

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 29 MARCH 2011

Title:

PROPOSAL TO RESTRUCTURE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH TEAM

[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Bryn Morgan]

[Wards Affected: All]

Summary and purpose:

To present proposals for a restructure of the Environmental Health Service to provide a more customer focused and efficient service.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

The proposals contained within this report will contribute towards the Council's 'Value for Money' priority by ensuring the Environmental Health Service is delivering a targeted and focused service to its customers, with an appropriate balance of managerial support and front-line Officers.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

There are no equality and diversity implications.

Resource/Value for Money implications:

This proposal will deliver a more efficient and effective management structure capable of delivering improved value for money within the Environmental Health team.

Climate Change Implications:

There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications.

Background

Foresight Review

1. Between March and December 2010 a comprehensive review of the Environmental Health service was carried out. This project followed the Foresight@Waverley methodology, and involved a thorough appraisal of the service, with a particular focus on strategy, processes, technology and people. Every aspect of the service was reviewed to establish potential improvements or efficiencies.
2. The review culminated in the development of an action plan with five main areas of focus, as follows:
 - i. Improvements in customer service- The development of a new, dedicated 'Customer and Technical Support Team' to improve customer service by making the most of first contact, reducing avoidable contact and focusing on service delivery. This team would reduce the number of calls being handled by experienced Environmental Health Officers to enable them to focus on inspections and detailed case progression.
 - ii. Efficiencies in operational processes- The development and implementation of new, leaner processes, resulting in efficiencies through clear procedures, removal of duplication and strong decision making frameworks.
 - iii. Directing resources towards areas of highest risk- The development of a new structure and revised processes to give Environmental Health Officers the capacity to deal with more complex cases and to prioritise the deployment of limited resources.
 - iv. Developing options for alternative service delivery models- Considering alternative models of service delivery, in particular the need to explore opportunities for shared services with other Surrey Local Authorities
 - v. Improvements in compliance with statutory agency's requirements- The review was carried out with the aim of creating capacity for managers to address statutory requirements.

Subsequent Restructure Proposal

3. The completed 'Foresight' Review was presented to Corporate Management Team and reviewed by the Portfolio Holder for the Environment in December 2010. It was also discussed at both the Environmental Services Star Chamber and Service Planning meetings. Overall, the recommendations of the Foresight review and the detailed action plan were understood and welcomed; however, it was concluded that the Environmental Health team structure required further analysis, in particular, the balance of management roles to front-line roles in the team. A chart showing the current staffing structure of the Environmental health Team is to be found at Annexe 1 for information.

4. This analysis demonstrated that retaining three management positions for a team of approximately 12 FTE did not represent value for money and was not in keeping with the management-to-officer ratio deployed elsewhere in the authority.
5. In response to this feedback, an alternative proposal has now been developed in which the posts of Senior Environmental Health Manager, Environmental Health Manager and Team Leader (Pollution) are deleted and replaced by the posts of Environmental Health Manager and Deputy Environmental Health Manager, with the aim of creating a more focused Environmental Health management team, and to enable the Environmental Health service to target its effort and resources more towards front-line service delivery in future. This alternative structure was developed from reviewing neighbouring authority structures and assessing an appropriate ratio of management to officer resources.

Consultation

6. This revised structure, also incorporating the proposed Customer & Technical Support team, was scrutinised during a formal consultation process with those directly affected, as well as the wider team. The consultation period ran for one month, and concluded on 4 March 2011.
7. The consultation consisted of a series of 1-1 meetings with the three managers directly affected (with HR and Staffside presence as required), and two full team briefing sessions.
8. All staff in the current structure were invited to feed back, and the large majority (over 80%) did so. In addition, the team had a joint meeting, with Staffside, at which it was agreed that Staffside put a formal response together, covering both their views and the views of the individuals present at that meeting.

Consultation feedback

9. A considerable amount of constructive feedback was received during the consultation period, and this feedback can be broadly categorised under the following headings-
 - a. Capacity issues- many expressed concerns that the removal of a manager (all of whom are experienced Environmental Health professionals) would impact badly on the capacity of the team. There were also concerns over the breadth of responsibility of the two remaining managers, incorporating Emergency Planning and the new Customer & Technical Services team, and how this would impact on the front-line Environmental Health performance.
 - b. Safety & Emergency Planning - Some felt that the synergies between this function and Environmental Health were limited whilst others felt there were strong links. As above, there were some concerns about

the impact upon the two remaining managers of having to manage this function as well as the Environmental Health service.

- c. Customer & Technical Support - The importance of this new team was recognised in terms of its scope to develop improved working practices, and free the practitioners up to deliver front-line services, and it was suggested that the lead officer in this team was a key post.

Revised Proposal

10. In summary, although many observations were made during the consultation period against the reduction in size of the frontline team (which this review was not recommending), none of these were specifically about the reduction and re-focusing of the management resource. It is therefore proposed that the restructure takes place, and that the three posts of Senior Environmental Health Manager, Environmental Health Manager and Team Leader (Pollution) are deleted and replaced by the two posts of Environmental Health Manager and Deputy Environmental Health Manager.
11. However, the feedback received has resulted in the following changes being made to the original proposal, and these are now being recommended to Executive as part of the restructure:
 - a. It is proposed that the Safety & Emergency Planning Function will now report directly to the Head of Environmental Services. This revised approach keeps the Safety & Emergency Planning Function within the same overall service area as Environmental Health, but relieves the new Environmental Health Manager of line-management responsibility of this team. Furthermore, the Emergency Planning and Health & Safety aspects of the role have strong links with the waste & recycling service, both in terms of business continuity and the health and safety aspects of the waste contract. Finally, it is felt that this important function would benefit from the higher corporate profile it will receive by reporting directly to a Head of Service. The actual management overhead for the team is minimal and will have little impact on the workload of the Head of Environmental Services.
 - b. It is proposed that the post of Senior Environmental Health Officer in the Food, Health & Safety Team (currently a fixed-term maternity cover arrangement) should be made permanent (effectively meaning more front-line staff). This change is proposed because a number of concerns were raised about capacity to deliver front-line services if the restructure took place, and this move will increase the capacity of the team by 1 FTE when the permanent postholder returns from maternity leave in November 2011.
 - c. It is proposed that the part-time officers in the team (of which there are currently 7) be invited to increase the number of hours they work. It is felt that this would again address the concerns about capacity to deliver front-line services following the restructure, further increasing the capacity of the front-line team. It would also potentially address the

argument raised by some that the large number of part-time staff in the team means that the current level of management is necessary to ensure continuity of service.

- d. It is proposed that line-management responsibility for the new Customer & Technical Support Team be passed to the Environmental Services Customer Team Leader, (whilst clearly maintaining strong operational management responsibilities with the Environmental Health Manager). In passing responsibility to a Customer Services professional with a proven track record in service improvement and performance management, this proposal recognises the important role that the team has to play in the new structure, and frees-up the two new managers to concentrate solely on delivering front-line Environmental Health services.
12. The new structure will be financed by the reduction of management overhead, using current EH vacancies and by using savings made from across the Environmental Services team. The Star Chamber process targeted the Environmental Health service to deliver savings of £70k next year – this revised structure will deliver those savings whilst also increasing the integrity and performance of the service.
 13. The revised structure, incorporating the above changes, and shown in the context of the wider Environmental Service, is to be found at [Annexe 2](#).

Shared Services

14. As noted in Paragraph 2 (iv) above, it has been recognised through the Foresight review that shared services potentially have a significant role to play in the future of Environmental Health in Waverley.
15. Following discussions that originated in the Surrey Environmental Health Managers' Group, Officers from four Councils in the west of Surrey expressed an interest in working more closely, and representatives from Waverley, Guildford, Woking and Surrey Heath have met on three occasions to progress this matter. It is highly likely that the sharing of Environmental Health Officers with specialist expertise would be cost-effective and would provide increased service resilience across the region.
16. Information is currently being shared between members of the West Surrey Cluster Group to compare service demands, activity levels and resources available between the four Councils. This is a challenging and important exercise, and the emerging information is already proving extremely useful.
17. It is recognised that the development of shared services may have an impact on the future structure of the Environmental Health service in Waverley and the proposed structure has taken this into account by developing focused professional teams and separate customer management. It is believed that the proposed structure could facilitate future sharing in due course if the business case is developed.

HR Implications

18. As previously stated, the proposed restructure will result in the three existing managerial jobs of Senior Environmental Health Manager, Environmental Health Manager and Team leader (Environmental Protection), being reduced to two new roles; Environmental Health Manager and Deputy Environmental Health Manager. This means that one post holder will be without a role in the new structure.
19. The most appropriate mechanism for filling the new roles is looking specifically at whether any of the existing post holders qualify for automatic assimilation based on a significant match with their existing job descriptions, or whether a ring-fenced recruitment process would be more suitable. This process is being carried out in liaison with HR and the existing post holders and will conclude by the end of March 2011.
20. Employee redeployment is the preferred approach for any individual unsuccessful in retaining their current position. However, it is unlikely that an appropriate alternative post will be found within Waverley for these current employees given their skills, experience and salary grade. It is therefore likely that a redundancy situation may arise as a result of this restructure.

Conclusion

21. Environmental Health is an important statutory duty for Waverley Borough Council and protects the health and well-being of our residents and businesses. The service in Waverley has been under pressure for some time and requires focused and dedicated team management to improve performance, motivate the team and deliver great results for our communities.
22. The proposed structure will deliver two new management positions with clearly defined responsibilities to transform our Environmental Health service. The structure has been developed following detailed analysis and consultation with staff.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive:-

1. approve the proposed structure for Environmental Health and delegate responsibility to the Strategic Director to implement the proposed changes;
2. agrees that the three posts of Senior Environmental Health Manager, Environmental Health Manager and Team Leader (Pollution) be deleted and create two new posts of Environmental Health Manager and Deputy Environmental Health Manager, and the establishment be amended accordingly;
3. delegate responsibility to the Deputy Chief Executive to negotiate with any unsuccessful candidate with regards to potential redundancy, as required, in accordance with Waverley's redundancy and early retirement policy; and

4. note the direction of travel with regards to potential shared Environmental Health services.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

CONTACT OFFICERS:

Name: Jon Poore

Telephone: 01483 523418

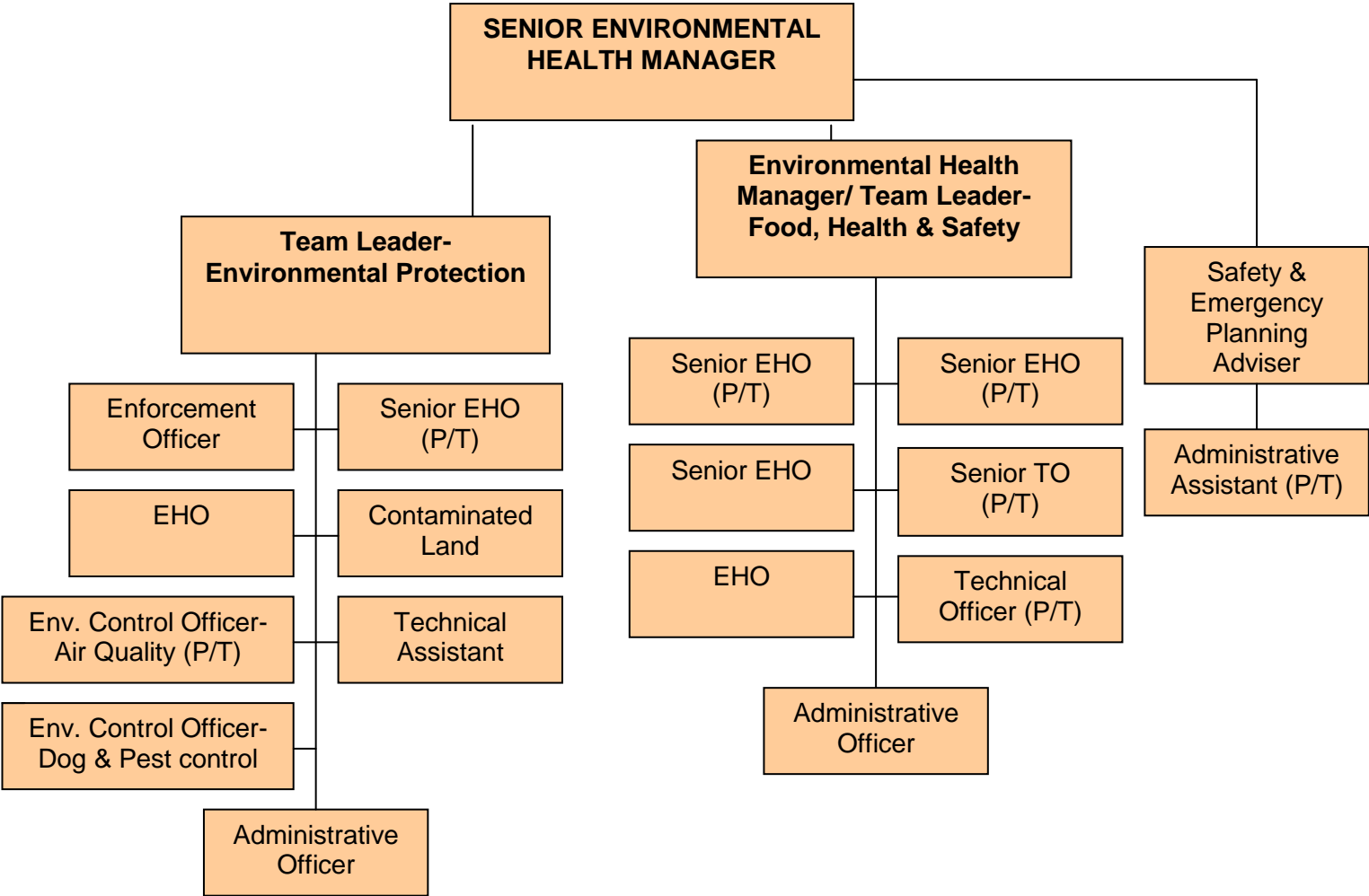
E-mail: jon.poore@waverley.gov.uk

Name: Rob Anderton

Telephone: 01483 523411

E-mail: robert.anderton@waverley.gov.uk

ANNEXE 1- CURRENT (INTERIM) STRUCTURE SINCE JULY 2010



ANNEXE 2- PROPOSED STRUCTURE MARCH 2011

HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH MANAGER

SAFETY & EMERGENCY PLANNING ADVISER

PARKING SERVICES MANAGER

Operational & Customer Services Team Leader

Performance reporting

Deputy Environmental Health Manager

Administrative Assistant (P/T)

Operational & Customer Services Officer

EH Customer & Tech Support Officer

Operational & Customer Services Officer

EH Customer & Tech Support Officer

ES Contract Compliance Officer

EH Customer & Tech Support Officer

Student EHO

Senior EHO

Senior EHO (20hrs)

Senior EHO (18.5hrs)

Air Quality Officer (25.5hrs)

Enforcement Officer

Senior EHO (20hrs)

Technical Officer (22hrs)

Contaminated Land Officer (30hrs)

Pest Control Officer

Senior EHO (30hrs)

EHO

Senior EHO (Maternity cover)



NB- actual reporting lines for Food, Health and Safety Team and Environmental Protection Team will be dictated by the specialism of the successful candidate for each managerial role