

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: STAFFING COMMITTEE
DATE: 29 JUNE 2022
REPORT OF: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER & CHIEF EXECUTIVE
AUTHOR: ANDREA HARVEY

SUBJECT: SERVICE MANAGEMENT TEAM REVIEW
UPDATE AND ACTION PLAN

Purpose of Report

1. This report provides Members with an outline of the actions associated with the independent SMT review that was presented to, and approved by, the Fire Authority on 9 December 2020. It also provides an update on progress.

Recommended: That

- [1] Members note the actions contained within the plan and the progress to date.

Background

2. An independent review of the SMT structure was commissioned in July 2020 and was carried out by RealWorldHR Limited. The review team was charged with assessing a key question: is the Service Management Team structure fit for purpose and sustainable? The review took into account national benchmarking, a study of the Service's retirement profile, a review of the pensions landscape and a data gathering exercise that involved interviewing every member of the then current SMT.
3. The review came to a number of conclusions and highlighted some risks with the potential impact of retirements due to the age profile of SMT, capacity pressures in some areas, and the need to further embed the Blue Light Collaboration arrangements.
4. Emphasis was also placed on the need to put focus around workforce reform and identified two posts within the current SMT structure that presented opportunities for future savings.

Information

5. The review presented a number of recommendations which revolved around the following:

- Establishing the post of Deputy Chief Fire Officer and removing one of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer posts.
 - Increasing the contractual hours of the Section 151 Officer post.
 - Redefining the role of the Director of Transformation to focus on short term workforce reform and value for money reviews.
 - Reassigning responsibilities associated with the Director of Transformation role to the joint HR team to realise the savings associated with the longer-term collaboration arrangements.
 - Generating savings through the release of the post of Head of Prevention in 2021 and the release of the post of Director of Transformation in 2023.
6. The recommendations have been incorporated into the action plan attached at Appendix A. It is intended that this action plan will provide the audit trail for the implementation of the SMT review and it is expected that the actions will be delivered by Summer 2023. Updates are shown in blue text.
7. An additional recommendation was added to the action plan in June 2021; to re-establish an in-house Communications and Engagement team. This was proposed by the Chief Fire Officer and supported by Members in order to provide the Service with immediate access to a more bespoke communications service.
8. To ensure the appropriate level of scrutiny is afforded to progress with the delivery of the SMT review action plan, it is intended that progress reports are provided to members of the Staffing Committee twice a year.

Financial Implications

9. The delivery of the SMT review action plan will provide savings of approximately £160,000 over time as outlined below:

Financial year 2021/22

- Removal of ACFO post and establishment of DCFO post
- Increase in budget for Section 151 Officer post
- Removal of Head of Prevention post

Net revenue savings of £46,485 plus on-costs – circa £60,000

Financial year 2023/24

- Removal of Director of Transformation post

Net revenue savings of £77,745 plus on-costs – circa £100,000

Legal Implications

10. Certain actions associated with the SMT review will be delivered in accordance with relevant HR policies and procedures.

Equality and Diversity Implications

11. To ensure the Service is in compliance with its own policies and aspiration to be an inclusive employer, the recruitment of the DCFO post was subject to both internal and external advertising.

Environmental Implications

12. None

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Staffing Committee on 8th November 2021 – Item 5 – Service Management Team Review and Action Plan