

CHILTERN AND SOUTH BUCKS JOINT COMMITTEE

Meeting - 15 October 2012

Present:

Mr Busby (SBDC), Mrs Cranmer (SBDC), Mrs Darby (CDC), Mr Martin (CDC), Mr Rose (CDC)(Chairman), Mr M Smith (CDC) and Mr D Smith (SBDC)

Also Present:

Mr Shepherd (CDC)

Apologies for absence:

Mrs Harker (CDC), Mr Lidgate (SBDC), Mr Reed (SBDC), Mr Stannard (CDC) and Mrs Woolveridge (SBDC)

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 5 July 2012 were agreed by the Committee and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. PHASING OF SERVICE REVIEWS

The report before the Joint Committee made recommendations regarding the first service areas to be selected for the first phase of service reviews, and explained the rationale for those decisions. It also provided an outline for the longer-term phasing of service reviews.

It was noted that although external support would be utilised for the first phase reviews, it was intended that there would be a 'knowledge transfer' to internal staff, who could then facilitate future reviews.

The Joint Committee acknowledged that the scheduling of future service reviews would be influenced in part by the experience of the first phase reviews. As such, the schedule presented in the report was not fixed, and Members would have an important role in determining the sequence of reviews in the second and third phases.

Both Leaders emphasised that the role of Members was not to become involved with the day-to-day operational aspect of services; instead, Members should be concerned that resilient, quality services resulted, to the financial benefit of both authorities. It was noted that Members would play a key role at the start of every review in determining the objectives and what was in-scope and out-of-scope for the reviews. Members would also have an opportunity to give a perspective on how they and residents viewed the current service, and what was good and could be improved. Each review would result in a business case, and Members on the reviews would have a key role in providing a view on the proposed way forward to help the Joint Committee make the final decisions.

Members noted the importance of ICT, as this was likely to be a key element in most service reviews. The Director of Resources advised that in addition to specific service reviews there was a significant amount of work being undertaken in the background around harmonisation of terms and conditions, ICT policies and strategies, and the finance and audit service. ICT Infrastructure requirements, policies and strategies would be influenced by the work of the service reviews as they progressed.

Both Leaders confirmed that the relevant Portfolio Holder for each function would act as the lead Member for each respective authority for the first phase service reviews. Each Leader would appoint two further non-Cabinet Members to each review by 26 October.

RESOLVED -

1. That the initial service review areas be agreed as:
 - Building Control
 - Community Safety and Licensing [as a combined review]
2. That the initial phasing of the service reviews be approved.
3. That further progress reports on the programme of service reviews be presented to the Joint Committee.
4. That Councillor P E C Martin be appointed as Chiltern District Council's lead representative for the review of Building Control; and that Councillor P Hudson be appointed as Chiltern District Council's lead representative for the review of Community Safety/Licensing.
5. That Councillor R Reed be appointed as South Bucks District Council's lead representative for the review of Building Control; and that Councillor Mrs A Cranmer be appointed as South Bucks District Council's lead representative for the review of Community Safety/Licensing.
6. That each Leader appoint two further non-Cabinet Members to the review of Building Control, and to the review of Community Safety/Licensing.

4. **DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR 5 NOVEMBER 2012**

The Joint Committee considered the draft programme for the All Member Briefing on shared management services to be held on 5 November.

It was suggested that a seating plan be used to ensure that Chiltern and South Bucks Councillors mixed together. It was also proposed that those undertaking similar roles at their respective authorities (for example, members of Licensing Committees) should be sat together.

The importance of the event was acknowledged, and it was agreed that Members should be requested to confirm whether or not they were attending.

RESOLVED -

That the comments of Members regarding the draft Programme for the All Member Briefing on 5 November be noted.

5. **FINANCIAL UPDATE**

The Joint Committee considered the financial position of the Business Case now that the first phase relating to the senior management arrangements had largely been completed.

It was noted that the position at October 2012 was very positive, with full year savings of £660k against the Business Case projection of £600k. Net savings over 3 years were forecast at a much healthier £782k than the £490k projected in the Business Case.

RESOLVED -

That the report be noted.

6. **PROGRAMME OF REPORT**

The Joint Committee received the latest Programme Report, detailing progress on milestones, the latest budget position, and the risk report.

It was noted that as the shared service reviews commenced the risk register would be expanded as appropriate.

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It was suggested that Risk 2 - Members and officers do not adopt new working arrangements - remained a key risk. However, the All-Member briefing on 5 November would help to mitigate this risk, and it was considered that staff subject to the first-phase reviews would help champion improved ways of working.

Regarding Risk 2, it was suggested that the mitigation wording stating that 'it would not be possible under the new arrangements for Members to have the same access to officers', could be reviewed. It was suggested that it was important to look at smarter ways of communication utilising ICT, and to present solutions rather than problems. It was considered that this would be particularly important at the all Member briefing on 5 November.

The importance of communications in managing the expectations of Members, and addressing the concerns of staff was noted. Members needed to be aware that it was not always necessary in the first instance to address any issue to senior management - other Officers were quite able to resolve issues. To this end it was suggested that the Chief Executive's Personal Assistants at each authority also attend the Briefing on 5 November, since they were often best placed to direct Member enquiries appropriately.

Regarding Risk 6 - lack of capacity to manage change - it was noted that the external support used to facilitate the first phase of service reviews would also be utilised to transfer knowledge to internal staff for future service reviews; thus helping to mitigate this risk. It was also suggested that the shared services reviews would represent a positive development opportunity for some staff.

RESOLVED -

That the report be noted.

7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that the next meeting would take place in early January and would monitor progress on the first phase shared service reviews, and consider the programme of second phase reviews. Dates would be circulated by Democratic Services in due course.

The meeting terminated at 5.55 pm