

Delivering a Dynamic Corporate Support Service

**Feedback on comments
received and revised
proposals for
consultation**

Introduction

The proposal document, 'Delivering a Dynamic Corporate Support Service' was issued for consultation to affected staff and to trade unions on 26 October 2015 and responses were invited during the consultation period. Observations were also invited from members of the Leadership team currently in receipt of support from the team, as well as the current Mayor and Sheriff and Group Leaders. A meeting was held with affected staff on 27 October 2015 and trade unions were invited to attend.

One formal response to the consultation was received and this was a joint response from the affected staff. Staff were also asked to complete a Working Hours request to indicate their preferred working arrangements within the proposed structure. The organisation wishes to thank the members of staff for taking the time to provide detailed responses to the proposals. Responses to the feedback from staff are detailed in Appendix 2.

The consultation document was considered at the Trade Union Consultation Meeting and a Special Meeting of the Employee Forum, where the proposals were generally well-received and the trade unions confirmed that they would not be submitting any written comments.

The proposals have been revised in light of the comments received from affected staff.

Revised proposals

1. Reporting arrangements

No changes proposed. It is still proposed that line management responsibility for the team be moved to the Managing Director.

2. Number of posts

No changes proposed. It is still proposed that the total resource be increased from 2.6 FTE to 3 FTE and that the total resource within the team must equate to 3 FTEs across each working day. Part-time and job-share arrangements will be considered.

3. Structure

It is still proposed that a Team Leader post (evaluated as Grade F), managed by the Managing Director, will be created within the required 3 FTE, however, part-time or job-share arrangements will be considered within the following parameters:

Part-time – minimum of 0.6 FTE, to include Thursdays and Fridays (to reflect current workload demands)

Job-share – two individuals each working 19.5 hours to cover the full working week (inclusive of a one hour overlap to allow for a thorough handover to take place)

In the event of a part-time arrangement being agreed, the remaining portion of the FTE will be filled through additional CSO resource to achieve the required 3 FTE across each working day.

The Team Leader will still be required to lead on support for both the Leader of the Council and the Managing Director.

4. Remit

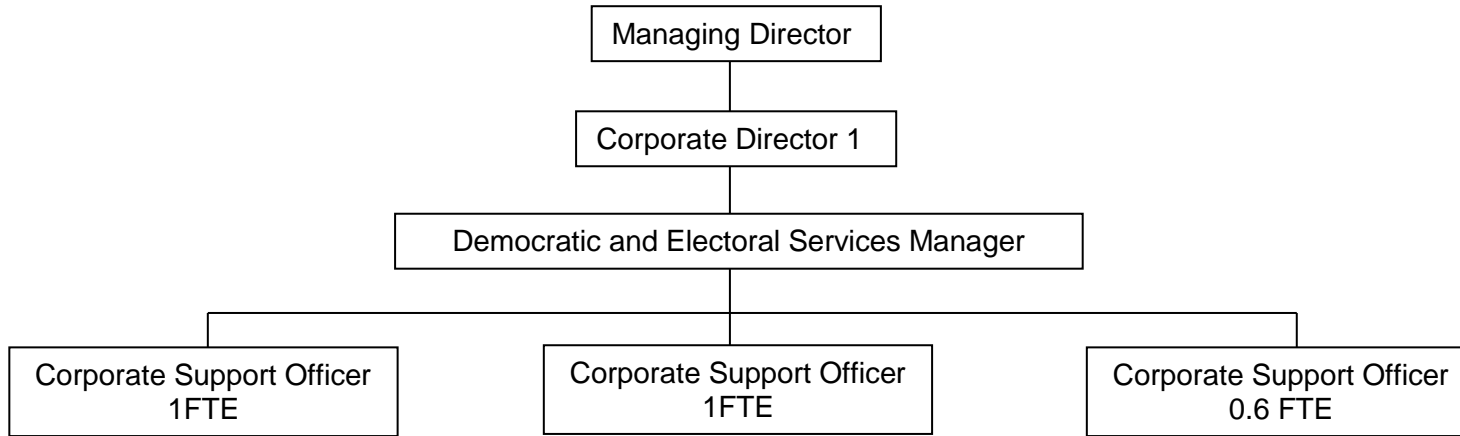
No changes proposed. It is still proposed that support for the civic function will remain within the Democratic and Electoral Services Team.

The next steps

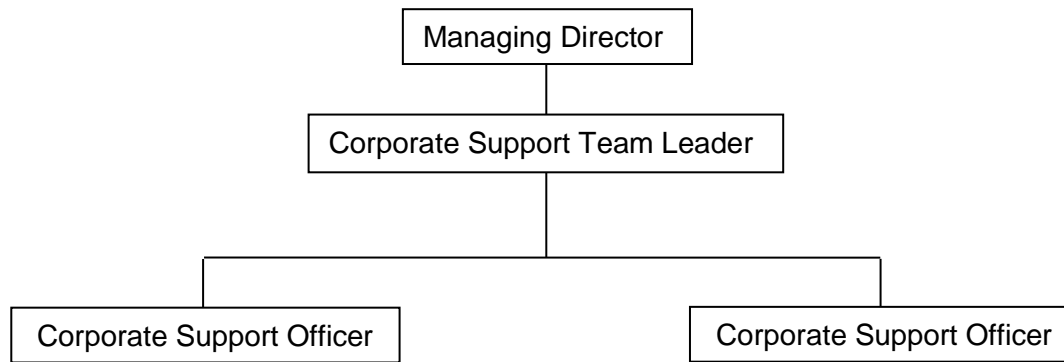
Affected staff are invited to review their Working Hours requests in light of the revised proposals and respond by 24 November 2015. Individual meetings will be arranged with staff to discuss their options. The revised proposals will also be sent to the trade unions.

In light of the further consultation required, the timescale for the review has been extended and it is anticipated that the final proposal will be considered by the Organisational Development Committee on 21 December 2015.

Current Structure for the Corporate Support Team



Proposed Structure for the Corporate Support Team



NB. It is proposed that the total resource will equate to 3 FTEs across each working day, however, part-time/job-share arrangements will be considered for all posts, subject to cover being sufficient from Monday to Friday.

Feedback on comments received

In the table that follows, comments have been grouped accordingly and responses provided.

Comment	Response
<p>Comments relating to the Team Leader role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe that within the organisation the CST is the one team which can easily be carried out on a job-share basis. It has been evidenced that the CSO role can successfully be carried out both part-time and job shared. By stating that the Team Leader role should be considered as a full-time position we feel that it is discriminating against those capable of this role who work part-time hours, therefore reducing their opportunity for career progression. • We disagree that the requirement for a Team Leader should be a full-time position. This role can be successfully carried out on a part-time or job-share basis. There are higher management roles throughout the organisation that are and have been carried out on a part-time basis. For example, the Managing Director runs the whole organisation on part-time hours, the Democratic Services Manager runs the service on compressed hours and is not in the office on a Friday. Until recently the Head of Legal (who ran the whole of the Legal Service for the Organisation) was in the office 3 days a week. • By grouping the Leader and the Managing Director to one position will put more pressure on the remaining two CSO's during times of absence and leave and therefore the level of support during this time will be reduced. Although the Leader and Managing Director are not in the office full-time they still require the same individual 	<p>Management agrees that the Corporate Support Officer roles lend themselves well to part-time and job-share arrangements, as detailed in the consultation document. Management accept that the Team Leader role could be undertaken on either a part-time or job-share basis within certain parameters. Part-time (minimum of 0.6 FTE) would be acceptable as long as the working days included Thursdays and Fridays to reflect the current workload demands, which could be subject to change. Job-share would be acceptable on the basis of two individuals each working two and half days with a two hour overlap to facilitate a thorough handover. As the central requirement within the proposal is for 3 FTE across each working day, any portion of an FTE remaining as a result of the Team Leader being part-time will be filled by additional CSO resource to achieve the required 3 FTE.</p> <p>Management agrees that there are many examples of managers operating flexible working arrangements successfully across the organisation; however the primary concern here is that the level of support is at an adequate level on each working day because the team is relied on for direct support by others. Although management accepts that the Team Leader role can be undertaken through a flexible working arrangement, this does not alter the requirement for 3 FTEs to be present on each working day.</p> <p>Although the Team Leader will be expected to lead on support to the Leader of the Council and the Managing Director, it does not follow that they will be responsible for carrying out all work requests emanating from those individuals. The team is expected to work collaboratively at all times, taking on tasks from any member of the Leadership team as</p>

<p>level of strategic support of a FTE. This is a very busy office which is demanding at times and we feel that this has not been fully recognised. Having individual 1:1's direct with those that the CSO support will benefit all by having closer working relationships, improving stronger support and having greater understanding of the daily workloads and requirements of both the Management and the CSO's.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the Team Leader post is a higher graded role with supervising responsibility, during periods of absence there is some concern with regard to the adequate cover expected from the two remaining CSO's. • Will the Team Leader be recruited before the CSO posts are filled? We have questions around this which we would like to discuss further. 	<p>and when required, with the Team Leader responsible for delegation and oversight as necessary. Therefore, short-term planned and unplanned absence is not expected to impact significantly on continuity of support. Individual reporting arrangements will only serve to reinforce a culture of 121 support and this is not desired; teamwork and collaborative working must be central to the team's approach.</p> <p>This directly contradicts previous requests to allow the Team Leader to be undertaken on a part-time basis. Again, the support element of the team's functions is a shared responsibility and as such continuity of support is expected in the event of planned and unplanned absence.</p> <p>This will depend upon the outcome of further consultation on the revised proposals.</p>
<p>Comments relating to the level of resource</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the resource from 2.6 to 3 FTE will not resolve the problems that occur during times of annual leave and sickness (i.e. having 1/2 people in the office). Also this increase will not provide sufficient strategic support for the current directorate along with additional support required for Cabinet, Councillors and other Managers. With the recent increase in Management, having 4 FTE's will ensure that the required effective and dynamic strategic support is provided to the Leader, MD and Directors across the whole of the working week (as demonstrated in previous years when a similar arrangement was in place). This option will also increase capacity within the team to provide additional support for Cabinet Members, Councillors and SMT. As the organisation has reduced in size over the past year, the current Corporate Support Team have found that there has been a much greater need to provide additional support to Cabinet members, councillors, managers and officers, which we have accommodated, but at times has also had an impact on the level of support provided to the current directorate. 	<p>It is recognised that the current level of resource does not meet the needs of the service; however, by increasing from 2.6 to 3 FTEs (across each working day) and moving support for the civic function away from the Corporate Support Team, the proposed level of resource will be adequate. The workload does not warrant a further additional FTE.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have considered that there may be cost implications involved for the additional FTE but as we have not had sight of the breakdown of costs (as requested by GMB during the meeting) we are unable to make exact calculations. Although we appreciate this will incur additional costs, we feel by increasing the team to 4 FTE's will be beneficial to the organisation as a whole. 	<p>The consultation document indicated that the proposed structure would cost an additional £3,000. The addition of one more FTE at Grade E would result in a further increased cost of £29,149 (salary plus on costs). This additional cost cannot be justified at the present time and, while a higher level of office cover is always desirable, this must be balanced against the workload to achieve the appropriate level of resource.</p>
<p>Comments relating to the reporting arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The consultation document states that <i>“the current line management arrangements are unnecessarily complicated and by having the team report to those they directly support the service will function more effectively”</i>. We fully agree with this comment and by having an additional FTE there will be no requirement for a team leader as each Corporate Support Officer would report directly to those they support. This will enable the Leader/SMT to have a better understanding of the individuals and teams workload through 1:1's and appraisals. Currently we manage our own annual leave, liaising as a team, to ensure there is adequate support in the office before requesting our leave to be approved and this has never caused any problems. 	<p>If each member of the Corporate Support Team were to report to a different individual, there would be no accountable individual to encourage collaborative working or to co-ordinate and oversee the work of the team; achieving this is a priority within the proposal. Additionally, it would not be appropriate for any of the Corporate Support Officers to report to the Leader of the Council.</p> <p>The creation of the Team Leader post also creates an important opportunity for career progression within the team; without this post, the structure of the team remains flat.</p>
<p>Other comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to two members of the CST going on maternity leave, we worked well together as a successful team providing a high level of support and ensuring operational continuity to the Leadership team. Apart from the coordination of cover arrangements as mentioned above, this included sharing of workloads and flexible working during times of low resources. Flexibility - Although the current CSOs will be requesting to work part-time, the team can be flexible, with notice, with their working days to cover the office during periods of high demanding workloads, leave and sickness. 	<p>This is not in question, however, the Senior Management structure has changed and it is considered necessary to review to the structure of the team to reflect those changes.</p> <p>While management are grateful for these comments, such arrangements would not be enforceable, therefore, the appropriate level of permanent cover is the primary consideration and achieving 3 FTEs across each working day is the main priority.</p>