

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR RESOURCES
16 NOVEMBER 2011**

Present: Councillors Cartwright (as the duly appointed substitute for Councillor Sabetian), Clark, Corello, Hodges, MJ Lock, Pragnell (in the Chair), and Westley

Lead Members in attendance: Councillors Birch

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sabetian

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

Councillor Hodges did address the committee to explain that, although he did not have any interest as such, he would declare that he was a member of the Staff Commission.

15. PROPOSED CHANGES TO SENIOR MANAGEMENT RESTRUCTURE

Prior to the report, Councillor Pragnell reminded the committee that they were looking at the senior management restructure posts and should refrain from speaking with regard to individuals.

Councillor Birch, Leader of the Council, presented his report to the committee. He explained that the senior management structure had to be reviewed primarily as a result of severe cuts in government funding over the next few years. He also commented that Hastings Borough Council was a shrinking organisation and, as such, the senior management structure should be aligned to this. To assist with the restructure, a former local authority Chief Executive had been engaged as a 'critical friend'.

Councillor Birch explained how a Staff Commission had been set up, including cross-grade members of staff and cross-party elected members. The Commission had been tasked with looking at alternative ways in which the council could function; this included researching how other local authorities across the UK had adapted their senior management structures, including shared, part time and no Chief Executives.

The Commission had been clear in their outcomes, in as much as they felt Hastings Borough Council needed a cultural change, more empowerment for staff, less micro-management and more visible chief officers. The Commission had put forward a number of proposals for a new senior management structure, one of which was a structure featuring no Chief Executive.

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Councillor Birch commented that he could not exactly quantify the savings that would be made, but they would be in the region of £250,000 in the first year, then circa £400,000 moving forward.

The proposed structure comprised three Directors (reduced from three Directors and one Chief Executive) and seven Heads of Service (reduced from eleven), working as a collegiate management team. There would be no changes in delegated powers under the Council's Constitution. The title of Head of Paid Service would be awarded, under fair and open competition, to one of the Directors, however there would be no additional remuneration for this role. The Leader of the Council would be responsible for appraising and reviewing targets of the Directors.

Members raised concerns regarding consultation, alternative options and proposed savings. Councillor Pragnell queried the amount of savings offered, commenting that quantitative figures were needed before a decision a structure could be made. He was also concerned that the consultation had not been wide ranging enough. Councillor Birch replied that the restructure was an issue that affected the council internally, so did not see that external consultation would have been relevant.

Councillor Pragnell also raised concerns regarding issues around equality. The proposed new structure showed three women in competition for one Head of Service post.

Some members expressed concern that the proposals had not been given enough time for contemplation and challenge. Councillor Birch replied that there was no more time to be given as any new structure needed to be implemented by the beginning of the new financial year. He also commented that it was not reasonable to delay any further, especially as individuals were affected.

Councillor Pragnell proposed a motion seconded by Councillor Corello asking that "the committee recommend to Cabinet that they defer the decision pending a full report on: i) full financial implications; ii) wider consultation with Working Arrangements Group and partners; and iii) consideration of alternative models and reasons for disregarding them." The motion was lost by 3 votes to 4.

Councillors Cartwright and Westley explained that they could not support a delay in the process, for the reasons Councillor Birch had given in an earlier explanation. Councillor Westley also commented that the consultation documents had been on the council's Sharepoint library for members and officers to read.

Councillor Hodges then put forward a further motion, seconded by Councillor Clark.

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RESOLVED (by 4 votes to 3) that the committee supports the recommendations regarding proposed changes to the Senior Management structure contained within the report made by the Leader and Deputy Leader, and that it will subsequently be placed before the Cabinet later this day.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 11.49am)