

## STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT TEAM RESTRUCTURE

Cabinet - 11 July 2019

Report of	Chief Executive
Status	For Decision
Also considered by	Council - 23 July 2019
Key Decision	No

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**Executive Summary:** This report sets out a proposed Strategic Management Team restructure to better enable the Council to meet the priorities set out in its new Council Plan and the ambitions of Members following the District Council elections in May this year.

It is proposed that the Chief Officer roles are reduced from five posts to four posts and a new Strategic Advisor role for Commercial & Property is introduced to increase focus and bring new skills in to the organisation for regeneration and the delivery of capital projects.

This will result in two existing roles being deleted and the post holders, with their mutual agreement, leaving the organisation.

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Portfolio Holder	Cllr Peter Fleming
Contact Officer	Dr Pav Ramewal, Ext. 7298

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**Recommendation to Cabinet:** That it is recommended to Council to approve the restructure of the Council's Strategic Management Team.

**Recommendation to Council:** That the restructure of the Council's Strategic Management Team is approved.

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**Reason for recommendation:** A proposed restructure of the Strategic Management Team is recommended to ensure the council is well placed to deliver on its Council Plan promises and on the objectives set out by the Leader of the Council and Cabinet.

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### Introduction and Background

- 1 This report sets out a proposed senior management restructure to better enable the Council to meet the priorities set out in its new Council Plan and the ambitions of Members following the District Council elections in May this year.

- 2 The current senior management structure, as set out as Appendix A to this report, was adopted in May 2015. The Chief Executive is supported by five Chief Officers, who together with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (& Monitoring Officer) and the Head of Transformation and Strategy, make up the Council's Strategic Management Team.

## Council Priorities

- 3 Members will be aware that the Council became the first in the country to become self-sufficient of central government funding in 2017, fulfilling a promise made to residents. This was achieved over a time period where the Council has gone from receiving a grant of over £5 million, to no grant funding at all in 2018.
- 4 An innovative 10 year budget, exceptional financial management and long-term strategic planning have enabled the Council to deliver savings, increase income and reduce costs. Through innovation and tough choices, services have been protected and residents have not seen a decline in the level of service provided. These achievements have been widely recognised by our colleagues in local government and beyond.
- 5 Although we are proud of our achievements and how we have met the challenges of the past four years, there are more challenges to come. The new Council Plan, adopted in November 2018 begins to set out what some of those may be, and importantly sets out what it is that the Council wants to deliver for its residents in the years ahead.
- 6 The Council Plan sets out five themes of community safety, environment, economy, housing and health. It explains that wellbeing will be at the heart of everything we do, and confirms that we will continue to focus on our three pillars of excellence, innovation and value for money in the provision of services to our customers. The promises within the Council Plan include:
  - Protecting our high quality natural environment through a robust Local Plan;
  - Strengthening the District's thriving economy through the regeneration of our market towns, making better use of existing employment sites, redeveloping previously used land and enhancing both the visitor and rural economies;
  - Delivering our Housing Strategy for Sevenoaks District;
  - Protecting the strong local identities of our neighbourhoods, ensuring residents will be safe, healthy and proud of the area in which they live and work;
  - Building strong and connected neighbourhoods where residents feel proud of where they live and have a sense of belonging; and
  - Delivering first class wellbeing services, supporting residents to make healthy choices, and linking them to our core services such as leisure and housing.

- 7 Specific objectives that have been set for the Chief Executive to enable the new Council Plan to be delivered include:
- Ensuring that capital projects are delivered to programme;
  - Increasing investment income by £300,000 per annum by 2023;
  - Delivering the customer redesign project across the Council;
  - Delivering 100 genuinely affordable homes, that are in line with the local housing allowance, within 10 years;
  - Improving levels of community engagement through a programme of work in local areas and neighbourhoods; and
  - Creating opportunities for empowered communities to deliver positive change in their local area.
- 8 Although each of these objectives have timescales that extend beyond this year, it is imperative the Council takes decisions early and begins to implement plans for their delivery almost immediately. Our experience has shown that preparing early will provide better long-term benefits and increase the likelihood of the Council being successful in achieving its aims.
- 9 From initial discussions with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet, it is clear that there is a requirement to review the Strategic Management Team structure, to ensure that it is aligned to the achievement of the ambitions that Members have set out and has the right roles and skills in place to deliver on the Council's objectives.

### **Strategic Management Team Restructure**

- 10 Having considered the needs of the Council to deliver its priorities it is proposed that the Chief Officer roles are reduced from five posts to four posts and a new Strategic Advisor role for Commercial & Property is introduced to increase focus and bring new skills in to the organisation for regeneration and the delivery of capital projects.
- 11 The proposed new structure is set out in the diagram at Appendix B, which also shows the responsibilities of each of the posts. The paragraphs below set out the changes to existing roles, albeit job titles are still to be finalised.
- 12 Chief Officer Finance & Trading - The criteria for this role includes holding appropriate qualifications to be the Council's section 151 Officer. In addition to the responsibilities of the existing Chief Finance Officer role this Chief Officer area will also include responsibility for Direct Services, Parking Services, and Emergency Planning & Property Services. Responsibility for Revenues & Benefits services will transfer to the Chief Officer for Customer & Resources. The role of the Chief Officer Finance & Trading enables the Council to have a single responsible officer for the Council's priorities for financial self-sufficiency, value for money and assets.

- 13 Chief Officer Planning & Regulatory Services - The criteria for this role includes holding appropriate qualifications to be the Council's Chief Planning Officer. In addition to the responsibilities of the existing Chief Planning Officer, this Chief Officer area will also include responsibility for Environmental Health and Licensing. It should be noted that responsibility for housing policy will not remain in this area, and instead be overseen by the Chief Officer for People & Places. The role of the Chief Officer Planning & Regulatory Services will ensure a strong focus on all planning matters, which are critical to our residents and enable greater co-operation amongst services that have a positive impact on the quality of the environment.
- 14 Chief Officer Customer & Resources - It is a requirement for this role to be the Deputy Electoral Registration Officer and to act as the Deputy Monitoring Officer. In addition to the responsibilities of the existing Chief Officer Corporate Services, which also includes Customer Services, IT and HR, this Chief Officer area will also include responsibility for digital services and council tax, business rates and benefits. This Chief Officer area retains a strong focus on the Council's organisational culture and approach to the customer, and responsibility for the delivery of the customer redesign, which is a priority for Members.

#### **New Roles**

- 15 The new roles within the proposed structure, Chief Officer People and Places and Strategic Advisor Commercial & Property (job titles to be confirmed), are explained further in the paragraphs that follow.
- 16 Chief Officer People & Places - This new role will have a strong focus on the empowerment of communities, to increase levels of community engagement and to ensure the co-creation of a vision for each local place.
- 17 The post holder will work with partners, town and parish councils, local community groups and the voluntary sector, to help the Council to better understand and identify local aspirations and priorities, and will have skills in building community capacity. It is hoped that this will extend to increasing active inclusion and to develop opportunities for enhanced engagement with groups who are more vulnerable and hard to reach.
- 18 The intention will be to deliver more community-led solutions that tackle priorities that matter most to local people. This will be achieved through a more joined-up, collaborative and participative approach to services working with all sectors. This should enable better outcomes for everyone and increased opportunities for people and communities to shape their own lives.
- 19 The role will bring together all of the Council's housing functions alongside those for health and wellbeing. This ensures an ongoing focus on health and housing, and provides a focal point for embedding wellbeing across Council services, which is a key ambition of the Council Plan.
- 20 Strategic Advisor Commercial & Property - This new role will report directly to the Chief Executive and provide the Council with additional commercial

and property market experience to enable it to deliver on its ambitions for growth in income and a growing portfolio of investments in the residential and commercial property markets.

- 21 Critical to the success of the post is the ability to create opportunities for inward investment, opportunities to invest in property for commercial and social benefit, and to provide advice on other opportunities to adopt a commercial approach to areas of the Council's business.
- 22 The post holder will be effective in creating strong and effective networks at local, regional and national level. They will be an outstanding negotiator and have a proven track record in identifying projects that have been delivered to improve local places, and identifying investment opportunities which generate sustainable income through resilient property portfolios.
- 23 The post holder will be supported by the Council's Head of Economic Development & Property and hold overall responsibility for the services they provide.
- 24 Having consulted the existing Chief Officers about the proposed structure it has been mutually agreed that both Lesley Bowles and Richard Wilson will not seek appointment to the new structure.
- 25 As a result and following the advice of the HR Manager:
  - Jim Carrington-West will be appointed to the role of Chief Officer Customer & Resources;
  - Adrian Rowbotham will be appointed to the role of Chief Officer Finance & Trading;
  - Richard Morris will be appointed to the role of Chief Officer Planning & Regulatory Services;
  - An external recruitment exercise will be undertaken for the post of Chief Officer People & Places; and
  - An external recruitment exercise will be undertaken for the Strategic Advisor - Commercial & Property.
- 26 Should the recommendations of this report be accepted, I would hope Members would join me in recording our sincere thanks to both Lesley Bowles (Chief Officer Communities & Business) and Richard Wilson (Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services) for their exemplary service to the council and its communities. They have each contributed significantly to the council's recent success, had a lasting impact on the way the council manages and delivers its services, and improved the strength of its reputation locally and nationally. On a personal note they are both respected and trusted colleagues who have provided me with support and advice that I will always be grateful for.

## **Company Directors**

- 27 It should be noted that both Lesley Bowles and Richard Wilson are currently Directors of the Council's wholly-owned companies, Quercus 7 Ltd and Quercus Housing Ltd.
- 28 When their employment with the District Council ends they will automatically cease to hold the office of Company Director. As required, the Trading Board will appoint new Directors, who will be Officers from the Council's Strategic Management Team. In considering the recommendations of this report, Members should note the use of this delegated responsibility, which will ensure the ongoing and proper management of the Council's trading companies in line with their articles of association.

## **Other Options Considered and/or Rejected**

- 29 Consultation has been undertaken with staff that are affected by the proposed restructure of the Strategic Management Team. As part of the consultation process Officers are invited to bring forward any comments on the proposals, which can include any amendments or alternative proposals that they wish to be considered. At the time of writing no alternative structures had been put forward for consideration.
- 30 Members should note that the consultation period closed on Friday 5 July, one week after the time this report was written. As a result any further consultation responses that require Member's attention will be reported at the meeting.

## **Key Implications**

### Financial

The costs associated with delivering the restructure will be met from within existing budgets and will be limited to the costs that the Council is required to pay under national terms and conditions. The restructure is not designed to deliver financial savings to the organisation.

### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

Advice has been taken from the Council's Legal and HR teams to ensure that appropriate procedures and processes have been followed in the restructure of the Strategic Management Team.

### Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

## **Conclusions**

A proposed restructure of the Strategic Management Team is recommended to ensure the Council is well placed to deliver on its Council Plan promises and on the

objectives set out by the Leader of the Council and Cabinet. This will result in two existing roles being deleted and the post holders, with their mutual agreement, leaving the organisation.

**Appendices**

Appendix A - Current Strategic Management Team structure

Appendix B - Proposed Strategic Management Team structure

**Background Papers**

None

**Dr Pav Ramewal  
Chief Executive**