

**NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
REPORT**

To: GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE AND POLICY & RESOURCES (PERSONNEL) SUB-COMMITTEE		Subject: DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION - STRUCTURE REVIEW
From: DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION		
Date: 21 January 2003	Ref: JOH/AH	

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this report is to make recommendations following on a review of the establishment structure within the Department of Administration.

2. Background

2.1 The present structure below the level of Director, involves the department being split functionally into the three divisions of Central Services, Legal Services and Personnel Services.

2.2 In broad terms the Central Services Division covers:-

Administrative Services:- Council headquarters common services such as switch board, Security, Office Systems Centre, Building Maintenance, Communications etc, the Area /Registration Offices (8 offices) the Property Enquiry Service, divisional staffing and budgetary matters, printing and reprographics and I.T support, including I.T support for Elected Members.

Committee Services:- The Council decision making processes covering the Council meetings, Committees and Sub Committees and a number of working groups, Scrutiny Panels and their structures, support to the Children's Panel System, the safeguarders arrangements, the contract standing orders, support to the prison visiting committee, community councils, delegated powers to officers and the publication of agendas, reports and minutes electronically as well as in hard copy in accordance with statutory requirements.

Members Services:- The provision of secretarial support to Elected Members, the Local Government Library, civic arrangements and hospitality, dedicated support for the Council's Principal Office Bearers and provision of a Council Officer service.

2.3 The Legal Services Division has responsibility for the provision of a mainstream legal service to the Council, its committee structure and to departments. This covers:-

Property and Commercial:- Undertaking the legal transactions involved in dealings with the Council's commercial properties whether by purchase, sale, lease etc, the scheme for the sale of council houses, a variety of contract matters for a number of departments including "Partnership" arrangements and a company secretarial support for a number of Council linked companies.

Advice and Litigation:- Provision of legal advice and representation in the civil and criminal courts where the Council requires to be represented and other tribunals or inquiry work such as employment tribunals and enquiries associated with planning appeals. In addition, this section provides a litigation service in relation to reparation claims against the Council.

District Courts and Licensing:- Involving the provision of legal and administrative support to three District Courts, operation of the Licensing Board and responsibility for a variety of other licensing arrangements.

2.4 The Personnel Services Division provides:-

Personnel Policy Support:- In terms of development and review of Council policies associated with its responsibilities as an employer and designed to assist in management and development of the workforce to accord with best practice and to meet the Council's needs and objectives.

Operational Personnel Support:- As well as the Division linking with separate personnel units in the Department of Education, Social Work and Community Services, the Division provides a direct operational support role for the other five Council departments.

Health and Safety:- A central team provides overall support and liaison on health and safety issues including the development and dissemination of standards, liaising with the Health and Safety Executive and production of the central health and safety management systems. A major element is liaison with health and safety staff in departments where such dedicated units exist and an operational role for those without such staff.

Central Training:- Provides a training and staff development role for Council departments including generic, non-vocational training, management development arrangements and the development of training profiles for council employees across the board; and administration of the Skillseekers scheme.

3. Comparative Costs

3.1 Since the re-organisation of 1995/96 a joint staffing watch exercise, administered through the Scottish Executive and CoSLA has monitored and published local authority employee figures on a quarterly basis. These monitoring figures are grouped in a variety of categories of employees and allow employee numbers to be compared in Scottish Councils.

3.2 Categories of particular relevance to the Administration Department show the levels of corporate services and central support staff per 1000 of population.

3.3 The definition of corporate services staff, so far as relevant to the functions of this department, include:-

- Committee Secretariat Staff
- Staff engaged in civic and ceremonial duties
- The caretaking of Council property
- Licensing
- Electoral registration and elections
- Registration of births, deaths and marriages

3.4 The definition of central support services staff, so far as relevant to the functions of this department include:-

- All staff in the central services units providing administrative services and secretarial services and other support services
- Legal Services
- Personnel Services

3.5 Using these definitions, analysis of the figures for Scottish Councils shows the Council among the best performers in terms of the cost of the central or support activities per thousand of population. Particular and continuing comparisons are made both with the Scottish average figures and with the particularly comparable authorities of South Lanarkshire and Fife. In all these analyses the Council has shown these structures to be efficient and cost effective.

4. **Issues Arising**

4.1 In broad terms the structure of the department has proved to be appropriate in terms of the groupings involved in a multi-functional department. Since the structure was created, however a number of issues have arisen which warrant attention.

4.2 These can be broadly summarised as follows:-

- (a) An increase in the frequency of election related work, the variety of systems involved and the level of scrutiny
- (b) Re-appraisal of the role of area office links at Cumbernauld and Coatbridge
- (c) Re-appraisal of the role of the office systems centres in the Civic Centre
- (d) Changes in the Committee Structure. Although there are fewer meetings in the cycle some areas have taken particular attention such as the development of the scrutiny function.
- (e) Support for Elected Members including
 - Training and Development
 - Continuing accredited qualifications and certification
 - Development of requirement for dedicated I.T support
 - Administration and maintenance of home based systems
- (f) The growing requirement to support the representational role of the Council in Courts and tribunals
- (g) The growing significance of achieving the capital receipts required to sustain capital expenditure
- (h) The developing and sensitive role of the health and safety function
- (i) The necessity of developing the investment in the professionalism and expertise of the workforce to meet Council objectives
- (j) The requirement to develop policy and procedures to deal with the continuous legislative change in employment rules and practices

5. Proposals - Central Services

- 5.1 The Department has had responsibility for area office staff providing reception/support facilities at the Bron Way offices in Cumbernauld and the Municipal Buildings in Coatbridge. Liaison arrangements with the main occupying departments have worked well but with the formalisation of these management arrangements allied to the development of the network of First Stop Shops, it is now considered appropriate to review responsibility for these staff in relation to the major building users, Social Work in the case of Cumbernauld and Education in the case of Coatbridge.

Historically, having regard to the free-standing status of those units, the staffing complement was enhanced beyond that of the equivalent unit within the Civic Centre, Motherwell. With the passage of time - and, in particular, with the establishment of First Stop Shops - the imperative for that arrangement has lessened and it is proposed that consideration now be given, in liaison with the appropriate departments, to the transfer of those units with a staffing complement in line with that of the Motherwell unit, to the major occupying department in each location.

- 5.2 There are two office system centres within the Civic Centre providing a word processing and general secretarial support to Civic Centre staff and on occasion to support members. The centre on the ground floor now serves the Legal Services staff and has developed the services and expertise to support that role. It is proposed to transfer this centre from the Central Services to the Legal Services Division. With the development of electronic production of Council records and minutes by committee staff more directly by personal computer, the role of the centre on the third floor has changed to the extent that the staff should now be subsumed within the Committee Services and Administrative Services sections to support their roles along with an enhanced remit for elections work and to support members training and development.
- 5.3 The Committee Services section comprises three separate teams, two Committee Services teams and a core services team. The section could be restructured into two committee teams with a re-allocation of committee responsibilities and Children's Panel and Safeguarders transferring to what is currently the Core Services Team. With the assimilation of the word processing arrangements in part this would also enhance the arrangements for minutes/records production.
- 5.4 It is proposed therefore to replace the current structure of three teams (Committee Teams 1 & 2 and the Core Services Unit) with 2 Committee teams - A and B. The structure would be as follows:-

Committee Services Team A	-	Chief Committee Services Manager	-	PO22
		Committee Services Manager	-	PO12
		Committee Officers (2 posts)	-	PO4
		Admin Officers (5 posts)	-	AP4
		Admin Assistants (3 posts)	-	AP1/2
		Clerical Officer (2 posts)	-	GS2

Committee Services Team B	-	Chief Committee Services Manager	-	PO22
		Committee Services Manager	-	PO12
		Committee Officers (2 posts)	-	PO4
		Admin Officers (4 posts)	-	AP4
		Admin Assistants (2 posts)	-	AP1/2
		Clerical Officer (2 posts)	-	GS2

- 5.5 This structure will recognise the changing nature of the decision making arrangements and, in particular, will provide a better capacity to service meetings of the decision making structures. In addition, it should place the Committee Section in a better position to deal with new and increasing demands involved in electronic forms of gathering, formatting and disseminating core Council information as well as the significant duties which will arise under the Freedom of Information regime.
- 5.6 Certain officers have retained entitlement to allowances on a contractual basis from predecessor authorities and this restructure will provide the opportunity for removal of allowances which are no longer earned.
- 5.7 Within the Members Services section the approved establishment has provision for a Members Services Manager at PO14 and an Assistant Members Services Manager at PO4. The PO14 post has been vacant for some time and the duties have, to a significant extent, been undertaken by the Assistant Member Services Manager with substantial elements of the remit, including Town Twinning and the overall member services development functions, being undertaken elsewhere. There is capacity for the twinning functions to be undertaken in the member services area but support is needed for this and other roles. It is proposed that the structure at section management level be:-
- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| Members Services Manager | - PO8 |
| Assistant Members Services Manager | - PO4 |
- 5.8 One further issue requires attention within this section and that relates to the dedicated secretarial posts to the Council Leader and Depute Leader (secretary's post is AP4) and the Provost and Depute Provost (secretary's post is AP2). The position of both posts have extended beyond traditional secretarial skills to have attributes more akin to posts of personal assistants with a more varied and demanding support role. There should, however, still be a distinction between the grades of these posts. It is proposed that the post of Secretary to the Leader/Depute Leader be regraded to PO1 (and retitled Secretary/PA) and that of the Secretary to the Provost/Depute Provost to AP3.
- 5.9 Throughout the life of the Council there has been a recognised grading structure for secretaries to leading members (Provost/Depute Provost and Leader/Depute Leader) and Chief Officers. With this and other changes proposed in another restructure proposal it is recommended that a separate grading exercise should be undertaken for other secretaries posts (presently AP3 for Directors and AP1 for Heads of Service) in order to establish whether subsequent specific reviews are warranted.
- 5.10 Within the administrative services section the senior posts in particular have evolved in recent years. The section has considerable responsibility for further distinct areas which are (a) Members training and development initiatives including the roll out of the home based P.C. network and (b) performance and quality issues across the department. In addition it is proposed to centralise a number of staffing related administrative systems for the department as a whole within this section, to provide a departmental wide support role and with a lesser reliance on requiring the Legal Services and Personnel Services support functions. It is proposed to formalise these remits and adjust grades accordingly by deleting the existing post of Chief Administrative Services Officer and Administrative Services Officer at PO18 and PO11 and replace them with posts of Chief Administrative Services Manager and Administrative Services Manager at PO22 and PO14.

6. Proposals - Legal Services

- 6.1 Within Legal Services no structure changes are proposed at third tier level at this stage. However discussion has taken place with one of the Chief Solicitors who has requested that consideration be given to a retiral in the interests of the efficiency of the service. It is felt that having regard to the circumstances and the history of the post holder, including current health condition and impact on operational service delivery this can be accommodated and it is intended that a recommendation be made to the Early Retirement Sub Committee accordingly. The one off costs can be accommodated within departmental underspends in 2002/03.
- 6.2 There are three sections within Legal Services Division. Within the Advice and Litigation section there are three posts at Principal Officer level. There is a necessity to re-arrange the job content for these posts to provide for a formal responsibility to allocate, supervise and monitor the work of the litigation legal staff. Against that background two of the three staff have been approached based on age criteria, and both have asked that consideration be given to early release from the Council's service. Having regard to a number of criteria including length of service, willingness to undertake the rearranged role and the cost of early release, it is recommended that the older of the two officers who also has the shortest period of continuous service, be permitted early retirement, subject to the approval of the Early Retirement Sub Committee. The one off costs can be accommodated within departmental underspends for 2002/03.
- 6.3 Two further issues require management attention. In particular the first is to recognise the increasing pressure on the Council in terms of litigation and representational arrangements and it is proposed to use the opportunity of future vacancies elsewhere in the Division as and when suitable opportunity arises, to enhance the litigation role and resource within the Division. The intention however is to seek to do this within currently existing resources.
- 6.4 The second issue is to seek to build on the work which has been achieved in terms of assimilating systems of previous authorities dealing with land and property matters, with particular reference to the statutory council house sales scheme, to examine ways in which the use of paralegal staff can, in appropriate circumstances, be developed. This would provide an ability for legal expertise to be used where it is best needed while at the same time releasing valuable legal resources from some aspects of the property work which can be undertaken through partly qualified staff. It is proposed therefore to examine the feasibility of extending the use of paralegal staff in certain areas of the Division's work and this will be taken forward as a separate exercise.

7. Proposals - Personnel Services

- 7.1 There has been a structural deficiency in the structure of the Personnel Services Division at senior level and that relates to the structure below Head of Service level where there is only one post of Chief Personnel Officer at third tier. As well as distorting normal reporting arrangements, there is a significant amount of high profile work within the Personnel Division which requires to be taken forward at a senior level. Examples include direct advice to Committees, scrutiny of proposals with personnel implications and representation at a number of groups to represent the Department and/or the service to progress strategic organisation development issues. The current structure does not allow for that and it is proposed to replace the single post of Chief Personnel Officer at PO24 with two Chief Personnel Officers posts at PO22. It is proposed to partly fund this by deletion of an existing PO12 post which is currently vacant.

7.2 Only one further adjustment to the Personnel establishment is proposed and that is in relation to one of the two Administrative Assistant posts (AP2) within the Personnel Administration team. The responsibilities have changed with a necessity for detailed computer skills, particularly when the post involves the supervision and oversight of administrative staff who require such skills. The post, with suitable skills, is required for delivery of the service and one of the AP2 posts has agreed a voluntary redundancy on the basis that despite considerable past attempts, it has not been possible for the individual to acquire the necessary skills and aptitudes. The one off costs can be accommodated within departmental underspends in 2002/03.

8. **Appendices**

8.1 The Appendices contain a summary of the proposals and the financial effects. Where new posts are involved the costs of these are generally calculated at a mid-point on the salary scale. Where a four-point scale is involved the third point has been identified for cost purposes. An addition of 10 per cent has also been made for employers' overheads. The overall restructure involves a financial saving to the Department of over £36,000.

9. **Implementation Arrangements**

9.1 In line with established Council practice, appointments to posts in the new structure where structural changes are involved will be by direct matching, restricted selection or advertising of posts as appropriate.

9.2 Efforts will be made to accommodate present employees within the new structure with the terms of the Council's redeployment policy applying as appropriate.

9.3 As the Council is aware, the Council is currently engaged in a job evaluation exercise using the nationally approved Job Evaluation System. All the posts included in this review will be subject to this process and the ultimate grading of the posts will be determined by the job evaluation exercise.

10. **Recommendations**

10.1 That the Committee agree the structural alterations contained within this report and recommend accordingly, where necessary, to the Early Retirement Sub Committee.


Director of Administration
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SUMMARY OF STRUCTURE PROPOSALS - CENTRAL SERVICES DIVISION**Posts Deleted**

Chief Committee Services Officer:	PO18 - 2 posts	£85,100
Chief Administrative Services Officer:	PO18 - 1 post	£42,550
Core Services Officer:	PO14 - 1 post	£39,745
Members Services Manager:	PO14 - 1 post	£39,745
Committee Services Officer:	PO11 - 2 posts	£74,202
Administrative Services Officer:	PO11 - 1 post	£37,101
Principal Administrative Officer:	AP5/PO2 - 2 posts	£56,158
Word Processor Supervisor:	AP2 - 1 post	£17,605
Assistant Word Processor Supervisor:	AP1 - 1 post	£16,292
Word Processor Operator:	GS2 - 5 posts	£72,105

Total posts deleted: 17		£480,603

Posts Created

Chief Committee Services Manager:	PO22 - 2 posts	£95,652
Chief Administrative Services Manager:	PO22 - 1 post	£47,826
Members Services Manager:	PO8 - 1 post	£34,689
Administrative Services Manager:	PO14 - 1 post	£39,745
Committee Services Manager:	PO12 - 2 posts	£76,018
Committee Officer:	PO4 - 3 posts	£94,305
Clerical Officer -	GS2 - 3 posts	£43,263

Total posts created: 13		£431,498

Net Saving: 4 posts £49,105

Regradings

Regradings/Redesignation of secretaries to Council Leader/Depute Leader and Provost/Depute Provost £6,261

Net Saving

£42,844
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SUMMARY OF STRUCTURE PROPOSALS - LEGAL SERVICES

Allow early retiral of one Chief Solicitor and One Principal Solicitor - both posts to be replaced (with adjusted duties where appropriate).

Note 1

One off costs of early retiral of one Chief Solicitor and one Principal Solicitor to be reported to Early Retirement Sub for consideration.

Note 2

Some savings will accrue from one current postholder being entitled to detriment payment following re-organisation.

SUMMARY OF STRUCTURE PROPOSALS - PERSONNEL SERVICES

(1)	Delete posts of Chief Personnel Officer and 1 vacant Principal Personnel Officer post at PO24 and PO12:	Saving	£77,014
	Replace with 2 Chief Personnel Officer posts at PO22:	Cost anticipated	£83,614

		Net requirement	£6,600
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(2)	Early retiral of Administrative Assistant at AP2 and provide for replacement:		

Note 1

One off costs of early retiral of one Administrative Assistant at AP2 to be reported to Early Retirement Sub for consideration.

Note 2

Some savings will accrue from one current postholder entitled to detriment payment following re-organisation.