

**HASTINGS BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CABINET MEETING 26<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2014**

**RESPONSE BY THE LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER TO THE CONSULTATION  
FEEDBACK.**

1. We would like to thank all of those who have responded and taken part in the consultation exercise. We are pleased to have had such open and constructive participation from a wide range of staff.
2. We are also grateful for a number of written responses and particularly those from two Directors and Unison. The submissions from the Directors have been circulated separately to members of the Cabinet.
3. Before making this response we have considered the report from our 'Critical Friend', David Bowles, very carefully along with the written responses.
4. The first point we would like to make is that we set out in November 2011 to transform the way the Council works. This is not an easy thing to do at the best of times. but we have sought to do so against a background of reductions in staffing, expenditure and financial uncertainty.
5. The Organisational Objectives set in November 2011 are:
  - *Stimulate cultural change through a more transparent division of strategic and operational duties, greater delegation to Heads of Service to manage their services and a greater use of time limited project teams to deliver specific objectives. This objective has been derived principally from the conclusions of the Staff Commission, which have proved particularly useful in helping to design the future structure of the council*
  - *Retain clarity of responsibility and accountability for decisions within the revised structure, so that the public and elected members know who is responsible for what*
  - *Allow the council to 'punch above its weight' in stimulating the strategic and economic development of Hastings, through the continued involvement of Directors in county wide/regional activity and leadership of council wide developments*
  - *Reduce the cost of senior management, whilst retaining a 'fit for purpose' structure, to recognise the requirement for a smaller more agile council*
  - *Create the opportunity for greater member input to the strategic work of the senior management team*
  - *Retain a presumption for internal service provision where value for money can be demonstrated, whilst recognising the value of a mixed economy of provision*
  - *Promote resilience of service within a diminishing resource base through appropriate sharing with other councils or other arrangements where necessary*

6. We further reinforced our commitment to them in our publically declared drive to become 'One Council'. These objectives remain relevant and indeed our 'Critical Friend' rightly confirms the latest proposals as being a continuation of what we started in 2011.
7. We have made very good progress on many of the aspects of the Organisational Objectives; however we have to acknowledge that there is still much to do on those parts dealing with culture and we propose that any new Director, with the Head of Paid Service responsibility, be mandated to show corporate leadership to that part of our transformation plans. They are critical to achieving 'One Council'.
8. In making proposals we have considered a number of factors; uppermost in our minds are issue of risk, particularly around capacity and continuity. If we take too many risks in those areas, it will affect our bold outward facing agenda and our ability to give high priority to regeneration of the Borough, which has widespread support both inside and outside of the Council.
9. We have considered carefully the various alternatives raised during the consultation. There was interest in having only one Director and whilst it would help financially and may possibly help with culture, it would bring with it significant increased risks. Other options would arguably also increase risk.
10. We agree with the suggestions from the Critical Friend that the Council should move away from generic job descriptions. We also note the comments, including those from a Director, that we should be much clearer about what we require of our Directors, with a focus on issues such as leadership and a commitment to empowerment; these should be reflected more explicitly in the person specifications and job descriptions of any proposed new posts.
11. Taking into account the consultation responses, risk and other issues we propose to proceed with two Directors with the functions/heads of service reports as set out in the original consultation document.
12. We have also considered various comments about the Head of Paid Service and we do not think from the point of view of risk and other reasons given in the consultation document by our Critical Friend, that the role should rotate at this time. We do however accept that it is something which should be kept under review.
13. We accept that the Head of Paid Service should also have the main role in corporate internal communications as that is consistent with leadership on corporate cultural change programmes etc to move toward One Council.
14. Taking into account the span of the Director of Services post proposed in the consultation document this will result in two post of equal weight.
15. We also propose that the Council consult with PAs and deals with them in a fair and open manner.
16. We recognise the desire from staff to have greater certainty about the longer term future of the Council and its direction. As they rightly point out, that should drive the structure of the organisation within which they work. However considerable financial uncertainty remains, but we will consider how it would be possible to bring greater clarity to longer term strategy to reduce organisational anxiety. We will at the same time, given the issued raised by staff, discuss with the proposed new Directors how and

when the further re- structuring will take place at Head of Service level and below. We would expect them to take into account, as far as they are able and appropriate, the issues raised in the report by our Critical Friend.

17. Finally we acknowledge that many of those consulted did not find the proposed job titles clear and we have taken that on board in the proposals.

18. Having considered all the matters carefully and all the submissions made

We **PROPOSE**

That the current three Directors posts be abolished and be replaced by two new posts. The two new posts are proposed to be

- a) Director of Corporate Services and Governance, which will be designated Head of Paid Service, and have the Heads of Service for Finance, Corporate Services and Marketing and Communications reporting to it;
- b) Director of Operational Services which will have the Heads of Service for Housing and Development, Regeneration and Planning Policy, Environmental Services and Amenity, Resorts and Leisure reporting to it.

We **INSTRUCT** the Executive Manager, People and Organisational Development to

1. produce, in consultation with the Leader, Person Specifications and Job Descriptions to reflect the specific requirements of each post taking into account the consultation response referred to above and the move away from generic job descriptions;
2. commence formal consultation with the three Directors on the proposals to abolish the three Director's posts and the alternative proposed arrangements;
3. commence formal consultation with other staff directly affected by this proposal