

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: STAFFING COMMITTEE
DATE: 22 MARCH 2021
REPORT OF: CHIEF FIRE OFFICER & CHIEF EXECUTIVE
AUTHOR: ANDREA HARVEY

SUBJECT: SERVICE MANAGEMENT TEAM STRUCTURAL
REVIEW – ACTION PLAN

Purpose of Report

1. In December 2020 the Fire Authority made a number of decisions in relation to the Service Management Team (SMT) following an independent review. This report contains details of actions associated with those decisions.

Recommended: That

- [1] Members consider the Action Plan (and supplementary Transition Plan) and endorse the actions contained within it.

Background

2. An independent review of the SMT structure was commissioned in July 2020 and was carried out by RealWorldHR Limited. The review was concerned with 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 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 could be released over time and generate savings.

5. At its meeting on 9th December 2020 the Fire Authority resolved that:
- [1] The establishment of the role of Deputy Chief Fire Officer and the removal of one Assistant Chief Fire Officer post be approved;
 - [2] The changes to the Constitution set out in Appendix 2 to enable the recruitment of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer to take place be approved;
 - [3] An increase in budgeted hours for the Section 151 Officer (Treasurer) role to allow the postholder to work up to two and a half days per week be agreed;
 - [4] The way that the Director of Transformation role is to be redefined and intention to ultimately remove the role be noted.
 - [5] The removal of the Head of Prevention post, with the responsibilities being combined with another function be supported.

Information

6. Since the Fire Authority in December 2020 an Action Plan has been prepared and progress has been made in a number of areas. The Action Plan is attached to this report as Appendix A. The Action Plan is supplemented by a more detailed Transition Plan in respect of the proposed phasing out of the Director of Transformation role. The Transition Plan is attached to this report as Appendix B. The intention is to use these Plans to monitor progress.
7. Officers intend to bring progress reports to Members twice a year.

Financial Implications

8. The delivery of the changes agreed by the Fire Authority will provide annual 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 and Equality and Diversity Implications

9. The actions described in the Action Plan will be delivered in accordance with the law, e.g. DCFO and ACFO posts were subject to open national adverts. They will also be delivered in accordance with the Service's relevant policies to ensure that any equality and diversity obligations are met. Since the report in December 2020 the legal position has changed; the Exit Payment Cap legislation is to be withdrawn and is no longer relevant at this time.

Environmental Implications

10. None

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