

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Review of Lord Mayor's Unit
Date:	21 February 2014
Reporting Officer:	Jill Minne, Assist. Chief Exec & Head of Human Resources
Contact Officer:	Jean Oakes, Principal HR/Organisational Development Advisor
1.0 Purpose	
1.1	The purpose of this report is to set out for Members the proposed interim staffing arrangements following a review of the Lord Mayor's Unit.
2.0 Background	
2.1	A comprehensive review of the Lord Mayor's Unit, was conducted primarily because of the changing nature of the Lord Mayor's role and it's office and the significant number of additional hours being worked by staff in the unit over a long period. The objectives of the review were : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to create a 'fit for purpose' service and staffing structure to ensure delivery of future needs in the changing civic and corporate environment; • to enhance and maintain the high quality service to the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and High Sheriff and to mitigate against risk within the environment; • to address long standing excessive working hours issues within the unit.
2.2	Two previous Lord Mayors and the current Lord Mayor of Belfast and all members of staff in the unit were consulted as part of the review.
2.3	The current organisation structure (see Appendix 1) consists of an establishment of seven full time permanent staff and one temporary member of staff.
3.0 Key Issues	
3.1	Civic Leadership Belfast is changing as a city with increasing recognition being given to the council as a civic leader, this combined with local government reform, the delivery of the Investment Programme and an increase in public expectations has had a significant impact on the Lord Mayor's role and that of the unit. A change in focus over the years has resulted in the Lord Mayor's unit taking a wider approach with its staff building closer working relationships with departments across the council, in particular the Chief Executive's support unit, the City Events and the Economic Development teams.
3.2	Working hours For the past few years staff have been working a significant number of additional hours and have been carrying-over an increased amount of annual leave; there are long standing high levels of flexi leave, overtime and time off in lieu leave and members of staff regularly take work home.

3.3 **Staffing/Roles & Responsibilities**

The roles and responsibilities within the unit have become somewhat blurred and this is primarily due to the dynamic and demanding environment together with a significant increase in workload. This increased work and tight deadlines means the work on projects and events has become more re-active rather than pro-active and planned.

Information gathered as part of the review demonstrated that the service has delivered a significant number of events over the past number of years with the Lord Mayor's Principal Officer in particular spending an increasing amount of time working with civic dignitaries and providing advice on events such as the visit of President Obama and the hosting of the 'Freedom of the City' events dedicated to Dame Mary Peters and Van Morrison.

The review also highlighted that there was some duplication of work and that senior officers were becoming involved in day to day operational issues resulting in less time being dedicated to issues commensurate with their level.

3.4 It is evident that additional support is required for the delivery of operational projects and it is therefore proposed that a new temporary post of Operations Manager (Lord Mayor's) notional salary scale PO5 is established to give additional support and to drive day to day operational work.

3.5 The work within the unit can be divided into two main strands of diary management and events management. Some tasks however have become merged and at times it is difficult to pin point ownership and accountability. It is important to clearly allocate duties and projects with clear accountability. It is therefore proposed to create two distinct strands with the current post of Democratic Services Officer (Lord Mayor's) salary scale PO3 being realigned and retitled to better reflect the key duties and an additional temporary post created i.e. Democratic Services Officer (Diary Management and Events) to support this dual approach (aspects of this role are currently being covered by an existing generic corporate resource on an interim basis) (See Appendix 2)

3.6 During the review it was highlighted by each of the Lord Mayors that while the Lord Mayor's Principal Officer and other designated officers currently attend larger scale civic events to ensure proper protocol is in place it would be useful to have a member of staff to accompany the Lord Mayor at local community based engagements. They also suggested that it would be beneficial to have an officer undertaking more detailed research and providing relevant background information prior to engagements. Evidence presented also highlighted that there were tasks at an operational level that could be improved and developed. It is therefore proposed that a new temporary post of Support Assistant (Lord Mayor's) notional grade salary scale 5 be established. This post would attend engagements as assigned and also provide the wider support as necessary and will also have line management responsibility for the Chauffeur and Parlour staff and ensure co-ordination of their activities in line with the diary and engagement requirements. The non-driving duties carried out by the chauffeurs are a key element in the effective operation of the unit.

3.7 Within the Lord Mayor's parlour service there is currently one member of staff i.e. the Civic Attendant, who due to the increased number of engagements, lunches and receptions has had to work a significant amount of additional hours. Agency staff are employed during periods of absence and this type of cover is not sustainable nor is it in line with council objectives relating to efficiency and the Investment Programme. Further, the use of agency staff is not appropriate in this particular work environment. To assist with the current workload and enable proper cover for the parlour a new post of Civic Attendant (salary scale 3) is proposed.

- 3.8 It is anticipated that a shift pattern will be developed to provide adequate cover for the role and to decrease the number of additional hours worked by staff.
- 3.9 In the context of LGR, potential new governance arrangements and organisational design it is proposed that the new posts are created on a temporary basis until April 2015 with these arrangements being reviewed in-line with corporate organisational redesign. The additional interim posts can be created under the Council's Scheme of Delegation but given the nature of this review it was considered appropriate to seek Members agreement .
- 3.10 There are currently three posts within the unit receiving an on-call payment and this will be reviewed once the recommendations of the review have been fully implemented and evaluated.
- 3.11 If the Lord Mayor's Unit is to meet future needs such as supporting civic dignitaries, delivering events both locally and on a global scale, it is vital that there are adequate and appropriate resources with clear lines of communication, roles, responsibilities and accountabilities but it should also be noted that additional resources alone will not ensure all needs are met. While the creation and the filling of the proposed new temporary posts will assist with the heavy burden of work in the Lord Mayor's Unit, this alone will not address the issues highlighted as a result of this review nor meet the objectives of it. It will therefore be necessary to adopt a far reaching planned approach to improvements that will not only ensure that the new human resources are recruited but that each of the issues identified through the review (such as the need for effective and updated IT systems and processes; improved planning and communication; and establishing a new culture to create a better work/life balance for staff) are addressed. In addition to the proposed additional resources a planned approach to improvements will now be developed and implemented.

4.0 Resource Implications

4.1 Staff Implications

The Human Resource implications will be implemented in accordance with the council's normal policies and procedures. The additional temporary posts can be created under the Council's Scheme of Delegation but given the nature of this review it was considered appropriate to seek Members agreement.

4.2 Financial Implications

These posts will be financed up to April 2015 through the re-alignment of existing budgets and the reduction of overtime payments.

5.0 Equality and Good Relations Implications

None

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Members are asked to agree the following temporary arrangements:

- Create one new temporary post of Operations Manager - notional salary scale PO5.
- Create one new temporary post of Democratic Services Officer (Diary Management & Civic Events) - notional salary scale PO3 (aspects of this role are currently being covered by an existing generic corporate resource on an interim basis).
- Create one new post of Support Assistant (Lord Mayors) - notional salary SC5.
- Create one new temporary post of Parlour/Civic Attendant - notional salary scale SC3.
- HR to work with the Democratic Services Manager to develop an implementation plan to ensure all issues/improvements are addressed.
- Review on-call payments at an appropriate time.

7.0 Documents attached

List all appendices

Appendix 1 – Current Organisation Structure

Appendix 2 – Proposed New Organisation Structure