

Agenda Item No: 13

Report to: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 5 January 2015

Report Title: Proposed changes to the Senior Officer Structure

Report By: Verna Connolly
Executive Manager People and Organisational Development

Purpose of Report

The report provides Cabinet with feedback on the results of the Chief Officer Restructure and affected staff consultation.

Recommendation(s)

That the Cabinet:

- 1. Thanks officers concerned for their comments during the formal consultation period**
- 2. In the light of the consultation responses re-affirms its decision of 26th November 2015 regarding the restructuring of the chief officer team**
- 3. Instructs the Executive Manager, People and Organisational Development to make the necessary arrangements for the appointments process**

Reasons for Recommendations

The consultation highlights the support from the chief officers and affected staff for the proposed senior officer changes, given the economic and financial outlook for the Council. These changes lead to on-going savings which can only be achieved once the new structure is implemented.

Background

1. As part of the Council's business case submission to the government for Efficiency Grant Support for 2013/14 and 2014/15 a commitment was given to reviewing the Senior Management Structure of the Council. The proposed timescale for the review was the third quarter of 2014/15 with indicative savings of £0.25m in 2015/6.
2. Our current Senior Management structure has been in place since 2011 and has served the Council well. However given the cuts to public sector spending it is now time to put in place revised senior officer arrangements
3. On the 26 November, 2015 Cabinet unanimously approved a recommendation that:
 - 1) Agrees that the current Director posts be deleted and 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.
4. The cabinet also accepted that: "the Council will need to comply with the JNC Terms and Conditions of Employment which state:

"Employing authorities should consult with any chief officer affected at the earliest possible stage when there is a suggestion that the Chief Officer's post might be abolished or proposed for abolition. If after such consultation a proposal is formulated to abolish the chief officer's post, the procedure of Section 188 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, requiring consultation with trade unions should be followed, the required statutory information being sent to the chief officer and to each independent trade union recognised by the employers for collective bargaining purposes for the chief officer. A period of not less than 28 days should be allowed for statutory consultation process. The chief officer and a trade union representative should also be afforded an opportunity of making oral representations to the Committee or Council meeting concerned before a final decision is made.

Conclusion to Consultation

5. As part of the consultation the three current directors have individually met with the leader of the council and the executive manager personnel and organisational development. No opposition has been expressed by them to the principle of reducing the number of directors from three to two or to the allocation of service responsibilities. They also agreed with the decision not to seek external candidates for the new posts as they felt the experience and skills required were already present within the current senior officer team.

6. There was an acceptance that this restructuring of the chief officer team was a logical step and comments were made that it could be made to work. Concerns were expressed about capacity within the organisation - that with fewer staff and a smaller senior officer team the council has to more rigorously prioritise its activities and be realistic about what it can deliver in these new circumstances.

7. The matters that have been discussed have concerned the status of the two new directors posts in relation to each other and the balance between the external and internal responsibilities within the council; the status and remuneration of the head of paid service post; the degree of difference between the job descriptions for the new director posts; the need for both directors to be signed up to the cultural improvements highlighted and needed within the council.

8. The leader of the council reiterated that it was the intention for there to be two director posts of equal status. Also that the job descriptions should reflect the different responsibilities of the two posts and the different nature of skills required by the two post holders allowing for the appointment of the most appropriate chief officer team to lead the authority.

9. Cultural changes are the responsibility of both new director posts. However, he confirmed that the championing of cultural change as well as the internal transformation and managing change within the organisation will be the responsibility of the director of corporate services and governance and it is appropriate that the head of paid service role is attached to that post.

10. Other affected staff were offered 1-1 meetings , some accepted and others declined as they wanted to await the outcome of the Director selection process before discussing the implications for their role.

Conclusion

11. Overall, the responses to the consultation have been very positive and supportive of the new structure and the direction it takes us in. All respondents felt it was the right move for the next step in Hastings transformation and they welcomed the opportunity presented in terms of the focus of the new Directorates, enabling better horizontal and cross council working and a more strategic role for the senior management team.

Wards Affected

None

Area(s) Affected

None

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Yes
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	Yes/No
Risk Management	Yes
Environmental Issues	Yes/No
Economic/Financial Implications	Yes
Human Rights Act	Yes/No
Organisational Consequences	Yes
Local People's Views	No

Background Information

None

Officer to Contact

Verna Connolly
Executive Manager of People and Business Support
Vconnolly@hastings.gov.uk
01424 451707
