

Item No. 15.	Classification: Open	Date: 17 January 2024	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Creation of a new senior management post: Director, Communications, Engagement and Change	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Kieron Williams, Leader of the Council	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR KIERON WILLIAMS, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Southwark has always been a council that puts communities and residents at the heart of everything we do and the services we deliver. I am proud that we have such a strong local civic infrastructure with residents who are ambitious about the future of our borough. As a people powered place the council is working hand in hand with residents, partners, businesses and all those with a stake in the borough and giving greater power to our staff, our greatest asset, to help them create new relationships and co-design future services with our residents. This is so they can shape the places they live and make decisions about issues that affect their lives.

In the spring we will agree an ambitious Southwark 2030 strategy for the borough. This follows a period of extensive engagement with the community last year in which you told us how you want the borough to look and feel by the end of the decade. Southwark 2030 will set out our ambition for change and the things we will commit to do with our residents, with our vibrant voluntary, community and faith sector and other partners across our place to achieve the co-designed vision.

To deliver this the council needs the right tools, skills, approaches and people to help the borough achieve our Southwark 2030 strategy. For this reason, this report proposes the creation of a Director of Communications, Engagement and Change, which will be a new role within the council's organisational structure. This role will work directly with communities across Southwark including partners to spearhead our communications strategy, our approach to engagement and lead on how we design future services to best deliver the 2030 strategy and wider council transformation priorities – all focused on delivering the best for our community and the borough we all call home.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

1. Approves the creation of a new post, Director, Communications, Engagement and Change.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. In the spring of 2024, the council will agree an ambitious Southwark 2030 strategy for the borough. This follows a period of extensive engagement with the community in 2023. Southwark 2030 will outline the systemic change required to deliver the community co-designed vision for 2030 and how this drives and prioritises the council's wider transformation programme and broader communications strategy and community engagement approach.
3. In addition, the council will be delivering its response to the recent LGA peer review (elsewhere on this agenda) integrating this into the Council Delivery Plan and associated transformation plans.
4. To achieve this well, it is essential that the Council has the right capacity and skills in the corporate centre and at the heart of organisational delivery to provide leadership and drive the council's wider transformation programme and communications strategy and community engagement approach. A programme that delivers on the ambition to put communities and people power at the heart of everything we do as a council and community. This includes building a corporate centre that is focused on supporting the delivery of excellent services and is outward facing working with and across partners and the community to deliver change and improve lives for residents.
5. Creating the post of Director, Communications, Engagement and Change is at the core of those plans. This will be a critical role in developing communications strategy and our approach to community engagement and service design for the medium and long term benefit of the borough. The role will work directly with communities across Southwark including partners to shape future service design and deliver change interventions that enhance community capacity and realign community relationships to best deliver the 2030 strategy and wider council transformation priorities.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

6. The purpose of building senior capacity in the corporate centre and in particular creating the new post of the Director, Communications, Engagement and Change is to support the council in delivering the community co-designed vision for Southwark 2030. It will lead and support delivery of the council's communications strategy and community engagement approach associated with 2030 alongside how we deliver

change through better service design, working directly with residents and the community.

7. In order for Southwark 2030 and the associated transformation and change to be successful, the council needs the right tools, skills, approaches and people to help the borough sustain its focus and efforts on delivering the Southwark 2030 strategy.
8. By way of further context, to ensure the senior management structure of the Council was aligned to the priorities in the Council Delivery Plan the council implemented a two phase senior management structure, first in February and then in September 2023. This created the Strategy and Communities department with corporate functions being brought together under one of two Assistant Chief Executive's (the other being the Governance and Assurance department).
9. Following this and to help fulfil our wider ambition on the delivery of Southwark 2030 and the council's transformation ambition, proposals were developed for a new senior management structure in the Strategy and Communities department. These were published for consultation on 28 November 2023, with feedback invited by 22 December 2023 and implementation of the new structure to commence from January.
10. The proposal to create a Director, Communications, Engagement and Change (to which this report relates) has arisen out of feedback received to the consultation, in particular needing to have sufficient senior capacity across communications and engagement and bringing this together with strategy and change functions. Creating a Director post, including to deputise for the Assistant Chief Executive, would also mirror management arrangements in the Governance and Assurance department. Enacting the decision now will mean the timeline for implementation, as shared with staff and critical to the delivery of the council's future ambition, will remain on track.
11. Working and co-designing the projects and services for how we deliver Southwark 2030 directly with the community, the Director role will be critical in helping the council to shift to a sector-leading, whole-organisation approach and an organisational and people strategy framed around three transforming priorities which run through everything the council says and does. These three priorities being People Powered, Closing the Gap and Neighbourhood delivery.
12. Being 'People Powered' is about us working differently with our communities and giving greater power to staff to help them create new relationships with our residents so they can shape the places they live and make decisions about issues that affect their lives. It is about building on strong local civic infrastructure and focusing council (and partner) resources on those residents most in need and so 'Closing the Gap' and addressing the wider determinants of health and the structural inequalities

that exist. One of the key ways that we will achieve this is through a focus on neighbourhoods – building on the strong communities and vibrant Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) which exists right across the borough.

13. The post of Director, Communications, Engagement and Change will bring much needed senior level capacity to help the council deliver the three transforming priorities set out above alongside deliver the Southwark 2030 Strategy and Council Delivery Plan. Creating the post also responds directly to the LGA peer review (elsewhere on the agenda) in terms of using Southwark 2030 to reinforce local priorities (the what) and focus the change programme (the how). It supports plans to create a well owned new corporate centre that can make it easier to work in the council and drive transformation.
14. The post will broaden the strategic leadership, skill set and operational service provision to enable a corporate centre that is supporting the delivery of cross-council priorities and excellence in future council service design and delivery. Working directly with and for the benefit of residents, the role will ensure the Council and borough has a strong voice at a local, regional and national level. It will be the senior adviser on the council's approach to strategic communications, community involvement and delivery of change campaigns and will empower and work alongside council services and residents to design and realign community and resident-led change.
15. For the reasons set out in paragraphs above, it is proposed to create a new Director, Communications, Engagement and Change, which will be a grade 18 role that reports into the Assistant Chief Executive, Strategy and Communities. The Director, Communications, Engagement and Change will:
 - work collaboratively with elected members, the Chief Executive, senior officers and the community to achieve the priorities and commitments in the Council Delivery Plan and any associated council-wide strategies and plans;
 - lead on service design and change related interventions to support the community and realign community relationships to deliver the 2030 strategy and council service transformation priorities;
 - lead on communications strategy and be the senior strategic adviser to the Leader, Chief Executive and the Council on all aspects of strategic communications;
 - deputise for the Assistant Chief Executive, Strategy and Communities as required.
16. Under the council's constitution, the creation of posts at grade 17 and above is a matter reserved for Cabinet.
17. Subject to Cabinet approval of the proposal to create this role, recruitment of a permanent postholder will commence at the earliest opportunity. The

council is committed to ensuring recruitment is always open, fair and transparent, and the recruitment process will be managed in line with the council's established recruitment policy and procedures.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

18. The creation of a new Director, Communications, Engagement and Change is being done to develop communications strategy for the medium and long term benefit of the borough and to work directly with (and so benefit) communities across Southwark. This will include working with residents and partners to shape future service design and change interventions that enhance community capacity and realign community relationships to best deliver the 2030 strategy and Council Delivery Plan.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

19. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the council has a duty when exercising its functions to have due regard to:
 - the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
 - the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not
 - the need to foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.
20. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
21. The proposal to create a new Director, Communications, Engagement and Change is not anticipated to adversely impact on any of the duties defined in the Equality Act 2010.

Health impact statement

22. There are no significant health implications arising from the proposal to create a new Director, Communications, Engagement and Change.

Climate change implications

23. There are no significant climate change implications arising from the proposal to create a new Director, Communications, Engagement and Change.

Legal implications

24. Under the council's constitution, the cabinet is responsible for making any decisions regarding the strategic management of the council, including decisions on major reorganisations, major reallocations of functions between departments or chief officers, and the creation of posts at grade 17 or above.
25. This report seeks the cabinet's agreement to the creation of a new senior management post of Director, Communications, Engagement and Change.

Financial implications

26. The cost of employing a Director, Communications, Engagement and Change will be funded from both existing departmental staffing budgets and the corporate capacity building reserve, during the period of the current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Consultation

27. The proposal to create a new Director, Communications, Engagement and Change has resulted from consultation with employees and trade union representatives on the reorganisation of senior management arrangements for the Strategy and Communities department. This is part of plans to create a well owned new corporate centre that can make it easier to work in the council and drive transformation. This consultation was undertaken in line with the requirements of the council's HR policy framework.

REASONS FOR LATENESS

28. The report proposes the creation of a Director, Communications, Engagement and Change which has resulted from feedback on the consultation on the reorganisation of senior management arrangements for the Strategy and Communities department. The consultation period only closed on 22 December 2023 and so time was required, ahead of producing this report, to review and act on feedback and publish updated proposals for implementation to staff.

REASONS FOR URGENCY

29. The report is urgent as a decision is now required from Cabinet to approve the new director role and so move forward with the timeline for implementation of the reorganisation of senior management arrangements for the Strategy and Communities department as set out to staff.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance

30. This report asks the cabinet to approve the creation of a new senior management post, Director, Communications, Engagement and Change, which is a grade 18 role. Approval of the creation of posts at grade 17 and above is a matter reserved to the cabinet under part 3C of the council's constitution.
31. The proposed creation of this new post has arisen from staff consultation relating to proposed changes to management in the Strategy and Communications department.
32. The appointment of an individual to this post is a non-executive function of the council delegated to the chief executive or her nominee in accordance with part 3O of the constitution and the Officer Employment Rules in part 4.12 of the constitution. This new post would be a deputy chief officer appointment as defined by the Officer Employment Rules. An offer of employment as a deputy chief officer can only be made where no well-founded and material objection from any member of the cabinet is received.
33. The cabinet will need to ensure it considers the public sector equality duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 when making this decision and is referred to the equalities impact section in the report.

Strategic Director of Finance (FC23/006)

34. The Strategic Director of Finance notes the proposal to create a new Director, Communications, Engagement and Change.
35. The cost of employing an individual to fill this role (including on-costs) will be £148,242, which can be funded from within existing resources alongside corporate capacity building reserve for the remainder of the MTFS period after which costs will form part of future MTFS periods.
36. Salary budgets in various cost codes within Strategy and Communities department to be adjusted accordingly, following agreement of this report.
37. Salary costs are to be regularly reviewed as part of the departmental monitoring process to ensure costs are contained within budget.
38. There are no capital implications in this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Document	Held by and Contact
None	

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Kieron Williams, Leader of the Council	
Lead Officer	Stephen Gaskell, Assistant Chief Executive, Strategy and Communities	
Report Authors	Stephen Gaskell, Assistant Chief Executive, Strategy and Communities	
Version	Final	
Dated	15 January 2024	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	15 January 2024	