

**Report for: Cabinet**

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Date of Meeting:	17 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
Subject:	Makeup of the senior officer structure in light of posts held vacant
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Luke Taylor, Leader
Responsible Officer:	Stephen Walford, Chief Executive
Exempt:	No
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	None

**Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

This report consider the makeup of the senior officer structure. The recommendation is to delete one of the Director roles in order to achieve financial savings. The post is currently vacant following a retirement earlier this year, therefore there are no redundancy costs associated with the removal of this post.

Advice has been sought from the Local Government Association (LGA) as to the appropriateness of the revised structure and the recommendation reflects such advice.

**Recommendation(s):**

- 1. That the senior officer (leadership team) structure be revised to delete one post, with responsibilities realigned across remaining posts as appropriate.**
- 2. That the new leadership team structure be implemented as soon as possible, subject to consultation with those employees affected, and in accordance with the relevant national terms and conditions for local authority senior officers.**

## **Section 2 – Report**

- 1.0 The council has had the same basic organisational makeup in its senior officer structure for almost seven years, with three Director-level posts alongside the Monitoring Officer. During that time, the remit of posts and postholders has varied, but the core capacity at strategic level has remained broadly consistent.
- 1.1 Following the retirement of a Director earlier this year, the team has operated in a holding pattern pending consideration of next steps. Such considerations have included leading by example when asking other teams to utilise vacancy management opportunities to deliver the savings targets as set by the council, alongside the desire to understand the priorities and expectations of the new administration following the elections in May 2023.
- 1.2 Given the changing nature of local government service provision and regulatory expectation, advice was also sought from the Local Government Association (LGA) on the appropriate senior officer structure for a direct delivery model District Council. This was done to provide some external assurance to Cabinet that the recommendations contained in this report were viable, sensible and achievable.
- 1.3 As part of the LGA assistance, all four of the current leadership team were interviewed, with the feedback reflecting a set of ‘excellent relationships and remarkable collaboration’ across senior roles. Such observations lend additional credibility to the ongoing functionality and effectiveness of the team in a resource-constrained environment.
- 2.0 In conclusion, the revised structure is deemed to be a good way forward for the organisation in light of current and future known challenges. It has been benchmarked by the national association for local government, and has the potential to realise financial savings compared to the current position without incurring any redundancy costs.

### **Financial Implications**

The recommendations, when implemented, will deliver a financial saving as compared to the currently-budgeted structure. Such savings will be reported through financial monitoring reports and summarised annually in the statutory pay statement that publishes the remuneration of officers who earn over £50,000.

### **Legal Implications**

It is considered that the council can continue to meet its legal obligations with this reduced senior officer structure. The legal implications resulting from the decision will relate to the appropriateness of implementing the changes in accordance with relevant employment law. This will be done in accordance with MDDC policy and with advice from SW Councils as required in order to minimise any risk.

### **Risk Assessment**

The main risks relate to the sufficiency (capacity) of strategic officer resource moving forward. However, this was considered, and external advice sought, as part of the process of formulating these recommendations. Risk is considered minimal.

## **Impact on Climate Change**

None identified.

## **Equalities Impact Assessment**

Implementation will be in accordance with MDDC HR Policy with evaluation undertaken externally by SW Councils. No other impacts identified.

## **Relationship to Corporate Plan**

The council's most senior officers work closely with the administration to advise on, and implement, the council's priorities as expressed in its corporate plan. This decision aligns to overarching efficiency ambitions but, as highlighted above, is probably most noteworthy in relation to the reduced capacity that will exist at strategic level.

## **Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks**

**Statutory Officer:** Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

**Date:** 27/09/23

**Statutory Officer:** Maria de Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

**Date:** 27/09/23

**Chief Officer:** Stephen Walford

**Date:** 13/09/23

**Cabinet member notified:** Yes.

## **Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Stephen Walford

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**Background papers:** None