

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET – 4 OCTOBER 2016
REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC/CORPORATE DIRECTOR

RECEPTION MERGER

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The merger of reception services will form part of the shared working arrangements across the council and the Trust. The shared working arrangements will help ensure a consistent approach to service delivery across both organisations and importantly, generate efficiencies.
- 1.2 The new reception arrangements will involve both council and Trust customers being served from one reception desk. The desk currently occupied by the Trust reception staff will be removed and recycled as part of the White Lion House refurbishment project, with two new customer interview/meeting rooms being constructed in its place.
- 1.3 The proposal for the delivery of the merged reception going forward is that the Sopra Steria contract is changed to include services to Trust, as well as council customers.
- 1.4 Currently the Trust employs two temporary reception staff. The Trust reception was previously serviced by permanent staff but after they moved into new job roles temporary staff were recruited, given the move towards the shared reception service.
- 1.5 Traditionally the Trust's receptionists have delivered some housing management functions, dealing with simple transactions at the point of enquiry. The Sopra Steria reception staff provide a 'meet and greet' service for council customers, referring visitors to relevant council services. The new reception arrangements will extend the 'meet and greet' service to Trust tenants.
- 1.6 In order to ensure that the nature and volume of enquiries generated by Trust customers are reflected in the new arrangements going forward, the Trust has been engaged in an exercise to map and understand the transactions that the Trust reception undertakes and, critically, measure the volume of activity. The data gathered has supported the approach to Sopra Steria that has, in turn, enabled the appended CCN/quote to be proposed.
- 1.7 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the procurement of the additional services from Sopra Steria and to offer assurance that the process is on track and that a saving can be delivered.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Cabinet agrees the proposal to commission Sopra Steria to provide a joint reception service and notes the proposed new arrangements.

3 Explanation

- 3.1 Proposal: The appended CCN from Sopra Steria may be summarised as follows:
 - 3.1.1 In extending the 'meet-and-greet' service the Trust's main two service areas (Housing Needs and Housing Management) will use a 'Duty Officer' structure.
 - 3.1.2 The Qmatic customer management system used in reception will include Trust queues and services within the existing council set-up. Reception staff will take details from the customer and transfer tickets to the Trust queue where they will be picked up by a Duty Officer.
 - 3.1.3 The council reception desk has capacity for 3 receptionists and all of the IT equipment required – including storage and telephony.
 - 3.1.4 The current SLA target will remain – 97.5% of visitors greeted at reception by CSA within 3 minutes.
 - 3.1.5 The current contractual requirement of two Customer Service Advisors being in reception at all times will remain.
 - 3.1.6 A three month probationary period will allow the service to be reviewed to confirm customer volumes. Sopra Steria reserves the right to review the charge should the customer volumes increase to a level where more than 1 FTE would be required or if there is an increase in Trust visitors of greater than 20%.
 - 3.1.7 After this period has elapsed, the arrangement will be formally reviewed on an annual basis. Should the volume of callers reduce and result in a redundancy, the cost of that severance will be part of the review.
 - 3.1.8 TUPE will not apply as the Trust reception is currently manned by temporary staff, as explained in 1.4 above.
- 3.2 Timescale: Steria will need to appoint a reception operative to create the capacity to deliver the arrangement. This means that go-live is unlikely to be before the end of October 2016. However, the current staff can be co-located more quickly as the need to recycle the desk (see below) is pressing.
- 3.3 Environment: There is an intention to recycle the Trust reception desk to be used in the new office accommodation at White Lion House, Hatfield. This will clear the space in the Campus reception area for further meeting rooms. Corporate Property is handling this and a drawing that shows the proposed layout is included at Appendix B. In order for the desk to be re-used, it will need to be removed by the end of September.
- 3.4 Monitoring: The Trust Team Managers will meet with the Customer Services Client Manager prior to her formal meetings with Steria to share intelligence.

- 3.5 Tasks in the interim: There is a list of tasks that need to be completed before go-live, as detailed as follows:

Task	Comment
Induction for Steria colleagues	2 hours for Trust staff to introduce areas of work to Steria staff. Early October.
Run training sessions for Trust colleagues (inc. system/processes)	One hour team briefing for officers that will undertake 'duty'. Early October.
Close Trust reception	23 September 2016
Update Qmatic touch screen branding, queue routing and tickets to include logo.	Out of hours on weekend before go live.

Implications

4 Legal Implication(s)

- 4.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5 Financial Implication(s)

- 5.1 The proposal from Sopra Steria includes a charge of £3,329.16 per month (£39,949.92). When contrasted with the direct cost of the Trust's reception service (2 x FTE at Scale E), this delivers a saving of approximately £10k p.a.

6 Risk Management Implications

- 6.1 The risks related to this proposal are operational and considered to be minimal.

7 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)

- 7.1 There are no security or terrorism implications arising from this report.

8 Procurement Implication(s)

- 8.1 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

9 Climate Change Implication(s)

- 9.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report

10 Link to Corporate Priorities

- 10.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's Corporate Priority 'engage with our communities and provide value for money'.

11 **Equality and Diversity**

11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been carried out in connection with the proposals that are set out in this report.

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Appendix A – CCN as provided by Sopra Steria

Appendix B – drawing for proposed reception layout