

The Highland Council

26th June 2014

Agenda Item	24
Report No	HC/16/14

Proposed amendment to the Council's Senior Management structure Report by the Chief Executive

Summary

This report proposes a change to the establishment at a senior level for the vacant post of Head of Community and Democratic Engagement.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council approved a revised organisational structure at its meetings in October and December 2013, resulting in 5 Directorates plus 2 posts at Head of Service level to be included in the senior management structure; the Head of Policy and Reform and the Head of Community and Democratic Engagement. With the recent promotion of the Head of Community and Democratic Engagement there is an opportunity to review the filling of this vacant post.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 The Head of Community and Democratic Engagement post, formerly the Corporate Manager post, is responsible for the Ward Management function in the Council ensuring corporate policies are effectively pursued and resources devolved to local areas are effectively used. More recently it has had a focus also on supporting Area Committees and ensuring collaborative working and engagement with partners and communities. These functions remain important; however an alternative arrangement for delivering these functions, along with new duties arising from community empowerment legislation, is possible while offering a saving in staff costs.
- 2.2 The current vacancy is covered by a temporary acting up position to end August 2014. The new proposal is to delete the post of Head of Community and Democratic Engagement post and to replace it with the post of Community and Democratic Manager reporting to the Head of Policy and Reform. Based on consultation with Service Directors and the ward management team the post would form part of the Senior Ward Management structure, alongside the City Manager and Senior Ward Manager posts. It would not, at this time, have line management responsibility but it would work with managers across all Council Services and with partners and it would be responsible for resources, including the Community Challenge Fund.
- 2.3 The purpose of the post would be to work as part of the senior ward management team to improve the Council's approach to community empowerment, enabling community action in the design and delivery of council services. It would also require working with partners to improve local community planning governance and arrangements and their contribution to developing and delivering outcomes for the

region. In keeping with the senior ward management role it would also ensure corporate and partnership policies are effectively pursued at area level for improved service delivery and improved community engagement.

2.4 Key tasks would include:

- designing and delivering new models of community engagement and participation;
- developing a strategic and collaborative approach to promote successful community asset transfers;
- managing and developing the Community Challenge Fund;
- working collaboratively with partners, staff and communities to build capacity in targeted localities;
- working with other staff across services and with partners to build organisational capacity for better community engagement;
- ensuring District Partnerships support local community planning and that this links with community planning at a Highland level.

The new post would ensure that Elected Members have appropriate information and advice at Ward level to scrutinise and monitor effective community engagement in service delivery locally.

2.5 The benefits of this approach include:

- A focus on delivering effective community participation, engagement and consultation and in alignment with new legislative duties from community empowerment legislation;
- Linking community planning at strategic and local areas;
- Closer links between corporate policies and their local implementation/ feedback;
- Clearer reporting lines to a tighter leadership team;
- A budget saving.

3. Implications

3.1 Resources implications

Replacing a Head of Service post with a manager post will require some re-prioritisation of workload and amendments to the delegation of duties among senior staff in the ward management and policy functions, including in the lead support for Area Committees. This will require consultation with staff affected. The new post would be subject to job evaluation to confirm the grade. A saving of up to £30,000 in salary and on-costs per annum is estimated and would contribute to the budget savings required across the Council.

Legal implications

HR advice has been provided and taken into account to ensure legal employment requirements are followed.

Equalities implications

The post will support inclusive approaches to community engagement. The job description includes a requirement that the post holder ensures that the Council's approach to community empowerment supports active democratic life and

challenges discrimination and exclusion. The manager post would be subject to the Council's HR policies on recruitment and selection which support equality of opportunity.

Climate Change/Carbon Clever implications

The new manager post could be located in any Highland Council office and not confined to a base at HQ. The use of ICT would reduce the need to travel.

Risk implications

There is a risk that reducing senior management capacity can affect the effectiveness of operations. Consultation with staff affected and reviews of workload and delegation can help manage this risk.

Gaelic implications

The new post will engage with communities across the Highlands and support the implementation of the Council's Gaelic Plan.

Rural impact

The post will have duties that span the Highlands covering rural and urban areas. It is likely that certain aspects of the post, e.g. asset transfer and testing new models of engagement may favour rural communities initially given the history of rural asset transfers and the scale and appetite for finding innovative ways to deliver services in remote and rural areas. In addition the post can be located anywhere in the Highlands; there is no requirement for it to be based in HQ and this should support the decentralisation of senior posts.

4. Recommendation

4.1 Members are asked to agree:

1. The change to the senior management structure proposed by deleting the post of Head of Community and Democratic Engagement and replacing it with a senior manager post of Community and Democratic Engagement Manager, responsible to the Head of Policy and Reform.

4.2 Members are asked to note:

1. That the views of Directors and the ward management team have been taken into account in this proposal and further consultation will take place on the implications for staff whose workload may be affected;
2. That post would be advertised externally with a view to recruitment over the summer.