



Parks and Leisure Services

Review of Business Support

August 2010

Project No. 05/010/09/45

Review of Parks & Leisure Business Support

Phase II stage 1

Introduction

As reported to Members in February 2010 this stage of the review is considered Stage I of Phase II in order to address structural and operational anomalies with the staff based centrally graded at Scale 4 to Scale 6.

As part of the Parks and Leisure Departmental Change programme, and specifically the review of business support across the Department, a review of Directorate Support was also undertaken to assess the impact of the ongoing change programme and the appointment of the Head of Parks and Leisure (HOS).

An assessment of the business support requirement within Leisure Centres is also included as part of the review of Business Support. A 3 month pilot will assess the support requirements in leisure regarding receptionist duties, membership management, key performance and management information and the linkages with business support in the centre of the department. It is essential to address the anomalies within the central business support team before the start of the three month Leisure pilot in order to fully realise the potential efficiencies to be achieved.

Current Situation

Directorate Support consists of the Personal Assistant/Secretary (PA) to the Director, a Management Support Assistant (MSA) Sc4 who reports to the PA, a Business Support Assistant (BSA) Sc6 who reports to the Business Manager and a MSA Sc4 who reports to the BSA in parks & cemeteries services.

The remainder of the structure is comprised of:

- HR and Quality Officer (Scale 6) x 1
- Business Assistant (Creditors and Income) (Scale 6) x 1
- Business Assistant (Income) FTC (Scale 6) x 1
- HR Assistant (Scale 6) x 1
- Administration Assistant (Scale 6) x 1
- Finance Assistant (Income) (Scale 4) x 1
- Finance Assistant (Expenditure) (Scale 4) x 1
- HR Assistant (Scale 4) x 1

A copy of the current structure is included in **Appendix 1**

Findings

Profiling exercises were carried out with each of the members of staff to ascertain the exact details of the post; the areas around responsibilities, work allocation and planning; an analysis of the main issues; and suggestions for improvement within the Unit.

Each point which was raised by the post holder was rigorously challenged and evidence was provided to confirm what had been stated.

This permitted the profiling information to be evaluated and cross-analysed with the duties that are expected to be carried out in accordance with the post holder's job description.

Accordingly, the following conclusions were reached about the posts within **Directorate Support**:

PA/Secretary

The duties that the PA/Secretary is carrying out are in accordance with the duties that are detailed in the post holder's job description and no change is therefore required.

MSA Sc4 (reporting to the PA/Secretary)

An analysis of the post holder's duties revealed an element of differentiation between what the post holder is currently doing on a regular basis and what is expected in terms of the current job description. The main issues identified were the following:

- Work is directly allocated to the post holder by the Director, Head of Service, Business Manager and the Policy and Business Development Manager as well as the PA/Secretary;
- The post holder covers for the PA/Secretary at all occasions when they are out of the office;
- A regular aspect of the job involves arranging meetings, answering calls on behalf of the Director/Head of Service, servicing internal meetings where the Director/HOS is present; opening mail, dealing with elected members both in person and on the telephone;
- The post holder collates information relating to the development of monthly committee reports; and
- The post holder is responsible for filing for the Director, HOS and Business Manager in the absence of the PA/Secretary.

Therefore the duties that are consequently being carried out by the MSA are more relevant to those that are expected to be carried out by a Secretarial Assistant Sc6.

It is therefore recommended that the post of MSA Sc4 is re-designated to that of a Secretarial Assistant Sc6.

BSA Sc6

The duties that the BSA Sc6 is carrying out are in accordance with the duties that are detailed in the post holder's job description with some additional staff supervision and work planning. Therefore no change is required.

MSA Sc4 (reporting to the BSA in Parks & Cemeteries)

The duties that the MSA Sc4 is carrying out are in accordance with the duties that are detailed in the post holder's job description and no change is therefore required. However the job description should be amended to reflect the departmental responsibility of the post and therefore the Section heading should be re-titled to "Directorate" and any reference made to reporting to the "Human Resources/Administration Officer" or "Human Resources/Administration Manager" be changed to reporting to the "Business Support Assistant".

The following conclusions were reached about the remainder of the posts within the **centralised business support unit**:

Finance Assistants – Income and Expenditure (Scale 4)

BIS have assessed the role of these posts and would recommend that these duties are similar to the Business Assistants (Scale 6) which had previously been located within Leisure Business Support.

In line with the corporate agenda and the desire to move to more flexible and generic job descriptions, BIS would recommend that a generic job description is developed which will enable greater flexibility between the financial support posts across the new unit. The new generic job description will cover all aspects of the financial support required and will therefore enable staff to be trained in the full range of the Business Assistant role which will provide greater flexibility to the service. A draft job description has been developed and an indicative job evaluation has shown this grade to be Scale 6.

It is therefore recommended that the posts of Finance Assistant (Income) and Finance Assistant (Expenditure) be deleted from the structure.

It is recognised that all substantive post holders must sign and agree the amended job descriptions prior to implementation.

In order to effectively implement the proposals, management must ensure that processes are developed in order to ensure probity and to minimise any potential risk associated with staff dealing with income and expenditure.

Business Assistant (Creditor and Income) Scale 6

BIS would recommend the post of Business Assistant (Creditor and Income) be deleted from the structure and be replaced with the generic post of Business Assistant (Finance) (Scale 6). This new generic job description will better reflect the duties and responsibilities of the post and again is in support of the wider corporate agenda to create more generic and flexible job descriptions. Furthermore, the creation of a generic post of Business Assistant (Finance) will be conducive to the sharing of knowledge and best practice across the two units and should therefore promote a more joined up and integrated approach in the operational working of the section. Additionally, it will facilitate the approach to continuous improvement in the development of common financial procedures and processes within both services.

The affected postholders will be subject to the council's categorisation procedure and it should be noted that all affected postholders should sign and agree the new job descriptions prior to implementation.

Business Assistant (Income) Scale 6 – Fixed Term Contract

This post is currently a Fixed Term Contract. It was created as a FTC following the Interim Restructuring exercise and was created under the

Directors delegated authority. The postholder is currently on secondment and this is being renewed on a month by month basis.

BIS would recommend this post is continued on a month by month fixed term contract basis in order to assist with the additional work from the Pilot exercise being conducted within Leisure Centres regarding business support functions. Once the pilot is completed and the results analysed and evaluated the need for this post to be retained should be reviewed.

HR Assistant (Scale 6) and HR and Quality Officer (Scale 6)

These two posts are derived from the previous Parks structure (HR and Quality Officer) and Leisure structure (HR Assistant). As with the Finance posts it is recommended that both posts should be working on the same job description to ensure consistency across the department. This will allow both members of staff to work across the two services (i.e. Parks and Leisure) and will provide the department with increased flexibility. Furthermore, it will facilitate opportunities for the sharing of knowledge between the two postholders in terms of disseminating best practice across the two services.

BIS would therefore recommend the deletion of the post of HR and Quality Officer and the HR Assistant (Scale 6) and the creation two new generic posts of Business Assistant (HR) Scale 6.

A draft job description has been developed and is currently with management for comment.

A job evaluation has indicated no increase in the grade of the post. All affected postholders will be dealt with under the council's categorisation procedure.

Prior to implementation, all affected postholders should sign and agree the new job descriptions.

Administrative Assistant (Scale 6)

The post of Administrative Assistant has existed in the section from the Client/Contract split. This post provides general administration to the section. It is recommended that this post should be deleted and be replaced with the new generic post of Business Assistant (HR/Admin). This will allow for greater flexibility in the delivery of HR and administrative support across the department.

HR Assistant (Scale 4)

Having reviewed the job description for this post, BIS would recommend that the duties and responsibilities adequately reflect this post. However the job description should be amended to reflect the departmental responsibility of the post.

CWPO/Messenger

The final numbers and remit of the CWPO and Messenger will be determined following the evaluation of the Leisure pilot project which will be presented to

Members in November 2010. It is anticipated that any capacity identified could be utilised to provide more administrative support to the new Parks Managers and the provision of a more effective Business Support service.

Conclusions

The adoption of the recommendations contained within this report will result in one postholder being re-designated from a MSA Sc4 to a Secretarial Assistant Sc6. (It should be noted that the MSA Sc4 reporting to the PA/Secretary has a different job description to that of the MSA Sc4 reporting to the BSA.)

In addition, the job description of the MSA Sc4 reporting to the BSA Sc6 should be amended to better reflect the departmental responsibility and therefore the Section of the Job Description be re-titled to read "Directorate" to ensure consistency with the other posts within the section and any reference made to reporting to the "Human Resources/Administration Officer" or "Human Resources/Administration Manager" be changed to reporting to the "Business Support Assistant". The job description of HR Assistant Sc 4 should be amended to better reflect the departmental responsibility and the updated reporting lines.

Recommendations

In respect of the posts within the centralised business support unit the following recommendations are made:

- Delete the post of Finance Assistant (Income) Scale 4
- Delete the post of Finance Assistant (Expenditure) Scale 4
- Delete the post of Business Assistant (Creditor and Income) Scale 6
- Create three new generic posts of Business Assistant (Finance) Scale 6
- Delete the post of HR and Quality Officer, Scale 6
- Delete the post of HR Assistant, Scale 6
- Delete the post of Administrative Assistant, Scale 6
- Create three generic posts of Business Assistant (HR) Scale 6
- Extend the FTC of the post of Business Assistant (Income) until such times as the Pilot review within Leisure has been completed and review the status of this post at that time.

In addition, the job description of the MSA Sc4 reporting to the BSA Sc6 should be amended to better reflect the departmental responsibility and therefore the Section of the Job Description be re-titled to read "Directorate" to ensure consistency with the other posts within the section and any reference made to reporting to the "Human Resources/Administration Officer" or "Human Resources/Administration Manager" be changed to reporting to the "Business Support Assistant". The job description of HR Assistant Sc 4 should be amended to better reflect the departmental responsibility and the updated reporting lines.

The duties that the BSA Sc6 is carrying out are in accordance with the duties that are detailed in the post holder's job description with some additional staff

supervision and working planning. Therefore no change is required. The duties that the PA/Secretary is carrying out are in accordance with the duties that are detailed in the post holder's job description and no change is therefore required.

Committee should note that all parties have been consulted throughout this process to date and are in agreement with the recommendations contained in the review.

It is acknowledged that the affected postholders will be required to sign and agree an amended job description to take account of the above changes.

Resource Implications

Whilst there is a cost associated with the proposed structure, this will address the anomalies with grades which currently exist across both services and are currently having a detrimental effect on the daily operations of the service. Furthermore, within the recommendations there remains an **opportunity to reduce the headcount by one** with the potential removal of the additional Business Assistant which has been recruited on a fixed term contract

Savings:

Business Assistant Sc6 (4 months savings following the end of the Leisure pilot) £7,902

Costs

3 X Sc4 to Sc 6 grades: £13,746

Total cost: £5844

However although there is a cost associated with Stage I of Phase II it is essential to address the operational issues that are prevalent due to the grading differences between staff previously based in the separate Parks and Leisure Services.

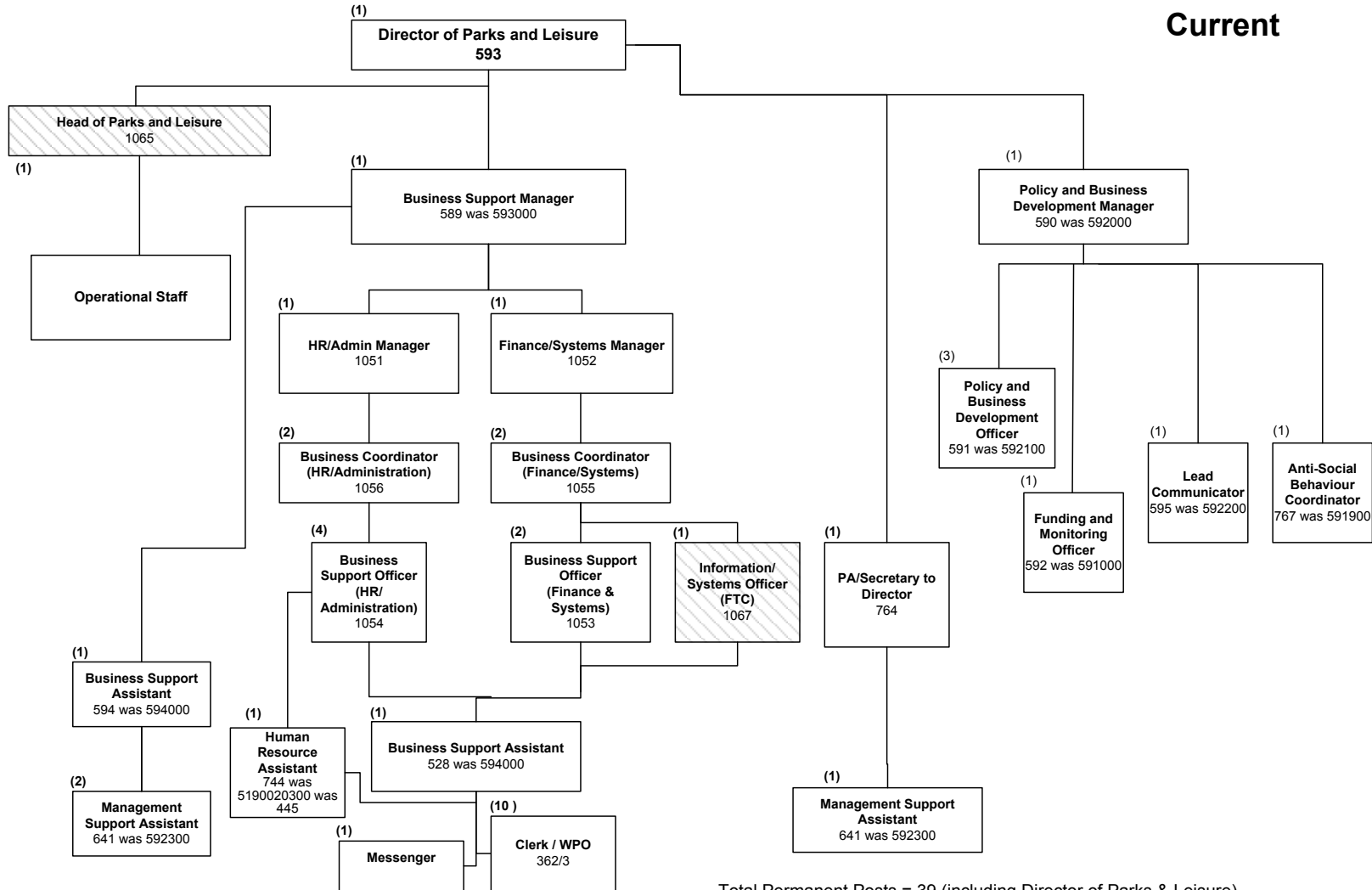
By addressing these issues it is anticipated that savings over and above the cost of Stage I will be achieved following the Leisure pilot and therefore provide Members with overall savings as a result of the Phase II review.

Additionally, the creation of two generic job descriptions i.e. that of the Business Assistant (Finance) and the Business Assistant (HR) has reduced the number of designations within the structure from seven to three.

A copy of the proposed structure is attached at **Appendix 2**.

Appendix 1 - Parks and Leisure Services - Directorate

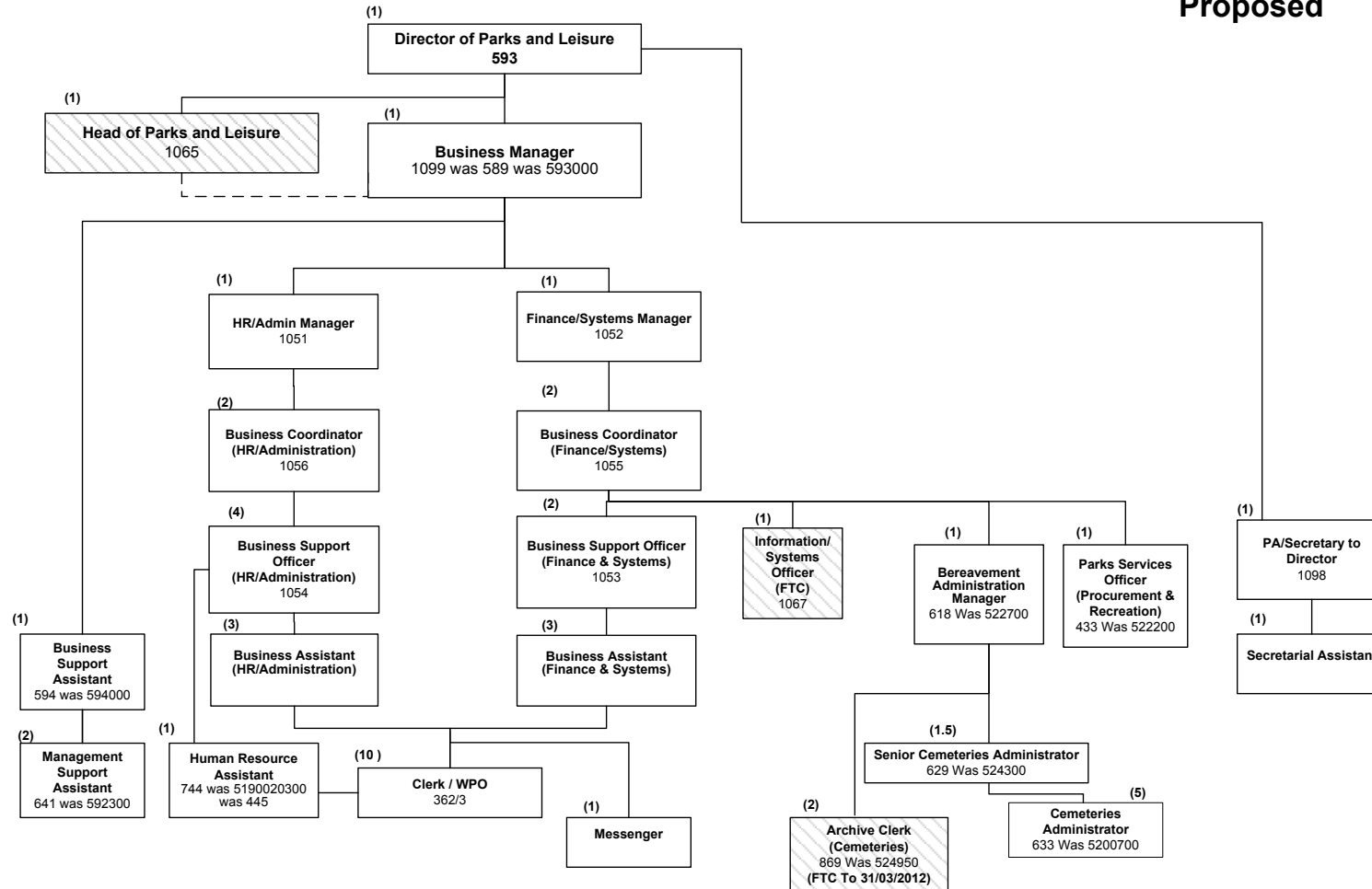
Current



Total Permanent Posts = 39 (including Director of Parks & Leisure)
 Fixed Term Contract = 2 (including Assistant Director of Parks & Leisure)

Appendix 2 - Parks and Leisure Services - Directorate

Proposed



Total Permanent Posts = 45.5 (including Director of Parks and Leisure)
 Fixed Term Contract = 4 (including Head of Parks and Leisure)