



Report of the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer

Council – 1 October 2020

Senior Management Structure

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| Purpose: | The report sets out proposals to create two Heads of Service posts within the wider finance function and appoint on an interim basis to the Head of Service posts. |
| Policy Framework: | Council Constitution |
| Consultation: | CMT, Trade Unions |
| Recommendation(s): | It is recommended that: 1) A Head of Revenues and Benefits post is established and added to the Senior Management Structure. 2) A Head of Service Centre post is established and added to the Senior Management Structure. 3) Council notes that it is proposed that the current Manager of Revenue and Benefits and the current Manager of the Service Centre take on the duties of the Heads of Service on an interim basis until 31 March 2021 whereupon the position will be reviewed. |
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1. Background

- 1.1 The response to the Covid 19 pandemic has seen a substantial change to all operations of the Council implemented at pace, including the whole finance function, which has seen budgets flexed by over 25%, or well over £100 million in revenue alone and by over £20 million in capital.
- 1.2 The priority has been to deliver rapid financial response and relief to as many people, businesses and as many sectors as possible at pace whilst safely maintaining the Council's own cash flow and financial security throughout, including paying all our own staff and pensioners, housing benefit recipients and suppliers. It has also involved collecting sensitively and pragmatically, in light of all circumstances, council tax, non domestic rates due.

- 1.3 The Section 151 Officer has had necessarily to rely heavily on substantial numbers of finance staff to assist him in delivering this and is instigating a number of restructures and re-gradings to strengthen the finance function, relying on the Constitution to provide, within reason, whatever offices and officers are and where needed to keep services running. The majority can be done by officer delegation. However the s 151 Officer considers that the provision of tangible and personal support in both the revenue and benefits department and service centre is crucial to allow him to be able to respond to the most challenging of financial times and to be able to react to the likely wider economic issues to come.
- 1.4 The overall additional costs will be modest, up to £250,000 in the context of an operating budget of around £30m million net for the finance function, a council budget of around £470 million and the flexing of budgets by over £100 million.
- 1.5 Both Head of Service posts will manage very substantial areas of activity on behalf of the Section 151 Officer. The service centre handles over £400m of payroll, payments and receivables. The revenue and benefits operation handles over £200 million of tax receipts and over £100m of benefits payments.

2. Proposed change

- 2.1 The section 151 officer has drawn up new job descriptions and job evaluation questionnaires for the existing posts of Revenues and Benefits Manager and Service Centre Manager. These job descriptions reflect the work that the managers have been doing and will be expected to do going forward.
- 2.2 Both posts have since been evaluated under the Council's JE scheme for Chief Officer/Head of Service Posts
- 2.3 Both posts are capable of being placed in the lowest Band 3 Head of Service range following job evaluation.
- 2.4 Staff and Trade Unions have been consulted on the proposal and are content for the Section 151 officer to proceed on an interim basis.
- 2.5 The proposed change will strengthen management capacity and resilience and appropriately recognise the work that is now needed within both departments. It also reflects the additional work that has been necessitated by Covid 19 and is anticipated to be long term. As indicated wider change will be done through officer delegation within an overall funding envelope of £250,000, affecting 20-30 posts in total.

3. Future Structure

- 3.1 Council will need to continue to respond and evolve as a whole, as it always does. Covid 19 has exacerbated and accelerated the need for immediate action in the finance function and it is likely that the strengthened arrangements will need to continue in some form for the future.

- 3.2 Nevertheless that should be as part of wider more permanent arrangements across the whole senior management structure when and if Council and the Chief Executive determine the time is right and appropriate to do so. This seeks a pragmatic interim solution for the functions the Section 151 Officer discharges. Accordingly any permanent change to the finance senior management structure will be subject to a future report and any appointments will follow the normal council recruitment and appointment procedure rules for permanent roles.

4. Equality and Engagement Implications

- 4.1 The Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Wales) and must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The recruitment process followed within the Council ensures that we have paid due regard to the above.

- 4.2 An EIA screening has been undertaken and all equality implications including the recruitment to the interim positions have been considered in proposing this change, an EIA screening has been undertaken and all equality implications including the recruitment to the interim positions have been considered in proposing this change.
- 4.3 No identified potential for any adverse impact or missed opportunity to promote equality with regard to any groups. The integrated post will also still be accountable to the Council's EIA process and reporting structures.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Any permanent appointment to the Head of Service post/s if confirmed in the longer term will follow the Appointment Procedure Rules as set out in the Constitution of the Council.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The costs of the two regrades at top of scale including oncosts in a full year would be £36,000, with 4 year spay progression. Both posts will be proposed appointed in normal fashion to the bottom of the new pay scale and thus the costs for a full year are under £7,000 including oncosts, half that again for a start date of 1 October.
- 6.2 Total costs for all finance restructuring is to be kept within the £250,000 envelope. The first quarter report to cabinet in October will seek approval from Cabinet, on the advice of the Section 151 Officer, to release that sum from contingency. Ongoing and future costs will be built into the base budget proposals due to come through Council for 2021-22 in March 2021.

Background Papers: EIA Screening Form

Appendices: Revised Job Descriptions