

COMMITTEE	Corporate Policy and Performance
DATE	21 January 2010
DIRECTOR	Stewart Carruth
TITLE OF REPORT	Support Staff Review
REPORT NUMBER:	CG/10/016

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the current temporary realignment of support staff to the new structure and inform of the approach and timing to be taken with regard to the review and permanent allocation of support staff to the new structure, as part of the overall restructuring that will follow the appointment of the Heads of Service. This approach takes cognisance of the Directorate needs and the implications of new technology and methodologies.

The general term support staff used in this report includes all staff, both full-time and part-time who provide clerical, administrative, secretarial, reception and similar roles in all areas of the Council except schools.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

Members are asked to:

i) note the work that has been undertaken by the OSMs (Operational Support Managers) in realigning the support staff on an interim basis to the new structure; and

ii) instruct Officers, lead by the Chief Administration Officer, to continue to support the work outlined in this report relating to the review of support staff.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications directly arising from this paper. The full financial implications will be detailed in the next report to Committee when the impact of new technology and methodologies will be measured together with the support staff review.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

This project is directly relevant to the following points:

Vibrant, Dynamic & Forward Looking (VDFL). Efficient Council & Fair Funding.

To achieve the vision of being a leading local authority, Aberdeen City Council must constantly both review its operation and activities and secure fair funding. This includes 'Modernise service delivery and ensure there is appropriate investment in staff training, equipment and accommodation'.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There is no direct legal, resource, personnel, property, equipment, sustainability and environmental, health and safety and/or policy implications and risks contained within this report. The next stage of the review will have a number of implications and these will be investigated and fully reported at that point.

6. REPORT

- 6.1 The recent realignment of support staff became effective on 1st September 2009.
- 6.2 It was necessary to undertake this temporary realignment of support staff, in the new structure for two reasons:
 - i. the support staff must be aligned to a Directorate within the new structure and in the case of some support staff the Service they were allocated to no longer exists
 - ii. to ensure the on-going support required in the Directorates by providing support services and continuity of business.
- 6.3 In respect of the substantial alignment of support staff then a research project was undertaken by the Chief Administration Officer in March 2009. The purpose of that research was to conduct an audit of all support staff Council wide (except schools) at post level.
- 6.4 Support staff in schools can be reviewed as a separate distinct group and maximum benefit would be realised if this was after the roll-out of InfoSmart, WorkSmart and the action plans from the Diagnostic Pathway Programme (DPP) to schools.
- 6.5 The research identified the work that the support staff undertakes and the processes involved together with related issues. The information and statistics gathered in the research is crucial to understanding the base line from which the support staff can be allocated to the new service structure.
- 6.6 The research established there are 863 support staff posts which equates to 722 FTEs (Full Time Equivalents). These figures do not include school support staff.
- 6.7 This number of posts accounts for a significant proportion of the total workforce (approximately 10%) and therefore of the annual costs to Aberdeen City Council. As of 11th January 2010 the total figures of staff employed by Aberdeen City Council are 10,997 which equates to 7,439 FTE.

- 6.8 Now that this figure has been established the proportion of staff undertaking support staff work can be benchmarked re proportions and content of work profiles with other local authorities and other organisations generally. This will inform the future level of support staff allocation that is necessary for Aberdeen City Council to have a support staff workforce that is effective, efficient and meets the needs of the external and internal customer using the most suitable systems and processes for each identified role.

Support Staff are categorised into two:

(i) Direct

Direct support staff which are those who report directly to and are line managed by a Head of Service, Service Manager or other officer; and

(ii) Indirect.

Indirect support staff which are those managed by either an OSM or a member of staff who reports to the OSM.

The findings further indicated that 28% of support staff posts are in Indirect Posts and the same percentage figure is true when applied to total support staff expressed as FTE. The management of indirect staff is largely consistent across all Services. The remaining 72% of support staff are managed by a range of line managers which can lead to inconsistencies in work undertaken, skills and the training and development of support staff. This review would address this in a positive way gaining maximum benefit for the teams being supported and realising opportunities for the support staff.

- 6.9 The allocation and skill based training of support staff will require a process to identify business needs and then match needs with skills and experience. The process by which the allocation of support staff to the new Service teams is proposed is outlined in 6.10 below.
- 6.10 A major review of the business needs of the Service teams is required. This can only take place when the teams in each Directorate are known. The Heads of Service (HOS) will be appointed during February/March 2010 and it is expected they will take up post as soon as possible thereafter, however, it is acknowledged there may be a lead in period of up to three months. The HOS will be aligning their teams and services as one of their first key tasks. At this point the review of support staff needs to take place for each service and focus on
- i. what are the impacts of new technology and methodology on the tasks to be carried out, including InfoSmart, WorkSmart, Corporate Management Asset System (CAMAS), Consilium and the planned move to Marischal College
 - ii. what are the requirements of the team by tasks and volume
 - iii. a skills audit of the support staff
 - iv. identification of training needs
 - v. agreement with the teams and Directorate on needs

- vi. agreement with the teams and Directorate on proposals to meet their needs
 - vii. agreement with HR and Committee on allocation of support staff
- 6.11 Only when the above steps are carried out can a detailed plan be provided with recommendations which will reduce the unit costs, increase productivity and improve service delivery.
- 6.12 The roles of support staff will change and this may require using a different skill set as well as using a wider range of skills to facilitate multi-tasking. The change in roles will be a consequence of deploying new technology enabled processes such as InfoSmart and WorkSmart and also the shift in focus to meet the business needs of each of the Service teams.
- 6.13 From this information and analysis the allocation of support staff to teams at appropriate levels, with the right skills, located in the right place can begin. An ongoing programme for support staff will then be put in place including training plans, both at team level and individual level, succession planning, work force planning and together with HR colleagues analysis of recruitment, retention and morale can be evaluated and lessons learnt for the future.
- 6.14 Using this methodology, which is a needs led approach, will ensure the business needs of all teams within the Council are met in the most effective and efficient manner with maximum outputs while simultaneously providing realistic development and career progression opportunities for support staff.
- 6.15 Work is already well underway to measure and analyse the impact of new technology in the Directorates under the auspices of the Joint Work Programme (JWP). This is the work detailed at 6.10 above. The JWT is lead by the Change Manager in each Directorate and also includes the ICT Account Manager allocated to the specific Directorate, Project Leaders and Directorate representatives. A JWP plan is being prepared for each Directorate in full consultation and agreement with the Directorate representatives and details each project involving technological systems. The JWP is at different stages in different Directorates but the implementation plan includes key milestones, timescales, resource implications for the Directorate (both to implement and post implementation) and quantifiable efficiencies.

As the teams become established within each Directorate stage (ii) of the work relating to the Support Staff Review will begin, that is, establishment of the requirements of the team by skills and volume.

Equally, where appropriate, consideration will be given to developing a central support team, e.g. Finance Creditors, where that provides the greatest efficiency in all regards of service provision.

- 6.16 Further research in tandem with the approach outlined above will focus on bench marking with other authorities and organisations to ensure that Aberdeen City Council employs best practice and achieves best value for spend. Some of the work and contacts relating to the DPP (Diagnostic Pathway Program) can be used for bench marking together with other national and local statistics.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Ann Irvine
Chief Administration Officer
Tel (52)3247
airvine@aberdeencity.gov.uk

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None for this report