

SUBJECT:	STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM ADJUSTMENTS
MEETING:	Council
DATE:	11th March 2021
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To propose some minor changes to the structure and portfolio balance of the Strategic Leadership Team recognising key external contextual changes that will shape the next stage of the Council's development.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To re-designate the current Chief Officer Resources as Chief Officer Resources / Deputy Chief Executive and the current Head of Law / Monitoring Officer as Chief Officer People and Governance. In accordance with Art 4.02(g) of the December 2017 Constitution this requires Council's endorsement.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Council has enjoyed a stable officer leadership structure over the last few years. This has enabled the policy agenda of the Council to be advanced with clear political direction and purposeful officer leadership. The last 12 months in particular has presented some extraordinary challenges to the whole organisation and to the community that it serves. The Council at all levels has proven itself capable of adapting to this situation. It has operated with purpose, clarity and agility. Challenges have been overcome. Now is the time to turn our attention to what comes next.
- 3.2 Society is coming to terms with a new reality. Phrases such as 'build back better' and 'a new normal' are more rhetoric than convincing narrative at this stage but nevertheless it is fair to say that a return to conditions prevalent in January 2020 is unlikely and in many respects undesirable. The Council had already set itself a clear policy position on tackling climate change through declaring a climate emergency and similarly debated hard the desire to address some of the deep seated inequality issues prevalent within and between communities. A revised Social Justice Strategy agreed by Cabinet on 3 March 2021 sets out ambitions on this latter agenda.
- 3.3 The economy locally, nationally and internationally will need to re-invent itself with many people needing to re-skill / re-train given the upheaval in the employment market. The real consequence of the COVID pandemic on unemployment will not be understood until the UK wide furlough scheme un-winds. At the time of writing this un-winding is imminent albeit commentators are suggesting that the Chancellor is considering an extension

through to September 2021. The Chancellor will have set out a UK budget and Welsh Government will have finalised its budget for Wales since the writing of this report. Both will set out some medium term policy direction that the Council will need to position itself for.

- 3.4 Public transport and the heavy infrastructure necessary to make it work for citizens faces significant upheaval whilst our learners will need to be supported to recover time lost. We are still to truly understand the impact of 'long COVID' on individuals and the consequences of the emotional strain put upon health and care workers in particular. Whilst confronting death is part of their role, having to do so on the scale presented by the pandemic is without precedent. Add to this the whole re-socialising experience of a population required to live apart and at a distance for an extended period and the conditions are set not for a period of 'recovery' – that will not be enough; it is more likely to be 'reformation' which is a challenge of a very different order.
- 3.5 All of this will come with a heavy financial bill at a time when UK borrowing is at a peace time high. Council financing is uncertain beyond financial year 2021/22 but the calls on the organisation will grow.
- 3.6 Certainly in Monmouthshire there is evidence that COVID and flooding have been characterised by local people looking first and foremost to their Council; the level of democracy closest to them and elected representatives that they know and can contact easily. This seems to have been particularly the case in other border areas where sense-making the different policy positions of UK and Welsh Government has not always been straightforward. It hasn't always been easy but public sentiment has been positive and compliance / adherence to COVID rules / restrictions has been very high in Monmouthshire.
- 3.7 The Council has long acknowledged that social capital in the county is high. Many local people have the will, capability and sense of attachment to come together and act for the benefit of others. This feature of our pre-COVID work and COVID response is going to need to be built on as we go forward. This will not happen through luck or magic. It will require work at all levels and the Council will need to reflect on its desire to see higher levels of community participation in the way that it designs its decision-making and delivery of services. Put simply, if there is a desire to see even more community action then it is reasonable to assume that communities in turn will be seek a different role in the decision-making process.
- 3.8 At the same time we are weeks away from a Senedd Cymru election and 14 months out from County Council elections. These cycles are forever slightly asynchronous. Cabinet has agreed that it will continue through the spring and summer months to produce Plans on a Page. These high level tactical documents have served well over the last 12 months and it seems sensible to continue with them as the Council becomes clearer on the next Welsh Government policy agenda in the first half of 2021.
- 3.9 The Council also needs to plan for and implement the requirements of the Local Government and Elections Act 2021. This is a significant piece of legislation that will

impact our governance and performance management systems as well as our external relationships.

- 3.10 Paragraphs 3.1 – 3.9 set out a short context for adjustments to the leadership team portfolio balance. In summary the proposed changes are:
- 3.10.1.1 Chief Executive – no change other than a need to devote more time to external activity to ensure the Council is optimally positioned to take advantage of opportunity brought about by legislative events at UK and Wales levels.
 - 3.10.1.2 Chief Officer Resources – the Council has operated without a Deputy Chief Executive since the current Chief Executive of the Cardiff Capital Region went on secondment. With the Chief Executive needing to adjust to benefit the Council, having a recognised Deputy will be beneficial to the organisation and to Councillors. It is proposed to re-designate the Chief Officer Resources as Chief Officer Resources / Deputy Chief Executive and to create some headroom for the expanded role by moving the 'People portfolio' to the current Head of Law / Monitoring Officer.
 - 3.10.1.3 Head of Law / Monitoring Officer – it makes sense to align the governance activity of the Council with this portfolio and the incumbent is willing to take a strategic lead on People Services and Emergency Planning when the current post-holder retires. This will be good career development and bring together a well balanced portfolio. It is proposed to re-designate the Head of Law / Monitoring Officer as Chief Officer People and Governance.
 - 3.10.1.4 Chief Officer Social Care, Health and Safeguarding – no change.
 - 3.10.1.5 Chief Officer Children and Young People – some additional input around the Youth Service but other than that no change.
 - 3.10.1.6 Chief Officer Enterprise – no change other than MonLife to become freestanding with the Chief Operating Officer having specific delegated responsibilities as set out in an earlier report on this agenda on Constitution Review.
 - 3.10.1.7 Head of Policy and Governance – Governance and democracy aspects transfer to Head of Law / Monitoring Officer creating necessary space for a re-designated Head of Policy, Performance and Scrutiny to take forward key aspects of the Local Government and Elections Act 2021, assume responsibility for the whole authority complaints function and devote attention to key third party relationships.
- 3.11 There will be line management changes for some teams but no direct or indirect implication for the terms and conditions of any individual other than the two posts highlighted in the report recommendations. As such these will be management actions that will be discharged if the recommendations in this report are agreed. That being said specific conversations will take place with all teams that are impacted with an agreed and revised organisation schematic being issued to councillors that will come into place from 1 April 2021.

4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 4.1 There are endless permutations to portfolio balance across the Strategic Leadership Team including leaving things as they are. The Team has given the matter significant thought and concluded that the proposed changes will enable each member of the team to play to their particular strength whilst providing a balance that is better suited to the agenda that the Council now needs to confront. The changes proposed add resilience without the need to add new posts

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 5.1 The success of the Strategic Leadership Team is tied to the success of the Council. A competent effective Team is so much more than suitably skilled and qualified professionals. Seldom do organisations succeed by accident, albeit this is sometimes possible in the short-term. In the longer term vision, strategy, structure, systems, style, measures and learning wrapped into a culture that talks to the values of the organisation all need to be in place by design. Members will be aware of the frequency of audit, inspection and regulatory activity that the Council is subject to as well as the performance and assessment mechanisms that are in place internally. However the ultimate judgement is always progress made with the delivery of the Corporate Plan which, if designed well should talk very directly to the manifesto commitments of the Administration and, as importantly, ensuring that these commitments are delivered within the democratically agreed budget for the year through a series of lawful actions in keeping with the approved Constitution.

6. REASONS:

- 6.1 To ensure that the Strategic Leadership Team of the Council is capable of delivering the policy priorities of the Council and responding positively to the dynamic external environment.
- 6.2 To improve the resilience of the Strategic Leadership Team within the resources available.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 The proposed changes will see the Chief Officer Resources / Deputy Chief Executive proceeding to the bottom of Chief Officer pay band A+ and the Chief Officer People and Governance proceeding to the bottom of Chief Officer pay band A. These changes to be implemented from 1 April 2021. This is an advancement of one incremental point for each position in financial year 2021/22 at a cost to the Council of £15k inclusive of employer on-costs. This increase will be off-set by not replacing the Head of People Services position when the post-holder retires later in the year with a consequent saving in 2021/22 of £87k and £105k in each full year thereafter.
- 7.2 The net benefit of £72k to the Council in financial year 2021/22 has not been factored into the budget for 2021/22 discussed earlier on this agenda. This sum will initially be allocated to the General Fund Reserve when realised.

8. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

8.1 The changes proposed in this report have a neutral impact. They look to re-allocate officer leadership responsibility and do not introduce / mitigate any risk in these areas.

9. CONSULTEES:

Senior Leadership Team
Cabinet

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

11. AUTHOR

Paul Matthews, Chief Executive

12. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 01633 644041 / 07939 316181

E-mail: paulmatthews@monmouthshire.gov.uk