

Personnel Committee

Date:	31 October 2017
Title:	Maintenance Team Structure
Contact Officer:	Graham Hunt, Town Clerk

Purpose of this Report

1. To consider the expansion of the Maintenance Team.

Background

2. This report has been prepared jointly by the Town Clerk and the Asset Manager, triggered by a variety of requests, experiences and the need for greater flexibility. The Asset Manager has also held discussions with the Maintenance Supervisor. All 3 Officers are in support of this proposal.
3. An attempt was made to expand the Maintenance Team from 3 to 4 by the recruitment of a full time Apprentice. There was limited interest and although an appropriate candidate was subsequently chosen, after switching to become a Trainee rather than an Apprentice, the candidate subsequently decided that the role was not for him. The experience of the team was that there is difficulty in taking on an apprentice in a 3 man team, although that was not contributory to his departure.
4. The budget for the apprentice was set at a realistic living level, rather than an apprentice rate. It has been unused since March 2017.
5. One of the long term Maintenance Assistants, with around 10 years' service has decided to move away for a change in lifestyle. Replacement recruitment (which may be at a lesser SCP level) is underway.
6. Additional seasonal resources have been used in the past, but their use was perceived as inefficient. A permanent member of the team will always be more committed.
7. It is proposed that rather than replacement recruit an Apprentice / Trainee, that a fully qualified Maintenance Assistant be recruited as a 4th team member, on a par with the 2 existing Maintenance Assistants, from 1 April 2018.
8. Advantages identified:
 - a) Would provide greater flexibility / cover for each other – illness / holidays / out of hours needs
 - b) Would allow more time for winter building maintenance
 - c) Would potentially allow take-on of St Mary's Churchyard maintenance in house – with direct cost savings - though would require some capital investment. An in house team would have useful local knowledge and take more pride in their work, reducing complaints.
 - d) Would allow more cover for Cleaner / Caretaker holiday / illness – possibly reducing overtime
 - e) Would allow time (from Maintenance Supervisor in particular) for project support / inspections that Asset Manager would otherwise undertake
 - f) Would allow ad hoc weed clearance / litter blitzes / dog foul blitzes / ditch clearance / tree maintenance - in response to complaints - even where not on our land (e.g. Shambles? Phoenix Trail? Outside Town Hall?). A "Just Do It" philosophy is currently precluded through the full on work schedules that a 3 man team is committed to.
 - g) Longer term would put us in better position to take on work from new housing development open spaces / other parishes / sports facilities in town
 - h) Fits with DCLG appeal that parishes should "spend to save".

9. Disadvantages identified:

- a) Increased cost of around £5k – although may be partially offset by current replacement recruitment at a lower SCP level – and may be fully offset if external St Mary's Churchyard contract could be taken in house. It could also be argued that it will be partially offset by the non-use of the Apprentice budget for 13 months.
- b) Potentially increased training costs depending on calibre of recruit.

10. Other options have been considered:

- a) Part Time role – but is difficult to manage
- b) Extended overtime – but existing 3 staff already work to the maximum – they need their R&R too

Action Required:

- 11. To consider whether to replace the currently budgeted Apprentice / Trainee, with a fully qualified Maintenance Assistant to be recruited as a 4th team member, on a par with the 2 existing Maintenance Assistants, from 1 April 2018.