

Decision under Delegated Powers

Officer Requesting Decision (if necessary)

Head of Transformation, Strategy and Performance

Officer Making the Decision

Chief Executive

Recommendation

1. That from 1 April 2023, the Communications Team in A200 be updated to include the following posts:

- a) As per JE - Communications Manager (Post No M176) be regraded from P03 to P04
- b) Create 2 x New Post Communications Officer, grade E, 74 hours reporting to the Communications Manager (M176). Francis Daley and Lewis Harbon be transferred into these posts.
The current structure has x2 Communication Officers titled as Communications Officer (Social Media and PR) held by a fixed term employee and Communication Officer (Website and Publications) held by a permanent employee. The updated job profile is seen as a comparable post for both the current Communication Officer (Social Media and PR) and Communication Officer (Website and Publications). The fixed term employee was originally interviewed for the temporary role, therefore under the Fixed Term Guidance the post holder can be "slotted" into the permanent position. Both Communication Officers will need to be moved to the new Communications Officer posts which will require a new post number.
- c) Create 1 x New Post Senior Communications Officer, grade S02, 37hrs reporting to the Communications Manager (M176), Stacey Commery be transferred into this post.
- d) Delete Post M324 Communications Officer Social Media & PR Officer 37hrs
- e) Delete Post M327 Communications Officer Website & Communications 37hrs

This is to reflect the increased workload and maintain the level of resource experienced during the COVID pandemic where posts were funded through Government grant money. Evidence demonstrates the need for the additional resource.

2. That the additional post and re-grades is part funded through the Reinvestment Reserve money £50k as one-off funding in 2023/24. This would require an ongoing service pressure for 2024/25 as part of the budget process. The balance of £11.1k will be met from £10k Town Deal funding each year until

April 2025 and the remaining £1.1K will be taken from the vacant post M172 (Improvement Support Officer) as ongoing.

Reason

1. To ensure a high level of professional service to the organisation.
2. To cover the funding gap

Authority for Decision

Under Section 8 of the current Council Constitution the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) has delegated authority 'to agree changes to the establishment, within budget and without major service or policy implications, affecting no more than five posts (irrespective of their post number) in any single case (item 6 on page 8-4 of the Constitution).

Decision and Date



Robert Mitchell (he, him, his)
Chief Executive

16/03/2023

Background

Pre-pandemic the structure of the Communications Team was made up of the following posts:

- 1 x Communications Manager (PO3)
- 1 x Communications Officer (Social Media and PR) (Grade E)
- 1 x Communications Officer (Website and Publications) (Grade D)

The cost budgeted for this service is £157.8K in 2023-24 (based on top of scale of each grade plus 45% on-costs).

Throughout the pandemic the Communications Team were at the centre of keeping residents informed, maintaining a cohesive workforce and liaising between partners, businesses and elected members.

During this period additional funding was allocated to the Communications Team through the Government Contain Funding recognising the pivotal role they were playing. This included the addition of a Senior Communications Officer post.

Moving through to the recovery phase the Communications Team continued to lead on the communications content to residents and staff. The role being even more important with staff working remotely which is a scenario which will remain.

The Council has now been successful in being awarded a number of Government funding allocations – Town Deal and UKSPF. It is recognised that the Communications Team are instrumental to ensuring residents are informed and updated regarding these two significant and new areas of work. This work being additional and carried out alongside the regular ‘day job’.

Therefore, a request is made to formalise the temporary arrangements and move forward from 1/4/23 with a Communications Team of 4 FTE’s comprising of:

- 1 x Communications Manager
- 1 x Senior Communications Officer
- 2 x Communications Officers

This model also creates resilience around management of the team which was previously absent.

Each of the job profiles have been updated and have been job evaluated and the results are outlined below;

Communications Manager – PO4
Senior Communications Officer – SO2
Communications Officer – Grade E

The cost of the proposed service is £218,900 (based on a 4.74% inflationary increase from 2022-23 costs).

The Communications Manager job profiles has been updated to reflect the increased responsibility and is seen as a comparable job for the current post holder. The Senior Communications Officer job profile has also been updated to reflect the increased duties and responsibilities and is seen as a comparable role.

The current structure has x2 Communication Officers titled as Communications Officer (Social Media and PR) held by a fixed term employee and Communication Officer (Website and Publications) held by a permanent employee. The updated job profile is seen as a comparable post for both the current Communication Officer (Social Media and PR) and Communication Officer (Website and Publications). The fixed term employee was originally interviewed for the temporary role, therefore under the Fixed Term Guidance the post holder can be “slotted” into the permanent position. Both Communication Officers will need to be moved to the new Communications Officer posts which will require a new post number.

The below table outlines the required changes on the structure and iTrent.

Post	Status	Grade	2023-24 Budgeted Cost	New Cost	Additona I Cost
Communications Manager (Mike Roberts) Post M176	No change to job title or post number.	Re-grade from PO3 to PO4	£72,300*	£76,800*	£4,500
NEW Post Senior Communications Officer (Stacey Comery)	No change to post number. To be made a permanent post on the establishment.	Re-grade from SO1 to SO2	£0	£52,700	£52,700
NEW Post Communications Officer x 2	New posts. New post number required.	Grade E		£89,400	£3,900
Communications Officer (Social Media and PR) (Lewis Harbon) Post M324	Delete post from structure and move Lewis to new Communications Officer post.	Grade E	£44,700	£0	£0
Communications Officer (Website and Publications) (Daley Francis) Post M327	Delete post from structure and move Daley to new Communications Officer post.	Grade D	£40,800	£0	£0
TOTAL					£61,100

All costs include a 4.74% uplift from 2022-23 budgeted costs. All costs at the top of the grade calculated at 45% on-costs.

** Includes additional emergency contact payment

Comments from HR

HR Advisor: Anna Cairns (7/3/23)

Summary of Comments from HR: The correct Policies and Procedures have been followed throughout this process. A new post number will need to be issued for the Communication Officer post and x2 posts created on iTrent. Variation eforms will then need to be completed for all x4 affected employees.

HR seen recommendations (both draft and final, if amended): Y

Financial Implications

1. Additional cost has been identified as £61,100 – which includes on-costs. It is proposed that funding in year is from Reinvestment Reserve money £50K as one-off funding in 2023-24. This would require an ongoing service pressure for

2024-25 as part of the budget process. The balance of £11.1K will be met from £10K Town Deal funding each year until April 2025 and the remaining £1.1K will be taken from the vacant post M172 (Improvement Support Officer) as ongoing.

It should be noted that in future years that all additional salary costs will need including in the base budget in future years.

In a budget setting exercise undertaken by the Director of Finance, Governance and Contracts a range of additional costs were agreed – the Communications Team posts were included in this.

As part of the exercise, funding was sought from major projects as it was recognised that the Communications Team were significantly supporting these projects in a number of ways.

It was also recognised that many future projects would also require similar levels of support from the Communications Team.

The table below outlines the funding allocated from Town Deal and UKSPF – within the Town Deal, there is a specific allocation for Communications Team staffing costs.

	Nov 22 – March 23	April 23 – March 24	April 24 – March 25
Town Deal – General	10,000	10,000	10,000
Town Deal – Staffing Costs	10,000	10,000	10,000
UKSPF	8,000	11,000	11,000
TOTAL	28,000	31,000	31,000

It is recognised that future projects would require the support of the Communications Team and therefore the salary costs could continue to be off-set from these identified projects.

Risk Management

No specific risks have been identified with this report.

Key Decision: No

Background Papers: None