

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**3 March 2008**Attendance:

Councillors:

Godfrey (Chairman) (P)

Chapman (P)
Collin (P)
Cooper
Fall
Goodall (P)
Johnston (P)Learney (P)
Nelmes (P)
Read (P)
Weston (P)
Worrall (P)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Cooper and Councillor Allgood (Portfolio Holder for Finance for Resources).

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 14 January 2008 be approved and adopted.

3. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF PARISH HUBS AND CLUSTERS
[\(Report CAB1601 Refers\)](#)

The Committee noted that at its meeting held on 16 January 2008, Cabinet had supported the further development of the concept of 'key hubs' and Local Access Points (LAPs). Members noted that the Personnel Committee was being asked to consider approving the required increase in the staff complement of the Customer Services Division. During discussion of the Report, the Committee referred to Report PER143 that contained the relevant extract of the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet as background information.

The Head of Partnerships and Communication and the Customer Service Manager answered a number of questions on the staffing arrangements for the LAPs. It was explained that the required staff would generally replicate the work of the Customer Service Centre (CSC) Advisors as 'generalists' on many aspects of the Council's work. They would also be able to access the Centre's 'LAGAN' system and therefore continue with other generic work of the CSC as required.

With regard to potential risks associated with lone-working, it was explained that this matter had been discussed with partner organisations (such as the Citizens Advice Bureau) and the location of the LAPs had been planned accordingly. This had also included the scheduling of the offices' opening times and for space sharing with other partner organisations. In addition, relevant risk assessments would be undertaken.

The Head of Organisational Development explained that the Council's Policy on lone-working would also be followed as part of the implementation of the LAPs.

The Head of Organisational Development confirmed that, following the Committee's approval of the staff complement, she would be guided by managers regarding the detailed implementation of the scheme and from when the staff should be established. It was hoped that the LAPs would be operational in May 2008.

Members also noted that the performance of the staff working at the LAPs would be measured by the type and numbers of enquiries that they dealt with. In future, this information would be used to help improve services to the public.

RESOLVED:

That the staff complement of Customer Services Division be increased by 0.6 FTE to provide for additional staffing of LAPs for the next three years.

4. **EXTRACT OF MINUTES OF CABINET HELD 16 JANUARY 2008**
([Report PER143 Refers](#))

RESOLVED:

That the content of the Report be noted.

5. **NEW POST PROPOSAL: ACTIVE LIFESTYLES OFFICER**
([Report PER137 Refers](#))

The Head of Cultural Services explained that the Council's contribution of £15,000 towards the new post had been ring-fenced following the withdrawal of the Council's previous annual grant to the Primary Care Trust (PCT) for the former GP referral post. The Council's funding for this post had been withdrawn as it was not meeting the delivery objectives of the Council. Since its withdrawal, the Council's contribution has continued to be located in the Sports and Recreation Team's revenue budget and used for projects in support of active lifestyles.

The creation of an Active Lifestyles Officer had resulted from discussions with key partnerships and stakeholder agencies, who supported the initiative as best means to achieve health targets in the District. Match funding of £15,000 per annum had been secured from external sources for the next four financial years to cover 50 per cent of the costs.

During discussion, it was explained that the deployment of the £15,000 for the new post would not only deliver healthy lifestyle activity initiatives more effectively, but that the post holder could also seek additional, external funding. The new post holder would build on existing healthy lifestyle initiatives, as well as exploring and driving forward new schemes by working proactively with other agencies. Therefore, the net impact overall would be significant. The new post was to be a full time equivalent.

The Head of Cultural Services reported that she was satisfied that DC Leisure had continued to fulfil their terms of the contract with the Council with regard to the referrals service. This would also remain an element of the renegotiation of the overall management contract for River Park Leisure Centre in due course. She reminded Members that there was an incentive for DC Leisure's continued

involvement, as clients may consider taking on additional fitness programmes after the conclusion of their first stage referrals.

Further to questions, the Chief Executive advised that he was satisfied that there was no requirement for a new business case to be made in support of establishing the new post. This was because the policies of the Council that were intended to be delivered by the post were already in existence. He explained that the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Sport had made an additional policy decision, on the advice of officers, to secure the external funding for its enhanced delivery. Therefore, the only formal decision required was for the establishment of the new post.

The Committee noted the financial risk to the Council, should the external funding for the post be withdrawn after the initial four year period. Should a decision be then made to make the post redundant, there would be further financial risk from potential severance costs payable to the post holder. This figure could not be easily quantified at this time. However, the Head of Cultural Services stated that the PCT had indicated that they were supportive of the post's permanent establishment and would look favourably to means to fund it after the fourth year.

The Committee referred to Appendix 2 to the Report and it was confirmed that the line of reporting of the post to the existing Sports Development Officer was unlikely to impact on that post's grading.

During further debate, the Committee considered whether the post's requirements could potentially be successfully delivered by alternative means such as by an outsourced provider, or by enhanced partnership working. Such measures might remove the risks associated with the post's permanent establishment at the Council. Responding to the discussion, the Head of Cultural Services advised that she had been satisfied that the post's permanent establishment had presented the best opportunity to make best use of the funds available, and that other mechanisms were unlikely to deliver its aims and objectives so effectively, based on experience from elsewhere. She explained that the funding had been secured for the new financial year, so any delay to the post's establishment from 1 April 2008 would require the Council to re-submit its bid, based on an alternative way to deliver its outcomes.

At conclusion of discussion, the Corporate Director (Operations) advised that he had been assured of the outcomes to be achieved from the new post and of the significant benefits to be accrued over time. He reminded Members that external funding streams were very often time limited and that the proposal had been presented to the Committee as soon as practically possible after funding had been secured.

RESOLVED:

That an increase in the Cultural Services Division's staff establishment of one Scale 4 FTE be agreed through the creation of an Active Lifestyles Officer post.

6. **INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY (IM&T) SECURITY AND CONDUCT POLICY**
([Report PER144 Refers](#))

The Committee noted that the Report was also to be considered by the Standards Committee at its meeting on 7 April 2008 and would then be referred to Council on

16 April 2008 for final determination as it formed part of the Council's Constitution (Part 5 (Codes and Protocols)).

During discussion, the Head of IM&T advised that the revised Policy was intended to be as broad and robust as possible, to avoid the need for frequent amendment in the future. She also confirmed that its drafting had been largely based on national guidance, whilst ensuring its relevance at the local level.

The Committee discussed the Policy and the following amendments were made:

- The Head of Organisational Development advised that the wording of paragraphs 18.3, 18.4, 18.5 and 18.6 had been necessary due to instances of alleged accidental access to restricted websites, which had later proved to have been deliberate. It was noted that the immediate reporting of such instances occasionally may not be practical (such as in out-of-hours working) and therefore this could be inadvertently utilised as evidence of mis-practice. It was therefore agreed that paragraph 18.3 be amended as follows, as shown in bold, with this principle additionally applicable to paragraphs 18.4, 18.5 and 18.6 that follow:

‘Accidental access may not result in disciplinary action, but failure to report it **as soon as possible** could do so’.

- Whilst noting that the IM&T Division continually reviewed the Council's filter and fire-wall facilities, it was agreed that Paragraph 18.5 should be reworded appropriately, as it would be unreasonable to expect officers and Members to report every instance of receiving, for example, spam emails requesting money or bank account details.
- The Head of IM&T agreed to add in to the Policy sufficient words to clarify that caution should be applied in responding to officers' and Members' private email addresses on official Council business. For example, such addresses, although stating the individual's name, may not have been set up by that person.
- The Head of IM&T clarified that with regard to paragraph 19, not every officer would be given access to the Government Connect facility and that the wording here had been based on national guidance. The Head of Legal Services undertook to investigate the legal implications of staff undergoing a 'Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BS)' as part of their utilisation of the facility.
- It was confirmed that the IM&T Division regularly monitored use of the internet and, in particular, specific site traffic and numbers of 'hits'. As a result, for example, sites such as 'Facebook' and 'ebay' had been blocked during core-time. It was noted that some disciplinary action had been taken against individual officers within the last 12 months for excessive use of the internet for non-work purposes. However, there was concern that some Managers had not been aware of such instances within their own Teams and that the issue had been allowed to escalate to such an extent before action had been taken.
- At paragraph 13.3, the Head of IM&T agreed to investigate a possible amendment regarding the practicality of not allowing Members to occasionally

use their email for minor party political activities. She explained that to instigate a contributory surcharge for personal use of IT equipment by Members was not practical as this would, for example, require the Council to notify the Inland Revenue.

At the conclusion of discussion, in addition to congratulating the Head of IM&T for drafting such a comprehensive document, the Chairman also invited Members to refer any further matters of clarification, or possible amendments to the Policy, direct to the Head of IM&T in advance of the meeting of the Standards Committee on 7 April 2008.

RECOMMENDED:

1. THAT THE INFORMATION, MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY_(IM&T) POLICY, AS ATTACHED TO THE REPORT, BE APPROVED, SUBJECT TO THE AGREED CHANGES AS SET OUT ABOVE,

2. THAT ANY FURTHER APPROPRIATE AMENDMENTS SUGGESTED BY MEMBERS TO THE HEAD OF IM&T BE REPORTED TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE FOR CONSIDERATION.

**7. HUMAN RESOURCES – PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT – QUARTER 3
([Report PER142 Refers](#))**

The Head of Organisational Development advised that she was mindful that the slight reduction of sickness absence shown during the quarter was part way during winter months, when traditionally it would have been expected to observe a rise in occurrences. She also reported that she was pleased with the momentum gained in driving down figures overall and confirmed that Divisional 'league tables' for sickness absence had been posted on the intranet site. Comparative figures with other Hampshire Local Authorities for sickness absence may be available to be presented to future meetings.

Following the concerns previously expressed by the Committee that officer productivity may be reduced by excessive non-work related use of the internet, the Head of Organisational Development undertook to investigate how officer output could be best monitored and comparison made to excessive internet usage, with this information being reported to the Committee.

Responding to questions on the appendices to the Report, the Head of Organisational Development stated that although the number of staff with disabilities within the organisation continued to be low, a recent external inspection had been satisfied with the Council's implementation of Equal Opportunity policies and processes.

RESOLVED:

That the performance information as set out in the report be noted

8. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

RESOLVED:

1. That in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

2. That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business because it is likely that, if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

<u>Minute Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description of Exempt Information</u>
#	Legal Services Establishment – Land Charges) Information relating to a particular individual. (Para 1 to Schedule 12A refers).)) Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual (Para 2 to Schedule 12A refers))
#	Operations Group Staff Changes) Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority. (Para 4 to Schedule 12A refers))

9. **LEGAL SERVICES ESTABLISHMENT - LAND CHARGES**

(Report PER139 Refers)

The Committee considered the above Report, which set out proposals to temporarily increase the approved establishment of the Legal Services Division (Land Charges Team) (detail in exempt minute).

10. **OPERATIONS GROUP STAFF CHANGES**

(Report PER138 Refers)

The above item had not been notified for inclusion on the agenda within the statutory deadline. The Chairman agreed to accept the item onto the agenda, as a matter requiring urgent consideration, to allow for the implementation of the proposals without delay.

The Committee considered a report that set out proposed changes to the configuration of staff within the Operations Group (detail in exempt minute).

The meeting commenced at 6.45pm and concluded at 9.35pm.

Chairman