

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 1st April 2019 and deliver further savings as set out below.

Information

Background

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

Savings

3. Legacy and future 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		£221,000 to be Delivered
2021/22		£97,000 to be Delivered

Overall savings from the Business Support Service, delivered by the end of 2021 would be £4,181m.

*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

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 engaged and negotiated 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.
6. Most recently we have been actively involved in supporting the work to review Children's Social Care Practices and have been proactively and positively embraced within the Remodelling Social Work Practice Project Board.
7. 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. data input and transactional activity.
8. Facilitated by the roll out of Smarter Working across the County and in collaboration with our customers, we have where possible, co-located Business Support staff into 'Hubs' which has also enabled the service to review managerial arrangements and spans of control.
9. Corporate Leadership Team have approved a change request to postpone delivery of our final £97,000 of efficiency savings until 2022. This is in recognition of the unintended yet positive consequence of the roll out of new technologies and more flexible working practices and the need to maximise the benefits of these developments through continued local systems and cultural change support, which is provided through our Business Systems Support Officers.

The Purchase to Pay (P2P) Hub Project

10. We continue to work closely with operational customers alongside colleagues within both the Business Support Centre and Corporate Procurement to streamline performance in relation to the ordering of goods, invoice processing and payment.
11. We have also moved the Purchase to Pay team previously located at Sir John Robinson Way across to County Hall and have begun to scope P2P activity across the County Hall campus for inclusion within the Hub.

The Meeting Support Service Hub Project

12. We have continued to review the way in which we support meetings across the Authority with 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.
13. With the support of ICT and the collaboration of the Independent Chair Service we have successfully introduced digital recording and revised secure storage solutions for Child Protection Conferences and Reviews. We have also supported organisational managers and colleagues within Human Resources, to introduce recording solutions for employee relations matters.
14. This gradual transition toward greater self-sufficiency has enabled the service to review and reduce the amount of administrators dedicated to this area of work, it has also ensured that we are more compliant with regard to issues such as GDPR.

Summary

15. The savings delivered to date as a result of the Council's continual review of business support activity have been achieved without the need for compulsory redundancy. Any further reductions required will continue to be achieved by a combination of the deletion of existing vacancies and if required, voluntary redundancy.
16. Business support staff have been consulted with regard to the revised structure appended to this report and there have been no concerns or comments received.
17. In respect of the savings required from 2019/20 onwards it is the Council's intention to bring a further report to Personnel Committee in the Autumn of 2019.

Statutory and Policy Implications

18. 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.

Financial Implications

19. As set out within the table under section 3 and within the HR implications below, the deletion of 12.45 vacant posts will enable the service to deliver the required savings of £300,000 by 1st April 2019.
20. The service is currently forecasting an underspend of £270k in 2018/19. This underspend relates to savings associated with holding vacancies in anticipation of the above budgetary savings commitment from 1st April 2019 onwards.

Human Resources Implications

21. The net impact of the efficiency measures described are illustrated within the table under section 3 of the report and above. More specifically actual post reductions are as follows:

Post Reduction Summary:

Team Manager (Band C)	0.5
Business Support Assistant Grade 4	0.9
Business Support Assistant Grade 3	8.8
Business Support Assistant Grade 2	2.25
Total	12.45

22. As set out above, post reductions have been achieved through business process re-engineering and the deletion of vacancies.

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

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (KK 19/02/19)

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

Financial Comments (SES 01/02/19)

24. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 19 and 20 of the report.

HR Comments (JP 13/02/19)

25. Consultation has taken place with business support staff and with the recognised Trades Unions.

26. Trades Union colleagues have commented that the savings being made from the Business Support Service are significant. Trades Union colleagues note that to date the majority of savings have been made through effective vacancy management and are keen to see this approach continue. They do however, recognise that it may be necessary to consider voluntary redundancies as the savings programme continues and accept that the proposals reflect the most efficient way of delivering savings.

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