

STAFF BRIEFINGS

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RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the report is noted.

Purpose of Report

- 1 To inform the Joint Committee on the staff briefings undertaken in January.

Links to Policy Objectives

- 2 The two Councils have committed to the project to share management as a means of improving the resilience and quality of services, and reducing costs for Council Tax payers.

Information

- 3 The two Councils held general staff briefings, as well as separate briefings for Heads of Service, in January on progress on setting up the shared management arrangements.
- 4 At both Councils the meetings the previous year had welcomed the decision to move away from the three Council approach to two. It is fair to say there was slightly more apprehension this time as the project is now real and happening now. Nevertheless, there was a good understanding of the financial picture and a desire to get into the detail.
- 5 SBDC Heads of Service were supportive and pleased that the project could now proceed in earnest. They were however concerned to see that the first phase of the project was completed to timetable in order to remove current uncertainties as quickly as possible for all concerned. The wider staff group was understandably more focussed on the second phase of the project and in particular what services would be joined up and when. Specific issues raised were:-
 - Many staff have been affected by a high degree of job insecurity since pathfinder – as a demonstration of the value placed on staff by the organisation, would the Council commit to not making any compulsory redundancies?
 - Any joint teams established should have officers employed on terms and conditions as least as favourable as at present.
 - Will the Council offices still shut for the week between Christmas/New Year?

- If joint services are to be co-located, how will the decision be made as to where they will be based?

6 Additional points raised at Chiltern included:-

- Shared services – how will the programme on phasing work?
- Will the two Councils remain in two buildings or is there an intention that they should come together in one?
- How will consultation be undertaken and what is the intended timing?
- Building Control is currently being considered as a joint service provision with Wycombe District Council; will that now proceed?
- Waste Management is similarly being considered as a joint service; how will the Council approach future mergers?
- How can staff input to the teams and groupings as well as being considered when individually affected?
- The presentation mentioned the Councils' sovereignty; how will that work out in practice and is there capacity to manage this?
- Savings will no doubt be based on staff redundancies; has this cost been built in and will there be any impact on the terms and conditions, particularly taking into account comments made by (Chiltern's) Policy and Resources Committee?
- How will people get jobs in the new structures?
- If applying for a new job, who will know how things have changed recently to help them make a decision?
- How long will service reviews take?

7 Following this, a list of FAQs has been developed for the intranet and an undertaken given to provide further briefings. The FAQs are intended as a living document and will be updated. A copy of the current version is attached as **Appendix**. The questions have influenced the two stage approach to consultation to be taken to creating the senior management team

Resources and Other Policy Implications

Finance

8 No additional financial implications.

Procurement

9 No implications.

Personnel

10 Good staff briefing and consultation are an integral part of the change management programme.

Risks

- 11 Adoption of new working arrangements; the actions in the report are part of the mitigation.

Equalities

- 12 Integral to both Councils' approach to equalities and the Equalities Impact Assessment.
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