

Agenda item:

[No.]

General Purposes Committee

On 18 April 2011

Report Title. Feedback and Information Governance restructure

Report of **Stuart Young: Assistant Chief Executive**

Signed :

Contact Officer : Eve Pelekanos; Head of Policy, Intelligence and Partnerships

Wards(s) affected: **[All / Some (Specify)]**

Report for: **[Key / Non-Key Decision]**

1. Purpose of the report (That is, the decision required)

1.1. General Purposes Committee are requested to approve the centralisation of management of all Council complaints, Member's Enquiries, Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection enquiries functions. In addition, an information governance function will be established to be based within the new centralised Feedback and Information Governance team.

2. Introduction by Cabinet Member (if necessary)

2.1. not applicable

3. State link(s) with Council Plan Priorities and actions and /or other Strategies:

3.1. Improving the way feedback is managed in the Council will support the principles and values set out in the *Rethinking Haringey* paper and support all services to improve how they are delivered.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. That the proposed centralisation of feedback and information governance functions as outlined in the report and appendices is agreed.

5. Reason for recommendation(s)

- 5.1. A report outlining plans to revise the management of complaints was presented to CEMB on 9th November 2010 and agreement was given to commission a review to centralise all complaints, Members' Enquiries, Freedom of Information (FOI), Data Protection enquiries, and information governance functions. The proposed team will also be responsible for records management.
- 5.2. Following on from this agreement, work has been undertaken to develop a proposed structure for the centralisation of feedback and information governance functions. This proposed structure was agreed by CEMB on 22 February 2011. This report sets out proposals for the new Feedback and Information Governance team.

6. Other options considered

- 6.1. The Council has no option but to retain the functions which the Feedback and Information Governance Team will have responsibility for. It is therefore essential that these functions are delivered effectively. Consultation with staff and managers indicated that the best way to achieve this in the current economic climate is via a centralised team. As indicated above many Directorates are making cuts to posts which deliver these functions and are reliant on the work being transferred to the centre, as they will no longer have the resources to undertake it. In order for performance to be maintained the management of these functions needs to be centralised.
- 6.2. Centralisation will lead to Council complaints, Member's Enquiries, Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection enquiries being dealt with more efficiently and in a standardised manner. A centralised team will improve line management and support arrangements for staff as it will allow for better cover arrangements, which previously have been difficult due to limited numbers of staff managing these functions in the individual Directorates.
- 6.3. The expected commencement of the new team will coincide with the launch of upgraded Respond (database for complaints and member enquiries) and the two stage complaints process in July 2011. All of which will enable processes to be more efficient and improved management information to be produced.

7. Summary

- 7.1. A report outlining plans to revise the management of complaints was presented to CEMB on 9 November 2010 and CAB on 18 November 2011 and agreement was given to:
- Implement the proposed two stage complaints process
 - Revise timescales for responding to complaints to 15 days for stage 1 and 25 for stage 2 – a total of 40 days end to end.
 - Commission a review to centralise all complaints, Members' Enquiries, Freedom of Information (FOI), Data Protection enquiries, and information governance functions
- 7.2. Following on from this agreement, work has been undertaken to develop a proposed structure for the centralisation of feedback and information governance functions. This proposed structure was agreed by CEMB on 22 February 2011. The Feedback and Information Governance team will consist of three teams: Feedback Response; Feedback Review and Information Governance – a total of 18 posts. The proposed structure and each team's responsibilities can be found in appendix 1.
- 7.3. There are currently 26 FTEs across the Council that carry out the functions that the new team will be responsible for (except the Information Governance roles which are new posts). This is a reduction of eight FTEs. In addition, there are a number of other officers in the Council who currently undertake some feedback and information functions but who have not been included in the restructure for the centralised team as this only forms a small proportion of their substantive posts or they are part of other service reviews.
- 7.4. It is intended that the Feedback Response Team will be the first point of contact for all enquiries set out under these functions. The Feedback Review team will carry out all Stage Two investigations under the new two stage complaints process agreed by CAB on 18 November 2011. The centralised team will also be responsible for managing all statutory complaints, which previously sat with Children & Young People's Service and Adults Culture & Community Services.
- 7.5. There will be 14 posts for Feedback Response Team and Feedback Review Team (including the Feedback and Information Governance Manager). This figure was calculated by estimating the average time spent on processing each function multiplied by the 2010 calendar year volumes. It was assumed that under the two stage complaints process all stage two's will be investigated by the corporate team and that it is likely that at least in the short term these volumes will be higher than current stage 3's.
- 7.6. The number of posts proposed for the Information Governance function is based on the Information Management Strategy report considered by CEMB on 9 October 2010. This new team will also take over responsibility for the Records Management function which is currently provided by three officers in ACCS.

8. Chief Financial Officer Comments

- 8.1. The Chief Financial Officer has reviewed the costings for the proposed new structure of 18 posts and confirms that they look reasonable and have prudently been based on the assumption that all attract full on-costs.
- 8.2. As highlighted in section 13.3 the requirement to fund new posts for the Information Governance function will mean that the savings from centralisation previously forecast for 2012/13-2013/14 will now not be achieved.
- 8.3. The Chief Financial Officer has yet to finally confirm the exact level of employee budgets available to transfer into the new team given the large numbers of restructures taking place across the organisation and the risk of double counting. The Head of Service has been consulting with those managers of staff affected so the risk of a shortfall is expected to be low.

9. Head of Legal Services Comments

- 9.1. A centralised approach to Members' Enquiries, Freedom of Information requests and Data Protection issues should assist the Council in improving consistency and accuracy in the discharge of these functions.

10. Head of Procurement Comments – [Required for Procurement Committee]

- 10.1. Not applicable

11. Equalities & Community Cohesion Comments

- 11.1. An Equalities Impact Assessment of the centralisation has been completed (Part 1) and is attached at Appendix 2. A final version of the EIA will be completed once recruitment has taken place.
- 11.2. It is not possible at this stage to say with absolute certainty, what the equalities composition of the new structure of the Feedback and Information Governance team will be. However, from an analysis of the current staff profile and the profile of the proposed ring fence, the proposal is not likely to change significantly the current equalities profile of the service. This means that it is not likely that any particular group of employees in the service (persons sharing a protected characteristic within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010) will be disproportionately affected either in terms of benefit or detriment. The full picture will be determined after the restructure has been completed and the new structure is in place and Part 2 of assessment has been completed.

12. Consultation

- 12.1. Informal consultation on the proposals took place with between November 2010 and February 2011 through a series of meetings with officers providing feedback functions and their managers. Project officers also attended the Feedback Officers Group on a number of occasions to provide updates to officers.

12.2. Formal consultation period started 14 February 2011, initially for 28 days. This period was extended until 6 April 2011 in agreement with Unison following the inclusion of Records management functions and staff into the restructure.

13. Service Financial Comments

13.1. The current costs of providing the functions that will be included in the new centralised team are £1,014,080.82. This has been calculated by including all officers whose sole function is to provide the services included and an estimation of time spent on these functions by officers who also undertake additional work.

13.2. It is estimated that the cost of the proposed structure of 18 FTE is £743,760.03. This represents a potential saving of £270,320.79 (27%). However funding to be centralised is limited to eighteen posts. This is due to funding being cut by the Directorates as part of other restructures, pre-agreed savings and reviews, which affect posts responsible in part or full for feedback and information functions. Therefore, to ensure that there is no double counting, these savings have not been put forward as part of this restructure.

13.3. The potential cashable savings resulting from the centralisation of Feedback and Information Governance functions will be used to fund the four Information Governance posts at an estimated cost of £157, 231.92.

14. Use of appendices /Tables and photographs

14.1. Appendix 1: Proposed structure of Feedback and Information Governance Team

14.2. Appendix 2: Equalities Impact Assessment for centralisation of Feedback and Information Governance. (Part 1 completed)

14.3. Appendix 3a: Trade unions comments on proposals and Appendix 3b Service response to trade union comments

15. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

15.1. Not applicable