



Warwick Update

...by, for and about Warwick District Council staff

January '08

A word from the Chief...

It's a bit late, but Happy New Year! This is my second as Chief Executive of Warwick District Council.

This past year has been a challenging one for us - organisational changes which have created uncertainty for some members of staff; a new administration has taken charge; our electronic counting of the elections didn't go according to plan; we've had rather a lot of rain and floods; we've introduced decriminalisation of on street parking as well as the new no smoking legislation; there have been lots of things for us all to do!

And how well you have responded. Ian and Mark (Engineers) are our local Flood Heroes (see below) and were lauded at the House of Commons by the Prime Minister; Staff responded marvellously to Gill and Maggie's call for help in the aftermath of the election count going wrong; our Warwick Response staff are one of the few in the country to have become accredited; our Parks and Gardens staff won the Green Flag for Jephson Gardens, again, and we won Gold for Leamington in Britain in Bloom.

The year ahead looks as though its going to be challenging as well...but what a great start, winning two awards at the Midlands Excellence ceremony - Public Sector and Corporate Social Responsibility on 22nd January.

We look forward to:-

- new integrated waste contract starting in April;
- the Customer Service Centre potential link up with the County Council's;
- alterations to Riverside House to free up space to rent;
- plans to move the CCTV control centre to Riverside House should be completed followed by changes to the Town Hall;
- we'll be entering the Best Council to Work for competition;
- we'll be encouraging more agile working so staff can work from home in some cases or when they are out on site;
- Waitrose will open in Kenilworth this Summer

There'll also be some changes at Head of Service and Manager level as some staff retire or take redundancy. (see page 3) Whatever happens, I know that you'll be doing your best to serve the community in Warwick District, providing World Class services. **You are all 'stars' and it's a pleasure to work with you. Happy New Year!**

Chris

'Floody Heroes



Left to right: Ian and Mark with Floods Recovery Minister, John Healey

Ian Bradbury and Mark Highton, Project Engineers, based in Planning & Engineering have been honoured for their 'outstanding' work during the floods earlier in the year. Hardly sleeping for two days, Ian and Mark were literally at

the front line of efforts to help limit the damage when the Leam and Avon burst their banks.

"It's not everyday you get an invitation to a reception with the Prime Minister!" said Ian. "I was absolutely dumbfounded when I opened the envelope from Lancaster House, and we still don't know who nominated us," he continued.

Mark was aware there was a possible problem looming, but was surprised to be woken at 2am by

a text alert from the Environment Agency, advising of a 'severe flood warning'! "It was very much, Action Stations" said Mark. "The team had to manage the requests for sand bags, and organise the contractors delivering them as well as giving advice to members of the public. It was a real team effort with Ian and I just one small part of the overall effort. We were very fortunate that the Leam peaked at a level lower than Easter '98 at Eathorpe because it could have been much worse."

Speaking at the reception, the Prime Minister said: "We are proud and so grateful for your efforts. Thank you for protecting properties, thank you for providing warmth and friendship, and thank you for helping elderly people in particular."

Mark left us for pastures new on 7th January. We wish him all the best.



Doing the day job; Mark & Ian on the banks of the Leam

Environmental Health visit Sierra Leone

Cross, rocks and plenty of shocks greeted Richard Hall, Head of Environmental Health and Councillor Jane Knight on a recent exchange visit to Bo City Council, Sierra Leone, on the coast of North Western Africa!

The visit was part of a planned programme of mutual help and advice, first started in 1981, when 'One World Link' was set up to try and foster understanding of life in an African country and of the very different culture and environment in which local government operates.

A team of four made up from WDC and the County Council made the ten day trip. Richard Hall was concentrating on two of the biggest problems, sanitation and waste. Jane Knight was looking more at the political and decision making processes, supported by County colleagues specialising in Finance and Waste Management.



The visit was not without incident! Richard takes up the story...'coming into land we could see the airport was on one side of a river estuary. We would have to cross this to reach our destination. On landing, after a seven hour flight, we discovered that there were three ways to get across. Unfortunately, the helicopter route was out as it had crashed a few weeks earlier; the boat was also *not* an option, so we went for the only alternative, the hovercraft. All was well until about half way across when the engine cut out!



A rescue attempt by a tug ended in collision and we began to sink,

then the engine started to catch fire! It was dark and we had no idea what to do. Trying to keep calm, we were transferred to a series of small 'boats' ...some of which capsized! Mercifully, the crocodiles must have been as scared as we were, and we reached the shore, very wet and with soaking suitcases, but still in one piece!



One of the main proposals was to draw up an action plan of priority work, and to seek appropriate funding. "In the UK we often complain about the poor levels of funding we receive from central government. Bo City Council regularly has such payments 'deferred' and has to make do, as best they can. There is no such thing as Council Tax!" said Jane.

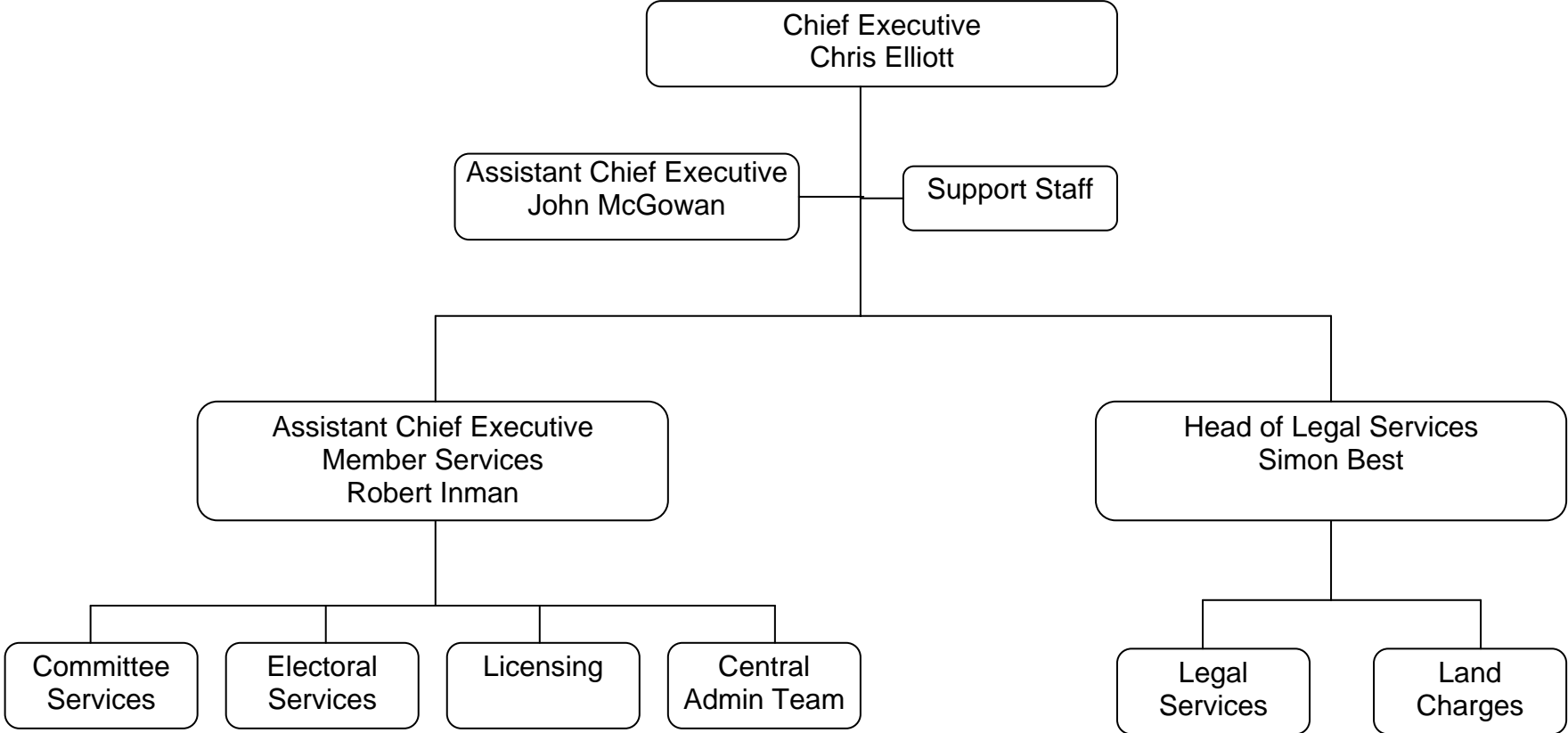
"It was very satisfying, on the last official day of the, visit to report back to the Mayor and his Deputy, the Chief Administrator and some other officers and councillors and to find that they were in broad agreement with the proposed action plan." she continued.

One of the main achievements was a waste management programme based providing around 100 skips around Bo, together with a multifunction vehicle, digger and improved landfill management.

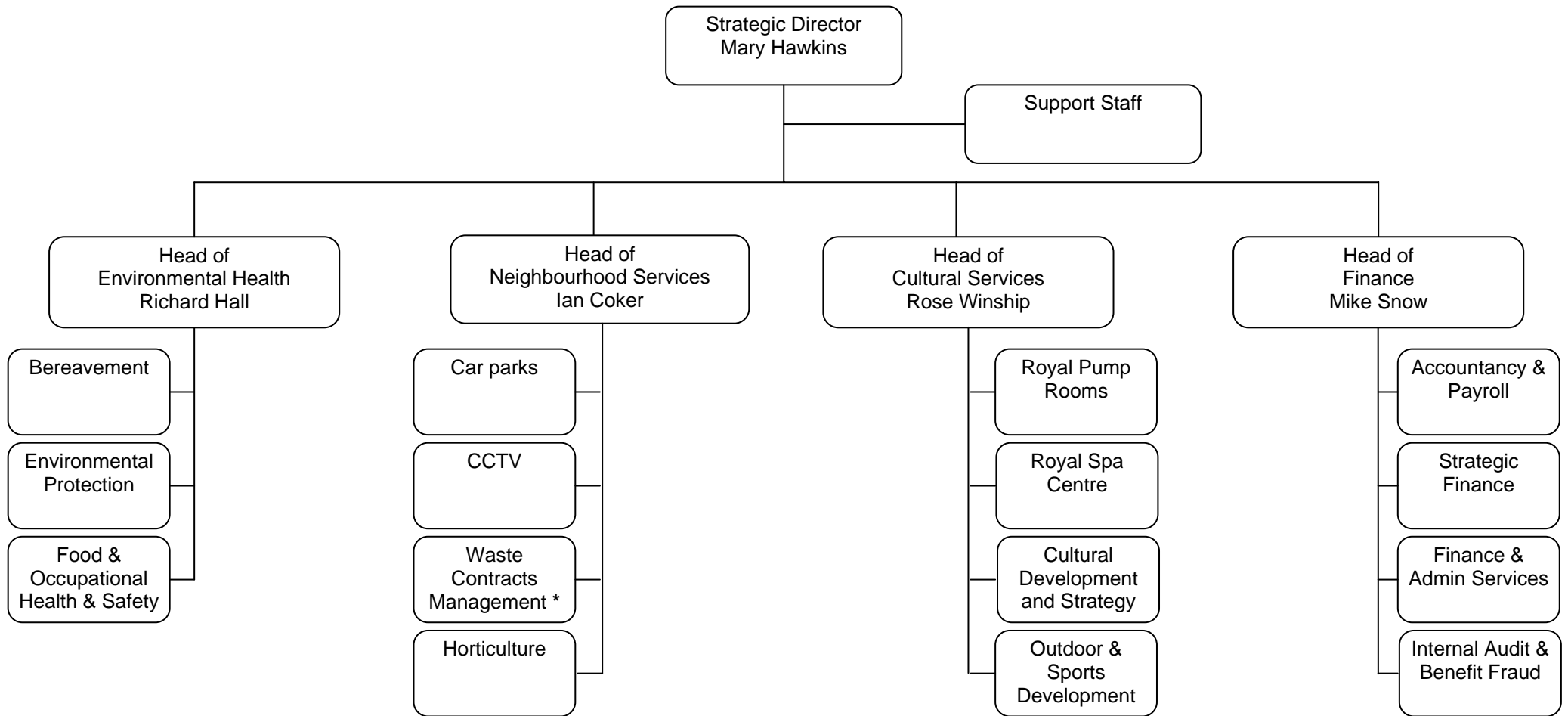
Despite the frightening start to the visit, the consensus was that the visit had been exciting, informative and very worthwhile.



Chief Executive's Office

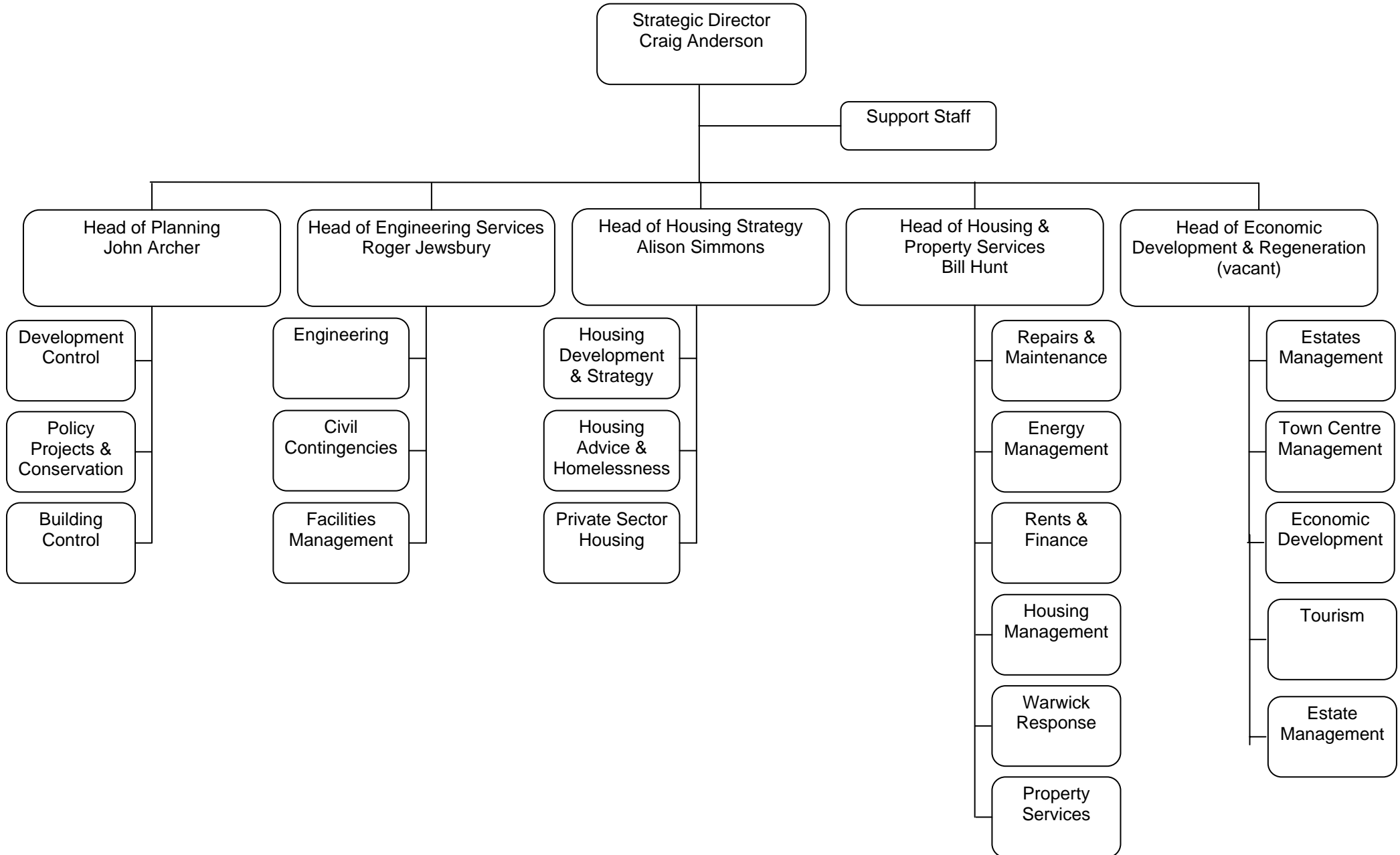


Directorate 1 Proposed Structure

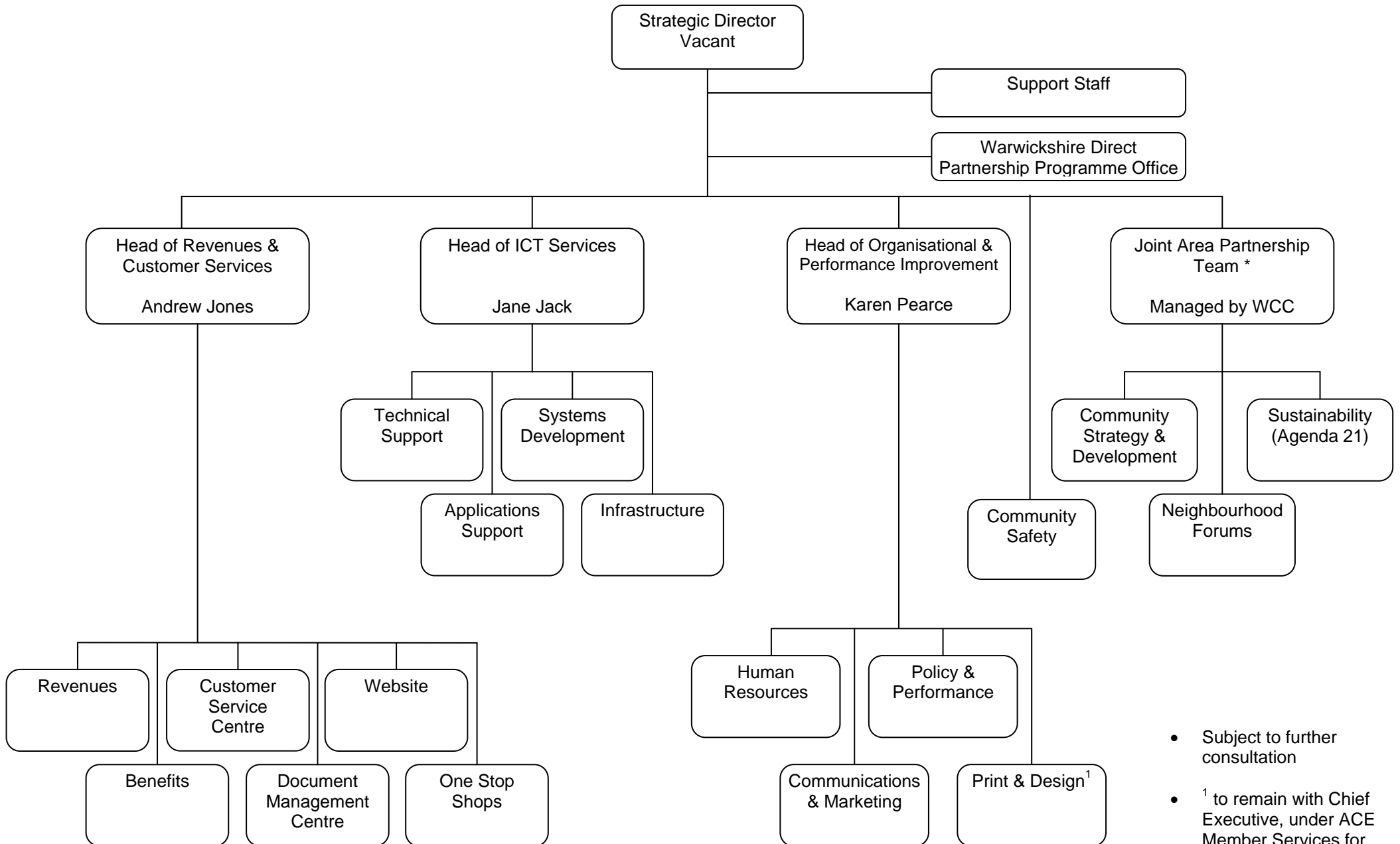


* Waste Contracts Management reporting to Chief Executive until at least July '08

Directorate 2 Proposed Structure



Directorate 3 Proposed Structure



- Subject to further consultation
- ¹ to remain with Chief Executive, under ACE Member Services for next few weeks.