

Item 5(d) – Senior Management Restructure

Cabinet's Recommendation to Council

At its meeting on 10 January 2013 the Cabinet considered the matter as follows:

Members considered a report setting out a proposal for a restructure of the Council's senior management that would meet the commitment within the four year savings plan to deliver a reduction in senior management costs of £302,000.

The report outlined the criteria used to help shape the proposal, the proposed senior management structure, a summary of the consultation carried out with staff and the process that would be followed in appointing to new posts.

The Chief Executive Designate stressed that it was never easy to save money, particularly in an already lean authority such as Sevenoaks District Council. £60,000 savings had already been made following the departure of the Head of Finance and Human Resources and the Head of Development Services. The Director of Community and Planning Services had also offered to take voluntary redundancy and this would contribute toward the £302,000 savings that were required.

The proposed structure at Appendix A of the report had been developed to meet the anticipated future challenges and reflected a move towards a Chief Officer structure. The proposed Chief Officer roles were:

- Chief Officer Communities and Business
- Chief Officer Environmental and Operational Services
- Chief Officer Housing
- Chief Officer Corporate Support
- Chief Officer Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer)
- Chief Officer Planning
- Chief Officer Finance

The posts of Chief Officer Finance and Chief Officer Planning would be subject to competitive assimilation including external competition.

The Chief Executive Designate reported that consultation had been undertaken with both Unison and affected staff and there had been no indication that the proposed structure was not supported. The Chief Executive Designate stated that the departure of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Community and Planning Services would leave a significant gap at a senior level particularly due to her contributions in transforming the Council.

The Chairman highlighted that significant changes to the senior management structure had already been made and were reflected in the report. One of the great successes of Sevenoaks District Council was its ability to develop its staff and prepare them for more senior roles. The Chairman stressed that this report was the first stage in the reorganisation process and further reviews of structures across the Council would be taking place. Sevenoaks District Council had found

itself in the very fortunate position that the current Chief Executive had given early indication of his intention to retire which had meant that the Council had incurred no additional costs. The decision taken by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Community and Planning Services had also allowed the organisation to move forward.

In response to a question from a visiting Member, the Chairman reported that a review of Member-level governance structures would also be taking place in order to ensure that these structures complemented the Officer structures.

A Member suggested that one area of concern was the effect that the proposed changes and the resulting period of instability could have on the Planning Department however, she was working with the Chief Executive Designate to minimise this. The Member stressed the need to ensure that the current high standards were maintained. The Chief Executive reported that senior officers would be working hard over the next six months to prepare for the proposed changes and ensuring that the transition was as seamless as possible.

Resolved: That:

- (a) The report be endorsed;
- (b) It be noted that the costs associated with the restructure of senior management will be limited to, and met from, the earmarked Reorganisation Reserves as approved by Council in February 2012; and
- (c) It be noted that the cost of any service restructures resulting from the new senior management structure will be limited to, and met from, existing service budgets.