

## **CHILTERN AND SOUTH BUCKS JOINT COMMITTEE**

**Meeting - 4 February 2015**

Present: Mrs Darby (in the Chair), Mr Busby, Mrs Cranmer, Mrs Darby, Mr Harris, Mr Martin, Mr Naylor, Mr Reed, Mr D Smith, Mr Wilson and Mrs Woolveridge

Apologies for absence: Mr Hudson (CDC) and Mr Stannard( CDC)

### **16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest

### **17. CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE**

Councillors received a letter from the Local Government Association which outlined feedback from the Corporate Peer Challenge team. It was noted that the Corporate Peer Challenge had been a good exercise and an opportunity to assess the work that had been completed so far. The Councils had achieved a lot, but the review team noted that there was a lot of work still to carry out. The letter outlined suggestions for future action, some of which the Councils could carry out and some that would be carried out after the elections in May. Additional support had been provided for the Personnel teams, and space was being created for managers to evaluate what shared working had achieved. The Peer Review Team suggested that the Local Government Association give support on an on-going basis, and the Local Government Association had indicated that it may be possible to facilitate this. It was advised that work needed to be carried out on the transformation strategy, organisation strategy, succession planning, streamlining governance arrangements and making the best use of accommodation space.

The letter also outlined that joint work could take place regarding housing. Councillors noted that it would not be possible to have a joint local plan, but that it may be possible for the two Councils to have the same housing and homelessness strategies. A longer term financial strategy would need to be developed going forward.

A Member stated that there were some inaccuracies in the letter received from the Peer Review Team. The letter outlined that positive steps had been taken to address a green belt review, which was incorrect for South Bucks District Council. The two Councils had been placed in different housing market areas; Chiltern had been placed in an area with Wycombe and Aylesbury Vale District Councils, while South Bucks District Council would be part of a housing market area with a number of the Berkshire authorities. This would drive planning policy in different areas, but delivery of housing strategies and affordable housing could be joint. It had been agreed that there would be two local plans.

### **RESOLVED:**

**That the letter received from the Local Government Association be noted.**

18. **PROGRAMME OF REPORT**

The Joint Committee received the latest programme report detailing the progress on milestones and future activities, the latest budget position including cumulative savings, joint projects outside of service reviews and risks for the programme.

Councillors were advised that the telephony rollout was largely complete, and the contact centre part of the system was due to be implemented. Funding from Government of approximately £220,000 for joint transformation had been granted. It was noted that a number of service reviews were coming to a conclusion and were due to be reported at the next meeting of the Joint Committee. 10 service reviews had now been approved.

Members questioned what the transformation challenge funding could be spent on. The money was awarded in response to a proposal that the Council put forward. This included developing online forms for residents to use and provide information, and also developing an appropriate solution to mobile working, which had been identified as a requirement in some of the service reviews. The project money could be applied over two years, and had to be matched with council funding, but it was noted that the Councils wanted to progress the projects as quickly as possible to support the transformation plans of the Councils. Most of the expenditure would be in the coming financial year.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the programme report be noted.**

19. **SHARED IT HIGHLIGHT REPORT**

The Joint Committee received the latest shared IT highlight report detailing progress, including tasks completed. Councillors noted that a lot of work had been achieved to date. The main works taking place were addressing some of the points that had been raised during service reviews. This included development of online forms for the licensing team and online facilities for people wishing to pay for parking services.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Shared IT highlight report be noted.**

20. **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED –**

**That under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.**

21. **HUMAN RESOURCES SHARED SERVICE REVIEW**

The Joint Committee received a report setting out the result of a shared service review of Human Resources. The report detailed the business case, the conclusion of which was that the case for a joint service had been proven and therefore that a joint service should be established. The proposed joint service would deliver greater resilience, improve service quality, increase capacity and reduce costs. It was stated that additional savings would be achieved with the reduction of 0.5FTE in 2017/18. It was noted that the service review covered the structure of the service area. Policies regarding staff, such as flexitime, were not under the remit of the review. Personnel policies and how they are implemented would be

subject to discussion by the respective Personnel Committees and JAIC, and there would be no changes to current arrangements in advance of that.

Councillors were advised that the service review was the smallest in financial terms that the Joint Committee had considered to date. The investment in the service reflects flexible working around laptops and mobile devices, which would enable the team to deliver a service to managers where it was required, rather than being in a fixed location. Councillors stated that efficient Human Resources was critical, and supported the principle of a shared service. It was advised that different running costs of the service at the authorities were due to the removal of the Head of Personnel post at Chiltern in 2012 as part of the joint senior management restructuring. This job was replaced by the Principal Personnel Officer, which was a shared post, and was therefore outside of the service review process. The situation prior to the senior management restructure was one where the running costs would have been similar for the two councils.

In response to a question from a Member, the future of the time recording system at South Bucks would be subject to a separate report to Personnel Committee before any changes are made.

Concerns were raised regarding the cost split of the service reviews between the two Councils. It was noted that the Human Resources Officer at South Bucks District Council had been working across both authorities supporting the harmonisation of terms and conditions. This had not been taken into account in the historic costings, and this meant that the proposed costs in the report would lead to additional costs being carried by South Bucks. It was proposed that the principle that neither Council should incur additional cost should not be taken forwards in relation to this service area. Councillors from both authorities suggested that a 50/50 cost split be implemented for a year before being reviewed.

**RECOMMENDED –**

- 1. That the establishment of a joint service is agreed and that both Councils should proceed to establish a joint human resources service.**
- 2. That staff in the respective Personnel and Human Resources Services can be shared to work across the two local authority areas.**

**AND RESOLVED –**

- 3. A report is submitted to JAIC and the respective Personnel Committees on the proposed restructure.**
- 4. That the cost sharing arrangements split of 50% CDC and 50% SBDC, with a cost split review after a year, be agreed.**

**22. POLICY, PERFORMANCE & COMMUNICATIONS SHARED SERVICE REVIEW**

The Joint Committee received a report setting out the result of a shared service review of the Communications, Performance and Policy team. The report detailed the business case, the conclusion of which was that the case for a joint service had been proven and therefore that a shared service should be established.

Councillors were advised that shared working in terms of the websites and communications had been carried out by staff at Chiltern District Council. Councillors at both authorities suggested that the cost split proposed in the report should be replaced by a cost split of 55/45. This suggested cost split would be reviewed in a years' time.

**RECOMMENDED –**

- 1. That the case for a joint service is proven, and that both Councils should proceed to establish a joint communications, performance and policy service.**
- 2. That staff in the respective communications, performance and policy services can be shared to work across the two local authority areas.**

**AND RESOLVED –**

- 3. That the joint communications, performance and policy service to be implemented should be as described in Sections 4 and 5 of the report, which proposes that staff are based at Capswood, Denham and King George V House, Amersham.**
- 4. That the cost sharing arrangements split of 55% CDC and 45% SBDC, with a cost split review after a year, be agreed**
- 5. That the high level implementation plan as the basis for reviewing progress in line with delegations and responsibilities decided for the implementation phase of the service review be agreed**
- 6. That the proposed shared service potential savings of £3,657 (1.52%) be noted.**

The meeting terminated at 6.33 pm