

Deputy Chief Executive's Office: Review of Service Provision and Structure

Recommendations:

1. That the following posts be deleted from the establishment
LHO/04 Community and Cultural Services Manager
LSS/09 Admin Assistant (18 hours part time)
ICT/212 Senior Website Officer / Business Analyst
2. That the following post be added to the establishment.
Assistant Director (Community Services and Customer Relations)
Youth Council Administrator (18 hours part time).
3. That the following post be ring fenced as indicated.
Assistant Director (Community Services and Customer Relations)
(previously agreed) be ring fenced to the postholder of LHO/04
Community and Cultural Services Manager.
4. That the principal of rotating annual lead officer for Community and
Culture on a temporary basis be accepted, with an additional
responsibility payment, equivalent to 2 incremental points.
5. That the post of Market Research and Consultation Officer, PMU/04 be
transferred from the Performance Management Unit to Public Relations
and Marketing.
6. That the post of Marketing and Events Manager, LSS/20 and Marketing
and Events Assistant, LSS/22, be transferred to Public Relations and
Marketing.
7. That the Assistant Arts Officer LCA/05 be amended from 36 hours to 22
hours.
8. That the post of Marketing and Events Assistant LSS/22 be amended from
36 hours to 28 hours.
9. That subject to the above recommendations the overall structure for the
Deputy Chief Executive's area of responsibility be agreed as set out in the
structure chart attached at Appendix 2.

Background

1 Stage one of the Council's structure review was completed with effect from 1 October 2007, when the original service structure was replaced by the following Directorates:

- Deputy Chief Executive;
- Corporate Support Services;
- Housing;
- Finance and ICT;
- Planning and Economic Development; and
- Environment and Street Scene.

2 As part of that process a number of services were relocated and the new Deputy Chief Executive's office was formulated by the following changes:

- Public Relations and Information from Research and Democratic Services
- Compliments and Complaints from Research and Democratic Services
- Performance Management and Equalities from HR and Performance Management
- Community and Cultural Services from Leisure Services
- Marketing and Events from Leisure Services
- North Weald Airfield (Strategic / Policy issues) from Leisure
- Customer Services - new

3 At Cabinet in December 2007, Members agreed to establish a core of 18 Assistant Director posts to support the new service Directors. Cabinet also agreed that wherever possible and where the new Assistant Director posts were broadly commensurate with former Assistant Head of Service roles, post holders should be assimilated into those new Assistant Director positions.

4 That part of Leisure Services which is being transferred did not include any posts at Assistant Head level.

5 The new DCE office has one Assistant Director post:

- Assistant Director – Community Services and Customer Relations

This post remains vacant and will be filled in accordance with ring fencing procedures.

6 As part of the Corporate Restructuring exercise each Directorate is required to find savings of approximately £50,000 from staff budgets, to produce an overall General Fund CSB saving of £250,000. In this instance the £50,000 is to be achieved by a combination of savings from the Housing Directorate and the Deputy Chief Executive's service area. This structure absorbs a proportion of the posts of Head of Leisure, Head of HR and PMU and the Joint Chief Executive (Community), as well as contributing towards the expected share of the £50,000 saving.

7 The key function of the post of Deputy Chief Executive is to support and deputise for the Chief Executive ensuring that cover is available to members on an ongoing basis between the two most senior officers of the Council, so far as is reasonably practicable. However, deputising for the Chief Executive is clearly not considered sufficient in its own right to justify a full time post. Therefore, in addition, the Deputy Chief Executive has a number of service level responsibilities largely of a corporate nature.

New Structure:

8 The rationale behind the structure set out in Appendix 1 is detailed below.

Assistant Director:

9 The Deputy Chief Executive Service Area, amalgamates a total of 7 Sections/Teams, each with a lead officer, namely, Public Relations and Marketing,

the Performance Management Unit, the Arts Development, Sports Development and Community Development Teams, Museum Services and a proportion of the Leisure Admin Team. In addition, the Leisure Marketing and Events Manager and Assistant, the Compliments and Complaints Officer and potentially the Local Strategic Partnership Co-ordinator (currently based with Voluntary Action Epping Forest) will also be incorporated into the new structure.

10 It would be impracticable for the Deputy Chief Executive to directly line manage all of these diverse service areas. Therefore it has been agreed that a new Assistant Director's post be developed, reporting directly to the Deputy Chief Executive. The post will adopt responsibility for a number of outward facing services, to be collectively termed Community Services and Customer Relations.

11 As Members had a clear expectation that savings will be achieved within this stage of the restructuring, there is therefore no revenue growth to fund the Assistant Director (Community Services and Customer Relations) post. This will in the main be achieved by the deletion of the existing Community and Cultural Services Manager Post LH/04, Grade 10. The current postholder will be included in a ringfenced interview for the Assistant Director's post.

Community and Culture Lead Officer:

12 The Community and Cultural Services Manager's post was responsible for the management and co-ordination of the Sports, Arts, Community and Museum Services. It is the intention to re-position these services to work more corporately, recognising that they already deliver a number of wider community objectives for the Council in relation to social inclusion, young people, health, crime and disorder and elderly persons services. A key feature of their current activity is the high level of external funding and partnership work. By positioning the services more corporately, it is hoped that this can be developed still further.

13 Whilst the Community and Cultural Services teams have been working collaboratively on joint projects for some time, there is still a need to ensure that their work is well co-ordinated. It is therefore proposed that on an annual rotating basis, each of the section heads, is given the opportunity to act up temporarily into a Lead Officer Role, for which an additional responsibility payment would be made above their substantive Grade 9. The four section heads would take the lead role in turn, supported by the Assistant Director. The order to be negotiated or determined if necessary by interview.

Youth Council:

14 There are no further fundamental changes anticipated within the current establishment of the Community and Culture Sections. However, in November, the Cabinet agreed to support the establishment of a Youth Council for the District, which following elections in December 2007, is set to be fully operative in 2008. In order for the Youth Council to be successful, it was recognised that in addition to the advice and guidance of the Council's Young Person's Officer, practical administrative support will be necessary at a level of 18 hours per week at Grade 4 (subject to Job Evaluation). The Cabinet instructed the Deputy Chief Executive to try to achieve this new role as part of the restructure. The role is being funded on a temporary basis until the end of the financial year by DDF, but will need to be funded by CSB savings, if this post is to be included on the permanent establishment.

15 In order to achieve this, it is proposed that the post of Admin Assistant LSS/09, Grade 3, 18 hours be deleted. This action combined with 8 hours currently vacant from LSS/22, Marketing and Events Assistant, Grade 4, would be sufficient to fund the new role in support of the Youth Council. This would still leave 28 hours for the Marketing and Events Assistant post, which is equivalent to the current level.

Administrative Support:

16 Community and Cultural Services (with the exception of the Museum Service) are currently based at Hemnall Street, although in the longer term it is hoped to relocate them to the Civic Offices, possibly through some form of accommodation exchange with Voluntary Action Epping Forest. However, Community and Cultural Services are currently assisted by the Admin Team at Hemnall Street, who also provide reception/enquiry services to customers and visitors to the offices. A number of Admin/Finance Staff will be transferring to the new Environment and Street Scheme Directorate (mainly those who currently support Grounds Maintenance, North Weald Airfield, Information Technology and the Leisure Management Client Role). However, there are still a number of posts approximately 3FTE, who are currently allocated to and will still be needed, to provide important support to the frontline Community and Cultural Services, i.e. LSS/05 Admin Manager, Grade 7 F/T, LSS/08 Admin Assistant F/T, Grade 3, LSS/06 Word Processor/Clerical, Grade 3, 26¼ hours, and LSS/19 Admin Assistant, Grade 3, 13 hours. It is proposed that the Admin Manager will report to the Assistant Director of Community Services and Customer Relations, who will jointly review the allocation of work across the services within this area.

17 Whilst the Youth Council Administrator can be funded by the re-allocation of existing vacant hours, there will be additional costs incurred in the temporary acting up Community and Cultural Lead Officer of 2 incremental points, (approximately £2,000 per annum) and the shortfall to create the new Assistant Director role, over and above the funding available from the deleted Community and Cultural Service Manager Post. Subject to job evaluation this could be in the region of £5000 per annum.

18 Currently the postholder of Assistant Arts Officer, LCA/05 Grade 7, works a total of 22 hours per week, leaving 14 hours vacant. It is proposed that these vacant hours are deleted and utilised to fund the increased costs of the Lead Officer role, and the new Assistant Director post. The funding available is sufficient at £12,627 per annum.

Customer Services and Public Relations:

19 Due in part to uncertainty around affordability, the Council has elected to hold its Customer Transformation Programme in abeyance, although there is still a substantial amount of funding allocated in the Capital Programme. However, there is still merit in pursuing some of the desired outcomes in relation to improved customer services, which were central to the aspirations of the Customer Transformation Programme.

20 It is therefore likely that the Council may wish to re-visit the whole issue of Customer Service Improvement, which may lead to further structural/managerial changes in the future. However, until this is fully considered and developed it is proposed that the Public Relations and Marketing Team will focus on Public Relations, Corporate Identity and Marketing, Community Events, Consultation and Corporate Communication, the Website and Information Services. It is proposed that

the team consists of the current staffing complement, supplemented by the Leisure Services Marketing and Events Manager LSS/20, Grade 8, Marketing and Events Assistant LSS/22, 28 hours, Grade 4 and the transfer of PMU/04, Market Research and Consultation Officer, Grade 5 from the Performance Management Unit.

21 The new structure would bring Marketing and Promotional expertise from Leisure Services which will have a positive impact on the Council's branding and publications, as well as experience on the staging of events. The Leisure Task and Finish Panel concluded in its review of Community Events that there was significant potential for the Council to improve its profile and image by being better represented at local Community Events, as well as capitalising on their potential as an opportunity for consultation. The relocation from the PMU of the Market Research and Consultation Officer's post will enable a more proactive approach to corporate consultation to be taken.

22 The Council's Website Board is exploring alternative outsourced means of providing technical support to the Website. It was hoped that this could be provided in-house, with the transfer of the Senior Website Development Officer post to ICT, with the intention of recruiting a new postholder with the technical ability to support the Website. Unfortunately, despite a number of attempts this Business Analyst Post was never filled, largely due to a lack of interest in the level of remuneration. Although it would be possible to utilise this post in future to potentially fund some improvements in Customer Services, it has proved impossible to fill and could be deleted to provide a significant saving of £36,960.

Performance Improvement Unit:

23 Outside of those contained within Community Services and Customer Relations, are another three service areas that will be line managed by the Deputy Chief Executive. The Performance Management Unit, to be retitled the Performance Improvement Unit, will maintain its role in relation to Performance Management, Business Planning, Value for Money/Use of Resources, Strategy and Equalities work. As mentioned previously, it is the intention to transfer the Consultation Officer post to Public Relations and Marketing. However, there is currently a vacancy in the Section, which will be recruited to i.e. PMU/02 Performance Improvement Officer with the focus of the work being on equalities issues where the Council has an ever-increasing statutory responsibility. Another important emerging area of work is the new Essex Local Area Agreement II which will need to be monitored carefully, a role that the PIU are well placed to undertake. The Section will therefore comprise of three posts, PMU/01 Performance Improvement Manager, Grade 9, and the two Performance Improvement Officer Posts, Grade 7, PMU/02 and PMU/03.

Compliments and Complaints:

24 The Council's Complaints Officer, CCM/06 has traditionally reported to Senior Managers of the Council, originally under the Chief Executive and in recent times the Head of Research and Democratic Services. It is proposed that in future the post reports directly to the Deputy Chief Executive. This will enable an overview to be maintained and decisions taken with respect to levels of compensation etc.

Local Strategic Partnership Co-ordination:

25 Finally, it is clear that the role that the Council undertakes with respect to Community Leadership, particularly with the onset of LAAll and Comprehensive Area Assessment, will become increasingly more important. This includes active

participation in the Local Strategic Partnership, in particular the development of a new Sustainable Community Strategy for the District, with its links to the Local Development Framework.

26 Until the resignation of the Postholder in December 2007, the jointly funded Community Strategy and Partnerships Manager was managed by Voluntary Action Epping Forest. However, in discussion with the LSP Chairman and Director of Voluntary Action Epping Forest, it has been recognised that in order to assist recruitment of a replacement officer and to improve co-ordination, it would be advisable for any new post to be located within the District Council. Although ultimately responsible to the Local Strategic Partnership Board, the post would be managed on a day-to-day basis by the Deputy Chief Executive. The Council already manages the LSP's budget on their behalf. The task of cost centre manager in future could be incorporated in the new manager's role. Voluntary Action Epping Forest have however, requested that they continue to still provide a degree of administrative support in the future, in the same way as they support the Crime and Disorder Partnership.

27 This report outlines the proposed structure for the services responsible to the Deputy Chief Executive and suggests how Members desire for support to the Youth Council could be achieved, without the need for CSB growth. It would also enable the new post of Assistant Director of Community Services and Customer Relations to be created, increasing corporate capacity, the lack of which has previously been highlighted as a concern.

28 The deletion of ICT 212 combined with the residual vacant hours from LAA/05, (once the additional funding for the Assistant Director of Community Services and Customer Relations and the additional responsibility payment of the Community and Culture Services lead Officer has been taken), will achieve a total saving of £45,807.

The consultation process

29 It is proposed that, following the consultation period, the final restructure proposals be submitted to Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on the 4th of February 2008. Under the Council's agreed arrangements staff are entitled to 28 days consultation of any new staffing proposals. It would however be of considerable assistance if your views could be received by me as soon as is practicable so that your comments can be built into the final Cabinet report rather than having to be provided orally at the meeting. I would therefore ask that comments be received by me preferably by not later than noon on Friday the 18th of January 2008. Please however be assured that comments received after this date and up to the Cabinet meeting itself will be considered and reported to Members.

30 Your views and comments are important and will be carefully considered before the final report is prepared. I would be pleased to discuss any issues of concern or suggestions for changes to the proposals with you personally or as part of a group of officers. Please arrange to see me through Shirley Hawkins on extension 4051. There will be a number of officers who occupy posts being put forward for deletion and/or are subject to ring fenced appointment arrangements into new or replacement posts. I shall be speaking to each of you individually to ensure that you are fully aware of what is proposed and what the appointment arrangements will entail.

Derek Macnab

Deputy Chief Executive