



**REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR - CUSTOMERS GOVERNANCE AND
EMPLOYEES**

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING STAFFING STRUCTURE

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval for a revised staffing structure in the communications and marketing function that reflects the outcomes of an external review of the service to ensure that the service is sustainable and able to continue to meet the needs of the Council going forward.

Information

2. Following the elections in May 2021 the new administration set out its clear vision to engage and communicate with Nottinghamshire residents about their priorities. The need to listen to residents and for an ongoing dialogue with local people and local communities were identified as critical components to ensure effective engagement in the setting and delivery of the Council's vision for the future.
3. It was recognised at an early stage that the current staffing structure was not equipped with the necessary resources to meet the short-term needs and emerging longer-term ambitions of the Council as set out in the new Council Plan which was approved at Full Council on 25th November 2021.
4. An external review was therefore commissioned to review the Communications and Marketing service to assess how it could be better equipped and resourced to respond to and deliver the vision and ambitions of the Council as set out in the new Council Plan.
5. An external agency was commissioned to conduct the review which involved consulting a wide range of officers, elected members, and external media agencies. The company who undertook the review is a market leading strategic communications consultancy that was commissioned because of its track record in delivering local government communications.
6. The review recognised that the Council is ambitious for the County and aims to make a real impact at pace. The review highlighted that the Communications Team needs to be at the heart of the Council's planning and delivery of this ambitious vision and programme of work supporting the Council Plan. The report set out the importance of having the right tools, framework, and skills in place to be able to advise, plan and deliver effectively.

7. The review recognised that the current team is enthusiastic and is well-regarded for its skills in protecting the reputation of the Council, delivering annual service activities such as the winter programme and supporting the activity of the Committees. Over the course of the review improvements to the Team were noted, in particular by Committee Chairs but also by several senior officers. The hard-work and resilience of the team throughout the pandemic was also commended.
8. The review also recognised the challenges presented by a new ambitious Council Plan and vision setting out short and long-term priorities which focusses on a renewed emphasis on strong and proactive communication and engagement with residents and local communities.
9. The report concluded with recommendations for changes to the service that would address the feedback received. The main recommendations were centred around key areas:
 - a) Brand identity, vision and narrative
 - b) Communications leadership
 - c) Strategy and planning
 - d) Research and insight
 - e) Campaign and communications plan delivery
 - f) Channels
 - g) Resources, budget and structure.
10. Within these areas were specific recommendations such as the need to:
 - develop a core narrative that reflects agreed priorities aligned to a communications strategy and annual plan.
 - create a small, specialist media team to build capacity and ability to sell in across all media.
 - ensure that the senior management capacity is able to provide sustainable reputational advice.
11. The independent review found that the average number of FTEs in a comparable upper tier council was 22.3 FTEs. As a result of the review, it is recommended that a revised authorised staffing structure is established to provide the foundations on which to develop the communications and marketing strategy to support the Council Plan. A proposed core structure is attached as Appendix 1.
12. The proposal is that the authorised established staffing structure would increase from 17 FTEs to 19 FTEs. The structure comprises a range of marketing, media and digital posts with the focus of some roles changed to provide additional capacity in key areas. The rationale for the changes to the authorised staffing structure is to address the recommendations in the review to build senior management capacity and to create a dedicated media team.
13. The core structure is complemented by additional temporary resources commissioned by departments to meet specific targeted short and medium term demands on services. This will meet the inevitable demand for additional communications support to deliver key projects and ensure the Council has sufficient capacity to work to tight deadlines which are often externally determined.

Other Options Considered

14. The existing staffing structure is currently supported by temporary media officer support through agency provision. This is a costly and unsustainable resource model so formalising the existing resource to support the communications and marketing team is the preferred option.

Reasons for Recommendations

15. A secure and stable core team structure would equip the council with a consistent resource around which it can build a sustainable communications and marketing strategy to support the priorities of the council, complemented by the provision of temporary funded communications resource for specific projects and focussed work activity.

Statutory and Policy Implications

16. 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

17. 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

18. The cost of implementing the proposed structure can be met from within existing budgets by generating savings from within the service.

Human Resources Implications

19. It is proposed that the existing established staffing structure, currently at 17 FTEs, be increased to 19 FTEs incorporating the existing temporary resource currently supporting the team. Confirmation of grades of the new posts within the structure will be confirmed using the agreed job evaluation process. Changes to the structure will be implemented using agreed Council policies and procedures.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Members:

- 1) Approve the new staffing structure of the Communications and Marketing function as set out in Appendix 1.

Marjorie Toward
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Constitutional Comments (KK 24/11/2021)

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

Financial Comments (RWK 06/12/21)

21. The report seeks approval to amend the staffing structure in communications and marketing function to reflect the outcomes of an external review of the service. The new structure proposed increase the number of posts from 17 to 19 FTEs at an estimated additional cost of £26,000 in 2021/22 and £105,000 in a full year. These additional costs will be funded from savings made elsewhere within the service's revenue budget.

HR Comments (JP 06/12/2021)

22. The additional resources identified in the report will be subject to the Authority's Recruitment and 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