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| **Directorate** | **Chief Executive** |
| **Combined Tracker Ref.** | **CEL/24/002** |
| **Service Director** | **Adam Divney** |
| **Service Area** | **Legal Services Trading** |
| **Service Manager** | **Kemi Onakoya** |
| **Activity/Cost centres** | **Level 3 NLLS (all legal services)** |
| **22/23 Budget £’000** | **-110** |
| **22/23 Outturn £’000** | **49** |
| **23/24 Budget £’000** | **-40 (original budget)** |
| **Pressure on this activity in 23/24 (based on 22/23 outturn) £’000** | **159** |

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| **Explain the context behind this pressure and what has caused it*** **Since when has the budget been in deficit (provide the year, e.g. 2020/21)**
* **Provide details of activity levels and the key cost/income drivers and how these have changed (this is needed for each year including the year prior to when the budget was first in deficit)**
 |
| A significant portion of the deficit in legal relates to staffing and the added cost of utilising agency staff. At the time of drafting this plan, legal services have seven agency staff based within the team, this is down from a high of nine staff in Aug 23. The remaining roles are below. (Further details around costs can also be found at Appendix A)

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|  | **Vacant since**  | **Attempts to recruit** |
| M5 Solicitor – Contracts and Procurement (x2, but one in Agency post, one vacant)£4k Market Supplement per post was approved in Jun 22. | 2018 Since the last permanent person in the post retired  | 15 times from Nov 21 – present. Nov 21, Dec 21, Jan 22, Feb 22, Mar 22, June 22, July 22, Sept 22, Nov 22, Jan 23, Feb 23, Mar 23, Apr 23, Jun 23, Aug 23.  |
| M5 Senior Childcare Solicitor (1.5FTE) | 1.0 FTE vacant since early 2021. 0.5FTE vacant since Dec 2021. | Dec 21, Jan 22, Mar 22, May 22, Apr 23, May 23, July 23, Sept 23, Oct 23.Post was not advertised between May 22 – Apr 23 due to Tehniat leaving and Javed coming into post. |
| M5 Senior Employment Solicitor | May 23 | 2 attempts thus far and currently out to recruitment  |
| L5 Childcare Legal Assistant  | November 22 & June 23 respectively  | One post recruited to (Starting Dec 23), one still outstanding  |
| Legal Secretary | June 23 | ?  |

Several of the posts have proved to be hard to recruit to – this is specifically relevant to the roles of the Contracts Solicitor, Senior Childcare Solicitor and Senior Employment Solicitor. This is believed to be largely centred around external employment market conditions whereby there has been a shift of LA’s legal service personal opting to becoming locums, where the pay and flexibility levels has been seen a preferential benefit over job security. Various activities have been undertaken in terms of broadening the breadth of publications advertised within, iterations of the adverts themselves and market supplement of £4k added to the contracts solicitor role.The second pressure on legal budgets is around historical schools trading. Schools within the borough that have converted to academies no longer subscribe to the Council’s legal package as more often than not, the multi academy trust the school is using has its own legal services in addition, following covid and due to their own budget pressures, most Schools are not buying into packages of legal support, preferring instead to pay for legal services on an ad hoc basisPlease also note that Legal Services is constrained in the trading it can engage in as it is regulated service. It cannot trade with schools outside the Council’s borough as it is not allowed to do so by its regulator. * Recharges to Trading Units (NL0203/6969) budget @ 44k (YE forecast @ - 44k)
* Recharges to Schools (NL0501/6927) budget @ 72K (YE forecast @ -14.7k) Total forecasted shortfall @58K
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| **What action(s) can be taken to keep 23/24 spend in line with approved budget?*** **What needs to be done? If there is more than one option explain each option in detail**
* **Are there any barriers or factors beyond your control that will affect your ability to recover the deficit?**
* **Explain how the cost/income drivers can be managed**
 |
| As mentioned, various actions have already taken place to improve the current position. The consequence of this being a reduction of £332k to £302k from Q1 to Q2 respectively. 1. **Agency pressure**

Key future items to tackle the A further, holistic, recruitment campaign to be implemented by Nov 23. This will be driven by a small Task and finish group from colleagues across legal services and recruitment but notably leaning on the skills and expertise of the council’s talent requisition and recruitment marketing officers. This will be a structured piece that includes that includes targeted direct searching and a clearer focus on social media promotion, The T&F group will also other options with the resources available, such as permanent recruitment via C2L. The first meeting of the T&F group is 20.11.231. **Schools traded income**

To promote services to school to obtain ad hoc work to increase income during the year or encourage Buy Back from schools. Michelle Lily-Hills will be engaged to understand current position re schools take up and any opportunities for further promotion to schools. 1. **OBC for transformation**

Clarify current working doc with HE and ongoing process with DM/MF |

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| **Timescale for budget deficit recovery*** **List the key milestones required to deliver the budget recovery, the estimated amount to be delivered and the estimated date for each**
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| MILESTONE DETAILS | £ | Date |
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| **Quarterly Monitoring updates*** **Provide quarterly progress updates against milestone delivery to align with the quarterly budget monitoring reports to executive. Where milestones have not been met please provide an explanation, revised milestone dates, and how delivery can be brought back on track**
* **If the recovery plan cannot be delivered, THERE IS NO NEW MONEY AVAILABLE so please provide an alternative proposal as to how budgets can be realigned so that it can be considered by DMT**
 |
| **QUARTER 1 (to 30/06/23)** |
| On Target ? (Yes = GREEN; Partial (e.g. milestones slipped) = AMBER, No = RED) |  |
| Provide narrative below |
|  |
| **QUARTER 2 (to 30/09/23)** |
| On Target ? (Yes = GREEN; Partial (e.g. milestones slipped) = AMBER, No = RED) |  |
| Provide narrative below |
|  |
| **QUARTER 3 (to 31/12/23)** |
| On Target ? (Yes = GREEN; Partial (e.g. milestones slipped) = AMBER, No = RED) |  |
| Provide narrative below |
| Recruitment campaign prepared in conjunction with HR to appoint to vacant posts.  |
| **QUARTER 4 (to 31/03/23)** |
| On Target ? (Yes = GREEN; Partial (e.g. milestones slipped) = AMBER, No = RED) |  |
| Provide narrative below |
|  |

Appendix A – Agency staff summary

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| **CC** | **Cost Centre Description** | **CCM** | **SD** | **Job\_Title** | **Units\_Worked\_Against\_Each\_Rate** | **Candidate\_Pay\_Rate** | **Supplier\_Name** |
| NL0203 | Legal Services (General) | KO | AD | M5 Solicitor - Contract  | 37 | 60.5 | Law Absolute Limited (LBC) |
| NL0205 | Legal Services (Children`s Services) | KO | AD | Senior Childcare Solicitor | 37 | 58.26 | Sellick Partnership Ltd (LBC) |
| NL0203 | Legal Services (General) | KO | AD | Senior Employment Solicitor | 15 | 51.26 | Sellick Partnership Ltd (LBC) |
| NF4005 | Secretarial Services | KO | AD | Childcare Legal Assistant | 37 | 28.6 | Sellick Partnership Ltd (LBC) |
| NF4005 | Secretarial Services | KO | AD | Legal Secretary | 21 | 12.02 |  |
| NL0205 | Legal Services (Children`s Services) | KO | AD | Employment Solicitor | 25.75 | 50 | Sellick Partnership Ltd (LBC) |
| NL0205 | Legal Services (Children`s Services) | KO | AD | Childcare Legal Assistant | 26.5 | 28.27 | Sellick Partnership Ltd (LBC) |