

Report to:	Cabinet	Date: 09 July 2025
Subject:	Review of Corporate Core Senior Structure	
Report of	Cabinet Member, Customer Service, Communications and Corporate Affairs	

Summary

1. This report sets out the actions which have resulted from a series of staffing changes within the Corporate Core during 2024/25.
2. Within these changes this report seeks approval for a Voluntary Exit application which must be constitutionally approved by the Cabinet and/or where costs exceed £100,000 and must therefore also be approved by Council.
3. The Report also includes the creation of two new Chief Officer Posts which must also be approved by Cabinet.

Recommendation(s)

4. Agree to the deletion of the post of Director of People & Inclusion following the post-holders resignation.
5. Agree to deletion of the post of Head of Human Resources.
6. Approve the Voluntary Early Retirement of the Head of HR, support payment of the Voluntary Early Retirement and capital costs associated and commend this proposal to Council for their agreement.
7. Thank the Head of Human Resources for his contribution to the Council during his time with the authority.
8. Agree to the creation of two new Chief Officer posts: Assistant Director People & Inclusion and Head of Communications.
9. Delegate authority to the Executive Director (Strategy & Transformation) and Monitoring Officer to consider responses received from the consultation and produce a final version of the structure for implementation.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

10. The proposals in this report make a budget saving with support the Council's financial position in 2025/26 and will create a permanent leadership structure within two important areas of the Corporate Core.

Alternative options considered and rejected

11. None

Report Author and Contact Details:

Name: Kate Waterhouse

Position: Executive Director (Strategy & Transformation)

Department: Corporate Core

E-mail: k.waterhouse@bury.gov.uk

Background

12. The Corporate Core has gone through significant change over the last five years in strengthening its role in supporting the Council and facilitating the delivery of organisational objectives. This transition was recognised by the Local Government Association (LGA) in its Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review in 2024 and can be seen through the delivery of the Enabling Actions monitored within the Council's Corporate Plan.
13. The Progress Review by the LGA noted that to better enable the delivery of the Council's transformation programme there was a recommendation to further develop Finance, HR and ICT services. Following this, the Council has integrated finance within the Corporate Core, under a single executive director, thereby demonstrating a commitment to finding efficiencies within the department and ensuring consistency of approach across corporate services.
14. The Corporate Core has also led on the integration of Housing Services back into the Council, integrating teams across corporate functions and managing the transition to 'safely land' the management and maintenance of the local social housing stock within the Council.
15. However, there remains work to be done to improve corporate services and to ensure the directorate is fit for purpose to support the Council to deliver against challenging objectives and increasingly complex demand.
16. This report outlines the need for a series of staffing changes within the Corporate Core following the departure of two members of the Senior Management Team and the vacant post of Head of Communications. As it is recognised that the Council continues to face a challenging budget situation, the proposals included within this report make savings through increased spans of management control and a reduction in tiers of leadership as per our organisation design principles.

The Context for Change

17. The development of Workforce Strategy for the Council continues to be a key priority, as does the focus on organisational development and inclusion to ensure that the Council has the strongest workforce to deliver its objectives. Following the departure of the Director of People and Inclusion at the end of March 2025 a review of the role has been undertaken, alongside the production of a service plan for Human Resources (HR) and Organisational Development (OD) to consider the current demands on the function and capacity to deliver.
18. The HR and OD service provides comprehensive management and employee support for Bury Council. The main functions of the service include managing the recruitment and selection process, employee relations, performance management, payroll and pensions, managing attendance, operational and consultation support, and occupational health and safety, as well as providing a training, development, reward and wellbeing offer.
19. In reviewing the performance over the last couple of years, the HR Service has delivered a wide range of improvements and a significant volume of activity through building relationships with managers, supporting large scale organisational change, improving recruitment processes, developing more sophisticated workforce reporting and increasing wellbeing support.

20. The OD function has continued to deliver core training and development activities over the past 12 months, supporting leadership and management development, increasing apprenticeship uptake and achieving our highest employee review and mandatory training compliance to date. However, further work is needed over the next 12 months to support the organisational culture, engagement, management development and behaviour work, to be further supported by a strengthened internal comms and engagement offer.
21. In 2020 Greater Manchester established a Tackling Inequalities commission, to address the entrenched inequalities across our communities which were exposed and worsened by the Covid pandemic. The Council has established a programme of work in response, under the leadership of the Director of People and Inclusion, to give voice to minoritised communities; improve cohesion and increase the representativeness and inclusion of its workforce and culture. The importance of this work to driving outcomes for local people is increasingly important in the context of current socio-economic pressures and will continue to be an area of future leadership, in conjunction with the Community Safety Partnership manager and the partnership of the Voluntary Community & Faith Alliance (VCFA).
22. Despite these improvements, stakeholder feedback from stakeholder has made clear that there are several areas where performance needs to be reshaped and improved, including:
- Employee Relations, to operate in an increasingly litigious national environment and continue to drive workforce improvements in the Council's regulated services which are currently subject to inspection.
 - HR Operations, including responding to the Improvement Plan across basic systems and processes being overseen by the Audit committee.
 - Health & Safety, learning from some serious accidents in recent years and recognising the high-risk environment in which the Council operates.
 - Organisation Development, to respond to the recommendation for a comprehensive transformation plan from the LGA in the Council's recent Peer Review.
23. The Communication, Engagement & Marketing function is currently without permanent leadership following the departure of the postholder at the end of March 2025. The Head of Service role has been filled on an interim basis since that time, but a substantive appointment is required. The Council has a longstanding objective to improve the quality of its internal and external communications, to ensure congruency of messaging with corporate strategy and reinforce the "LET'S Do It!" call to action. Communications leadership is also required to corral the whole system, particularly the NHS GM function which until recently operated joint communication arrangements with the Council.

Proposed Structure

24. The opportunity has been taken to review the HR/OD leadership structure to achieve efficiencies whilst building on the professional strengths described. This report recommends streamlining the senior management roles to ensure focus on the delivery of core operational requirements of the HR/OD service. The current structure includes both a Director and Head of Service for HR which, previously, provided capacity for the HR service to be managed and wider leadership of workforce-related functions to be discharged, including across Greater Manchester and in other services such as a review of the procurement function. The additional responsibilities

previously discharged by the Director post are now concluded and leadership requirements absorbed into substantive structures elsewhere in the Core.

25. On this basis the report proposes the deletion of the vacant post of Director of People & Inclusion and to agree to the Voluntary Early Retirement of the Head of HR post, with effect from the 1st August 2025, in order that a new Chief Officer post of Assistant Director of People & inclusion may be created (Chief Officer Band D). The Cabinet is asked to recognise the contribution of the departing Head of HR who spent his career at Bury Council and leaves us after over 36 years of public service, having overseen many of the improvements listed in this report and built a strong legacy for the future.
26. The reduction of leadership capacity in the HR Service will deliver a full-year saving of c£120k. Some of this saving will be reserved to address the costs of the structure change however it is proposed that a proportion is re-invested in the delivery team including Health & Safety.
27. The total costs of agreeing the release of this postholder are £39,604 in severance. Funding for this payment will be drawn from the savings made by the proposals contained within this report whilst still allowing for investment in the leadership required for HR/OD and Communications, and the creation of an additional role within the service to provide additional focus on Health & Safety. There is a requirement through the Voluntary Exits policy that the costs associated with the release are paid back within three years.
28. In line with the Council's Constitution and the Localism Act, applications under the Voluntary Exit Policy which exceed £100,000 must be agreed by Council. The £233,088 capital cost related to the early release of pension benefits which will be met through a combination of the remaining pension strain allowance available to the council this financial year and utilisation of capital receipt flexibilities that can support redundancy costs where service transformation and financial savings are achieved. There will be no further direct impact on the Council's general fund budget from this decision.
29. It is proposed that a new Head of Communications is established (COA) to lead and manage the Council's function on a permanent basis. This role will be required to lead the Council service only but must work across the system including in partnership with NHS GM; the Combined Authority and Team Bury partners to manage system-wide messaging, particularly across statutory partnerships including the Community Safety Partnership; Children's Strategic Partnership Board and in conjunction with the private sector, particularly the Council's two Joint Venture development partners.
30. This post holder will also be expected to work closely with the Assistant Director of People & Inclusion to ensure alignment of strategy and the co-delivery of high-quality internal campaigns to ensure the recruitment, retention and development of staff within the Council. The post holder will also be expected to complete a review of the team structure to ensure that the service is fully aligned to the priorities agreed within the Communications Strategy.

Conclusions

31. The proposals above support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan for 2025/26 by strengthening the leadership arrangements in the Corporate Core

through providing for permanent appointments to senior posts in Human Resources and Communications.

32. These changes are shaped around continuous improvement within the Corporate Core as recommended by the Local Government Association in their Corporate Peer Challenge and are directed at fulfilling the objectives within the Council's 2025/26 Corporate Plan.

Recommendations

33. The recommendations from this proposal are as follows:
- Agree to the deletion of the post of Director of People & Inclusion following the post-holders resignation.
 - Approve the Voluntary Early Retirement the Head of HR, supports payment of the Voluntary Early Retirement and capital costs associated and commends this proposal to Council for their agreement.
 - Thank the Head of Human Resources for his contribution to the Council during his time with the authority.
 - Agree to the creation of two new Chief Officer posts: Assistant Director People & Inclusion and Head of Communications.
 - Delegate authority to the Executive Director (Strategy & Transformation) and Monitoring Officer to consider responses received from the consultation and produce a final version of the structure for implementation.

Links with the Corporate Priorities:

Please summarise how this links to the Let's Do It Strategy.

34. These proposals seek to support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan by ensuring that the Council has the right structure and capacity in place to deliver against published priorities and performance indicators and the wider commitments of the LET'S Do It! Strategy.

Equality Impact and Considerations:

*Please provide an explanation of the outcome(s) of an initial or full EIA and make **specific reference regarding the protected characteristic of Looked After Children**. There must be a signed off EIA template appended with a full analysis or explanation as to why an analysis is not needed for the report to be put forward to cabinet.*

Intranet link to EIA documents is [here](#).

Sign off to be completed by the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Manager (contact l.cawley@bury.gov.uk for advice).

35. The proposals do not effect Council policy and are delivered within the scope of the agreed Voluntary Exits Policy which has been subject to a full Equality Impact Assessment.

Environmental Impact and Considerations:

*Please provide an explanation of the Environmental impact of this decision. Please include the impact on both **Carbon emissions** (contact climate@bury.gov.uk for advice) and **Biodiversity** (contact c.m.wilkinson@bury.gov.uk for advice)*

36. No negative impacts identified.

Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
The proposed changes remove capacity and experience necessary to organisational delivery.	The proposed departure dates and future structural arrangements have been designed to mitigate this risk.

Legal Implications:

To be completed by the Council's Monitoring Officer.

37. The Supplementary Guidance (Openness and Accountability in Local Pay) supplements the existing pay accountability guidance published in February 2012 which requires Local authorities to present details of any package paid to an officer where the value of the package exceeds £100,000. In accordance with the Council constitution approval of the Voluntary Early Retirement package is subject to agreement by Council.

Financial Implications:

To be completed by the Council's Section 151 Officer.

38. The severance cost of £39,604 will be funded from savings arising from the net reduction in posts detailed in the report. The capital costs of £233,088 will be funded from a combination of the remaining pension strain allowance available to the council this financial year (c£81k) with balance via utilisation of capital receipt flexibilities that can support redundancy costs where service transformation and financial savings are achieved. There will be no further direct impact on the Council's general fund budget from this decision. There is an ongoing revenue saving of c£40k resulting from the proposals.

Appendices:

None

Background papers:

Please list any background documents to this report and include a hyperlink where possible. Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning