

FOR PUBLICATION

CREATION OF DIGITAL CONTENT EDITOR POST

R100

MEETING:	1. LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION 2. JOINT CABINET AND EMPLOYMENT AND GENERAL COMMITTEE 3. COUNCIL
DATE:	1. 19 JUNE 2015 2. 30 JUNE 2015 3. 22 JULY 2015
REPORT BY:	COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING MANAGER
WARD:	ALL
COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY:	ALL
KEY DECISION REFERENCE (IF APPLICABLE):	372

FOR PUBLICATION

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval to establish a Digital Content Editor post.

This will help deliver the Council Plan objective of 'improving access to technology that meets the needs of our residents, businesses and visitors'.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That approval is given to establish a post of Digital Content Editor within the Communications and Marketing Service.
- 2.2 That Joint Cabinet and Employment and General Committee recommends to Council that £18,000 is allocated from the 2015/16 budget risk reserve to fund the post in the current financial year and that in future years the post is incorporated into the base budget.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 29 July 2014 Cabinet accepted the recommendations of a cross party scrutiny review report into external communications carried out by the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum.
- 3.2 Two of their recommendations were:
 - a) *That analytics (the discovery and communication of meaningful patterns in data) is used to guide web content and to be able to better predict and improve performance.*
 - b) *That the council consider adopting a 'digital first approach' to all its external communication.*
- 3.3 These recommendations were incorporated within the External Communications Strategy approved by Full Council on 17 December 2014 as objectives to deliver. The strategy also sets targets to improve customer service through online communication channels and enable more people to communicate and carry out transactions through the website.
- 3.4 The council currently has a main website – www.chesterfield.gov.uk – and 11 other websites which it directly runs or is involved in as a partner organisation.
- 3.5 The main website alone attracts 530,000 visitors a year – the equivalent of more than 5.9 times the number of people that Wembley Stadium holds. Together these customers view more than 1.5 million pages.
- 3.6 The website is the only method customers have to contact the council seven days a week, 365 days a year.

3.7 But, unlike other customer service channels, the council does not have a dedicated person to manage the contacts from the public created by this or to develop a strategic approach to the council's use of websites, intranets, social media and other forms of electronic communication, such as e-newsletters.

3.8 As a result:

- A large number of the website pages contain out-of-date or duplicated information
- There are many links to other websites which no longer work
- There are a large number of unnecessary PDFs that make it more difficult to access information
- Much of the information is not presented in a way users would expect to find on a website
- Copy is not written to maximise the chance of it being picked up by search engines (eg Google) which means it appears lower in search engine results, making it harder for the public to find the information they need.
- The council does not currently have a website that is suitable to be read on smart phones or tablet devices.

3.9 Within the Council Plan (2015 to 2019) the council has set itself a first year objective to 'switch to a new website that will provide our customers with improved access to our services, including from mobile devices'. The proposed post will play a key part in delivering that objective.

3.10 And in summer 2015 the council will launch a new intranet which will improve internal communication and deliver social networking type functions that will enable effective collaboration across different council teams.

3.11 As with the website, nobody currently manages the content which has led to so much out-of-date and unorganised information on the site. Having a Digital Content Editor in post will prevent this happening again with the new intranet.

4.0 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Both the website and intranet currently operate through a system of delegated management, where members of staff in teams across the council write, edit and are in charge of updating content.
- 4.2 There are currently no teams with the professional skills to manage websites or intranets, develop and guide strategy and train other staff on how to write website or intranet copy.
- 4.3 It is proposed to supplement the existing governance system by having one dedicated post in charge of both the strategy and day-to-day management of all the council's websites and intranet, as well as oversight of the strategy of all other forms of digital communications.
- 4.4 The post holder would also be responsible for training and managing a small number of editors in different teams to ensure that copy being posted on all websites and the intranet is correct and managed so that it remains up-to-date.
- 4.5 They would ensure that the council puts in place the right strategy to take advantage of opportunities created through search engine optimisation to help market services that generate income. It will also assist with the council's objectives to channel shift more customers to the website to carry out transactions, with the time and financial savings this will bring.
- 4.6 A job description and person specification for the proposed role are attached at appendices 1 and 2 respectively.
- 4.7 The role would enable the council to deliver the:
- recommendations about websites made by the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum
 - objectives of the council's external and internal communications strategies to deliver more services digitally
 - help create the ability to deliver the channel shift and customer service improvements needed for the Great Place, Great Service transformation programme.

5.0 CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Financial

5.2 The first stage of job evaluation for the post has been completed and provisionally assessed the post as scale 9, although this is subject to final determination by a job evaluation panel.

5.3 If the post is assessed at scale 9 it would cost £29,558 (£35,765 with on-costs) at the bottom of the scale through to £30,978 (£37,483 with on-costs) at the top of the scale.

5.4 Assuming an appointment from 1 October 2015 at the bottom of scale 9 the cost for the current financial year will be £18,000. It is proposed to fund this from the Budget Risk Reserve for 2015/16, subject to approval by full council.

6.0 In future financial years it is proposed to incorporate the post into the base budget, subject to approval by full council.

6.1 Human Resources

6.2 If approved, the post would sit within the Communications and Marketing Service.

6.3 However, the post holder would work with employees from across all services, and also closely with staff from the council's ICT partner arvato, which provides the technical support for the website and intranet.

6.0 Risk Management

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Residual impact	Residual risk
Customers find and act on old or inaccurate information on the website resulting in reputational damage or legal action	Medium	Possible	Appoint a digital content editor to audit pages and ensure they remain up-to-date	Low	Unlikely

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Residual impact	Residual risk
Channel shift customer service improvements and financial savings are not met	High	Possible	Analytical data is used to assess areas where channel shift will achieve maximum benefits. Digital content editor advises on strategy needed to deliver the improvements	Low	Unlikely
Necessary technical developments are not made to keep the website and intranet up-to-date	Medium	Likely	Digital content editor will produce strategies and business cases making recommendations to members and senior officers on future technical requirements of the website and intranet	Low	Unlikely

7.0 EQUALITIES ISSUES

- 7.1 This post and the subsequent improvements to the website will have a positive impact for the whole community, including people with protected characteristics. Information will be easier to find and services will become more accessible.
- 7.2 These improvements will also enable a broader range of access channels which may suit people with protected characteristics.

8.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

- 8.1 The council could continue to operate the website and intranet without any strategic or day-to-day management.
- 8.2 While this has the benefit of having no direct financial cost this is not recommended because it does not resolve any of the issues identified in paragraph 3.8.
- 8.3 These issues create indirect customer service costs and result in unnecessary calls or visits to the council because customers cannot find the information they need on the website.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 9.1 That approval is given to establish a post of Digital Content Editor within the Communications and Marketing Service.
- 9.2 That Joint Cabinet and Employment and General Committee recommends to Council that £18,000 is allocated from the 2015/16 budget risk reserve to fund the post in the current financial year and that in future years the post is incorporated into the base budget.

10.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To improve customer service and increase the number of transactions carried out through the council website.
- 10.2 To improve internal communications by developing the intranet.
- 10.3 To help deliver the Council Plan objective of 'improving access to technology that meets the needs of our residents, businesses and visitors'.
- 10.4 To help deliver the first year Council Plan objective to 'switch to a new website that will provide our customers with improved access to our services, including from mobile devices'.

You can get more information about this report from John Fern on (01246) 345245.

Officer recommendation supported.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Burtow". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping underline.

Signed

Cabinet Member

Date 19/06/2015

Consultee Cabinet Member/Support Member comments (if applicable)/declaration of interests