

REPORT TO PERSONNEL COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATOR & SUPPORT OFFICER HOURS AND RECRUITMENT



Report Reference P-21-10
Meeting Date 23rd November 2021
Agenda Item 5
Prepared by Town Clerk

1.0 BACKGROUND

The 2019 staffing review saw the creation of two Administration and Support Officer posts, each of 22.5hrs per week; the incumbents started in March 2020. During appraisals, both officers stated that they felt the level of workload within the roles was challenging and that they felt some aspects of the roles dominated others. At the same time, other officers had commented they felt unable to pass administrative tasks to the ASOs as they were aware they were busy.

To assess workload, a time and motion study was completed by both ASOs for a period of six weeks (from late August to the end of September). This process has now been completed and its output detailed in this report.

From November, a change to the contracted hours of the two ASOs was agreed; this involved one ASO dropping to 15hrs with the other increasing to 30hrs. This was based on their mutual desire to increase/decrease hours. In mid-November the ASO on 30hrs gave notice to terminate their employment at Christmas; following this the ASO on 15hrs gave notice to terminate their employment at the end of January.

2.0 TIME AND MOTION STUDY

2.1 METHODOLOGY

The ASOs completed a time and motion study for a period of six weeks. This involved each ASO recording the task(s) they undertook for each fifteen-minute period. The completion rate was 100% with no periods missed.

Each period was then coded by the Town Clerk e.g. to "SUPPORT-SC", "FINANCE" or "CEMETERY". The total number of periods for each category was calculated and divided by four to give the total number of hours for the period. This total was then used to calculate the average number of hours per week needed for each category across the two ASOs.

The Town Clerk then met with the ASOs to review the data and to identify if any of the tasks undertaken were unrepresentative of a normal period (which would overstate the time required) or if there were tasks not undertaken in the period that usually are. Examples of this included the fact that there had been no coffin burials at the cemetery during the period (which require more time to prepare for than cremated remains burials) and that little work had been undertaken updating the council's websites.

2.2 OUTPUT

The observed column is the raw output data from the review; all values are in hours. The planned column is based on the allocation of hours drafted (but not finalised) during the creation of the two roles. The adjusted column indicates the smoothed output of the review which is taken as the required allocation.

Category	Observed	Planned	Adjusted	Commentary
Cemetery Admin	7.6	15.0	10.5	During the period there were no coffin burials nor any visits to the cemetery to meet with families. There were no memorial works inspections nor routine checks. There was little work on the memorial safety inspections which will be seasonal. Generally, a quieter month for cemetery operations. Total remains lower than the original forecast.
Planning Admin	1.1	2.0	1.1	Considered to be a normal period, no adjustment necessary.
Finance Admin	4.6	7.5	5.5	Some minor additional finance tasks to be delegated to administrative staff (e.g. coding invoices and preparing BACs files).
Website/Social	0.9	2.0	2.0	Few website updates undertaken during the period. Time to be allowed for more proactive updating of council and market websites. Some work being undertaken by Town Clerk.
Room Hire	0.3	1.0	1.0	Room bookings low in period, notably increased in October and aspired growth in future (most notable the chapel).
Reception	5.1	5.0	5.0	Considered to be a normal period, minor adjustment to reflect planned.
General	4.6	-	5.0	No allowance had been made for the routine administration involved in the role e.g. sorting post, diary planning, maintaining stationery stocks etc.
Support	7.4	8.0	12.0	Adjusted to provide 3hrs per week to each the TC, TCMO, EO and PFO. This is discussed more below.
Staff	1.6	2.3	2.3	Covers the weekly team meeting and monthly appraisal. Monthly appraisal missed in September.
Training	0.8	0.6	0.6	Minor adjustment to reflect planned allowance.
Events/Sickness	-	1.2	1.2	No events or sickness in period. Allows two days sickness / event work per person per year.
Annual Leave	10.1	4.8	4.8	More annual leave taken in period than the average per week allowance. This is to be expected (as one does not take their weekly allowance each week).
TOTAL	44.24¹	49.40²	51.15	

The output of the review highlights a need for an additional day of ASO time (6.15 hrs)³.

¹ This figure is less than 45hrs due to the removal of 'unusual' tasks from the calculations.

² This figure is higher than 45hrs as it was a preliminary figure used in the review and was not finalised.

³ The table shows the need for an increase from 45 to 51.15 (6.15 hours). Making allowance for the additional average weekly leave resultant from an increase to 6.15 hours the total is updated to 52.05 i.e. 7.05hrs.

2.3 SUPPORT FOR SENIOR OFFICERS

The tasks attributable to supporting different senior officers were individually categorised from within the overall 'SUPPORT' category. This showed that the level of support provided to officers was inconsistent which echoed concerns raised by individual officers.

The weekly support provided (out of 7.4) was as follows:

- Town Clerk – 1.4
- Events Officer – 0.63
- Planning and Facilities Officer - 0.72
- Town Centre and Marketing Officer – 4.27

The data showed that the Town Centre and Marketing Officer received the bulk of the administrative support in the period. This was not considered unordinary, and one output of the review is the need for better apportionment of ASO time to ensure greater balance between officers which is something the Town Clerk will implement with the team. The adjusted support allowance provides for an average 3hrs of ASO time to the four senior officers.

2.4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The ASO roles are graded at SCP 5-7 (FTE £19,312 to 20,092); recognising that a new employee would start at the bottom of the scale and the leaving ASOs would have been at the top, the net additional cost for the 2022/23 financial year would be £5,174 and for the current financial year £1,070.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the total ASO allowance be increased from 45 hours to 52 hours per week. This satisfies the identified minimum requirement from the study.

It is considered that there are significant benefits to having a full time ASO and that one role should be made full time (37 hours). This would leave the second role as 15 hours; if the council wished to add capacity into the system this could be increased. With a full time role, the part time role could be worked in a variety of combinations to suit the successful candidate (e.g the hours could be completed over 2-5 days) as the basic requirement of Monday-Friday administration support would be fulfilled.

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION

Recruitment would commence immediately; recognising the Christmas period it is likely that the full time ASO would commence employment in mid-late January (depending on the speed at which shortlisting and interview can take place). Subject to the confirmed start date, a temporary administrator would be contracted for up to three days per week to minimise impact on the office.

The interview and shortlisting panel would comprise three members of the committee and the Town Clerk.