

SUBJECT: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES RESTRUCTURE OF GROUNDS, CLEANSING AND WASTE COLLECTIONS

MEETING: INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

DATE: 27th November 2019

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

NON-PUBLICATION

1. PURPOSE:

This report seeks approval for restructuring the grounds, cleansing and waste collections sections within Neighbourhood Services. This restructure will reassign roles and functions to meet the challenges identified through staff engagement sessions.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To approve the restructure and creation of new posts within the Neighbourhood Services sections – as supported by the evidence base Appendix 1.
- 2.2 To delegate powers to the Head of Service to enable the recruitment and appointment process to commence in line with policy.
- 2.3 To approve any costs associated with the implementation of the structure (redundancies, commuted sums etc.) These will fall upon the Enterprise service budgets to fund but should this prove insufficient, then corporate funding will be sought to cover any one off severance costs.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The amalgamation of Highways Maintenance, SWTRA, Waste & Street Services under Neighbourhood Services creates an opportunity to restructure the existing waste and street services department to give a greater focus on grounds, cleansing and waste collections.
- 3.2 Under the current structure there are four distinct areas in W&SS - Operations, Strategy, Commercial and Administration. We are currently working in a legacy structure and as such the opportunity for individuals to progress in line with roles and responsibilities is limited.
- 3.3 Individual engagement sessions in the form of speed CiCos were carried out in March 2019 and the majority of staff cited roles and responsibilities and clear management lines as a contributing factor for inefficiencies and stress in the department. Staff wanted more accountability for duties to increase job satisfaction but felt this would be

difficult under the current structure as the roles were not specific enough to allow that level of ownership.

- 3.4 Succession planning, training and development were also raised as serious issues for future proofing services.
- 3.5 This was in the midst of the recycling review changes and MHA contract negotiations and workload and stress may have impacted on some of the responses. The previous engagement session from 2016 (appendix 1) also highlighted the same issues stating the roles and responsibilities and lack of accountability as the main reasons for low morale. Having gone through 3 restructures in quick succession at that time we felt that a period of stability would be more beneficial. The latest engagement sessions demonstrate that this is not the case and with the higher levels of stress related absenteeism it is clear that something needs to change.
- 3.6 Throughout there was an underlying desire to improve the service and ensure roles and responsibilities are given more clarity that prioritise support for the frontline delivery. We are an operational department and looking at the service from a customer perspective was important to everyone. Stress related absenteeism and low morale was seen as a clear indicator that the current structure is no longer fit for purpose.
- 3.7 There were a range of suggestions but the most favoured was splitting grounds from waste to give clear lines of management and accountabilities.
- 3.8 It was identified that there was a need for more strategic presence and clear priorities for the services. The lack of resources in the department created more pressure and the HoS being immersed in the day to day delivery of the service was generally appreciated but it was clear that this would not benefit the service long term.
- 3.9 Some general themes emerged from within teams -
 - Good team spirit
 - Restructure to reassign roles in grounds and waste
 - Clarity on job spec and accountability linked to responsibility and specific to service area
 - Succession planning and training for existing staff to deliver services
 - Systems and processes need to be reviewed to ensure fit for purpose, everything is urgent/priority so nothing is urgent/priority
 - Clarity on commercial direction and focus on delivery of existing services before seeking additional opportunities
 - Improve communications across the department
 - Health, safety, wellbeing and training needs to be prioritised
- 3.10 The restructure separates the grounds, cleansing and waste collections services to create two distinct services, Grounds and Cleansing and Recycling and Waste and aligning support teams in this way will address the roles and responsibilities issues and give clarity of accountability. (Appendix 2 and 3)

- 3.11 It will ensure all frontline services are supported and equally resourced, the additional management support at the frontline should impact positively on sickness absenteeism.
- 3.12 Reducing reliance on agency staff and filling current vacancies will be a priority. We will limit the use of agency staff to cover short term absences. This reduces flexibility and increases costs in the short term but we recognise the increased stability that permanent members of staff bring to the service and the opportunities this brings for managing absenteeism more effectively.
- 3.13 The operational, commercial, strategic and business support functions sit together in a team that delivers those core function and should address some of the issues raised by these teams. Systems development, customer care, KPIs, complaints, reactive response etc will then sit within those teams.
- 3.14 Clear responsibilities for functions within a defined team will improve the service request and complaints process and allow further expansion of automation of service requests.
- 3.15 A clear commercial focus on delivering our existing internal and external contracts in grounds and waste to the highest standards. Several contracts have been lost in recent years and there is a need to ensure resources are prioritised to maintain current income levels.
- 3.16 Historically, grounds and waste structures have been very flat on the frontline. To support career progression, succession planning and staff retention work as commenced at the frontline to address these issues. Apprenticeship opportunities will be investigated more fully. A training structure that rewards advancement and creates opportunities for staff who want progression will be reviewed. This is a longer term project but the additional investment and structured career progression should also help support reduced agency and absenteeism through increased morale.

4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 4.1 The restructure has been consulted on with staff over the last 3 months and staff input has helped shape the structure contained within this report.
- 4.2 A formal consultation has also been completed and the structure has been agreed.
- 4.3 A full build-up frontline staff and office support has been completed and is included in Appendix 2.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 5.1 The restructure will be evaluated as part of the Service Plan process and measured against a selection of performance indicators including –
 - Reduction in agency staff usage against 2019 baseline

- Reduction in absenteeism against 2019 baseline
- Improvement in staff retention against 2019 baseline

6. REASONS:

- 6.1 The restructure separates the grounds, cleansing and waste collections services to create two distinct services, Grounds and Cleansing and Recycling and Waste and aligns support teams in this way will address the roles and responsibilities issues and give clarity of accountability. It will ensure all frontline services are supported and equally resourced, the additional management support at the frontline should impact positively on sickness absenteeism.
- 6.2 Reducing reliance on agency staff and filling current vacancies will be a priority. We will limit the use of agency staff to cover short term absences. This reduces flexibility but recognises the increased stability that permanent members of staff bring to the service.
- 6.3 The operational, commercial, strategic and business support functions are merged to deliver the relevant service will address some of the issues regarding roles and responsibilities. Systems development, customer care, KPIs, complaints, pro-active reactive response etc will then sit within those teams.
- 6.4 A clear commercial focus on delivering our existing internal and external contracts in grounds and waste to the highest standards. Several contracts have been lost in recent years and income targets remain challenging. There is a need to ensure resources are prioritised and external contracts and non-statutory chargeable services cover direct and indirect costs.
- 6.5 A clear plan and structure to reward continued professional development and recognise leadership and technical qualities on the front line. This will support staff retention, succession planning and increase morale.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 There is work needed to split cleansing budget from the waste budget but this will allow greater transparency moving forward. This work will be carried out post-restructure and the physical split of waste and cleansing teams and resources needed to deliver the functions will be a priority in readiness for the 2020/21 budget.
- 7.2 On the frontline, the grounds maintenance and scheduled cleansing teams will be merged following approval of report and appointment of Supervisors. The EPA team responsible for litter bins, flytipping, ad hoc cleansing etc will remain within waste while the budget and resources issues are resolved, they will then transfer into grounds and cleansing over the next 6 to 12 months.
- 7.3 Any costs associated with the implementation of the structure (redundancies, commuted sums etc.) will fall upon the Enterprise service budgets to fund but should this prove insufficient, then corporate funding will be sought to cover any one off severance costs.

- 7.4 Previous MTFP savings have in part been achieved by reducing provision in cleansing, this has helped manage budgets but does not reduce customer demand or expectation in that area and ultimately does not result in the right outcomes for the MTFP or residents. Understanding the actual costs of service delivery will be more transparent for future service provision decisions.
- 7.5 Commercial activity supports delivery of services and the focus will be on maintaining existing contracts and delivering services for residents. At a time of increased budget pressure it is more important than ever to understand what services actually cost so potential savings can be clearly identified.
- 7.6 The Commercial Manager post is currently vacant and will be deleted from the establishment. The commercial team roles will sit within the wider structure. The current duties of the commercial waste officer role will be covered in the contracts and scheduling officer role and the business admin role. This will allow the role to focus sustainable growth of the trade and garden waste income within the available resources. The internal and external grounds contract and scheduling roles will ensure the transition into the new MHA contract is seamless and external contracts are reviewed to ensure full cost recovery is achieved. These posts will be merged over the next 12 to 18 months and will result in a future MTFP saving opportunity.
- 7.7 The Recycling Performance Officer post will not be filled until the wider decision on future direction of services is completed. Decisions on driving forward recycling performance in line with Welsh Government targets, insourcing the household waste recycling centres and opportunities for income generation through the sale of recyclable material will need additional support. This position is key to MCC achieving its aspirations and is seen as an investment to save going forward.

8. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

- 8.1 This report seeks approval to alter the staff establishment listed within this report. The report does not seek to amend or add to the policies or services that direct the nature of services provided to the public. The report deals solely with staffing matters and as such a Future generations and Equality assessment is not considered appropriate or of relevance in this instance.

9. CONSULTEES:

- 9.1 Informal consultation with staff was carried out during August and September 2019 and helped shape the restructure proposals. A 10 day formal consultation was completed prior to report submission in full consultation with staff and Unions with support from finance and HR.
- 9.2 At this point redundancies are not envisaged through this process. Following the formal consultation process and amendments to the structure individual meetings with staff

that are at risk will be conducted. Where posts are not “slotted in” or “ring fenced” they will be advertised internally and externally.

- 9.3 The department accountant and HR Business Partner have been consulted to ensure the HR and budget accurately reflect current and future needs of the service.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – 2016 staff engagement session

Appendix 2 – current and proposed staff build with costs

Appendix 3 – Staff profiles

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Evaluation Criteria – Cabinet, Individual Cabinet Member Decisions & Council

Title of Report:	Neighbourhood Services restructure of Grounds, Cleansing and Waste Collections
Date decision was made:	
Report Author:	Carl Touhig

What will happen as a result of this decision being approved by Cabinet or Council?

What is the desired outcome of the decision? To approve restructure proposals to facilitate improvements in service delivery
What effect will the decision have on the public/officers? Improved service delivery and reduction in absenteeism and reliance on agency staff

12 month appraisal

What benchmarks and/or criteria will you use to determine whether the decision has been successfully implemented?

Think about what you will use to assess whether the decision has had a positive or negative effect:
If decision is to restructure departments, has there been any effect on the team (e.g increase in sick leave)
Reduction in sickness absenteeism, staff retention and reduction in agency costs

12 month appraisal

What is the estimate cost of implementing this decision or, if the decision is designed to save money, what is the proposed saving that the decision will achieve?

There are no budget implications directly resulting from this restructure. A reduction in use of agency staff will be netted off by increases in permanent staff wages. Any reduction in sickness resulting from improvements in morale and well being will improve service delivery for residents ensuring communities are sustainable and resilient, cleaner, greener, safer.

12 month appraisal

Any other comments

APPENDIX 1

DATA FROM REVIEW IN 2016 GENERIC THEMES AND DATA TO SUPPORT FINDINGS

1. Doing work of others	100%
2. No clarity of role	69%
3. No clarity of others roles	77%
4. Being undermined	62%
5. People in the wrong job, with lack of knowledge	92%
6. We keep reacting/changing	31%
7. Goodwill gone	77%
8. No morale	77%
9. No consequences	38%
10. Policies and procedures not fit for purpose	31%
11. Ground and waste doesn't work	69%
12. Transport Issues	100% of frontline
13. Sickness	85%

- INTERESTING COMMENTS

The nature of our service/department is to help but we are struggling to do our own work, let alone work/questions of others.

There is an expectation and desire to provide a gold plated service where as in reality we are not even nickel.

We are driving chaos

'I want to feel supported by the organisation'

We are reacting and giving priority to waste as immediate but we are not thinking longer term, the impact will be shown in the grounds' contracts, don't understand how schedules are being completed.

Staff are playing the policies

Where has all our training gone?

Morale in on the floor, Christmas will trip us over.

There is no slack in the system, we are cut to the bone and hence just moving problems, solutions around.

I'm so stressed I've started smoking again.

Sent thank you letters out to colleagues for not taking any sick leave but we can't even get that right, people who have had sick had letters thanking them for not taking sick.

Something is going to pop – big time.

Waste and Street Scene as one works on paper in reality we are as we always were with less everything.