing a public library service.

9. Risk Management

There are risks, as defined in the Corporate Risk Management Policy, associated with failing to implement the proposed recommendations as follows:

- i) Loss of professional staff and expertise within the library service.
- ii) Continued failure to achieve the staffing Standard of the WPLS.
- iii) Reputational risk to the Council, particularly with regard to meeting its statutory duty of providing a library service.

10. Consultation

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

11. Recommendations

It is recommended that Members approve the following amendments to the staffing structure:

- a. Create post of Library Assistant 37 hours - Grade 3
- b. Amalgamate 2 x 15 hours Library Assistant post to 30 hours - Library Assistant (Glynneath) - Grade 3
- c. Confirm Children's Literacy Officer (Project officer) as a Permanent 37 hour post - Grade 6

Delete the following post:

- d. Reference librarian, 37 hours Grade 5

12. Reasons for Proposed Decision

The recommendation is made that members approved the proposed restructure of the library service, which will enable the authority to maintain its existing professional staff and confirm the appointments of long term temporary staff.

13. Implementation of Decision

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period

14. Appendices

Appendix 1 Financial Appraisal

Appendix 2 Staffing structure - Neath / Glynneath libraries

Appendix 3 Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form

15. List of Background Papers

Library service Strategy 2016 -2021

16. Officer Contact

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