

APPOINTMENTS AND STAFFING COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2019

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR PEOPLE

CUSTOMER SERVICE STAFFING ESTABLISHMENT

EXEMPT INFORMATION

N/A

PURPOSE

To seek approval from Members to make additions to the establishment to support the relocation and enhanced service offer of the Tourist Information Centre and to support the creation and development of an In House Call Handling service for the Repairs and Investment Contract.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee approve:

- 1) the permanent addition of the following posts to the Council's Customer Service staffing establishment:
 - 1 x FTE Senior Customer Service Officer
 - 1 x FTE Customer Service Officer
- 2) Uplift 1 x FTE current Customer Service Officer to create a 1 x FTE Senior Customer Service Officer.

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The council currently has 2 Senior Customer Service officers (CSO's), one primarily covers digital services (webchats, email enquiries and development of channel shift) with the other one covering face to face and telephone operations.

1.2 To enable a smooth transition to the new arrangements for the development and delivery of TIC services, an uplift to 1 x FTE current Customer Service Officer to create a 1 x FTE Senior CSO is required with effect from 1st December 2019.

1.3 To support the set up and development of TBC's In House Repairs Call Centre 1 x FTE Senior CSO and 1 x FTE CSO are required with effect from 1st December 2019.

1.4 Further staffing resources from April 2020 are included in budget policy changes for consideration.

1.5 Subject to member approval the senior posts will be advertised internally in the first instance to our current CSO's as a development opportunity.

2. Tourist Information Centre

2.1 This new post will ensure that the TIC improves and enhances its current service offer, specifically:

- Expanding the service accessibility by extending the current opening hours to support shows and events in the town. Currently opening times are 8.45am to 5.10pm

Monday to Thursday, 8.45am to 5.05pm Friday (Marmion House) and 11am to 2.30pm Saturday (at the Castle). The opening hours at the Assembly rooms will be 10am to 4pm Monday to Saturday (when there is no show) and 10am until approximately 9pm on show days including Sundays.

- Proactively promoting Tamworth, all of its venues, facilities, events and activities
- Providing the interface between the Tamworth Assembly Rooms management and the TIC service ensuring that service level agreements and standards are met.
- Increasing ticket sales
- Streamlining the customer journey and encouraging digital first service delivery (where appropriate)
- Provision of enhanced webchat and email service in the key demand window of 5pm to 7pm
- Development of a knowledge hub to signpost visitors to businesses and services within the town enabling collection of Customer Insight which in turn will support the TCO and further inform DQS for the future.
- Raising the profile of Tamworth and contribution to the local economy by actively signposting visitors to local services and businesses.
- Potential reputational gain via submissions for best practice and service excellence awards in the fields of tourism, customer service and community engagement.

2.2 Consultation is in progress with the current staff supported by the Trade Unions regarding the relocation and change of operating hours for the TIC service, and closes on 20th November 2019.

2.3 The current establishment allocated to TIC staff is 3.04 FTE. This proposal does not increase the overall FTE as the role will be ring fenced to current CSO staff and one CSO role will be uplifted to a Senior CSO.

2.4 Further proposals for an additional 1.5 FTE Customer Service Officer from April 2020 onwards are included in budget policy changes to enable the TIC to support the ambition of the Assembly Rooms.

3.0 Repairs Call Handling Centre

3.1 The repairs call centre will provide specialist call handlers with a detailed knowledge of the repairs function who will engage with customers throughout the repair process and will also capture post completion customer satisfaction data.

3.2 In addition, the new contract provides for continual service improvement and the aim is for the Contractor and Call Centre to work together to expand our service offer to include mutually agreed appointments, satisfaction monitoring at all points of contact in the customer journey.

3.3 This activity will positively impact upon the value for money of the service, reducing aborted calls and no access visits, allowing timely resolution of expressions of dissatisfaction and true 'first time fixes'.

3.4 The service will be developed over the coming years including the opportunity to align the repairs service with digital self-serve options for customers.

3.5 This request is to provide dedicated resources to enable the set-up and initial development of the centre.

3.6 Proposals for a further 3 x FTE CSO (1 post temporary for 2 years) are included in budget policy changes to support the service delivery and development.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Tourist Information Centre

The establishment of 1 x FTE Senior Customer Service Officer (Grade E) for the TIC service equates to £33k per annum at the top of the grade including on costs, less the cost of the current Customer Service Officer post.

As the recruitment for this post is to be ring-fenced to the current CSO team, the additional financial requirement for the 4 months 1st December 2019 to 31st March 2020 is £944, assuming recruitment at the bottom of the grade, which will be met from current Customer Service salary budgets.

4.2 Repairs Call Handling Centre

The establishment of 1 x FTE Senior CSO (Grade E) and 1 x FTE CSO (Grade D) for the repairs call handling service equate to £33k and £27k respectively per annum at the top of the grade and including on costs.

The cost of this proposal for the 4 months 1st December 2019 to 31st March 2020 is £18.2k assuming recruitment at the bottom of the grade, and will be met from the Housing Repairs Options Review reserve which has a current balance of £125k.

Ongoing budgetary funding for the above proposals and further staffing requirements for Customer Services are included within policy changes currently under consideration as part of the 2020/21 MTFS.

5.0 LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

5.1 As with any organisational change there is a risk that staff will become distracted and that uncertainty and change can undermine morale, this is being mitigated by clear and regular communication along with support from Trade unions.

5.2 Support from the Council's appointed Counselling Service will continue to be offered and accessible to all employees during this period of change.

5.3 The proposals take account of equality issues and comply with legislative requirements by utilising the Council's job evaluation scheme; the grades have been established fairly and equitably.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

N/A

6.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

6.1 The TIC has been in its temporary location in Marmion House since 16th September 2016 providing a wide offer including:

- tourist information
- tickets for events
- local venue tickets
- travel tickets
- coach day trips
- private event tickets
- sell items for local authors and artists
- support community group events
- parking permits
- theatre tokens
- Tamworth souvenirs

6.2 From September 2019 the TIC service on a Saturday has been delivered from Tamworth Castle

6.3 Approval to permanently locate the service to the Assembly Rooms was given in August 2019, with the service level requirement being established and agreed in early October.

6.4 The repairs service is currently out to tender for provision of the repairs from 1 April 2020 onwards. The call handling aspect of the service has in the past been delivered by the repairs contractor; however Cabinet resolved that the Call Centre be brought back in-house which in turn would give greater control of the end to end process of delivering repairs and enables the Council to drive service improvement.

6.5 Since 2015 Customer Service staff have worked under generic job descriptions and are multi skilled.

7. Conclusions

7.1 Members are asked to note the new extended breadth of delivery of service for this team who will be positioned to deliver a much improved service with a One Tamworth ethos.

7.2 The proposed position will provide the mechanism and ability to support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan, strategic goals as well as the Customer Experience Business Plan.

7.3 The proposal will provide the foundation to enable the TIC service to thrive and develop over the coming years benefit residents and visitors alike.

7.4 The proposal provides dedicated resources to enable the set-up and initial development of the centre.

REPORT AUTHOR

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

APPENDICES

N/A