



REVIEW OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVES OFFICE – PHASE THREE

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1. The Policy and Resources Committee approved a new role for the Chief Executives Office on 11 July 2000. Subsequently organisational structures and other detailed considerations were presented to Members participating in the Chief Executives Office Working Party 14 September 2000. After consulting appropriate Members, under the urgency procedure, the Chief Executive implemented the recommendations, as follows:
- (1) that the Chief Executive be asked to consider an alternative option for the European and Regional Office and the Racial Harassment Project to be located in the Environment and Development Department, and that further consultation take place on this proposal, for decision by the Cabinet.
 - (2) that the remainder of the proposals be recommended for approval and implementation, so far as possible, pending consideration of the alternative option (including recruitment to the Assistant Director post).
 - (3) that a further meeting of the Working Party be convened if, after consultation with Members of the Working Party, it is deemed necessary by the Town Clerk.
- 1.2. The grounds for urgency are set out in the consultation letter which is attached to the report at Appendix D.
- 1.3. This report presents the alternative proposals for the location of the above mentioned functions with a summary of the issues relating to each option.

1.4. Staff comments are attached at Appendix C for Members information.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended:

- a) That the action of the Chief Executive under Standing Order 44 to implement the Working Party's recommendations be noted.
- b) Members consider the arguments presented below and approve the organisational arrangements as follows:

Either

- i) to approve the location of the European and Regional function in the Chief Executives Office in accordance with the structure shown at Appendix A

Or

- ii) to approve the location of the European and Regional function in the Environment and Development Department in accordance with the structure shown at Appendix B with Policy Officer support from the Chief Executives Office as defined at paragraph 1.4.3 of the main report.

And either

- iii) to approve the location of the Racial Harassment Project in the Chief Executives Office in accordance with the structure shown at Appendix A

Or

- iv) to approve the location of the Racial Harassment Project in the Environment and Development Department in accordance with the structure shown at Appendix B.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.2. The proposals in this report do not affect the financial implications that were reported to the Working Party on 14th September. Whilst exact levels are not able to be determined at present, estimates show that the target to find £200,000 (p.a. over the next three years) savings from the Chief Executives Office budget will be achieved.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION AND APPENDICES

1. EUROPEAN AND REGIONAL WORK

1.1. The European Office currently undertakes the following work:

- Corporate co-ordination of European policies and strategies
- Working with other department to respond and develop policies in relation to Europe
- Working with regional organisations e.g. EMDA, GOEM and LGA to promote Leicester's case in European matters
- Corporate co-ordination of European bids
- Development and assist in writing bids for European resources
- Provision of European advice and information
- Developing partners at local, regional and European levels

1.2. In addition to the regeneration specific regional work carried out in the Corporate Strategic Regeneration Unit, the wider regional role involves the following activity :

Support for Members and the Chief Executive including:

- The production of monthly written briefings and advice on EMRLGA and RA agendas, and liaison with regional officers on these agendas.
- Deputising or observing at regional meetings in the absence of Members or the Chief Executive.
- Participation in regional advisory meetings, workshops, and consultative meetings.
- Attendance at county-wide LGA meetings.
- Liaison with local partners on regional matters
- Liaison with officers from Nottingham and Derby City Councils on matters of common interest as major urban authorities within the region.

1.3. Rationale For Inclusion In The Chief Executive's Office

1.3.1. The original proposals place the European and Regional function within the Chief Executives office as part of the Strategic Policy and Performance unit. This was proposed to facilitate a strategic link between the Councils City-wide and Corporate policy processes and the developing Regional, Sub – Regional and European agenda. It defines the Regional and European agenda in broader terms than just regeneration. For example the development of social issues specifically around Human Rights and Equality, provides corporate support and advice on all aspects of European legislation, and facilitates support to the Cabinet, Scrutiny and the Chief Executive at a regional level including the East Midlands LGA and Regional Chamber. This developing role is proposed in the light of expected developments in the Regional Government agenda after the next election. By placing the role within the corporate policy function it was hoped to be able to support the additional work from the pool of policy offices based in this unit.

1.4. Proposed Future Role For European And Regional Work In The Environment And Development Department

1.4.1. The alternative proposal would transfer the existing European team from the Chief Executives office to the Environment and Development Department reporting directly to the Assistant Director (Health and Community Recreation). The proposal will fully integrate the European and Regional function with all other elements of corporate regeneration, economic development and appropriate regional functions and as above provide the corporate support to the Chief Executive, Cabinet and Scrutiny on the functions. The proposal provides a stand-alone unit with no changes to its current size and structure. The aim is to establish a high profile Team to provide a corporate response on European and Regional issues.

1.4.2. The key tasks will include:

- To be the focal point for all matters to do with European and Regional issues within the City Council both for Members and officers
- To co-ordinate and advise other departments in the development of policies and strategies in response to the European and Regional agenda
- To facilitate inter-departmental working in a "joined-up" approach to European and Regional work.
- To work with other partners in the City, sub-regionally, and in the region to ensure that appropriate responses are developed to the European agenda
- To work with EMDA, GOEM, LGA, Regional Assembly and EMREO to promote Leicester

- To identify, promote, assist and co-ordinate funding opportunities through EU
- To develop and facility partnership working locally, regionally and nationally to support future joint working, in particular, to develop partnership with other member states.
- To establish and provide regular update information on European matters
- To support the implementation of specific programmes e.g. TEP
- To provide briefing for Members and others on other regional matters, working closely with other service departments.

1.4.3 It has been difficult during the review process to ascertain the ongoing resource requirement associated with this area of work. Therefore to enable this situation to be resolved with some flexibility, it is proposed that Policy Officer support (up to the level of ½ full time equivalent post) be provided from the Chief Executives Office. This situation would then need to be reviewed within a 12-month period to allow Members the opportunity of reconsidering the level of resource and priority to assign to this area of work.

1.5. In summary the arguments around the location of these roles are:

1.5.1. If the function is located in the Chief Executives Office it retains an unquestionable corporate focus and is more easily able to exercise strategic links with other corporate policy areas, with some capacity to absorb variations in workload that are anticipated.

1.5.2. If the function is located within the Environment and Development Department then it will remain as a unit with focus on the European and Regional roles maintaining the specialisms within it. In close working with the regeneration function there will be advantages in better informing and co-ordinating bidding for European resources, but the focus on this work will need to be balanced with responding to other wider European and Regional issues.

2. THE RACIAL HARASSMENT PROJECT

2.1. The Role Of The Project

2.1.1. The project is currently responsible for the monitoring, recording and reporting of Racial Harassment complaints within the City. There are no proposals to change the role of the project within the review.

2.2. Discussion on location issues

2.2.1. The original proposals locate the project within the Chief Executives Office as part of the Strategic Policy and Performance unit. The Racial Harassment Project deals closely with the Police and other agencies on racial harassment cases, and has been linked with the team of Policy Officers, as this role is a key part of monitoring performance, and can lead to a lessening of racial tensions in communities. There is also the opportunity to 'learn lessons' from such incidents, and clearly community support is critical if the causes of racial harassment are to be addressed and reduced. Therefore, placing the project in the Chief Executive's Office, as part of Strategic Policy & Performance, allows the opportunity for better engagement with communities and improved awareness of incidents; which, in the long-term, should lead to less harassment and better understanding of cultural and religious differences.

2.2.2. The alternative proposals locate the project in the Environment and Development Department within the Community Safety Team. There are concerns that such inclusion would change the focus of the team's work and would introduce direct service delivery and away from corporate work on strategy and implementation of the Crime and Disorder Act. The resources allocated for this work at present are limited and if the proposal to transfer the work to the team is to be considered it will need additional resources to ensure that effective service is provided.

3. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

3.1. The function of the Racial Harassment Project is of great significance under the current climate around Lawrence and race issues. Its location will need to be considered carefully in the light of this.

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

4.1. Background Papers

- i) Review of the Chief Executive's Office – Phase One, joint report of the Chief Executive and the Director of Housing, Policy and Resources Committee 11th July 2000.
- ii) Review of the Chief Executive's Office – Phase Two, joint report of the Chief Executive, Director of Housing, Town Clerk and Director of Corporate Resources and Director of environment and Development, Chief Executives Office Working Party, 14th September 2000.
- iii) File on Chief Executives Review (in the Housing Department)

5. EMAS IMPLICATIONS

5.1. There are no EMAS implications associated with this report.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The Racial Harassment Project is a key function in the execution of the Councils responsibilities around Crime and Disorder.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There are no legal implications associated with this report.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 There have been many meetings of the Review Team and Service Management with staff representatives and Trade Unions. There have been five Liaison Group Meetings since the Policy & Resources Committee on 11 July, and six further meetings since the Working Party on 14 September. On 13 October the Regional Organiser for the UNISON wrote to the Leader of the Council with a grievance, citing lack of consultation throughout the whole review but without specific views on where consultation had not taken place.

9. AUTHOR OF REPORT

- 9.1. Dave Pate, ext. 6801