

Supplementary Committee Agenda



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Cabinet Monday, 4th February 2008

Place: Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Room: Council Chamber

Time: 7.00 pm

Committee Secretary: Gary Woodhall (Democratic Services Officer)
Email: gwoodhall@eppingforestdc.gov.uk Tel:01992-564470

9. CORPORATE RESTRUCTURE (Pages 3 - 6)

(Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder) To consider the additional comments received following the publication of the agenda, and attached, as part of the consultation exercise (C/109/2007-08).

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Further comments received from staff in the Directorate of Corporate Support Services (4/2/08)

Comments received from Legal Officers ALE/08 and ALE/09	Management response
<p>Further representations made by Senior Legal Officer ALE/08 and Legal Officer ALE/09 with regard to Management's response.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Without a Job description and Job specification for the new post of Senior Legal Officer, we feel that this consultation process has not been fair to us. Even if/when this information is to be made available to us, we would need time for consideration. How can we make proper representations without sight of a Job Description and Job Specification? 2. If the 3rd new post of Senior Legal Officer is substantially the current Legal ALE/05's post plus additional management duties and we feel it is the intention of The Director of Corporate Support Services to upgrade this post, would it not be more prudent to simply re-evaluate this current post? Why ring-fence posts ALE/08 and ALE/09 to apply for this new post when they have never been given the opportunity to gain this knowledge and experience required for a systems administrator or supervise administrative staff and therefore would not be in a realistic position to compete with the current post-holder ALE/05, who has had this advantage over us for years. We reiterate that we still feel that we have not been given an equal opportunity to apply for this post and have been put under considerable stress. We explained this in paragraphs 2,3 and 4 of page 107 but we feel that the Director of Corporate Services has not addressed our concerns in her response. 3. Based on the information given by the Director of Corporate Support Services, the 2 Legal Officers (within the new 	<p>Clearly these officers remain concerned although the procedures applied to them are reflected throughout the Directorates and are entirely in accordance with Council Policy.</p> <p>The purpose of this consultation is to seek comments on the structure and the principles which underpin it.</p> <p>Contrary to the views of the staff concerned, it is not the Director of Corporate Services' intention to upgrade one officer and there will be genuine and proper competition.</p>

<p>structure) would be placed in their posts and carry over their existing duties. So if the new posts are not going to be different to the posts held at the moment, why is there a need for our current posts to be put at risk? It would be far less stressful if the 2 post holders were slotted in to their new posts, as is the more normal process during exercises of this sort.</p> <p>4. It is not normal practice to expect a post-holder to move from a post where the title includes the word "Senior", to a job title which has this word removed although the job is substantially the same. It would not be surprising if that post-holder were made to feel undermined and undervalued.</p>	
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Further comments received concerning the proposed Housing Directorate structure (4/2/08)

Comments received from Susan Stranders, Principal Team Leader (Environmental Protection), Environment & Street Scene Directorate	Management response
<p>Recognises the potential benefit of moving Private Sector Housing to the Housing Directorate given the need to significantly raise its profile.</p>	<p>No comment required</p>
<p>Fully supports Recommendation (3) - creation of a Private Sector Housing Manager (Technical). Over the past few years the private sector housing team has expanded. This has afforded various management problems given the resultant flat structure, the expansion of work due to the requirements of the Housing Act 2004 and the introduction of the Council's new Private Sector Housing Strategy.</p>	<p>No comment required.</p>

<p>There are still many areas of private sector housing that are not being fully addressed and some not at all. Whilst the creation of this post will assist with the effective management of the work, the post holder will inevitably have less time to spend on their current workload. Therefore a review, prioritisation and re allocation of the work, as recommended in Point 20 of the Restructuring Report, will be absolutely essential. This may be difficult in the short term given that officers are currently covering the work associated with the vacant Private Sector Housing Officer post, which was created to assist with delivery of the Grant/Housing Assistance regime.</p>	<p>It is agreed that the review of workload and work allocation is essential, once the Private Sector Housing Manager (Technical) has been appointed.</p> <p>It is accepted that there are short term difficulties, but once an appointment can be made to the vacant Private Sector Housing Officer post, it will free-up environmental health officer (EHO) time to concentrate on moving forward with improved service delivery.</p> <p>The proposed conversion of the current temporary P/T EHO post to a permanent post will also offer added certainty of staffing resources in the future.</p>
<p>The introduction of the Housing Act 2004 and the new Private Sector Housing Strategy has resulted in a significant increase in the work associated with private sector housing. In December 2006, Cabinet agreed to adopt the new Private Sector Housing Strategy but full implementation was delayed due to, at the time, the difficulties surrounding the waste contract and the impact this potentially had on the Councils financial position. Therefore only the minimal additional resources were sought and work was re-prioritised within existing resources. A review of available resources is still pending, as stated in the Cabinet report.</p> <p>The impact of this has been compounded given that the Council has, so far, been unsuccessful in recruiting a suitable Private Sector Housing Officer to assist in the delivery of the Strategy. This has put pressure on the existing team and as envisaged we have been unable to meet the objectives as set in the Strategy and have not spent the additional funds received from GO –East.</p>	<p>The Housing Scrutiny Panel is due to review the Private Sector Housing Strategy Action Plan within the next few months. One aspect that the Scrutiny Panel will need to consider is the availability of staffing resources to deliver the strategy, and the implications of losing inward Government investment if there are insufficient staff to spend the additional capital resources provided.</p> <p>If the Scrutiny Panel considers it appropriate, it can make a recommendation to the Cabinet that staffing resources should be increased.</p>

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