

## Report to Cabinet

Thursday, 23 November 2023

By the Leader of the Council

**DECISION REQUIRED**



**Horsham  
District  
Council**

### **New Head of Service Position – Sustainability and Green Spaces**

#### **Executive Summary**

The resignations of the Head of Leisure and Culture and Head of Housing and Communities provided an opportunity to review the structure of teams and the Heads of Service offering. Whilst it was considered unnecessary to change the Housing and Communities service area, there were opportunities for change with Leisure and Culture. This report proposes that the Parks and Countryside element of that function be moved into a new service area alongside the Council's climate change work.

#### **Recommendation**

That Council be recommended to agree funding of £2,680 be included in the 2023/24 Revenue Budget for the new position of Head of Sustainability and Green Spaces.

#### **Reasons for Recommendations**

To ensure that the management of the organisation is best structured to achieve the Council's objectives.

Full council is required to approve expenditure outside of the budget.

#### **Background Papers**

None

**Wards affected:** All

**Contact:** Paul Anderson, Director of Communities.

## **Background Information**

### **1 Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 The resignation of the Head of Leisure and Culture and Head of Housing and Communities provided an opportunity to review of the Heads of Service structure to ensure it was best placed to deliver the objectives set out in the Council Plan. Whilst it was considered unnecessary to change the Housing and Communities service area, there were opportunities for change with Leisure and Culture.
- 1.2 The Head of Leisure and Culture will have some key projects to deliver during the period of the Council Plan. They will be required to plan for and undertake the procurement of the contract for the management of the Council's Leisure Centres, with a new contract due to commence in 2027. Subject to consideration by Council later in the year, there is likely to be a project around improvements to the Capitol. In addition, there will be key pieces of work around the further establishment and shaping of the events programme, which was introduced in the current Council year, the development and implementation of a plan for the development of the museum and to review the running track at Broadbridge Heath Leisure centre which reaches end of life in 2026.
- 1.3 Furthermore, we have not had a Head of Service responsible for Climate Change and Nature Recovery. As one of the key areas of priority for the Council, it is considered that it needs senior manager visibility and leadership.
- 1.4 This report therefore proposes that additional funding be created for this new post.

### **2 Relevant Council policy**

- 2.1 The proposal supports the priority around 'Always Listening, Learning and Improving'.

### **3 Details**

- 3.1 SLT considered that there was talent within the organisation to fulfil this role. The post was ringfenced to identified officers, in line with our employment policies, and an offer has been made to an officer, subject to Council approval of the funding for this post. They have accepted the offer.

### **4 Next Steps**

- 4.1 Subject to Council approval, the Director of Communities and the Head of Service will work on shaping the future of the team, and identifying the backfill arrangements that will be needed to best place the Council to achieve its objectives. These will be included in the 2024/25 budget proposals. In the interim, the Director of Communities will support the Head of Service to deliver the Annual Plan.

## **5 Views of the Policy Development Advisory Group and Outcome of Consultations**

- 5.1 Group Leaders have been consulted on the proposal.
- 5.2 The Monitoring Officer and Director of Resources have been consulted to ensure financial and legal probity.

## **6 Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected**

- 6.1 The possibility of a like for like replacement was considered, although it was concluded that the benefits of the Parks and Countryside Team working directly alongside the Climate Change Team under a single Head of Service would add more value, particularly around the delivery of the Nature Recovery objectives, in the light of the Council declaring an ecological emergency.

## **7 Resource Consequences**

- 7.1 This proposal will require an increase in the budget in the current year of £2,680

## **8 Legal Considerations and Implications**

- 8.1 None.

## **9 Risk Assessment**

- 9.1 It is considered that there is a reputational risk of not having a Head of Service with clear responsibility for climate change and nature recovery, particularly in light of the recent declaration of climate and ecological emergencies. The creation of the new position sends a clear statement to officer colleagues and partners around the importance of climate change and nature recovery to the core business of Horsham District Council.
- 9.2 There are no identified negative risks as a consequence of the recommendations within this report.

## **10 Procurement implications**

- 10.1 None.

## **11. Equalities and Human Rights implications / Public Sector Equality Duty**

- 11.1 None.

## **12 Environmental Implications**

- 12.1 This post has been created to ensure that the authority is best placed to deliver against the Council objectives, in particular 'Inspiring Greener Futures'.

## **13 Other Considerations**

- 13.1 None.