

## RESOURCES SCRUTINY PANEL

21 April 2016

### REVIEW OF THE ADMIN FUNCTION ACROSS RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

#### Report of the Director for Resources

Strategic Aim:	All	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Mr O Hemsley, Portfolio Holder for Resources (excluding Finance), Culture, Sport & Recreation, Tourism and Housing.	
Contact Officer(s):	Diane Baker, Head of Corporate Governance	01572 720941 dbaker@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors	Not applicable.	

#### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Resources Scrutiny Panel:

1. Notes the detail of the proposals set out in Appendix 1 regarding a review of the Council's administrative resource and functions; and
2. Provides guidance on additional factors they may wish to be considered as part of the overall review process.

#### 1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 For Resources Scrutiny Panel to note the scope of the proposed review of the Council's administrative function and to comment on other factors they may wish to be considered as part of this process.

#### 2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Council currently operates a structure wherein administrative roles are incorporated into various teams within each directorate. The Corporate Support Team is the only exception to this, having undergone a full review in 2013, which resulted in the amalgamation of two teams to form one executive and democratic support function. This merger also generated substantial savings.

#### 3 PROPOSED SCOPE

- 3.1 It is therefore proposed to undertake a wider review of other administrative roles within the Council to generate options to:
- Minimise cost;
  - Improve efficiency;
  - Increase resilience; and
  - Drive forward quality and performance.
- 3.2 The proposed scope of the review is attached as Annex A to this report. In essence, it suggests an initial focus on roles at grade 6 and below with an assessment of job function to establish where a role is wholly dedicated to administrative tasks. The initial assessment will determine what roles should or should not be part of the review, based on the administrative element. A draft definition of what constitutes an administrative duty is attached to Appendix 1.
- 3.3 Once a list of roles has been agreed by Directors as 'in scope' an evaluation of working practices will be undertaken to determine opportunities for:
- Streamlining;
  - Minimising duplication; and
  - Increasing corporate resilience

## **4 COST**

- 4.1 Overall, this review should generate a number of options regarding how the organisation could achieve the objectives set out above. In all options, cost must be the overriding factor as this exercise is intending to find savings without compromising quality and service delivery. The Council currently employs 317 officers at grade 6 and below. As soon as we identify those roles within scope, we will have a better idea of savings that may be generated. During 2014-15, the Council also spent £78,000 on agency administrative staff through Comensura (the Council's agency staff supplier). If the Council creates more robust internal systems and/or expands areas of administrative cover, the agency budget and reliance on Comensura should diminish.

## **5 TIMESCALE**

- 5.1 If Resources Scrutiny Panel endorses the scope of this review, a report will be presented to the Strategic Management Team (SMT) in the early autumn, which sets out findings and draft proposals. Any new model agreed by SMT could be in place by June 2017. Resources Scrutiny Panel will be provided with a progress report towards the end of the review.

## **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 Formal consultation will take place at the appropriate stage in the review.

## **7 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 7.1 The options are to continue with the current arrangements and not make any improvements or cost efficiencies; this alternative does not accord with the Council's overall improvement strategy and desire to realise savings where duplication or inefficiencies occur.

## **8 IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The financial and organisation implications for the Council will become clear as the review progresses and options for a future working model are identified. These will be reported in the next phase of the process.

## **9 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 9.1 The administrative function cuts across all Council services; this proposal seeks to review whether it is organised in the most economic and efficient way to meet current and future pressures. Any contractual issues, in relation to employees, will be addressed at the appropriate stage of the review and Council policies will be adhered to in all cases. The Council must ensure that it complies with Equality Act requirements and relevant legislation throughout the process.

## **10 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 In conclusion, the Council is seeking to identify a more cost efficient and resilient way of delivering its administrative function. In order to start this process, the views of the Resources Scrutiny Panel are sought in order that they may help to shape the scope of the review.

## **11 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 There are no additional background papers to the report.

## **12 APPENDICES**

- 12.1 Appendix 1 – Review of Admin Function across Rutland County Council – 2016

**A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.**

### Review of Admin function across Rutland County Council – 2016

#### Background

The Council currently operates a structure wherein administrative roles are incorporated into various teams within each directorate. The exception to this is the Corporate Support Team, which underwent a full review in 2013. This review resulted in the creation of a central function, which delivers executive and democratic support to members and senior officers. In practice, officers, who are graded at s.4, deliver a hybrid service which comprises of democratic committee support and administrative support to officers at Head of Service and above. It is anticipated that officers within the Corporate Support Team will be included in the review.

#### Objectives and Scope

It is proposed that a review is undertaken of the administrative structure across the Council in order to generate proposals, where feasible, to improve efficiency, minimise cost, increase resilience and drive the quality and performance. The scope of the review includes:

- As an initial start, the roles that might be considered in scope have been defined as roles at grade 6 and below. An assessment will be undertaken to identify those jobs where the role is wholly dedicated to administrative duties. This process will be undertaken by the Director of each service.
- An agreed definition of 'administrative duties' will be used to assess the roles outlined above. (See Appendix A).
- The next stage involves an evaluation of working practices of all those roles within scope to determine opportunities for streamlining, minimising duplication and increasing corporate resilience.
- The final stage will involve options regarding how the organisation should proceed, for example creating a centralised function of administrative staff or retaining the status quo, or something else.

The rationale for undertaking this review is:

- There are currently 317 officers at grade 6 or below whose role may be considered to have some element of 'admin' function. These vary across the organisation and include casual cycle instructors through to auditors. If a large percentage of these posts fall within the scope of this review, it is likely that savings could be made through identification of duplication and more efficient working practices.
- In 2014-15 the Council spent £78,000 on agency admin staff through Comensura. Although this requirement may not cease, demand may diminish if we create a more robust internal system or expand areas of administrative cover.
- The introduction of new processes such as a smarter way of working with Agresso, the transition to Liquidlogic and the intention to channel shift a large percentage of our customers to use digital processes.

- To address inconsistencies in the support provided to different levels of managers across the organisation whilst ensuring that ‘diseconomies’ are not created.
- There is a need to ensure Council services are resilient and resources can be flexed to meet operational demands such as annual billing, elections and inspections.

At this stage it is unclear whether the review will identify the need for any potential redundancies. If this is the case, formal consultation will take place between all relevant parties.

### Approach and Timetable

The approach to the review is as follows:

Date	Action	Lead Officers
April/May 2016	Agree scope with SMT/Consult Resources Scrutiny Panel	Head of Corporate Governance
	Directors to sift and agree posts in scope	Directors
	Brief unions on review	Head of Corporate Governance/Head of HR
	Brief all staff involved in review	Head of Corporate Governance/Head of HR
	Establish project board	Head of Corporate Governance
	Data gathering exercise and external research/comparators to identify good and poor practice.	Head of Corporate Governance/Corporate Support Team Coordinator
September/ October 2016	Production of report, setting out findings of the review and draft proposals and models identified to SMT	Head of Corporate Governance
November 2016 November/December 2016	Finalise proposed model and present to unions and staff	Head of Corporate Governance/Head of HR
	Determine organisational structure changes	Head of Corporate Governance/Head of HR
December/January 2017	Enter period of formal consultation with staff involved in the review	Head of Corporate Governance
Jan/Feb 2017	Include feedback in final report and recommendations	Head of Corporate Governance

Date	Action	Lead Officers
March 2017	Conclude review	Head of Corporate Governance
April – June 2017	Implement proposals	Head of Corporate Governance
March 2018	Review effectiveness of change	Head of Corporate Governance

## **DEFINITION OF ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES**

- managing and screening calls
- use of Word and other software applications, including creating spreadsheets and presentations and general business correspondence
- managing calendars
- making travel, meeting and event arrangements
- preparing reports and financial data, including processing financial data and some handling of cash and payments.
- training other support staff;
- customer relations, including receiving and directing customers and visitors and dealing with frontline enquiries
- computer and Internet research
- project coordination
- support for senior managers
- support for elected members
- Clerical support for Council meetings and meetings
- General filing (including digital filing)
- Tracking internal clerical processes e.g. FOI, Complaints and other workflow systems.
- Scheduling repairs and other inspections
- Sorting, distribution and coordination of mail, including operation of mail equipment.
- Provision of print and reprographic services.