

Joint Response to the Proposed Senior Management Restructure

Background and context

The four corporate directors directly affected by the proposed senior management restructure, together with the Joint Director of Public Health, welcome the opportunity to feedback on the proposal for a new leadership model for Wiltshire Council that will delete the post of chief executive and reduce the number of corporate directors from four to three.

Our combined response sets out our thoughts and considerations and is an illustration of our joint commitment to the vision presented in the proposal. It reaffirms our belief that together we can be a strong and dynamic senior management team that can lead the organisation to deliver its four year plan and effectively manage the challenges that it faces over the next few years.

We recognise that the council is in a strong position and that the strategic plans, that are in place, clearly set out what we will achieve and deliver for the people of Wiltshire in the next few years. We also recognise that these plans must be delivered.

We acknowledge and understand the financial challenges facing the council and the need to make substantial savings over the few years, including £36 million next year.

In this context, we have reflected on the proposal and are confident that by continuing to work closely with the cabinet that the 4 year business plan will be delivered, the budget and financial pressures will be managed, and that we will promote and embed a culture that places our customers first, focuses on communities and working locally, and adopts a can-do approach in everything that we do.

The proposed model – leading the council

We are quite clear that the leadership of the council is the politicians who set the vision, direction and policies for the council, and that the corporate leadership team manages staff, plans and resources to deliver this vision.

Whilst we realise that the model will take some time to develop and evolve, and that its success will be based on establishing close and effective working relationships, we believe that the team is mature enough to achieve this and that the organisation is ready for a new model.

The changing role of local authorities' means new models of leadership must be developed and tested. We recognise the need to continue to build closer relationships with communities and partner organisations and we have all signed up to the principals that our communities and customers are at the forefront of everything we do. This model reflects that culture.

The proposal will place Wiltshire Council in the spotlight and we will be viewed as a vanguard being the first unitary to adopt such a model. We welcome this opportunity

to be part of developing and testing a new model and to work with the leader, deputy leader and the cabinet to make this exciting opportunity a model of best practice leadership for other authorities to adopt.

The role of the corporate directors

The role of the corporate directors will need to change from our current definition. A reduction of forty per cent in capacity at senior management level will mean a fundamentally different role.

This will include:

- Delivering the business plan
- Delivering a balanced budget
- Future business and financial planning
- Being the champions for safeguarding across the organisation
- Policy development with cabinet – responding to emerging legislation changes - particularly around the community and place agenda
- Transformational change and improvement programmes, and
- Shaping and embedding our values and behaviours to reflect a culture of excellence and can-do.

The test of success for this model will be our approach and working together with a focus on the whole organisation. We will have a corporate overview, building our knowledge, insight and understanding of all service areas. The proposed structure will also mean working closely with the service directors to enhance their role and visibility in the organisation to deliver the business plan and the organisational values and behaviours.

We would suggest that the corporate directors:

- Work closely with the cabinet to advise and deliver
- Deliver the business and financial plan
- Share responsibility for all the management decisions
- Have equal responsibility and accountability for all aspects of the business, including the budget and service performance, risk and reputation management
- Are accountable for embedding the council's values and behaviours and are role models for the organisation
- Focus on building a team with the service directors
- Deliver consistent messages and effective communication to all staff and members
- Support and challenge one another to encourage improved performance and delivery

How the new model CLT could work

How the new model CLT works together will be vital. The organisation will look to this team as its role model for performance, delivery and behaviours.

We would propose that:

- CLT meets weekly and that part of the meeting is allocated as time to meet with the leader, deputy leader and other relevant cabinet members, as appropriate, to ensure clear policy advice and development, communication and fast decision making.
- There would be real benefit from having the additional membership of the statutory officers of the council, namely the 151 officer, the monitoring officer, as well as communications (and as appropriate other posts). This will be critical over the next 2-3 years, as we strive to embed the values and behavioural change in the organisation. We will be a dynamic corporate team, accountable for increasing organisational effectiveness and performance and we will provide strong and clear leadership.
- With the help and expertise of the PAs in the corporate and cabinet offices we will review the support arrangements and agree the best model for the future.
- Responsibilities including those previously held by the chief executive post will be shared equitably across the team. We would propose that the Head of Paid Service is allocated to the Director for HR and Organisational Development as this is essentially a role related to staff management.
- Each corporate director would have a statutory responsibility in addition, CD1 (adults), CD2 (children), CD3 (returning officer).
- The scheme of delegation is reviewed and revised to meet the changes proposed in line with the new model.
- Cabinet and CLT will continue to meet regularly – at least monthly.
- A formal individual external appraisal system is adopted with a provider such as SOLACE, or similar to provide objective feedback, constructive challenge and development for the corporate directors.

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