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Title of meeting: Resources

Subject: Review of Members Services Support

Date of meeting: 12th March 2015

Report by: Louise Wilders, Head of CCDS

Wards affected: None

1. Requested by Councillor Lee Mason

2. Purpose

The purpose of this report is

- (1) to provide the Resources Portfolio Holder and Opposition Spokespersons with an update on the review of support provided to elected members. This was requested following the earlier report presented to the 4 December 2014 Resources Decision Meeting.
- (2) to request that changes to the roles of Members Services Staff be noted and communicated to each Political Group.

3. Review of Support

In September 2014, as previously reported, the Head of Service undertook a consultation exercise with all elected members to review the support they received in undertaking their duties as a Councillor for Portsmouth City Council.

The review covered all aspects of support including IT provision, training and Member Services administrative support.

The results of the consultation were shared with the Members Services Team and with elected members via the 4 December 2014 Resources Portfolio Meeting and an action plan was agreed.

As a result of the feedback on Members Services administrative support, an analyst from the transformation team was assigned to review the work undertaken. The process followed and results (contained in exempt Appendix 1) were shared with the Team.

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The consultation and review both indicate that the work of the team has decreased. Members are becoming increasingly self-sufficient and the level and availability of current technology has assisted with this.

3.1 The Formal Process

As a result of the review it has been proposed that the staffing levels within the service are reduced from 2.6FTE , to 2.0 FTE - a reduction of 0.6FTE. The Members Services Support Team are in formal consultation on this proposal which ends on 22 March 2015. It is anticipated that this reduction in staff will contribute around £17k of savings which have been accepted by Full Council as part of the revenue budget savings for 2015/16.

3.2 Corporate efficiencies

PCC is about to embark on a significant programme of Channel Shift for both customers and staff. It is estimated that by 2017/18 we will achieve circa £500k on-going savings from this programme of work that will move greater numbers of our customers on to more cost-effective methods of conducting business with us and will provide greater choice via self-service.

Staff are already being moved to self-service through HR and Payroll systems , with payslips only being available online and requests for leave also being submitted online. Most training for staff is conducted via e-learning and policies are completed and reviewed online

3.3 Member Services efficiencies

3.3.1 Summary Findings

From the work undertaken by the analyst detailed at Appendix 1 and through subsequent conversations with the officers involved, it is apparent that the needs of individual councillors vary significantly.

The vast majority of councillors (regardless of any Cabinet or Portfolio role) do not call upon support from Members Services to any real degree and most are fairly adept in their use of technology. However, some councillors make significant demands on Members Services resources for example those who do not use any ICT and therefore request that every item of correspondence is printed off for them and then responded to via the officers on their behalf.

3.3.2 New ways of working

One of the main areas where efficiencies could be made would be if all councillors used the PCC Outlook calendars. At present those councillors who do not use Outlook but require their diaries to be managed or checked, create duplicate input and the analyst stated that approximately 50% of the work could be removed if we adopted a more uniform approach.

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With the availability of ICT, the requirement for printed material has significantly decreased and with the exception of Full Council papers and other large and complex documents which are managed either via Democratic Services Team or the relevant service, the need to print from the Members Support Team should be by exception only. Savings that can be made from a reduction in print and copying, both in terms of officer time and cost of paper etc are quite significant.

In order to respond to the review and achieve the accepted savings, it is proposed that from the start of the new Municipal Year 2015:

- Any elected members requiring diary management from the Members Support Team will allow their diaries to be managed via the PCC Outlook calendar system.
- Outside of Cabinet, printing and copying requests will be by exception.

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Signed by (Head of Service)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - EXEMPT - Members Services Consultation Feedback Report

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location