

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive – 9 February 2011

Theme 5 of the Core Council Review (CCR) Legal & Democratic Services

Report of the Legal and Democratic Services Manager

(This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council and Executive Councillor Vivienne Stock Williams)

1. Executive Summary

On the 13 December 2011 the Council approved the proposed changes to Theme 5 for the Core Council Review. As part of those proposals it was agreed to create a Corporate Business Support Unit. It was also agreed that a minimum of £50,000 savings should be delivered from the re-structure. This report now deals with the structure of the Corporate Support Unit

2. Background

- 2.1 As part of Theme 5 of the Core Council Review (CCR) it was agreed that there should be a further review of Legal & Democratic Services.
- 2.2 The report to Corporate Scrutiny on the 22 September 2011 contained a full range of options for the Corporate Management team together with options for Legal & Democratic Services, support functions for Strategy & Corporate and the directors.
- 2.3 The Theme Manager for Legal & Democratic Services was tasked with creating a Corporate Support Unit to take effect from the 1 April 2012.
- 2.4 A report on the proposed new structure for the new Corporate Support Unit was presented to Corporate Scrutiny Committee on the 24 November and the Committee agreed that the Executive should be recommended to approve the new structure.
- 2.5 On the 13 December Full Council approved the proposed changes to Theme 5 of the CCR

3. Proposals for the Corporate Support Unit

3.1 The Legal & Democratic Services Manager was given the following terms of reference. The new service would be required to:-

- Deliver a service that is resilient, flexible and responsive;
- Deliver different ways of working to ensure that stakeholders' needs are met and within resource capacity;
- Deliver a service that meets the need of the key stakeholders, namely, the Leader of the Council, the mayoralty, CEO, Directors, Theme 1 managers and councillors as a whole.
- Deliver a minimum of £50,000 savings per annum.

3.2 The following posts have been reviewed as part of this re-structure;

- Democratic Services Manager – Legal & Democratic Services
- Democratic Support Manager – Legal & Democratic Services
- Democratic Services Officer – Legal & Democratic Services
- Democratic Services Officer – Legal & Democratic Services
- Administration Assistant – Legal & Democratic Services
- Civic Officer & PA – Legal & Democratic Services
- Electoral Services Manager – Legal & Democratic Services
- Parish Liaison Officer – Legal & Democratic Services
- PA – Corporate Management
- PA – Corporate Management
- PA – Corporate Management
- Administrative Assistant – Strategy Unit
- Administrative Assistant – Performance & Client Unit

3.3 Interviews were undertaken with all of the staff who either would be part of the unit as well as the stakeholders who will use the resources in the unit. It was quickly established through those conversations that it would be necessary to ensure not only flexibility and resilience, but also ownership of the tasks assigned to the various staff if this unit was to be a success. Therefore the proposed structure set out in Appendix 1 aims to achieve this balance. Also attached at Appendix 1 is the overall structure for Legal & Democratic Services should this structure be approved.

3.4 It was also clear from the review that there is a wide range of work that would need to be catered for and in some cases the need to understand the work of various officers who would use the service, especially in terms of sensitive and highly confidential work. Therefore it is proposed that throughout the unit officers will be nominated to certain areas in order to

provide some consistency and responsibility. However all officers within the unit must understand and have the opportunity to experience the different work-streams that the unit will need to support.

3.5 The proposed structure will allow for this to occur and all officers within the unit will be required to understand the various processes and procedures that operate. For example, the rules of debate and how the decision-making process operates so that there will always be resource to service meetings or to support these processes.

3.6 In addition, the proposed structure will also allow for support to be given in areas that have not previously had the support due to the restrictions of the current structure. For example, legal services were previously meant to receive a ½ FTE administrative support but that has not been possible in the past but will be possible under the new structure.

3.7 Therefore the advantages of the proposed structure are:

- greater flexibility and resilience;
- the range of grades ensures that work can be done at the correct level rather than lower grade work being carried out at a higher level and vice versa;
- it allows for rotation of work whilst allowing for officers to maintain responsibility for certain areas
- savings of approximately £60,515 per annum

3.9 In addition to the one to one interviews a formal consultation period has also been carried out and the details of those responses and the management response are set out in Appendix 2. No comments have been received from Unison.

4. HR Comments

4.1 It will be apparent from the proposed structure that there are a number of HR implications in this proposal.

4.2 All of the new posts have now been job evaluated and the grades stated are confirmed as those given in the structure set out in Appendix 1.

4.3 There are however a number of officers who have been put at risk of redundancy due to this new structure whilst others have been slotted into new posts. Set out in Appendix 3 are details of those posts who have been put at risk and those who have been slotted in.

5. Finance Comments

5.1 The proposed structure will generate an on-going saving of £60,515 per annum. However redundancy costs will need to be taken into account.

These are likely to be no more than £71,491.53 although it is hoped that they will be lower than this figure.

6. Legal Comments

- 6.1 Any restructure must ensure that all due processes are followed but there are no other legal implications relating to this proposal.

7. Links to Corporate Aims

- 7.1 This report assumes that the current corporate aims will remain broadly for the life of this Council and all of the posts referred to will work to ensure those aims are met.

8. Environmental Implications

- 8.1 There are no environmental implications in this report.

9. Community Safety Implications

- 9.1 There are no Community Safety implications in this report.

10. Equalities Impact

- 10.1 The author of this report has screened the potential impact of these options in relation to the elimination of discrimination, the advancement of equality or opportunity and promoting community relations. The outcome of the initial screening concluded that this option would not have a negative impact on those with the following protected characteristics, age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership.

11. Risk Management

- 12.1 A failure to ensure that a flexible and resilient service is provided for the Strategy and Corporate Theme could lead to reputational risks as well as legal challenges should the council fail to comply with the relevant statutory guidelines, e.g. in respect of agendas being sent out in compliance with statutory timescales or decisions being made in accordance with the Council's constitution.

12. Partnership Implications (if any)

- 12.1 All support to the Council's partnerships that are currently carried out by the Strategy unit will continue to be carried out therefore no detriment will be suffered.

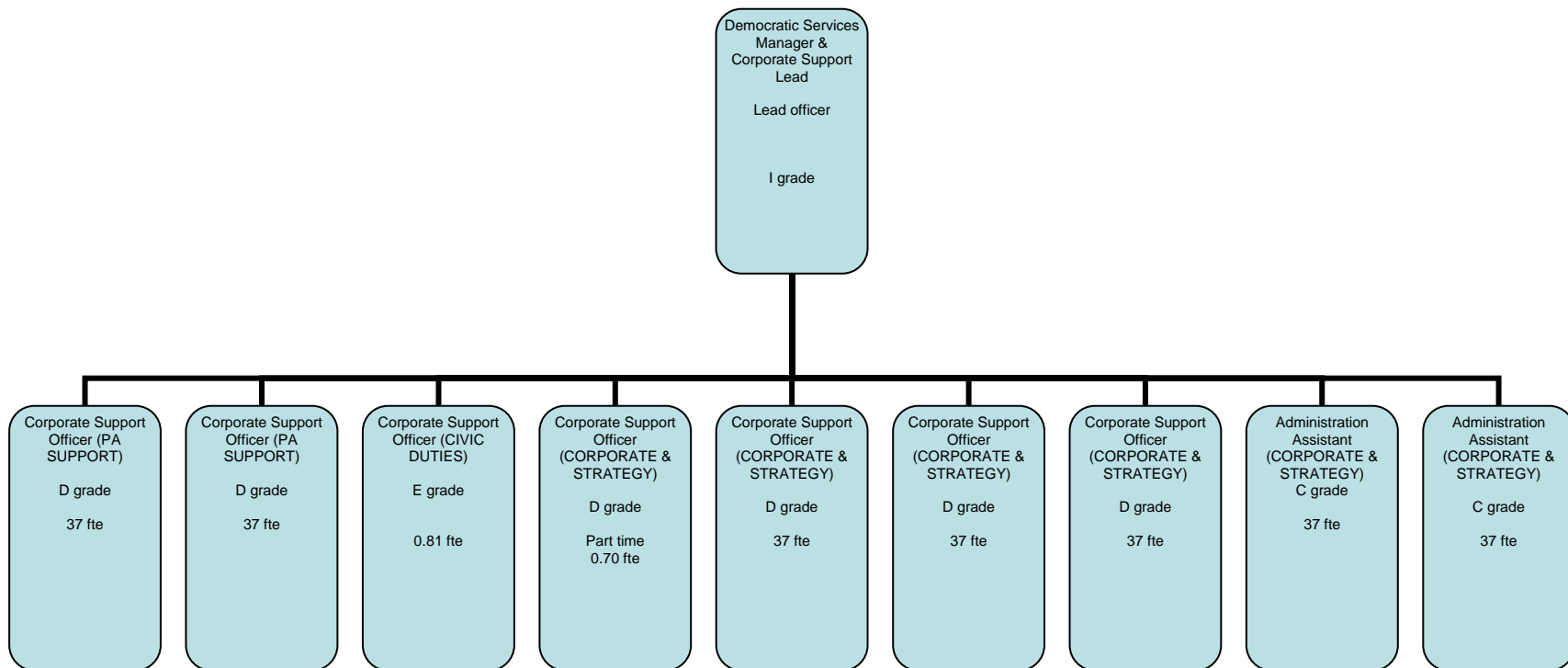
13. Recommendations

- 13.1. The Executive recommends to Full Council that the proposed structure be should be approved.
- 13.2. The Executive recommends to Full Council a Supplementary Budget allocation of up to £72,000 in 2011/12, funded from reserves, related to redundancy costs

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Appendix 1 – EXECUTIVE 9 FEBRUARY 2012 - CORPORATE SUPPORT UNIT – PROPOSED STRUCTURE



Appendix 1.1 – Executive 9 February 2012 - Legal & Democratic Services

