

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....17th March 2011

1. Title of Item/Report

EIT Gateway Review of Administration, PA Support, Business Support and Performance Management

2. Record of the Decision

The Gateway review of Administration, PA Support, Business Support and Performance Management (“The Admin Review”) had been undertaken to identify ways in which these “back-office” functions could be carried out more effectively across the organisation. The review had been carried out as a “Gateway” review under the scrutiny of the Housing and Community Safety Select Committee. The review had considered the work of 466 employees who carry out this work in 391.4 Full Time Equivalent (“fte”) posts at an annual salary cost of £9,380k. It was proposed that changes were made to these teams of support staff which would reduce the number of FTEs to 332.5 – generating annual salary savings of £1,518k per annum.

The Admin Review had considered the delivery of the following functions across the Council:-

- General Administration
- PA Support
- Technical (Service Specific) Administration
- Business Support and Performance Management

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The reduction of 58.9ftes was detailed within the report.

The Admin review had been carried out as a Gateway Review within the EIT process, reporting to the Housing and Community Safety Select Committee. The Committee had met 4 times during the course of the 9 month review to set the scope of the review, review baseline information,

consider options and approve final proposals. All members of the Committee supported the final recommendations in January 2011. The Committee expressed interest in the grade of posts to be reduced as a result of the review and suggested that it would be helpful to state clearly the range of grades affected by the review, this information was provided in this final Cabinet report. Members also sought reassurances about the implementation process and noted that appropriate training and support packages should be in place for employees affected by the review. Members also noted that implementation must proceed immediately following final approval to secure savings in the 2011/12 financial year.

The 90 day consultation period with unions and employees began on 17th December 2010 and ran until 16th March 2011. The report included a summary of the consultation responses received up to 3 March. Members were informed that the unions had not raised any objections. The consultation had been constructive and active and had involved weekly meetings with union representatives, small group meetings in individual Services, drop in sessions and road shows for all staff affected by the review as well as detailed communication with individuals via the review email account. A union official, in attendance at the meeting, complimented the Council, and in particular the lead officer, on how the review had been handled. It had demonstrated the partnership between the Unions and the Council and he suggested that the process followed should be used as a template for and future reviews where redundancies were likely.

The majority of consultation responses had been specific queries and questions about the impact of the review for individuals, questions of clarification about working practices and questions about the implementation process. Where changes had been agreed with a small number of individuals – these had been reflected in the numbers included in the report. In addition a number of useful suggestions had been made about admin related issues such as admin related procurement practices, IT and telephone arrangements etc. All of these had been captured and would be provided to the relevant service managers in the new structures.

Three proposals were submitted during the consultation, which suggested alternative structures; one for the Business Support and Performance Management Service and two for teams within the technical admin strand. All three proposals were given serious and detailed consideration and 2 had been adopted and incorporated into the final recommendations.

The 90 day consultation period also provided an opportunity for employees affected by the review to express an interest in voluntary

redundancy and voluntary reduction in working hours. This process had been extremely positive and had a huge impact in terms of avoiding compulsory redundancies. At the start of the consultation process 48.7ftes were facing the possibility of compulsory redundancy as a result of the review. Through the expression of interest process it had been managed to reduce this number to 20.4ftes. Furthermore there were three factors which were likely to reduce the compulsory number further:-

- 4.2fte vacancies arise from the creation of the new structures.
- There were an additional 7fte voluntary redundancy requests which had been received from employees in the admin review which whilst not directly attributable to achieving the new structure offer an opportunity to replace a compulsory redundancy with a voluntary redundancy.
- There was 1fte vacancy arising from the termination of a temporary contractual arrangement in a permanent post.

Therefore, assuming no changes to the current list of confirmed voluntary redundancies and successful recruitment of employees at risk to the vacancies created by the review, the compulsory redundancies will be further reduced to 8.2ftes. These additional jobs would be included in the recruitment process described within the report.

For employees involved in the review this meant the changes were delivered as sensitively as possible and many fewer would need to undergo competitive interviews for a reduced number of posts. The impact for employees was set within the report.

It was planned that, subject to Cabinet approval, the implementation process would begin on 18th March 2011. Redundancy notices for employees who had sought voluntary redundancy and for those whose roles had been deleted would be issued immediately. This results in a final date of service for employees with 12 weeks notice of 17th June 2011. Active work would begin through the redeployment process to pursue alternative roles for those who did not wish to leave.

The competitive recruitment process would begin for ring-fenced and new posts created in the review. It was anticipated that available posts would be published on 18th March 2011 with recruitment taking place between the end of March and 8th April 2011. Redundancy notices for employees who were ultimately not successful through the recruitment process would be issued in the middle of April. This results in a final date of service for employees with 12 weeks notice of mid July 2011. Active work would take place through the redeployment process to pursue alternative roles for those who did not wish to leave.

Once the recruitment process was complete managers would begin to implement the new structures during the notice periods. Service managers were working on transition plans to ensure a smooth transfer to the new arrangements.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The reconfiguration of Administration, PA support, Business Support and Performance Management be approved, delivering annual savings of £1,518k.

2. As part of this reconfiguration the posts of Head of Support Services (CESC) and Head of Performance (CESC) be deleted and replaced with the post of Head of Business Support and Improvement (CESC).

3. Reasons for the Decision

To produce efficiencies and improvement in the delivery of the administrative, PA support, Business Support and Performance Management functions across the Council.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on 25 March 2011

Proper Officer  
21 March 2011