

Report for:	<b>Overview and Scrutiny</b>
Meeting Date:	<b>4 February 2020</b>

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Buckinghamshire Unitary Council Programme Update</b>
Shadow Portfolio Holder	Councillor Martin Tett
Responsible Officer	Rachael Shimmin, Interim Head of Paid Service, Chief Executive Buckinghamshire Council, Chief Executive Buckinghamshire County Council
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<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>That the update is noted</b>
Corporate Implications:	n/a
Options: (If any)	n/a
Reason:	This report provides an update on the progress made with the programme to establish the new unitary council for Buckinghamshire.

## **Introduction**

1. This report provides an update on the progress made with the programme to establish the new unitary council for Buckinghamshire.

## **Overview**

2. Following the appointment of the Corporate Directors, appointments have now been made to the Service Directors positions and work is now progressing to finalise the alignment of staff under the new Service areas. A search is currently being undertaken to appoint to the Corporate Director Resources role, final interviews for this post are expected to take place in March.
3. A set of employee values have also been agreed together with underlying behaviours. These will be linked to the OD strategy and rolled out to staff within the new organisation.
4. Members have agreed new Customer Services standards and a Complaints, Compliments & Comments policy. They have also agreed 16 Community Boards following an extensive public consultation. Work is now progressing on a Town and

Parish Council charter which will shape the future relationship between the new council and town and parish councils.

5. Members have been working to finalise a budget for the new council which will be agreed by the Shadow Authority when it meets in February. This has included a series of challenge sessions with members of Overview and Scrutiny.
6. Members have also agreed that the new council will be members of the Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (BLEP) and that Aylesbury Vale District Council will withdraw from the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP).
7. We have also confirmed with Members the arrangements for the Interregnum period (1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020).

### **Organisational Structure**

8. Following an internal open recruitment exercise we have now recruited to the majority of Service Director roles in our new council structure. These roles will support the corporate management team to create the foundations for the new council and work with their services and teams to get ready for April this year.
9. Out of the 34 Corporate and Service Director roles five (14%) remain vacant and are being actively recruited for externally. The vacant posts are listed below:
  - Corporate Director Resources
  - Service Director Legal and Democratic Services
  - Service Director Adult Social Care
  - Service Director Integrated Commissioning
  - Service Director Education
10. Details of the new Corporate and Service Directors are attached at Appendix A.
11. In addition to these appointments, Joe O'Sullivan, appointed as the Corporate Director Resources for the new Buckinghamshire Council, has left the council.
12. We have now started the recruitment to this post which will conclude early in March 2020. As an interim arrangement, Neil Gibson (currently the county council Executive Director for Transport, Environment and Economy) will work in a caretaking role as the Executive Director for Resources for the county council and for the Resources Unitary Programme Board. Sarah Ashmead (Deputy Chief Executive) will also attend the Resources Board for transition to ensure continuity.
13. In February the new Service Directors will undertake a series of staff meetings with staff who have been aligned to their service areas. These meetings will be important to reassure staff and to start to think about some of the practical arrangements required for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. By 1<sup>st</sup> April all staff will have a clearly identified Service Director and where appointments have not yet been made will be clear about the Acting Service Director arrangements. Service Directors will also be asked to complete a day 1 planning template to identify how their service will operate, and

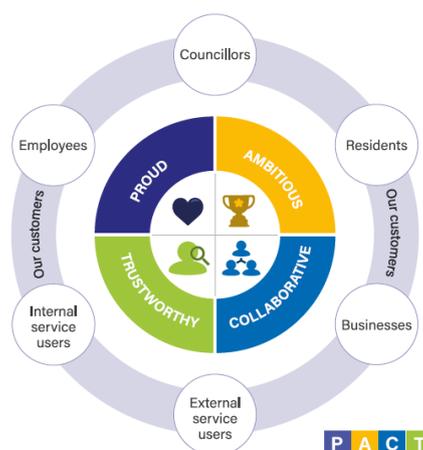
ensure we have captured any remaining issues. The information captured will also be used to develop the Service Plan which will sit underneath the new Council Plan.

## Progress

14. We currently have 115 individual 'must haves' which we are working on. Of these 33 have been closed and 7 are identified as 'amber' due to slippage. Plans are in place to ensure delivery of these by Vesting Day.
15. One of the main issues we have been looking at is the number scheduled to be delivered in March, however many of these have to occur then as they are linked to the date the new council is established.
16. In summary the current picture for delivery of our Must Haves now looks like this:

Completed	Jan/Feb	March	Post March
33	24	37	21

17. The Shadow Executive has recently agreed 16 Community Boards as part of the new council's localism arrangements. This followed an extensive consultation which attracted over 520 responses.
18. This was the final strand of the three key themes of our localism work following agreement to 17 council access points and our devolution offer.
19. We are also finalising a Town and Parish Council Charter which will help develop our future relationship with these organisations. This has been developed with the help of representatives of town and parish councils.
20. Members have agreed a set of organisational values which we will shape our work with employees to create a new culture. These are Proud, Ambitious, Collaborative and Trustworthy (PACT). These are illustrated below.



21. Work on the Council Plan has also progressed and was considered by the Shadow Executive at their formal meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> January. At the same meeting Members considered the new Council's budget. Following this Overview and Scrutiny have held

a series of public budget challenge sessions. Their feedback will then be considered by the Shadow Authority when it meets to agree the budget on 27th February 2020.

22. Work on the new constitution is progressing with a draft constitution now written. As part of this Members have agreed the structure for planning and licensing committees in the new council. The constitution will also be agreed at the Shadow Authority meeting in February.
23. Other decisions made by Members recently include a new set of customer service standards and a new Complaints, Compliments & Comments policy. We are now developing a comprehensive training plan to ensure all appropriate staff are prepared for when the council comes into force.
24. Members have also agreed that the new council will only be a member of the Buckinghamshire LEP and that Aylesbury Vale District Council will withdraw from the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP). A letter confirming this arrangement has now been sent to MHCLG and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.
25. We are planning some testing of our day one plans with our critical friend Ameo. At the end of January/early February they will be carrying out a number of reviews on key service areas to ensure we have robust plans in place.
26. We will also starting to consider how we will prioritise and develop service improvement plans which we will be working on once the new council has been established.
27. Finally the elections teams across the county ran a very successful general election last month and are now planning for the new council election in May 2020. At this time we will also be running the election for town and parish councils and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

## **Risk Management**

28. The Unitary Implementation Risk Register reflects risks regarding the overall programme, external risks and also any that require escalation from the Programme Boards.
29. Workstreams and programme boards are actively reviewing and assessing risks to implementation of the unitary programme. The risk register is reported as part of our monthly programme update reports highlighting the key risks, and necessary actions to mitigate them.
30. The risk management framework allows the risk register to be dynamic to react to the fast paced nature of the programme, ensuring risks to the programme are identified and managed effectively.
31. The current risk register consists of a total of 13 risks of which 5 are red and 6 amber, attached at Appendix B. The areas of risk that remain high but where mitigating actions are in place and closely monitored to manage the likelihood of the risk occurring are:

- Resource capacity for both programme delivery and business as usual;
- Clarity and timeliness of legal advice
- Implementation of the single finance, HR and Payroll system
- Slippage to the delivery of 'Must Haves'

## **Members**

32. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee met in November and discussed the draft Council Plan, programme communications and general progress on the programme.
33. Earlier this month the Scrutiny Budget Task and Finish Group met over four days in public to review the proposed budget with members of the Shadow Executive and senior officers. Following these meetings Overview and Scrutiny will provide feedback for the consideration by the Shadow Authority when it meets to agree the budget on 27th February 2020.
34. The Shadow Executive has recently discussed and agreed the arrangements for the Interregnum period (1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 11<sup>th</sup> May 2020). These are based on very practical arrangements using existing committee arrangements where these committees need to meet during this period.

## **Communications**

35. We are developing our day one communications plan. Branding guidelines have been agreed and we will be introducing the new brand as part of these communications. Members can therefore expect to see the new brand appearing over the coming months in the run up to April. The plan is to raise awareness of the new council with a particular focus on residents and other service users.
36. The next series of staff roadshows are planned for January and February which will include members of the new Corporate Management Team.
37. We are also undertaking a staff and Members' survey to understand what more we can do to improve communications to these groups, as well as a health and wellbeing survey of our staff.
38. Subject to Members' support we also plan to introduce a new residents' magazine in May once the new council is established. This will be issued three times a year and will be delivered to every household in the county. This will be part of our plan to engage with residents about the new council.

## **Summary/Conclusions**

39. We remain confident that we are on track for April next year, with just over 60 days to go until Vesting Day our focus is now on looking at the operational arrangements for day one and to start to think about our improvement programme once the new council is established.



<b>Background Papers</b>	None
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## **Appendix A – Corporate and Service Directors**

### **Deputy Chief Executive senior management team**

- Corporate Director – Sarah Ashmead
- Service Director Localities and Strategic Partnerships – Claire Hawkes
- Service Director Policy and Communications – Roger Goodes
- Service Director Service Improvement – Joanna Baschnonga
- Service Director Legal and Democratic Services – *Vacant*

### **Resources senior management team**

- Corporate Director – *Vacant*
- Service Director HR and OD – Sarah Murphy-Brookman
- Service Director ICT – Tony Ellis
- Service Director Service Finance – David Skinner
- Service Director Business Operations – Lloyd Jeffries
- Service Director Corporate Finance – Richard Ambrose
- Joint Strategic Director, Information Assets and Digital Development – Balvinder Heran

### **Planning, Growth and Sustainability senior management team**

- Corporate Director – Ian Thompson
- Service Director Economic Growth and Regeneration – Lisa Michelson
- Service Director Planning and Environment – Steve Bambrick
- Service Director Property and Assets – John Reed
- Service Director Strategic Transport and Infrastructure – Joan Hancox

### **Communities senior management team**

- Corporate Director – Richard Barker
- Service Director Culture, Sport and Leisure – Sophie Payne
- Service Director Transport Services – Sara Turnbull
- Service Director Neighbourhood Services – Martin Dickman
- Service Director Highways and Technical Services – Rob Smith

### **Adults, Health and Housing senior management team**

- Corporate Director – Gill Quinton
- Service Director Quality Performance and Standards – Jenny McAteer
- Service Director Public Health and Early Prevention – Jane O’Grady
- Service Director Housing and Regulatory Service – Nigel Dicker
- Service Director Adult Social Care – *Vacant*
- Service Director Integrated Commissioning – *Vacant*

### **Children’s Services senior management team**

- Corporate Director – Tolis Vouyioukas
- Service Director Children’s Social Care – Richard Nash
- Service Director Education – *Vacant*

