

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

CABINET – 15 DECEMBER 2011

REFERENCE FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 13 DECEMBER 2011

Senior Management Restructure Proposals Challenge Panel Report

The Committee received report from the scrutiny challenge panel which had considered the Senior Management Re-Structure proposals.

In considering the report of the panel, Members expressed differing views as to the extent to which the panel's comments had been taken on board in the report that was due to be considered by Cabinet on 15 December 2011 with particular reference to the Section 151 Officer and competition for posts. A Member stated that whilst he was happy with the report he was concerned at having a Section 151 Officer in post that had not been interviewed and appointed by Members. He also suggested that the report be forwarded to the Chief Officer's Employment Panel for consideration. In response, the Chair of the panel advised that this had not been a finding of the panel.

During the discussion on this item, Members made comments and asked questions as follows:

- A Member expressed the view that whilst he was pleased to see that there would be a review of the structure in 18 months, he was concerned about the contradiction in terms of the post of the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise in that he/she would be appointed for a period of 2 years.
- A Member voiced his concerns about the potential for legal challenge and stated that some of the proposals did not appear to have been thought through. The potential consequences should the Council not want post holders to continue in their role in 18 months required consideration. No evidence had been provided to the panel as to how the structure had been devised.
- A Member stated there would always be problems when a structure was based around existing post holders and that the clear driving force behind the re structure was reducing redundancy costs. The Section 151 Officer should be 'free' to look at finances as a whole and whether that individual had a place on the Corporate Board was a separate issue. The Interim Director of Finance advised that the new structure had not been created around existing post holders but instead to take the organisation forward. In terms of the future Section 151 Officer there would be an open invitation for the post holder to attend the Corporate Strategy Board and he/she would receive all the papers. The post holder would also have regular meetings with the Chief Executive.

- A Member stated that over 90% of Section 151 Officers were on the Corporate Board and had a direct link to the Chief Executive. There were issues in terms of overloading this post holder and Director of Resources. Another Member stated that the Section 151 Officer was the officer that the Council would rely on in a crisis and it made no sense that this individual was not included on the Corporate Board.

RESOLVED: That the report of the challenge panel and comments of the Committee be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Background Documents:

Report submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 December 2011.

Draft minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 13 December 2011

Contact Officer:

Alison Atherton, Senior Professional Democratic Services

Tel: 020 8424 1266

Email: alison.atherton@harrow.gov.uk