

**REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR – CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND
EMPLOYEES
BUSINESS SUPPORT REVIEW PROGRAMME**

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Members on the progress of the ongoing review of Business Support and delivery of associated cashable efficiencies and to seek approval for the revised Business Support Service Structure as set out in Appendix A, which will come into force with effect from 1 April 2022.

Information

2. Business Support is defined as the function which provides support to the delivery of frontline and/or specialist services. It offers a range of support activities which span from more generic administrative duties (i.e. convening and supporting meetings, answering calls and enquiries, data input etc) through to broader and more complex activities which require greater knowledge and experience of our services (i.e. ordering specialist equipment, processing invoices and care packages through Mosaic, providing financial and systems support, liaising directly with third party providers and our service users etc).
3. Additionally, given the fact that business support is affiliated with all types of operational activity across the Council, with staff who have a thorough understanding of the way in which we conduct our business, Business Support is increasingly regarded as an enabler in transformational change, leading process reviews, acting as advocates for digitisation and as relationship brokers for wider departmental objectives.
4. Since 2014 the Business Support Service has been through an ongoing programme of transformation and has delivered a total of £4,181,000 in savings through a headcount reduction of 145 FTE without the need for any compulsory redundancies.

Constantly reviewing the way in which Business Support is delivered

5. We constantly seek opportunities to revise and re-design processes and develop new operating models for service support within a modern organisation and for 2022/23 the Business Support Service is required to deliver further cashable savings of £263,000.
6. Members are already aware that our approach has always been to collaborate with operational colleagues via senior and divisional leadership forums and at a local level, where we discuss our savings requirements and identify revised business support arrangements/opportunities.

7. Members are also aware of our work over recent years to combine similar activities into 'Hubs' (now virtual), to multiskill our staff and to maximise the use of emerging technologies in order to provide the economies of scale needed to compensate for the inevitable reduction in our overall staffing establishment required to deliver the cashable efficiency savings needed.
8. What we have realised over the last two years is that the new ways of working adopted during the Coronavirus Pandemic have demonstrated that we are able to efficiently provide the vast majority of our business support activities at 'arms-length' and that our staff are able to work in a hybrid way.
9. This more adaptive and flexible model of service delivery is something which we would wish to continue and our aspiration to transition away from our existing location based managerial arrangements will enable us to explore a move toward a Business Partner Model of operation, which is very much welcomed by our operational customers.

2022 Savings Commitment - £263,000

10. We have identified £183,000 of our savings commitment through;
 - a) A review of our non-staffing budgets which has yielded a cashable saving of £40,595.
 - b) The deletion of 5.7 posts which have become vacant throughout the year. (It should be noted that the work associated with these posts has been re-engineered).

The Digitisation of Receptions

11. The remaining £80,000 of our savings commitment is tied into a corporate programme of work to transition from physical to digital receptions, which will result in the reduction of a further 3.36 FTE posts.
12. The Business Support Service has historically provided reception support in all of our major offices, with the exception of County Hall (which is excluded from this proposal). Unlike County Hall, as the focus of our Civic Functions and host for a significant number of visitors, the remainder of our office bases see very few ad hoc visitors.
13. Throughout the Coronavirus crisis members of the public have not had access to 'drop into' our offices at all, instead they have utilised the Internet or directed their enquiries through the Customer Service Centre, and this is a practice that we propose should continue.
14. In reality, the majority of visitors to our office sites, attend for prearranged appointments (i.e. families and professionals attending for conferences, contractors attending to complete remedial works etc). They are therefore expected by operational practitioners or facilities colleagues, who should be available to greet and deal with them.
15. Working in collaboration with the Investing in Nottinghamshire Project Team and ICT, digital reception technologies are being explored which will negate the need for us to have a physical receptionist on duty in each building in the following locations;
 - Lawn View House, Ashfield
 - Meadow House, Mansfield
 - Sir John Robinson Way, Arnold

- Sherwood Energy Village, Ollerton

16. We will, however, continue to ensure that we have Central Services Business Support staff available until such technology is in place and latterly, 'behind the scenes' to support clients with this transition.

17. It is important to note that the Business Support staff affected by this proposal have been consulted and that we have been able to identify redeployment opportunities for these colleagues within our wider Central Services Teams.

Additional Changes to note

18. Funding has been provided and transferred from the Children, Families and Cultural Services Department to the Business Support Service for the creation of a further Executive Officer post which will provide support directly to the CFCS Corporate Director. This is in line with the executive support arrangements already in place for all other Corporate Directors and the Chief Executive.

In Summary

19. The savings identified by the Business Support Service, have been achieved through a combination of reduced non-staffing budgets, the prudent review of vacancies as they have arisen and an ongoing digitisation project to transform reception support.

20. 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

21. No other options have been considered.

Reasons for Recommendations

22. To update Members regarding the progress of the Business Support Review and particularly, delivery of required efficiency savings.

Statutory and Policy Implications

23. 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

24. There are no data protection or GDPR issues arising from this report as all the information contained is generic and cannot be attributed to individual employees.

Financial Implications

25. As set out within paragraphs 10 and 11, and within the HR implications below, the deletion of 9.06 FTE posts will contribute to delivery of required cashable efficiencies alongside a reduction in our non-staffing budgets.

Human Resources Implications

26. The net impact of the efficiency measures is described in the body of the report above. The post reductions can be achieved through the deletion of vacancies and redeployment of staff to alternative posts within our structure.

27. Work has been re-engineered and new technology has been utilised to ensure that there is no detrimental impact for front-line colleagues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 1) Note the progress of the ongoing review of the Business Support and delivery of associated cashable efficiencies, and
- 2) Agree to the revised Business Support Structure as set out in Appendix A, with the implementation date of 1 April 2022.

Marjorie Toward

**Service Director – Customers, Governance and Employees
Chief Executives Department**

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (KK 09/02/2022)

28. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Personnel Committee.

Finance Comments (SES 11/02/2022)

29. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 25 of the report.

30. As set out within paragraphs 10 and 11, and within the HR implications, the deletion of 9.06 FTE posts will contribute to delivery of required cashable efficiencies of £263,000 alongside a reduction in the non-staffing budgets.

HR Comments (JP 11/02/2022)

31. The recognised trade unions have been invited to comment on the details contained in the report and engaged in discussions around the approach taken. Any staff redeployment identified as part of this report will be in line with HR procedures.

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