

11 March 2020
Agenda Item: 5

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR - CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND EMPLOYEES

THE BUSINESS SUPPORT REVIEW PROGRAMME

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval for the revised Business Support Service structure (see Appendix A) which will come into effect from 1 April 2020 and to deliver previously committed savings as set out within the medium-term financial strategy.

Information

2. The Business Support Review is an established ongoing programme of efficiency which seeks to review and re-design processes and develop new operating models for service support within a modern organisation.

Savings

3. Legacy and further committed savings can be found in the following table:

Opening Budget;	£11,107,237.00	
Financial Year	FTE	Savings
2013/14	548	
2014/15	475	£911,000 Savings Delivered
2015/16	440	£895,000 Savings Delivered
2016/17	435	£534,000 Savings Delivered
2017/18	434.5	£508,000 Savings Delivered
2018/19	406	£715,000 Savings Delivered
2019/20	396.5	£300,000 Savings Delivered
2020/21	405.11	£221,000 Savings subject of this Report
2021/22		£97,000 to be Delivered

*it should be noted that 2016/17 and 2017/18 net staffing numbers remained broadly the same, due to the assimilation of Public Health and Corporate Leadership Business Support teams into the wider Business Support Service

* from 2019/20 3 Business Systems Support Officer posts transitioned over from the Smarter Working team to business support

* from 2019/20 we also inherited staff from Derbyshire, Derby City and Nottingham City in respect of the Regional Adoption Agency.

Overall savings from the Business Support Service, delivered by the end of 2021 will be £4.181m.

Reviewing the way in which Business Support is delivered

4. We have continued throughout the life of the programme, to liaise with operational colleagues via senior and divisional leadership forums where we discuss, identify requirements and revise business support arrangements.
5. We have also continued to engage and negotiate at a local level, bespoke Service Level Agreements which has enabled front line practitioners to have a direct influence over how their support is prioritised, providing the opportunity to meet individual and service needs.
6. We continue to work collaboratively with our colleagues within Children's Social Care and have been proactively and positively engaged within the Remodelling Social Work Practice Project Board and the move toward strength-based practice.
7. Likewise, we are working alongside the Adults Leadership Team as they deliver and embed their revised structure.
8. Through the Investing in Nottinghamshire programme and in collaboration with our customers, we have where possible, co-located Business Support staff into 'Hubs' within our major office sites, a model of working which provides cross skilling opportunities for our workforce, allows us to support the provision of apprenticeship opportunities and ensures business continuity.
9. Changes in operational support requirements and new ways of working provides an opportunity for the provision of elements of business support to be delivered at 'arms-length'. Whilst recognising that 'one size does not fit all' there are significant areas of commonality across services in terms of their support needs i.e. procurement, data input and transactional activity which we have consolidated.
10. These revised ways of working reflect the changing nature of business support, which is no longer about the provision of routine administrative assistance but has become about the provision of more technical and specialist support, linked to the needs of the services.

Supporting the Digital Strategy

11. We continue to use our Business Systems Support Officers (BSSO) to assist front line colleagues to maximise the functionality of new technologies and are actively engaged in supporting the Council's direction of travel through the new Digital Strategy.
12. We have for this reason sought CLT support to retain the 3 additional BSSO posts originally created to support the Smarter Working Programme, particularly as our BSSO's are crucial in supporting front line workers to maximise the capabilities and effectiveness of the Office 365 suite of products.

The Meeting Support Service Hub Project

13. We have continued to review the way in which we support meetings across the Authority with a view to moving away from the reliance or expectation that an administrator will attend to take arising actions or in some cases more comprehensive minutes.
14. In collaboration with the Independent Chair Service we have expanded the range of meetings that we digitally support for Child Protection.
15. This gradual transition toward greater self-sufficiency has enabled the service to review and reduce the number of administrators dedicated to this area of work, it has also ensured that we are more compliant regarding issues such as data protection.

Summary

16. The savings identified within this report, deliverable as a result of the Council's continual review of business support activity, can be achieved by using vacant posts held proactively throughout the year as they have arisen and without the need for voluntary or compulsory redundancy.
17. Business support staff have been consulted regarding the revised structure appended to this report and there have been no concerns or comments received.

Other Options Considered

18. No other options have been considered.

Reasons for Recommendation

19. To update Members regarding the progress of the Business Support Review and particularly, delivery of the required efficiency savings as committed within the MTFS.

Statutory and Policy Implications

20. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Data Protection and Information Governance

21. The report contains no personally identifiable information and as such there are no GDPR implications.

Financial Implications

22. As set out within the table at paragraph 3 and within the HR implications below, the deletion of 9.1 vacant posts will enable the service to deliver the required savings of £221,000 by 1 April 2020.
23. The service is currently forecasting an underspend of £280k in 2019/20. This underspend relates to savings associated with holding vacancies in anticipation of the above budgetary savings commitment being deducted from our base budget from 1 April 2020 onwards.

Human Resources Implications

24. The net impact of the efficiency measures described are illustrated within the table in paragraph 3 of the report and above. More specifically actual post reductions are as follows;

Post Reduction Summary

Business Support Officer Grade 5	0.4
Business Support Assistant Grade 4	2.0
Business Support Assistant Grade 3	4.7
Business Support Assistant Grade 2	2.0
Total	9.1

As set out above, post reductions can be achieved through the deletion of vacancies. Work has been re-engineered and new technology has been utilised to ensure that there is no detrimental impact for front-line colleagues.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That Members approve the revised Business Support Structure as set out in Appendix A.

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Service Director – Customers, Governance and Employees
Chief Executives Department

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (KK 17/02/20)

25. The proposal in this report is within the remit of the Personnel Committee.

Financial Comments (RWK 20/02/20)

26. The report sets out proposals to save £221,000 in the Business Support service in 2020/21. This saving has been included in the development of the 2020/21 revenue budget.

HR Comments (JP 20/02/20)

27. Consultation has taken place with business support staff and with the recognised Trade Unions.
28. Trade Union colleagues note that to date, savings made by the business support service have been achieved through effective vacancy management and are keen to see this approach continue.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All