

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE ON 15 MARCH 2011

SUBJECT: CUSTOMER SERVICES – STAFFING STRUCTURE UPDATE

BY: CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To advise members of the creation of a central mail team and to seek approval for support staffing for the on-going development and maintenance of the corporate electronic document management system, SharePoint.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section A(II) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to Managing the Finances of the Council Section A(42), the organisation and management processes of the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the committee:

- (a) Note proposals to establish a central mail room by way of transferring existing mail room staff from Revenues to the customer services unit; and**
- (b) Approve the recruitment of two Support staff members in relation to the administration and support of SharePoint as it rolls out across the organisation.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 31st August 2010, the Policy and Resources committee approved the staffing structure for the Customer Services Unit. Paragraph 3.3 of that report stated that “The operational support business case recommended that the central mail room should be managed by the customer services unit. This incorporates the development, implementation and maintenance of a corporate document management and Workflow system and the operational aspects of the mail room. Work is progressing regarding the standardisation of data records for filing and retrieval. This work will be further enhanced with the wider use of document management and workflow systems. The implementation of these systems form a key part of the core project design work for each tranche and overarching management arrangements will be developed as part of this work. Further reports will be provided to Members on this area as and when clear proposals are available.”
- 3.2 This report sets out proposals in relation to the formation of a central mail team and support staffing requirements. It also sets out some adjustments as a consequence of corporate re-structuring.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The two main aspects of change proposed are as follows:

- The establishment of a central mail room
- The recruitment of two customer service support staff.

4.2 The Central Mail Room

4.2.1 A central mail room is being established as part of the DBS core project. The introduction of the electronic document and workflow management system (SharePoint) enables mail for each service to be addressed to a central point, handled by a corporate team who scan and index mail with the electronic copy being workflowed to the appropriate place. This is being introduced on a tranche by tranche basis as part of the DBS core project.

4.2.2 The mail team currently operating within the Revenues section and the current corporate mail room team (also within the Revenues section) will be transferred to the Customer service section.

4.2.3 The main reasons for proceeding in this manner are:

- It is not possible to create a “team” for tranche 2 services where only 1FTE is required. This proposal gives the scale to proceed successfully.
- Staff in the Revenues mail team are experienced in the new ways of working and this would be beneficial in the development of the new central mailroom.
- The Revenues mail team also perform mail duties for the planning service, process cheque payments received in the post for the Council and are responsible for cash/cheque collection administration arrangements for items deposited through the night safe within HQ and so are already working across services within the Council.
- It provides the opportunity to bring the two current mail teams together.

4.2.4 Management of the central mail room team has been assigned to one of the Team leader posts detailed on the current customer service structure. This team leader would also be responsible for Access Point staffing. The other Team leader post is responsible solely for contact centre staffing.

4.2.5 These measures will initially transfer 10 FTE staff to the customer services team, potentially rising to 16 FTE as each service moves onto the electronic document management system.

4.3 Customer Services Support Officers

4.3.1 In September 2010, there were two posts in the new structure and recruitment to both of these posts has been completed. These posts are supporting the development and maintenance of the Lagan CRM system.

4.3.2 The DBS implementation plan identifies “Managed Operational Support” as a key component of the changes that will result in a more efficient organisation.

The implementation plan shows the following operational support functions being managed corporately:

- Procurement
- Mail Scanning/Handling
- General Admin
- HR (Transactional)
- Recruitment, Payroll, Disclosures, Travel and Accommodation
- Workflow and Document Management

4.3.3 The Sharepoint system will be a key tool for improving the efficiency of all of these functions and its development is being led by the Customer Services Manager. From experience to date, it is clear that there will be an ongoing requirement to support and maintain the Sharepoint system and it is therefore proposed to establish 2 posts. The aim is for the four staff (Sharepoint and Lagan support staff) to work closely together to maintain and develop both Lagan and Sharepoint, but with their own particular specialism within this.

4.3.4 These posts play an important role in user group meetings, the production of reporting material for the core service and customer services, training of staff, both within the customer service unit and within services, production of scriptflows, user manuals, workflow documentation, dealing with change requests from services etc.

4.3.5 Initially a large proportion of this resource will assist in the development of the system as part of the DBS core project. Over time the balance of work will move to maintenance and support for all service users.

5. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Single Outcome Agreement/ Service Improvement Plan

These proposals form part of the DBS program.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no policy or legal issues.

(c) Financial implications

The annual recurring cost of introducing two additional Customer Service Support staff is £58,189 including on-costs. This cost is incorporated in the DBS core project detailed cost benefit plan.

Operation Support improvements are anticipated to contribute annual savings of around £580,000 and form a core component of the DBS programme.

There are no other financial costs associated with these changes as staffing is being identified from existing service staff.

(d) Risk Implications

These proposals take the steps towards implementing staffing arrangements for a new service unit. It also provides resources to develop and implement new service areas without which there is a risk that work performed within the DBS team could not proceed.

(e) Staffing Implications

The grade for these posts has already been established at Grade 6. The posts will be recruited from existing staffing resources within the Council.

The recruitment process will be undertaken according to the principles and practices of the DBS Change Management Policy and procedures.

A change management plan has been developed in order to proceed with these proposals.

(f) Property

There are no significant short term issues.

(g) Equalities

The Change Management Policy and procedures will ensure that any equality issues are properly observed.

(h) Consultations

Consultations with trade unions and staff will be developed as part of the change management plan. The DBS programme board have agreed these proposals.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The Customer Services Unit implementation is progressing well and the establishment of the corporate mail handling team is a crucial aspect of the implementation.

6.2 The creation of 2 support posts for the Sharepoint system will assist with the implementation of the changes to Operational Support within each Tranche and will be required for the continued support and maintenance of the Sharepoint system.

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Background Papers:

Ref: EB/LJC/914698