Committee(s): Establishment Committee – For information	Date:
Subject: HR Helpdesk Software	Public
Report of: Chamberlain's and the Director of HR	For Information
Report author: Sam Collins Marion Afoakwa	

Summary

This report provides a brief summary of proposals to implement a suitable solution for managing HR service enquiries and cases. This paper outlines progress with exploring the use of the existing Firmstep software, which provides a digital toolkit for the creation of structured forms, workflow and automation and case management. The work will be undertaken using internal HR staff resource, with project management and technical resources from the IT Division.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The HR Service aims to deliver a timely and consistent service to its customers. Historically, this has been difficult given the demands placed upon the service, and the limitations of underpinning software on its working practices. The HR service receives many telephone calls, e-mails and face to face enquires and holds information in many different locations, which has made it very difficult to perform to the levels expected by its customers.

Current Position

2. Requests for an HR service can be made by e-mail, over the phone or in person. These are managed manually and using a series of inboxes, and there are instances where requests can be put into the wrong folder and there is no audit trail. Similarly, for more complex requests (cases) staff are reliant upon spreadsheets to track team and individual caseloads. There is no method for service transparency/tracking requests, or for access to performance information and statistics.

3. A detailed piece of work was conducted between the HR service and the IT Division in 2017, which sought to evaluate options for Helpdesk software. A potential Sharepoint solution was identified, however the cost was considered prohibitive and this was not progressed.

4. Discussions began in 2018 on the use of Firmstep software as an alternative, specifically "Service", to manage all online and staff assisted channels on the same platform and "Forms", for the creation of digital forms with automation and workflow.

5. It became apparent in 2019 that the available version of "Service" would not be a suitable solution for HR as employee data could not be separated from other users' data.

6. Work has however continued with using "Forms" to facilitate greater automation in HR processes and is progressing towards developing and piloting use of a digital form as an alternative to "Service".

7. A review of the pilot will be conducted in April 2020, as well as scoping and costing options to determine a longer-term solution for a HR Service Desk facility. If the review determines that Forms does not meet the services' needs, another solution will be explored.

Recommendation

8. The IT Division's recommendation is to utilise the existing Corporate Firmstep platform to configure a series of structured online forms, to raise, manage and resolve enquiries and cases, pending a longer-term solution being determined.

Proposal

6. Firmstep can be made available at no extra cost to the HR Service but will require resource to be made available to create the online forms and associated workflow. The IT Division has funded training for 4 members of staff within HR service, to help self-build simple forms and processes, with project management and technical support from the IT Division.

7. The next step for this work is to clearly define the scope of the work, document the HR processes and develop a project plan with agreed timescales and resourcing commitments.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

8. The use of the existing Firmstep product, is aligned to a key principle of the IT Strategy, which is to use fewer systems, more effectively.

Implications

9. This piece of work is dependent upon the use of internal staff resource, the greatest risk is therefore the availability of the appropriate level of IT skills in HR and time to commit to the delivery of this work.

Conclusion

10. The HR Service will progress with the exploring implementation of the HR Service Desk software, using the Firmstep platform and work with IT to scope and cost options to determine a longer-term solution for the HR Service Desk system. The IT Division will continue to work with the HR service to scope the project, define the project plan and support the delivery of this key piece of work.

Sam Collins
Head of Change and Engagement
IT Division, Chamberlain's

T: 020 7332 1504
E: sam.collins@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Marion Afoawka
Assistant Director HR & Corporate Change
Human Resources

T: 020 7332 1554
E: marion.afoakwa@cityoflondon.gov.uk