

COMMITTEE: ADMINISTRATION

DATE: 7TH NOVEMBER 2007

SUBJECT: COMMUNICATIONS REVIEW - CREATION OF NEW POSTS

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

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IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	✓	COMMUNITY SAFETY	
EQUALITIES	✓	ENVIRONMENT	
FINANCIAL	✓	CONSULTATIONS	✓
STAFFING	✓	OTHER	

WARDS AFFECTED: NONE

PURPOSE

1. The purposes of this report is to seek the approval of Administration Committee to the creation of new posts arising from the recommendations of the final report of the Communications review team.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. **Administration Committee is recommended to approve the creation of the following new posts;**
 - **Communications Manager**
 - **Senior Press & PR Officer**
 - **1.5 FTE Web Content Editors**
 - **Media Planner/Buyer**
 - **Design Assistant**
 - **Sponsorship & Advertising Support Assistant**

BACKGROUND

3. The Communications review was commissioned by the Chief Executive, under the sponsorship of the Director of Resources, as a “fitness for the purpose review” of the Communications division. This was the first of the reviews under the Council’s value for money evidence-based budgeting programme.
4. The review team reported its preliminary findings and recommendations in June, and these set out a number of proposed changes to the structure of the division, including the deletion of the post of Head of Communications. These were formally consulted on during July, and the final recommendations issued in August. As the final report no longer proposed the deletion of the post of Head of Communications, but rather the transfer of other functions to its area of responsibility, a further period of formal consultation was held. In the meantime, those recommendations that were not subject to further consultation were implemented as far as was possible.

REPORT

5. The recommendations remaining to be implemented concern the structure of the division and the creation of new posts to deliver the revised Communications Strategy approved by executive on 15th October 2007.
6. The proposed structure, in which the new posts are underlined, is attached as Appendix A. Whilst the review team did, in their preliminary recommendations, propose the merger of the Communications division with the Customer Access and Business Transformation, with the consequent loss of a post of Head of Service, we have decided not to pursue that suggestion, as there are a number of factors, of which the review team could not have been aware at the time the proposal was made, for instance, the findings of the Peer Review, and the key role of communications in delivery the Council’s Luton Excellence programme. We, are, therefore, recommending no change to the post of Head of Communications, save to review the content of the job description to reflect the challenges now facing the Council.
7. Below the Head of Service, we accept the review team’s recommendations in their entirety. This involves the deletion from the establishment of the following posts:
 - a. Corporate Marketing Manager
 - b. PR Manager
 - c. Graphic Designer Team Leader (.39 FTE)

d. Graphic Designer (1.5 FTE)

8. These posts have been deleted using the authority delegated by Council at its meeting on February 21st 2007 to Heads of Service to enable them to take action to meet savings approved by the Council for inclusion in its budget. In the absence of the Head of Service, the authority has been exercised jointly by the report authors.
9. Of these posts, all are vacant apart from 1.5 FTE, and of this, 0.5FTE has been deleted with the consent of the employee concerned who wished to go to a part-time contract. The remaining one post is subject to the Council's redundancy and redeployment process.
10. The following posts are proposed to be created:
 - Communications Manager
 - Senior Press & PR Officer
 - 1.5 FTE Web Content Editors
 - Media Planner/Buyer
 - Design Assistant
 - Sponsorship & Advertising Support Assistant
11. The Communications Manager will provide both operational management and practitioner skills to the division, and will be responsible for developing customer relations, and delivering an effective and integrated service both within the division, and through fostering good working relationships with departments.
12. The Senior Press and PR Officer will be a practitioner but with team leader responsibilities for the Press and PR team. It is expected that this post will be ring-fenced to the existing team members.
13. The posts of Web Content Editors will support the Web Content Manager (an existing post) and departments in improving the standards of quality and timeliness of the Council's web-based communications. As these posts will be a corporate resource, the review report recommends that the cost of them should be met by the transfer of funds from departments.
14. The Media Planner/Buyer will assist departments in planning to make the best use of media, and in securing efficient and cost savings in the use of advertising and media. It is expected that the cost of this post will be covered by a sharing between the division and the departments of the resulting savings; initially, therefore, the post should be established on a temporary basis.

15. The Design Assistant post has been established on a temporary basis, and provides an entry-level post in the Design team, and is already proving invaluable in relieving the Council's graphic designers of a range of routine work, enabling them to respond more effectively to customer demands in more complex and challenging commissions.
16. The Sponsorship and Advertising Support Assistant is proposed for re-establishment following the regrading of the previous post to provide a fuller administrative resource to the division as a whole, as it has been invaluable in the past in supporting the Sponsorship and Advertising Officer in exploiting a range of opportunities to bring income into the Council. It is expected that the cost of the post will be covered by additional income; initially, therefore, the post should be established on a temporary basis.

PROPOSAL/OPTION

17. Should Administration Committee decide not to approve the posts set out above, it is unlikely that the Communications division could discharge its duties effectively and to the best benefit to the Council.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

18. This report has no legal implications and this has been agreed with Richard Stevens in Legal Services on 5 October 2007.

STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

19. Any redundancies arising from the deletion of the posts identified above are being dealt with under the Council's Redundancy and Redeployment policy. The net effect of the recommendations of this report is an increase in employee numbers of 1.61 FTE.

EQUALITY, INCLUSION AND COHESION IMPLICATIONS

20. This report has no equality, inclusion and cohesion implications except in so far as it addresses the resources available to the Council to support effective communications in relation to these areas of its responsibility, and this was agreed by the Head of Equalities on 4th October 2007.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

21. It is proposed that two of the new posts are funded through income generation, and the 1.5 FTE posts of Web Content Editors through the transfer of resources from departments, resulting in no net increase of costs to the Council. The remaining new posts (together with other costs resulting from the recommendations of the review, such as the regrading

of existing posts) are met from the deletion of the posts set out at paragraph 5, resulting in a net saving of £16,000 at the top of the grades. These implications were agreed by the Finance and Airport Client Manager (Corporate and Customer Services) on 2nd October 2007.

CONSULTATION IMPLICATIONS

22. The Communications review has been subject to extensive consultation with Members of the Council, Corporate Directors, Heads of Service, employees and Unison. Two periods of formal consultation of not less than 30 days were undertaken in June/July and August/September 2007.
23. A Section 188 notice in respect of the employee subject to the Council's Redundancy and Redeployment Policy was issued on 2nd October 2007, the 30-day period of formal consultation having started with that employee on the previous day. The results of that consultation will be reported orally to the Committee.

APPENDIX

Appendix A – Structure Chart

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D**

There are no Background Papers relating to this report other than documents which disclose exempt information within the meaning of Section 100A of and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.