

Waverley Borough Council

Report to: Leader of the Council

Date: Decision not before 26 April 2024

Ward(s) affected: All

Report of Director: Strategic Director Legal and Democratic Services

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Lead Councillor responsible: Leader of the Council

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Report Status: Open

Key Decision: No

Supplementary Estimate – Democratic Services Restructure

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Corporate Management Board agreed to a revised organisational structure for the Democratic Services Team on 8 April 2024. The revised structure addresses service change, creates greater opportunities within the team, and enhances capacity.

2. Recommendation to the Leader of the Council

That the Leader of the Council approves:

- 2.1. A Supplementary Estimate of £55,187 (2024/25) to restructure the Democratic Services team.

That the Leader of the Council notes:

- 2.2. That a parallel strand of work to restructure the management team of the Joint Strategic Director of Legal and Democratic Services is underway.

2.3. That proposals are being brought to the Executive Briefing meetings of Guildford and Waverley Borough Councils on 23 April and 7 May respectively.

2.4 That this broader work has been taken into account in the restructure of the Democratic Services team.

3. Reason(s) for Recommendation:

3.1. To fund growth in the democratic services team to enhance capacity.

4. Exemption from publication

4.1. Not exempt from publication.

5. Purpose of Report

5.1. A review of the Democratic Services team has been undertaken to identify the extent to which it was able to support the full range of requirements the team need to support.

5.2. The review identified the need to increase capacity and to revise existing roles for which a growth bid decision is required.

6. Strategic Priorities

6.1. Local, open, participative government – the Council is committed to an open, inclusive approach to communications and decision making.

7. Background

7.1. The last 5 years has seen a significant change in the traditional roles undertaken within Democratic Services functions. Meetings are held in a variety of locations and formats and almost all public meetings are now webcast, greater enabling public participation.

7.2. Additionally, the importance of effective and transparent decision making has increased, particularly in the context of the greater number of councils experiencing significant financial difficulties. The need to ensure that Elected Members are fully equipped to undertake their responsibilities alongside their ability to build constructive but appropriately challenging relationships with officers is also critical.

Democratic Services are the 'engine room' for organising the Forward Plan, setting up meetings, tracking reports, clerking and webcasting meetings; together with publishing minutes and decisions.

7.3. The revised structure for democratic services will:

- Enable a fit for purpose, sustainable future for Democratic Services at Waverley Borough Council
- Encourage the development of a strong customer focused, value driven and resilient service
- Ensure we are able to provide comprehensive support to Elected Members
- Support career development and progression for democratic services team members – increasing knowledge and experience of different aspects of Democratic Services provision
- Improve management arrangements ensuring that there is clarity around roles, encouraging appropriate autonomy
- Enable strategic and operational work to be better defined and executed.

8. Consultations

8.1. Human Resources, Finance, and Corporate Management Board were consulted by the Strategic Director and the Democratic Services Manager.

8.2. New role descriptions were prepared and reviewed and agreed by the Job Evaluation Panel in April 2024.

9. Key Risks

9.1. Not properly resourcing the Democratic Services function may lead to a deterioration of service. The revised structure addresses that risk.

10. Financial Implications

10.1. This proposal will cost an additional £55k which is not budgeted in 2024/25. Waverley have just set a balanced budget and do not have reserves for the purpose of growth request. The only way to fund this

will be to repurpose reserves that were agreed in 2024/25 budget setting.

- 10.2. It should be noted that this additional cost was not considered as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan when this was taken to Council in February. This growth will be an additional impact to the budget gap going forward.

11. Legal Implications

- 11.1. The Leader of the Council may make Executive decisions. This is a non- key decision requesting a supplementary estimate only.

12. Human Resource Implications

- 12.1. Human Resources were consulted throughout and advised on the process. Existing staff will be formally consulted on the revised structure once funding has been approved, and as guided by HR policies.

13. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 13.1. There are no direct equality and diversity implications.

14. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications

- 14.1. There are no direct climate change or sustainability implications.

15. Summary of Options

- 15.1. Three options were considered:

- Option 1 - Do nothing
- Option 2 - Collaborate with Guildford Borough Council
- Option 3 - Restructure

- 15.2. Option 1 means that the team will retain the same structure. Experience will grow within the team, but without structural change the resilience needed within the team and career progression and succession planning will not be delivered effectively.

- 15.3. Option 2 is an approach taking in other Local Government organisations. Bringing two teams together to build a service can be successful. However, a number of fundamental building blocks need to be in place to support that first.
- 15.4. Option 3 involves restructuring the current team. Introducing new roles and reconfiguring responsibilities will deliver capacity, support resilience and provide a platform for a sustainable future. This option requires a supplementary estimate as set out in this report.

16. Conclusion

- 16.1. A supplementary estimate is requested to fund the restructuring of the democratic services team to introduce new roles and reconfigure responsibilities to enhance capacity, support, resilience and to provide a platform for a sustainable future.

17. Background Papers

- 17.1. Report to Corporate Management Board, 8 April 2024

18. Appendices

- 18.1. None

Service	Sign off date & Initials
Finance / S.151 Officer	As per CMB 8/4
Legal / Governance	As per CMB 8/4
HR	As per CMB 8/4
Equalities	N/A

Director	18/4/2024 - SS
Lead Councillor	18/4/2024
Executive Liaison/briefing	Not routed to Executive Briefing - Non-key Leader decision
Committee Services	18/4/2024