



## **ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**MEETING** : Wednesday, 25th November 2015

**PRESENT** : Cllrs. James (Chair), Dallimore (Vice-Chair), Haigh, Hilton and D. Norman

**Others in Attendance**

Lloyd Griffiths, Head of Neighbourhood Services

Anthony Wilson, Head of Planning

Colin Parkin, Shared HR Service

Tanya Davies, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

### **8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

8.1 There were no declarations of interest.

### **9. REALIGNMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

9.1 The Committee considered a report of the Head of Neighbourhood Services concerning proposals for a new Neighbourhood Management Service to realign the existing Environmental Planning and Neighbourhood Management Teams.

9.2 The Head of Neighbourhood Services summarised the proposals and explained that they would deliver the required £100,000 savings while protecting frontline services. He noted that no changes had been made to the proposals as a result of the consultation feedback.

9.3 Councillor Haigh asked if there were any future plans to work more closely with the Fire Service to deliver community safety work. She noted the proposed reduction in Neighbourhood Managers and advised that community groups struggled to know who to contact in respect of different matters that arose; she emphasised the importance of building relationships that would help the Council to deliver its aims.

9.4 The Head of Neighbourhood Services advised that Community Safety did not sit within the service areas in question and explained that the Neighbourhood Manager roles would be reviewed to help strengthen links with communities and deliver the Council's Asset Based Community Development priorities.

9.5 The Vice Chair explained that the Fire Service was represented on Safer Gloucester and that consideration would be given to whether Community Safety

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should sit with the Partnership and Engagement Team. She advised that the role of Neighbourhood Managers had changed over time and was currently more focused on environmental matters. She encouraged Members to refer issues raised by community groups to the Partnerships and Engagement Team and noted that the Council welcomed contact from such groups.

- 9.6 Councillor D. Norman noted that the £100,000 savings would be achieved through a combination of changes to the structure and an increase in income and questioned how the income would be factored in. He asked whether the officers were confident that the indicative grades for the posts being re-evaluated were accurate.
- 9.7 The Head of Neighbourhood Services advised that the known income had been built into the proposals and that any new income would be factored in as it arose. He confirmed that the posts had been evaluated at the indicative grades.
- 9.8 The Chair suggested that the service manager post be re-titled 'Neighbourhood Services Manager'.
- 9.9 Councillor Hilton asked whether the responsibility for the stray dog service sat within Neighbourhood Services and noted concerns about service users incurring substantial bills as a result of the changes to the service.
- 9.10 The Head of Neighbourhood Services advised that the stray dog service would transfer to Worcestershire Regulatory Services from 1 December 2015 and that a Neighbourhood Manager within the team would oversee the service for Gloucester City.
- 9.11 Councillor Haigh enquired about the effective date for the proposed redundancies.
- 9.12 The HR representative confirmed that redundancy notices would be issued following approval of the proposals and that individual contractual notice periods would apply.
- 9.13 **RESOLVED** - that the proposal to re-align the Environmental Planning and Neighbourhood Management Services as outlined in Appendix 3 is approved for implementation.

**10. RESTRUCTURE OF PLANNING SERVICES**

- 10.1 The Committee considered a report of the Head of Planning concerning proposals for a new structure for Planning Services.
- 10.2 The Head of Planning summarised the proposals and noted that the service was required to make £100,000 of savings as part of the budget.
- 10.3 Councillor Hilton queried where planning enforcement featured within the proposals and was advised that it was part of the Private Sector Housing Service, which did not form part of the proposals.

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- 10.4 Councillor D. Norman asked whether the proposals would have an impact on the service's ability to bring in income.
- 10.5 The Chair asked whether the proposals addressed the issues resulting for part-time working arrangements within the service.
- 10.6 Councillor Haigh noted the deletion of a technician post and the comments made about the workloads as part of the consultation feedback. She asked where the ad hoc tasks should be undertaken.
- 10.7 The Head of Planning explained that the Development Control team would be largely unchanged and that funding had been received to support the additional Senior Planner post. A bid had also been submitted to the Homes and Communities Agency for funding for a further Planner post to work on applications within the Housing Zone and, if approved, this would create capacity elsewhere in the team to focus on development control. He reported that steps had been taken to ensure that any issues arising from part-time working arrangements were mitigated to prevent any break in service and confirmed that ad hoc graphic design work should be directed to the County Council shared service.
- 10.8 The Vice Chair questioned the omission of any reference to the importance of ABCD within the functions of Planning Services and called for it to be included in the relevant job description.
- 10.9 The Head of Planning agreed that community engagement was an essential part of the planning process and that officers would seek to strengthen that approach.
- 10.10 Councillor Haigh stated that Councils were not resourced to underwrite ABCD.
- 10.11 The Vice Chair advised that officers should be expected to have an understanding of strength-based community development in order to have the appropriate conversations with communities about what they wanted and how they it could be delivered.
- 10.12 The HR representative advised that it was appropriate for job descriptions to make reference to alignment with relevant council priorities and an understanding on ABCD could be built into the service in that way.
- 10.13 **RESOLVED** - that the proposed structure for Planning Services be agreed and implementation be progressed.

**Time of commencement: 6.00 pm hours**

**Time of conclusion: 6.30 pm hours**

**Chair**