

By: Linden Kemkaran, Leader of the Council
Amanda Beer, Chief Executive Officer

To: County Council

Date: 18 September 2025

Subject: Senior Management Structure

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report sets out Personnel Committee's recommendation to proceed with amendments to the senior management structure of the Council, to enable recruitment to the post of Deputy Chief Executive. It outlines a structured approach to refining the operating model of the corporate departments to better support the organisation's changing strategic needs and evolving operating context.

Recommendations:

County Council is asked to:

1. AGREE the proposed changes to the senior management structure.
2. AGREE the deletion of the General Counsel and Director of Human Resources and Organisation Development posts.
3. AGREE the change in report line for the Director of Infrastructure from the Deputy Chief Executive to the Chief Executive.
4. AGREE that the Head of Law be designated Monitoring Officer within the new structure, to take effect upon implementation of the revised structure.
5. NOTE the change in report lines for the Head of Law to the Chief Executive; Head of Commercial and Procurement to the Deputy Chief Executive; Assistant Director People to the Deputy Chief Executive; the Head of Health and Safety to the Director of Infrastructure and the Head of People Strategy to the Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance.
6. INSTRUCT the Monitoring Officer to advise on and propose changes to the Constitution to give effect to any changes agreed by this paper.
7. DELEGATE authority to the Chief Executive to take relevant actions and make required arrangements in line with the Constitutional Personnel Management Rules to implement the revised structure, as required to implement the Council's decision.

1. Background

- 1.1 The current top tier structure has been in place since the reintroduction of the Chief Executive post in May 2022, with only a small number of minor alterations since then. Following Amanda Beer's appointment as Chief Executive in November 2023, after a four-month period as interim Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive post, which she held, has been vacant with all the report lines and responsibilities being discharged by the Chief Executive.
- 1.2 In the autumn of 2024, plans were being put in place which would see Kent and Medway apply to be part of the Devolution Priority Programme (DPP) in January 2025. During the same period, significant changes to the operating model and top tier structures were being considered but were put on hold pending the DPP decision. Once the government announced the region would not be included in the DPP, elections were reinstated and it was felt an inappropriate moment to implement the planned changes.
- 1.3 The proposals for the top tier restructure were therefore halted with no decision about any further change required after the election.

2. Context

- 2.1 The challenges and opportunities for the Authority have never been greater. The new Administration is committed to transforming Kent County Council. This aim aligns with other strategic ambitions and imperatives including delivering visible improvements to services; achieving efficiencies identified by the DOLGE team; expanding the use of technology and AI; and designing and delivering a clear and achievable prevention agenda.
- 2.2 These ambitions will need substantial input and clear focus from the Chief Executive and will be realised more quickly and sustainably through the effective working with providers and partners, led by the most senior officer. The size and complexity of the organisation requires an enabling structure to ensure that the Chief Executive can fulfil their internal and external responsibilities effectively.
- 2.3 There are also external challenges to be met, including ongoing financial pressures; increasing demand for and cost of services; considering how pressures on our service delivery and budgets caused by changes in our partner organisations can be resisted. Most significantly, Local Government Reorganisation is a key challenge. It is essential that the Chief Executive is supported by a senior team and structure to allow the postholder to concentrate on the strategic imperatives. The recruitment of a Deputy Chief Executive is a critical step in this.
- 2.4 KCC will need to be a leaner organisation, capable of harnessing and leveraging its scale in terms of service delivery. The corporate core will need to provide a service offer enabling and supporting services on a 'One Council' basis, freeing services to focus on practice, service quality and resident/client outcomes. This will be an important priority for the Deputy

Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive's Department will be refined to better support the organisation's evolving operating context and strategic focus.

- 2.5 The proposed action outlined in this paper also strengthens the Chief Executive's ability to focus on the key requirement of the role – to ensure that Kent residents receive the highest quality services possible within the financial envelope available. Streamlining the number of direct reports will enable the Chief Executive to maintain and further develop strong working relationships with the service Corporate Directors.
- 2.6 The sections below in this paper outline the aims of the proposed change and details a proposed approach.

3 Overarching Aims

- 3.1 **Support for the new Chief Executive.** Refining the Deputy Chief Executive Department aims to build a strong framework and additional capacity to effectively support the new Chief Executive allowing them to focus on the strategic priorities of the Council and the transformation required in response to the new Administration and the external challenges and opportunities.
- 3.2 **Reduced costs and enhanced efficiency.** The proposal achieves a reduction in costs through a streamlined top tier structure. This is essential given both the extreme financial pressures and the need for all levels of the organisation to contribute to savings.
- 3.3 **Retention and recruitment in advance of Local Government Reorganisation.** The strengthened model will build strong succession capability in preparation for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and offer flexibility for the new Unitary Authorities in Kent. It will also help with the retention and recruitment of senior staff in the run up to unitarisation.
- 3.4 **Provide options for organisational continuity.** The proposal allows for potential organisational continuity and the retention of critical Kent specific knowledge.
- 3.5 **Flexibility in relation to external context.** The proposal assumes Local Government Reorganisation progresses according to the current government timeline. However, if there are adjustments to LGR in Kent, the revised structure will still be a relevant and a valuable improvement to senior level capacity and efficiency.

4. The Proposal

- 4.1 This section of the paper outlines proposed changes where functional activity within the Deputy Chief Executive Department will be re-focused to re-instate direct reporting lines to the currently vacant Deputy Chief Executive role. The structural adjustment builds on strengthened capacity models within Governance, Law and Democratic Services and the Human Resources and Organisation Development and will result in the removal of two strategic lead posts, one in Governance, Law and Democratic

Services (General Counsel) and the other in Human Resources & Organisation Development (Director of Human Resources & Organisation Development).

- 4.2 These changes will enable a ringfenced Member recruitment process for the Deputy Chief Executive post providing the opportunity for continuity in leadership and strategic support to the new Chief Executive.
- 4.3 The new model for Governance, Law and Democracy will see a new Head of Governance role established and the existing Head of Law post, currently covered on an interim basis, will become a direct report to the Chief Executive and will be recruited to. It is proposed that this postholder will be designated as the Authority's Monitoring Officer. As required in the constitution, the Chair of Standards Committee has been consulted on the proposed process and will be consulted on the individual appointment to the Monitoring Officer (Head of Law) post when the structure is implemented.
- 4.4 In HR/OD, the Assistant Director – People role will be reviewed and expanded and will report directly to the Deputy Chief Executive. The Head of People Strategy will report to the Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance.
- 4.5 The report line for the Director Infrastructure will move from the Deputy Chief Executive to the Chief Executive. This, along with the move of the Head of People Strategy, outlined in paragraph 4.4 of this report, means that all the key functions involved in working to the Chief Executive on the design and implementation of LGR (Policy, including HR policy, Finance, Legal and Assets) sit on the same management team.
- 4.6 In other changes which the County Council is invited to note, the Head of Strategic Reset Programme (SRP) will take responsibility for the new Central Programme Management Office (CPMO). The Head of Health and Safety role will move from HR/OD to be managed by the Director of Infrastructure and the Head of Commercial and Procurement will move from temporary line management by the Corporate Director Finance to align with other services in the Deputy Chief Executive's Department.
- 4.7 The Job Description for the Deputy Chief Executive role, and the Head of Law where the Monitoring Officer responsibilities will sit are attached in Appendix 1.
- 4.8 Reporting arrangements will be adjusted, and functional activity will be realigned to reflect the revised structure. A proposed organisational structure chart including indicative grades for the new and revised roles, is provided in Appendix 2. The current structure is also shown in this Appendix.
- 4.9 In accordance with the Constitution the top tier structure of the Authority is determined by the County Council. Personnel Committee at its meeting on 3 September reviewed the detail and agreed to recommend this structure to County Council.

5. The Process

- 5.1 As well as a small number of changes in report lines and amendments to job descriptions, achieving the proposed changes will require the displacement of two top tier posts, the Director of HR/OD and the General Counsel. Informal engagement and communication has taken place with all those where job descriptions are revised and/or there will be new line management reporting arrangements.
- 5.2 Following the decision by Personnel Committee to recommend this change to County Council, formal individual consultation has been undertaken with the two individuals impacted by the deletion of their posts.
- 5.3 The individual consultation response supported the proposal. The fact that the proposed change recognises the reality of the capacity pressure in the General Counsel role and seeks to address that was welcomed. Comments were included about the importance of the role of HR in the organisation and the need for this to be maintained following the deletion of the Director of HR/OD and on the need for a very close working relationship between the Head of People Strategy and the Assistant Director - People Operations and between that Assistant Director and the Head of Health and Safety. It will be important that the new model is implemented in a way that ensures these objectives are achieved and no impediments to this are envisaged.
- 5.4 The response also suggested that two roles that were intended to report to the Head of Governance are moved to the Head of Law. The two posts in question provide direct support to the Monitoring Officer in relation all matters regarding the Constitution. Personnel Committee agreed that any minor changes resulting from the consultation exercise be delegated to the Chief Executive in advance of County Council debate and decision. This suggested change has been agreed by the Chief Executive.
- 5.5 Subject to County Council approval, the subsequent process would be managed in accordance with our established HR procedures. This would include the ringfenced recruitment to the vacant Deputy Chief Executive role, with the two holders of the existing displaced posts being invited to submit an expression of interest in the role. In accordance with the Constitution, the appointment decision would be made by a Member Appointment panel of Personnel Committee. If an appointment is made, it is intended to have the new model largely in place for October 2025.

6 Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 Following a screening of the equality impact of this proposal it is deemed there is no impact.

7 Financial Impact

- 7.1 The Deputy Chief Executive role remains within the existing budget provision. In view of the ongoing financial challenges facing the Authority, cost savings will be realised through the removal of the Director of HR/OD and General Counsel roles. While there will be additional costs associated

with the creation of the Head of Governance role and the anticipated grade uplift to the Assistant Director - People post, overall these changes will realise savings.

- 7.2 Initially there will be a minimum annual saving of £115k and from 2028 onwards annual savings are projected to exceed £250,000. Where applicable, redundancy costs would be met by the Workforce Reduction Fund and would have no impact on the revenue budget, but pension strain costs are included in the financial impact assessment of savings

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Author:

Amanda Beer
Chief Executive

Appendix 1: Job Descriptions:
Deputy Chief Executive
Head of Law

Appendix 2: Current Structure Chart
Proposed structure chart