

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES – S.REES

January 19th 2015

SECTION B - MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

WARDS AFFECTED: All

DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE – E BULK ONLINE SYSTEM

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information about a new initiative that the HR team will be implementing early in 2015 in relation to the administration of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosure checks. DBS checks will be processed using an online E Bulk system, enabling applicants to complete the DBS application form online instead of via paper-based applications.

2. Background

- 2.1 NPT is currently a Registered Body with the DBS and the HR Team administers all DBS applications on behalf of the Council. Applications are currently processed via paper-based applications. In the 12 month period January 2013 – December 2013, the HR Team manually administrated 2,713 applications.
- 2.2 As a result of the Council's budget pressures, it is essential that the HR team identifies more efficient ways of working that reduce the bureaucracy of employment administration, both for the HR team and for managers across the Council. The number of administrative posts in the HR team is to be reduced over the next 3 financial years through natural wastage and the redeployment of staff to enable budget savings to be achieved. Currently, the equivalent of two full time equivalent Grade 5 employees administrate DBS checks, at a cost of £56,000 per annum.
- 2.3 Approval was given on November 27th 2014 by Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee to procure the services of Powys County Council to supply the E Bulk online system to process DBS checks on behalf of the Council. Powys County Council is an established Umbrella Body with the

DBS and is able to administer and process DBS checks on behalf of another organisation, using the software E Bulk online system.

- 2.4 The E Bulk system is a secure, fully encrypted online system which ensures security of information and enables DBS checks to be processed across Criminal Justice Department servers. It will significantly improve HR service delivery, enabling DBS checks to be processed much more efficiently.
- 2.5 The Council has signed a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Powys County Council for a three year duration to process and countersign DBS applications on behalf of NPT. Work is currently being progressed to implement the new system.
- 2.6 NPT has been working in partnership with the City and County of Swansea, Pembrokeshire County Council and Bridgend County Borough Council to explore joint implementation of the E Bulk System, due to the significant improvements in service delivery this system offers. As part of the partnership working, proposals were received from three private sector organisations who also provide E Bulk DBS administration services, however it was determined that the submission and costings provided by Powys County Council represented best value. The City and County of Swansea, Pembrokeshire County Council and Bridgend County Borough Council have also signed SLAs with Powys County Council.
- 2.7 The benefits of the E Bulk online system are as follows:
- E Bulk is a secure, fully encrypted and auditable online system with automation validation of data entered.
 - It is a significantly faster method than paper applications. 90% of Standard DBS checks are returned within 24 hours and 90% of Enhanced DBS checks are returned within 4 days. The current method of paper applications can take up to 6 – 8 weeks and causes significant delays in recruitment processes.
 - It is a more cost and time effective way of administering DBS checks. Based on current usage, the use of this system will cost the Council approximately £19,000 per annum, compared with the current costs of manual administration of £56,000. This does not include the costs of line manager time across the Council.
 - E Bulk reduces postage and delays.

- Automated messages are sent from the E Bulk system to managers when their staff have not completed their online application form. At present, the HR Team must carry out this manually.
- Applicants are sent e mail reminders for non- completion of forms, which is a task currently undertaken manually by the HR Team.
- Managers are automatically notified of satisfactory and adverse DBS checks. Currently, employers are reliant on employees producing a copy of the DBS check as the certificate is issued direct to the employee only, which often causes delays in the process.
- There is a minimal error rate percentage as any error is identified at the onset of the process when the system validates data as soon as it is entered into the system.
- The recruitment process is speeded up and reduces delays in employees commencing employment, which helps managers make safer recruitment processes, especially with positions involving children or vulnerable adults.

3. Appendices

None

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that Members NOTE the change in the administration process of DBS, along with the benefits that the E Bulk system will bring to the Council.

5. List of Background Paper

None

6. Officer Contact

Sheenagh Rees - Head of Human Resources
 Telephone: 01639 763315
 Email: s.rees5@npt.gov.uk

Catherine Lewis - Human Resources Manager
 Telephone: 01639 686267
 Email: c.lewis3@npt.gov.uk

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE – E BULK ONLINE SYSTEM

(a) Implementation of Decision

N/A

(b) Sustainability Appraisal

Community Plan Impacts

Economic Prosperity	..	Positive
Education & Lifelong Learning	..	No Impact
Better Health & Wellbeing	..	Positive
Environment & Transport	..	No Impact
Crime & Disorder	..	No Impact

Other Impacts

Welsh Language	..	No Impact
Sustainable Development	..	No Impact
Equalities	..	No Impact
Social Inclusion	..	No Impact

(c) Consultation

This item has not been subject to external consultation.