

Service Delivery Proposals

Summary

1. The analysis at **Appendix A** to this paper provides a summary of the proposals set out below. Together with the proposals for the Senior Management Structure, if implemented, these proposals would deliver a saving of **£308,100** with no compulsory redundancies.

Planning, Building Control and Licensing

2. The Council agreed at its meeting on 25th September 2018 to delete 1fte vacant post in the Building Control which has remained on the Council's staffing establishment following the departure of the postholder. This contributes **c£24,000** towards the savings target. In relation to the remaining staff in the function, previously, consideration has been given to transferring ***Building Control*** to the Pennine Building Control Service (a partnership between Blackburn and Burnley Borough Councils). However, it was not considered that any material savings would be derived and that position remains unchanged. That said, there is the potential to consider this proposal again as this might bring more resilience to the service which is subject to more competition from private sector Building Control Inspectors.
3. By way of background, **Strategic economic regeneration** work includes working with Partners (LCC, LEP, Homes England etc) to deliver economic and regeneration development (for example, securing investment for strategic intervention in Pendle, bringing forward land for housing such as Further Clough Head, Small Sites Development, bringing forward employment sites such as Lomeshaye Industrial Estate). It also includes supporting the Council's Joint Venture arrangement with Barnfield on housing projects and the delivery of Northlight.
4. **General economic development and business support** is largely focused on matters such as dealing with employer engagement, business support enquiries, delivering the Gearing up for Growth Programme, support for Town Centres (eg the development of the Colne BID).
5. It is proposed that the General Economic Development and Business Support function currently in the Housing, Health and Economic Development Service is transferred to this Service. The Service would be renamed '*Planning, Economic Development and Regulatory Services*'. The Strategic Economic Regeneration function would remain in Housing, Health and Engineering and, along with the Head of Services, would be delivered by the Senior Regeneration Officer and the proposed Special Projects Officer.
6. The rationale for this proposal is to combine the Planning Policy, Development Management and Economic Development functions into the same Service Area to provide a 'one-stop' service for potential residential, employment and economic development enquiries. Equally, with the changes proposed in Housing, Health and Engineering, there would be distinct separation between strategic development of the Borough (*Planning, Economic Development and Regulatory Services*) and the delivery of key economic growth and regeneration projects (*Housing, Health and Engineering*).
7. **Planning Administration** deals with the processing, scanning etc of planning applications and the clerical work associated with the Building Control and Licensing functions. As indicated in the main body of the report, there will be scope to review the level of administrative support as Teams are combined within the Town Hall.

Housing, Environmental Health and Economic Development

8. As indicated above the Economic Development function will transfer from this Service to the Planning, Economic Development and Regulatory Service. And, given proposed changes to Neighbourhood Services referred to below, the Engineering Service will be transferred to this Service.
9. Following the departure of the former Head of Environmental Health, the **Private Sector Housing and Environmental Health functions** have been restructured into two teams dealing with Residential and Commercial matters. The functions within the Teams include dealing with:-

Private Sector Housing Standards
Dealing with Empty Properties
Disabled Facilities Grants (which in the main is funded from the Capital Programme)
Food Inspections and Hygiene
Noise Control/Air Pollution
Public Health
10. The Council agreed at its meeting on 25th September 2018 to delete 1fte vacant post in the Team which was established to implement and operate Selective Licensing had it been introduced. This contributes **£38,000** towards the savings target. Since the last report to Committee, vacancies have arisen in the following areas:-
 - 0.41fte post in Housing which deals with drainage issues reported by householders;
 - 0.81fte post in Pest Control;
11. Discussions with the Service Manager indicate a preference to delete these posts to be replaced by a Technical Officer (1.0fte). This role will deal with flooding/land drainage issues, either reported by householders or those matters previously dealt with by the former Drainage Engineer (LE). Whilst it will result in a reduction in capacity in the Pest Control function, given the extent of sickness absence by the former postholder, the impact of this is considered to be minimal. It will, however, inhibit the Team's ability to secure additional commercial contracts and the proposal overall will not result in a saving to the Council. It will, however, ensure that there is some capacity remains within the Council to deal flood/drainage related issues.
12. Also, following the recent request for volunteers to consider voluntary redundancy/flexible retirement, requests were received from two members of staff (equivalent of 1.3fte) in Environmental Health, both of whom work part-time hours. Discussions with the Service Manager indicate a preference to accept these requests, delete both posts and create a new post of Technical Officer (1.0fte). This will result in a saving of **£17,350**. There will be one-off costs of redundancy of £35,000 which will be met from the Change Management Reserve.
13. A similar change in the staffing structure arising from the voluntary redundancy of two part-time officers in Environmental Health replaced by a full time Technical Officer occurred earlier in this financial year and resulted in a saving of **£15,550** which can be scored for 2019/20.

Recommendation: That the Committee recommend to Council that:

- ***the post of Housing Officer (0.41fte) and Pest Control Officer (0.81fte) be deleted and replaced by the post of Technical Officer (1.0fte) to focus on flooding/land drainage issues;***

- ***the request for voluntary redundancy as set out above be accepted and that the post of Technical Officer (1.0fte) be created in Environmental Health.***

Neighbourhood Services

14. As indicated in the main body of the report, the proposal is to disband Neighbourhood Services and merge the functions within the Service into other Services of the Council. This would also facilitate a reduction in the number of Service Managers from 5 to 4.
15. The Environmental Action Group (EAG) has a net annual cost of £120k. It undertakes various small scale environmental projects including, for example, dealing with Japanese Knotweed. The EAG Supervisor has requested voluntary redundancy and it is recommended that this is accepted. To maintain continuity of the service, it is proposed that the EAG is merged into the Ground Maintenance Operational Service and managed by the Parks Officer. This will result in an annual saving of **£36,100**. There will be one-off costs of redundancy of £19,800 which will be met from the Change Management Reserve.

Recommendation: That the Committee recommend to Council that:

- ***the request for voluntary redundancy from the EAG Supervisor is accepted;***
 - ***the Environmental Action Group be merged with the Grounds Maintenance Operational Service to be managed by the Parks Officer.***
16. Again, as indicated in the main body of the report, subject to the proposed changes in accommodation, it is expected that the Elliott House Administration function would be merged with the Nelson Town Hall Administration Team.

Environmental Services

17. Earlier this year, Craven District Council requested support from the Council for the management of their Waste Collection Service. This was a result of the short term absence of their Head of Waste Services at short notice for personal reasons. The Environmental Services Manager provided this support for 1.5 days per week for an initial period of 4 weeks on a mutual-aid basis. However, Craven's Head of Waste Service has since left the Council and the Environmental Services Manager has continued to provide support with the cost of this recovered from Craven.
18. In consultation with the Administration, and given the current arrangement, discussions have taken place with Craven District Council about a proposed Shared Waste Management Service. These discussions are at an early stage and will require further work but it is considered that sharing the Environmental Services Manager is a viable proposition for both organisations. At this stage, the proposal is to split the role on a 60/40 basis in favour of Pendle, ie 3 days at Pendle, 2 days at Craven (subject to a formal agreement with Craven). This will result in annual savings of **£25,000**.

Recommendation: That the Committee recommend to Council that:

- ***That it is agreed to share the post of Environmental Services Manager with Craven DC on the basis set out above (and subject to formal agreement with Craven).***

19. The Environmental Crime/Enforcement function comprises the Environment Crime Officers and Dog Wardens. As Councillors are aware, this function is within the scope of the review of enforcement activity which is currently being undertaken. Nevertheless, currently the Service has 1fte vacant post and another staff member has given notice of their intention to leave the Council.
20. Whilst not pre-empting the outcome of the review, it is proposed that one of the vacant posts is deleted. This will result in a saving of **£26,200**.

Recommendation: That the Committee recommend to Council that:

- ***That a 1fte post of Environmental Crime Officer be deleted from the Establishment.***

Legal Services

21. It is not proposed to change the staffing structure in Legal Services. However, acknowledging the need for succession planning in the service and following discussions with the Service Manager and Postholder, it is proposed that one of the Legal Clerks undertakes a Degree Apprenticeship to obtain the necessary qualifications to qualify as a Legal Practice Clerk. As a consequence, it is the post will utilise **£12,000** from the Council's Staff/Modern Apprenticeship Reserve.

Recommendation: Note the use of the Staff/Modern Apprenticeship Reserve to meet part of the cost of a Legal Clerk.