

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to a meeting of the Cabinet

Date of the meeting: 17th September 2019
Report by: Dilwyn Williams, Chief Executive
Title: Management Review

Decision sought

Not to fill the vacant post of Corporate Director for the time being in order to see whether we can do without the post.

Background

1. In May this year I presented a report to the Cabinet on the Council's management arrangements where I recommended that there should be a reduction in the number of senior managers in the Council.
2. With one adjustment, the Cabinet agreed to that report.
3. In the same report, in addition to challenging the number of heads/assistant heads we needed to run the Council, I also noted we should consider whether we needed two corporate directors as well as a Chief Executive.
4. I noted that the only way we could establish whether we could do with fewer would be to try such a model, but I also warned that there was less evidence that we could operate with only two at this level.
5. The cost of making one of the post holders redundant in order to try a new model would be enormous and without any certainty that we could cope, there would be a risk that we would need to re-fill the post in due course. This would be a waste of resource.
6. I therefore suggested that we should not reduce the number of Corporate Directors at that point but that we should consider the matter further if an opportunity arose in future where we could experiment with a new model without incurring redundancy costs.
7. As one of the Corporate Director posts is now empty, this gives us an opportunity to see whether we can cope without the post.

8. I have discussed the matter with the remaining Director and whilst we both have reservations relating to the medium term risks, we are both agreed that it is incumbent upon us to at least experiment with a different model.
9. I therefore recommend that we do not fill the vacant Director post at the current time in order to experiment to see if we can do without the post.
10. This would mean that the functions being undertaken by the previous post holder would need to be re-allocated between myself and the remaining Director.
11. As the post holder has been working on the Growth Bid for some time now, a significant proportion of the workload is already being undertaken by us both, but there will be other functions which are not, and which will need to be re-allocated.
12. I would emphasise that this report does not recommend deleting the post from the establishment at this juncture as we do not have sufficient evidence to show that we can do without the post, but if the experiment is successful, this would be an option for the future.

Observations of the Statutory Officers:-**Monitoring Officer**

“The report clearly notes what was discussed at the Cabinet meeting in May, and in view of this, I consider the recommendation within the report to be reasonable. As noted in the report, clarity is needed as to where the vacant post’s responsibilities will lie during the experimental period. No further comments from a propriety perspective”.

Head of Finance

“A report was presented to the Cabinet on 23rd July, considering how we will cope with the financial situation in 2020/21, in the context of grant settlements from the Welsh Government being insufficient to meet inflation pressures. It was confirmed that we are planning for a funding gap of between £2m and £7m and we have already asked departments to find their share of the minimum savings.

In view of the challenging situation we are planning for, it is logical to conduct an experiment to gather evidence to see whether we can get by with less at this tier. Therefore, I support the decision sought.”