

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

24th November, 2008

PRESENT: Councillor Cartwright (Chairman); Councillors Mrs Davies, Edmonds, Sherwell and Sir Beville Stanier.

1. SENIOR MANAGEMENT RESTRUCTURE

A review of the Authority's Senior Management Structure had been undertaken, influenced by a number of factors, but principally the retirement/resignation of a number of senior managers, including the Corporate Director (Development), and financial pressures facing the Authority over the period of the medium term financial plan, necessitating an urgent need to balance the budget over the next three years, whilst maintaining service delivery in accordance with Corporate Plan priorities.

A report setting out the detailed rationale for, and the extent of, the proposed changes, which had been circulated previously to all Members of the Council, was submitted. The proposed changes had been the subject of consultation with the Staff Side and relevant Trades Unions. On the whole, the general response to the proposals had been positive. Some minor concerns had been expressed about the placement of some functions across the proposed new Directorates and the detailed plans had, as a consequence, been adjusted to take account of the views expressed.

The principal change was a move from three Directors to two and the widening of the responsibilities of particular Heads of Service. These changes required the approval of full Council, and this Committee's recommendations would be considered at the Council meeting on 26th November, 2008. Some changes would take place below Director/Heads of Service level, but these would be dealt with by the Chief Executive/Head of Personnel under delegated authority. The Committee report summarised all the changes and incorporated charts showing the existing senior management structure and the proposed structure.

The restructuring represented a significant change to the existing organisational design of the Council. However, the staffing impact was far more modest than might possibly have been the case, given the coincidental natural retirement of a number of Heads of Service and the voluntary early retirement of one of the Council's Directors. No compulsory redundancies were required and the revised structure would result in £500,000 savings after restructuring costs.

This was not however the end of the organisational change journey. The medium term financial plan predicted the need to find over £4 million revenue savings over the next four years. Cabinet would be advised in due course of further options, not least in

relation to pathfinder, which would be aimed at improving services, whilst at the same time achieving efficiency savings/gains.

The Chief Executive responded to a number of specific questions raised by Members:-

- It was confirmed that the two remaining Directors had participated fully in the discussions culminating in the current proposals and were looking forward to the challenge presented by the restructuring. Their capacity to carry out their new roles and responsibilities had been factored into the proposals.
- Supporting Heads of Service and other senior managers had accepted the need to become more involved in the Corporate/Strategic processes. The current proposals recognised the availability of existing qualified staff and provided them with an opportunity to move into more senior positions to provide momentum, energy and new ideas.
- Where there was a possibility that posts might be frozen as part of the ongoing review of staffing requirements, any action to do so would be predicated upon service delivery needs and the continuing changing climate both economically and demographically, to ensure delivery of the Council's Corporate priorities. There might however be a corresponding need to seek savings elsewhere within the organisation to meet the costs of maintaining particular service areas. This monitoring would be an ongoing process.
- It was acknowledged that the new organisational charts should have reflected the maintenance of a strategic planning service, particularly given the work currently taking place on the Local Development Framework (LDF). It was indicated that revised charts, including one showing the organisational structure of the Chief Executive's Department, would be circulated separately to all Members of the Council as a useful aide memoire.

After due deliberation, the Committee concurred with the proposals as presented, and accordingly, it was

RESOLVED –

That Council be recommended to:

- (a) approve the changes affecting Directors/Heads of Service as shown in the organisational chart attached as Appendix 2 to the Committee report, noting that this would be amended to reflect the inclusion of the Strategic Planning Service; and
- (b) note the intention of the Chief Executive and/or Head of Personnel to implement the organisational changes below Director/Heads of Service level.