Buckinghamshire Council

Draft Implementation Plan

Introduction

1. The Buckinghamshire Council unitary programme is designed to create:

    "a new council that will be able to deliver high quality, sustainable local services to the people of Buckinghamshire and provide for effective leadership at both the strategic and most local level." (Rishi Sunak, 7 May 2019, Hansard)

2. The business case "Modernising Local Government in Buckinghamshire" provides the high level context for the design of the new organisation, and the programme is required to have regard to this.

3. In his letter of 1 November 2018 announcing the decision to establish a single unitary council, the Secretary of State also set out that he expects "the new unitary council, and in the meantime the existing councils, to actively engage with their local communities about the appropriate arrangements for civic representation for Towns and Parishes. I similarly expect the councils to promote and help support the development of neighbourhood plans, as I consider that these can be key building blocks for the successful implementation of change in Buckinghamshire."

4. This document is intended to provide the framework within which the unitary programme will be further developed and implemented so that we successfully transition from existing structures to a new single unitary council on 1 April 2020.

5. The document recognises that the significant service improvement work will take place following Vesting Day. In particular, once the new council is elected and the new senior management team is appointed, it will be important that the leadership of the new council are able to shape the culture and priorities of the new organisation, together with the integration of services, systems and processes. However, some decisions and choices will need to be made during the transitional period which will have longer term implications and so this document establishes a clear foundation on which to build that future transformation.

6. Part A sets out the framework for the creation of the new council. Part B describes the detailed transitional arrangements which will be delivered in readiness for Vesting Day. Part C sets out the programme governance arrangements.

Part A - Creating Buckinghamshire Council

7.   The purpose of the unitary transition programme is to establish a brand new, countywide single unitary council for Buckinghamshire, with its own vision, values, policies and processes that are rooted in the best of the legacy councils but that are also ambitious, forward looking, and fit for the future challenges facing Buckinghamshire.

Vision and Aims

8.   The business case set out the following aims for the new council:

- Strong, visible and accountable strategic leadership, speaking up with a single voice for Buckinghamshire on behalf of residents, business and partners;
- Local communities empowered to shape their own future, with improved involvement of local people in the choices that affect them;
- Services that are simple to access, efficiently delivered, and meet the needs of residents, communities and businesses, with faster, leaner decision making;
- Significant cost savings delivered and invested in priority outcomes, adding value for both Council and Business Rate Tax payers; appropriate commercial activities developed to reduce the need for grant and taxpayer funding.

9.   The business case also outlined a series of ambitions:

- Provide a **new form of civic leadership** fit for *the future; redefining* the role of the public sector **from one of control and top down** dialogue to one of **enabling and facilitating** initiative, innovation and ambition.

- **Our ambition is a high-quality customer experience** …. *We will take* a **customer focused** approach *and* deliver a **single point of contact** … for residents, businesses and town and parish councils.

- A **shared ambition to make Buckinghamshire a great place for all children and young people** to live, be safe, to learn and achieve successful and fulfilled lives.

- The creation of a new, county-wide single unitary council would provide a unique opportunity to **introduce a modern business model**, at the heart of a broader integrated system of public service delivery in Buckinghamshire.

- Through service integration and transformation there is an opportunity to **design (new) digital processes to achieve 24/7 access.**

- The development of a brand new county-wide unitary council provides an exciting opportunity to design **a new localism model**.

- Key to the success of the new council would be its ability to **retain skilled, specialist staff** from the five organisations **and actively engage them in shaping a new culture for a new organisation.**

10. These will need to be reviewed by Members during the transition year to ensure they reflect their ambition for the new council. These will also need to feed into the work to develop the strategic plan and performance framework for the new council, which will also inform the budget setting process.

Design Principles

11. Creating the new unitary council is a complex programme of work with significant dependencies. To avoid duplication, and ensure that key workstreams are aligned, a set of core design principles will be developed with Members which set out a clear ambition about what sort of council we want to build. A suggestion of what these could include has been developed for discussion.

12. These principles can then underpin work on vision, values, branding, strategies, people, systems and processes. The draft set of design principles developed for discussion are below and draw upon the ambition in the business case:

Member Led
We will be an organisation where elected Members establish the strategic priorities and work collaboratively with officers to deliver these. We will have effective governance and management arrangements to underpin this.
Customer and Service User Focused
Services and processes will be co-designed with employees, customers, service users and communities around their needs, making the best use of existing and emerging technology as appropriate. We will place our customers at the heart of what we do. We will provide excellent digital channels whilst also ensuring that telephone and face to face access is provided for our most vulnerable residents and those who are digitally excluded.
Locally Focused
We will be a council that thinks and acts locally, devolves local decision making where it is safe and cost effective and enables unitary councillors to take decisions in their local areas, alongside key partners, and develop local solutions to local issues. We will design services within a countywide framework, with local delivery tailored according to different local needs.
Externally Focused
A strong external perspective to understand what is best in class and take opportunities to achieve excellence for Buckinghamshire. We will build partnerships and relationships at regional and national levels and promote the interests of Buckinghamshire on the national stage.
Flexible Workforce and Culture
All employees are highly valued and our approach to people management will be empowering, collaborative and streamlined. We will encourage innovation and continuous improvement and minimise bureaucracy. We will have the culture, skills and systems to support mobile and flexible working.
Commercial Outlook
We will proactively seek opportunities to create value for residents and communities whilst reducing the dependency on the tax payer. We will seek to drive down costs, retain, dispose or acquire assets where appropriate to create a long term benefit and additional income for the council, and ensure income generation through trading, fees and charges, and levering in external finance are sufficient to enable the new authority to deliver its priorities and be in as strong a financial position as possible
Pragmatic Commissioner
Service delivery solutions will be evidence based and developed on a case by case basis to achieve best quality and value for money. We will commission some services where this is appropriate, to sit alongside our directly provided services.

Working in Partnership
We will work in partnership and integrate services as appropriate to deliver benefits for residents, businesses and communities, enabling people to help themselves on occasion.

Values and Behaviours

13. The new council will need to develop its own distinct culture as it moves forward. This will be created over time through the development of shared values and behaviours which underpin systems, processes, strategies and structures.

14. A framework for the values and behaviours for the new council will be developed in the summer 2019 by Members, working with the new Chief Executive. This will build on the values and behaviours identified by Members for the appointment of the new CEO which include:

- Inclusive/collaborative/consensual
- Integrity/honesty/trust
- Courage (not afraid to try new things)
- Good judgement/knowledge – reliable/dependable
- Respectful and engaging (listens)
- Positivity and reassurance

15. The new council will be built and operate around a philosophy of 'Member Led', which will recognise the unique roles of elected Members and senior officers, a respectful model of co-production between elected Members and officers and a sense of collective endeavour.

Branding

16. The new branding will be key to setting the tone of the new council for all stakeholders and it will need to represent Members' vision for the new organisation. The team of in-house designers across the county and district councils will be developing options for the new branding for consideration by the Executive. Once agreed, this will be rolled out across the key communication channels, and operational/transactional channels as appropriate. The aim will be to promote good awareness of the new brand whilst minimising costs as far as possible. A pragmatic approach will be taken on what is rebranded for April 2020 including signage, assets and uniforms.

Organisational Structure

17. Redesigning the functions of five separate councils into a new fit-for-purpose structure for the new Buckinghamshire Council will not only deliver savings but also provide the opportunity to drive efficiencies and improved resilience in services, as well as creating new career pathways to attract and retain key talent.

18. Key principles underpinning decisions on the organisational structure include:

   - Clarity for employees, partners, stakeholders and the public from 1 April 2020 about the structure of the council and the senior managerial leads.
   - An appropriate pay and reward strategy to ensure staff recruitment and retention.
   - Additional capacity within the first term of the council in order to: build a strong and competent organisation which not only delivers BAU services but undertakes service restructures, transformation and the roll out of new ways of working to ensure a one council approach to residents, building on the best of all councils and creating a unified and collaborative culture.

19. For all posts but particularly those with senior management and leadership responsibilities it is critically important that the new council has the right people at the right level doing the right things and behaving in the right way.

20. The senior management structure will be critical to the successful transition to the new council. The aim is to secure the appointment of the Chief Executive by July and the Corporate Management Team by October. These two tiers will both be subject to a national search, to ensure that elected Members are able to appoint the most able candidates for these key posts.

21. An internal process will be conducted for the appointment of Tier 3 posts, with a view to appointing this tier by Christmas. This process will allow for an external recruitment exercise to these posts if they are not filled internally.

22. Whilst the organisational structure will set out broad areas of alignment between Tier 3 posts and services, the detailed design of service level structures will follow at a later stage, to allow detailed discussions with senior managers once appointed.

23. Where staff are appointed to new roles, they will be appointed on new terms and conditions. Otherwise, all staff will transfer to the new council on their existing terms and conditions.

Transition and Transformation

24. The programme is being developed in two distinct phases:
   * Transition   – May 2019 – May 2020
   * Transformation / Service Improvements – May 2020 – May 2022

25. During transition, our key priorities are:

   * Business and service continuity for the public, partners, suppliers, stakeholders and business, with ongoing effective operation of existing systems, processes and contracts.
   * Retention and engagement of employees, with clarity of line management for staff.
   * The election to the new council in May 2020, comprehensive Member induction programme and formation of cabinet and relevant committees.
   * Engagement of key stakeholders in the design of the new unitary council.
   * The right conditions to be in place to undertake the transformational activity that will be required post Vesting Day in relation to services.
   * Building clarity for Members and employees on what type of organisation the new council will be, including the working environment, expectations on behaviours and the priorities over the coming years.

26. Whilst there may be a clear business need to integrate some teams from Vesting Day, the realisation of benefits through harmonising teams, systems, policies and contracts, will be phased over time to ensure that Buckinghamshire Council is able to lay strong foundations for future success.

27. Once the new council moves into the transformation phase, the new Corporate Management Team (CMT) will be responsible for developing and implementing detailed transformation plans that fully achieve the benefits and savings associated with service integration, creating cohesive teams and bringing to life the vision, culture and values of the new organisation.

28. The new council will inherit a mixed approach to service delivery, directly providing some services in house (particularly where there is a statutory responsibility) and commissioning others from a range of public, private and voluntary sector providers. There are also many examples of partnership working covering a wide variety of services. During the transformation phase, all service delivery arrangements across the new council will be reviewed to identify the optimum model of delivery which not only achieves savings but also maximises innovation in service delivery, digital opportunities, customer improvements and effective organisational development.

Programme Principles

29. The following principles underpin the transition programme:

    - A need to work together to successfully deliver a single unitary council for Buckinghamshire from April 2020.
    - A desire to build positive and collaborative relationships between individuals across councils in advance of vesting day to help create the right conditions for a strong mutually supportive organisation in 2020.
    - An acknowledgement that different perspectives will be heard and considered before final decisions are made.
    - A need to ensure distributive leadership across all organisations and a range of services.
    - Recognition of the skills, experience and knowledge that all colleagues bring to transition.
    - A need to ensure programme management arrangements for transition with the delivery of specific pieces of work that are clear and unambiguous.
    - A need to clearly identify tasks associated with transition and separately pieces of work / activities for post vesting day for discussion with the CMT of the new council and elected Members.
    - A need to ensure that we import the best of each council into the new organisation recognising the strengths and capabilities of individual councils, services, staff and managers and considering scaling up of best practice wherever possible.
    - A recognition that specific aspects of unitisation will require detailed discussion and political debate e.g. localism / locality arrangements.

Member Engagement

30. Member engagement will be at the forefront of the transition programme. Whilst the Shadow Executive is responsible for overseeing the creation of the new Buckinghamshire Council, Members from across the five councils will be involved in a number of different ways.

31. A comprehensive Member Engagement programme will be established which will ensure Members have a good understanding of all the functions of the new organisation, and also have the opportunity to help shape the new Council.

32. Specific Task and Finish groups will be established for elected Members to look in detail at specific issues and help identify suitable outcomes.

33. The Shadow Authority will be responsible for setting the budget for the new Council.

Key Deliverables on Vesting Day

34. The following outline the key deliverables which will be delivered by the programme by 1 April 2020:

- Appointment of chief executive and senior leadership team.
- Transfer of staff, contracts, assets and liabilities to the new authority.
- Terms and conditions of employment and reward framework for new roles.
- The vision, culture and values for the new council.
- Branding for the new council.
- Strategic Plan and corporate KPI suite.
- Communications and Engagement Strategy and channels for the new council.
- Financial strategy and budget for 2020/21.
- Single register of fees and charges for services, with alignment as appropriate.
- Single contract register with a plan for the alignment of contracts as appropriate.
- Internal Audit Plan, Audit Charter and Risk Strategy.
- Arrangements to ensure that all employees, suppliers and contractors are paid correctly and revenues collected in a timely manner.
- 2020 Election.
- New council constitution, financial regulations and contract standing orders.
- Induction, support and engagement arrangements for unitary councillors.
- Transfer of Civic and Ceremonial functions.
- New 'shop window' for customers for Vesting Day, including a single telephone number and website.
- Accessible and secure ICT systems on vesting day, allowing the organisation to operate as a new authority, including new email addresses and continuity of line of business systems.
- Interim solution for Finance & HR systems for Vesting Day, and specification for future requirements.
- Interim HQ accommodation.
- Information governance structure that is GDPR compliant and protects customers' data.
- An emergency management process and emergency response plan.
- Policy framework, with new policies and procedures as appropriate.
- Localism Strategy for the new council.
- Devolution Process for the new council.
- Parish and Town Council liaison arrangements.
- Single staff telephone directory.
- Arrangements for local/strategic regulatory committees.
- Local Access to services designed and ready to be delivered.
- Strategic Partnership arrangements for Buckinghamshire Council.
- Single programme of major capital projects.
- Economic development delivery arrangements.

- Transfer of Development & Regeneration Companies.
- All regulatory requirements for services established.
- Separate awareness/engagement programmes for Members and staff.

35. A high level milestone plan is being developed, which will be underpinned by detailed project management plans for each board and workstream.

36. These plans will be monitored through the programme governance outlined in Part C below of this plan. As part of this governance, Forward Work Plans have been developed for the Shadow Executive including the published 28 day Statutory Plan.

PART B –
TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Employees

37. The extent, to which employees will be directly impacted by changes, and the timing of the impact, will vary considerably across the workforce. Employee engagement is a key feature of the transition programme, and specific opportunities will be made available to assist staff in preparing for future opportunities in the new organisation.

38. On 1 April 2020, the majority of staff will continue working in their current role in their current location. Most staff can expect to have the same:

- Office location.
- Desk.
- Car parking.
- Phone number.
- IT devices and service based systems and applications.
- Terms and conditions.
- Line manager.

39. There will be minimal or no changes for schools based on staff who are current BCC employees.

40. A new Terms and Conditions and Reward framework will be in place for Day 1 that has been consulted with Trade Unions and Employee representatives, for new roles in Buckinghamshire Council.

41. Key visible changes on Vesting Day will include:

- New email address.
- Whole organisation phone directory in place.
- Shared access to council offices and networks.
- A single universal pay date and payroll.
- Internal communications.
- A single universal Employee Wellbeing and Support offer for all staff.
- Budget management.
- Branding.
- A single and universal employee knowledge management portal to access:
    - Digital service desk queries.

- All of the legacy council terms and conditions, and the new terms and conditions and reward framework for the new Buckinghamshire Council.
- Jobs and opportunities.
- Benefits and well-being provision.
- Buckinghamshire Council Performance management processes.
- Learning and Development provision.
- Personnel processing systems e.g. expense claims.

42. The new council will operate from a range of different locations across the county. It is proposed that a single location will be identified for a small corporate HQ team, with meeting room accommodation for elected Members. A small number of staff may move and be based from different office locations on or around 1 April. Where this is the case, there will be a consultation period for staff.

43. Flexible working spaces will be provided in different locations, and staff will be able to work remotely from any Buckinghamshire Council offices, with their manager's approval. They will have swipe cards to access offices and be able to use the network and printing facilities, as well as relevant business systems / IT applications.

Members

44. Buckinghamshire Council will have 147 Members in May 2020. A key priority for the new council will be to support the unitary councillors to ensure that they have the capacity and capability to carry out their community leadership role.

45. Some of the challenges for Members will include:

- Understanding the full breadth of services that will be delivered by the new council.
- Considering how best to operate in three member wards.
- Determining how local Members can work effectively to respond to the needs and ambitions of their local communities whilst also playing a role in the development of the strategic framework of the new council.

Role of Members

46. The constitution will establish the governance framework within which all councillors will operate. This will set out the committees and scrutiny arrangements which will be implemented by the new council, together with the Code of Conduct for Members. Guidance will also be provided on effective

Member/Officer relationships and ways of working, linked to the values and behaviours established for the new organisation.

Supporting local Members

47. To support all Members to fulfil their roles effectively, the following arrangements will be developed:

- **Training and Development** – an induction programme for Members of the new council with training and development opportunities, will be delivered in a variety of venues around the county, together with on-line resources;
- **Engagement** – opportunities for direct Member input into the design of the new council through a series of task and finish groups and workshops to support the programme objectives. This will be supplemented by regular newsletter to keep Members abreast of developments and key meeting dates, together with a programme of briefing sessions;
- **Accommodation** - Executive and Committee meetings will be held in a variety of venues around the county. It is proposed that a single location will be identified for meetings of the full council, and that all Members will be able to access drop-in office facilities and parking in each of these locations:

  - Amersham
  - Aylesbury
  - Denham
  - High Wycombe

- **IT equipment** – the ambition is to provide all Members with access to a common set of devices. All council meeting papers will be published on mod.gov, with no paper copies produced. Appropriate support and training will be available;
- **Officer support –** all Members will be provided with contact details for officers who will provide them with administrative assistance, digital and ICT support, and signposting on case work issues.

Boundary review

48. During the first term of the new council, it is anticipated that a Boundary Commission Review will be undertaken to review the current arrangements and move to fewer, single member wards which reflect the changing nature of communities during a period of significant growth for the county.

Customers

49.   People who use our services will be at the heart of the new Buckinghamshire Council and the new systems and processes need to be designed to deliver best in class customer service.

50.   Key objectives underpinning the customer strategy are:

- Access to services through cost effective channels that suit customer needs.
- Digital by choice, not by default.
- Telephone and face to face service for our most vulnerable residents and those who are digitally excluded.
- Creating conditions to enable us to join up channels with local public sector partners in the future.
- Improved customer outcomes based on knowledge about customer requirements.
- Ensuring service continuity on vesting day.
- Outstanding customer experience and consistency across all channels.
- Ensure our customers' data is protected and secure.
- Change from a reactive service to proactively engaging our customers.
- Create a culture of customer accountability.
- Involve customers in service design and decision making.

51.   The overarching approach during transition is to deliver an interim solution in place for Vesting Day which will be branded as the new council, which overlays existing systems and processes. In parallel, we will develop the longer term transformational plan to establish a new customer infrastructure, by April 2021.

The following tables set out the plans for each of the key channels:

Website

On Vesting Day	*Post Vesting Day*
• An accessible website for the new council that works on any device or browser, branded with the new branding. • Webchat will be available on the pages of the new website. • Existing websites will continue to be in place and pages will be rebranded to sit behind the new website.	• Development of single new website (12-18 months). • Webchat and AI on all pages, extended to 24/7.

Telephone access

On Vesting Day	*Post Vesting Day*
• A single new telephone number for customer access (in addition to the existing numbers that people currently use). • Telephone number published on the new website. • Customer service staff able to handle straightforward enquiries and refer to all services as needed. • 24/7 access will be provided for emergency contacts and out of hours services.	• Migration of all existing numbers to a new telephony service.

Face to face access

On Vesting Day	*Post Vesting Day*
• A network of access points across the county, based on the existing face to face access points already provided by each of the predecessor councils. • Customer service staff in each of these locations will be trained to handle FAQs and signpost customers for all of the unitary council's services. • Consistent opening hours across each of the access points.	• A network of One Stop Shop access points in well located and accessible buildings, using existing offices, libraries and partner facilities. • Over time, there will be some rationalisation of accommodation and alignment with redesigned service delivery arrangements.

Complaints and Compliments

On Vesting Day	Post Vesting Day
• Single customer service standards and complaints policy.	• All customer facing processes will be reviewed and re-engineered as appropriate to ensure that customer access meets expectations of the new council.

My Account

On Vesting Day	Post Vesting Day
• My Account will remain in place but with new branding; customers will link to the relevant transactions and online services through the website.	• Single My Account.

Payment channels

On Vesting Day	Post Vesting Day
• Existing payment channels maintained but rebranded for the unitary council.	• Single e-commerce platform.

Locality Working

52. A new localism model will be developed which builds on the experience of the five councils to date and provides the critical link between strategic decision making by the unitary council and local decision making by unitary councillors, Town and Parish Councils and partners. The localism model will need to ensure that the unitary council is accessible to communities and that town and parish councils and residents are able to find answers to service issues close to home. The key building blocks of the localism framework will include:

- Community Boards – structures which enable unitary councillors to make decisions on very local issues alongside key partners. Existing statutory partnership arrangements will be retained.
- Local access to services – contact points in local communities where residents can access council services and be signposted to information.
- Voluntary devolution to Town and Parish Councils – providing opportunities for Town and Parish Councils to play an enhanced role in local service delivery.

53. The detailed operation of these three building blocks will be designed with key stakeholders in advance of Vesting Day.

Partnership Working

54. Strong collaboration by the new council with public, private and voluntary sectors - at both strategic and local levels - will be essential for meeting the future needs of Buckinghamshire.

55. A framework for regular liaison and engagement with key groups, such as businesses and the voluntary and community sector, at a strategic countywide level will be developed in advance of Vesting Day. Arrangements for partnership structures for Buckinghamshire will also be developed.

56. Existing statutory partnerships arrangements will be retained and where possible strengthened. Examples include the NHS and mental health services where strong working relationships deliver a range of services within the social services area, health and wellbeing, housing and rough sleeping. Similarly with the Thames Valley Police and the probation services on issues like crime, keeping our residents safe, community relations, rehabilitation and housing ex-offenders.

57. Members during the transition period will have the opportunity to help shape the plans for Partnership working.

Financial Strategy

58. The new authority requires a robust and legally compliant budget, including the process of setting Council Tax, for the financial year 2020/21. This needs to be formally agreed in advance of Vesting Day as the development and approval of this budget will fall under the remit of the Shadow Authority.

59. The following issues give rise to uncertainty in the future funding envelope for the new council:

   - The 2019 Comprehensive Spending Review, which will define the quantum of resource to be allocated across Local government. This may only be a 1-year settlement.
   - The Fair Funding Review, which will revise the mechanism by which the quantum of funding allocated to Local Government, is distributed across individual authorities.
   - The implementation of 75% Business Rates Retention, which will see a full reset of retained growth in 2020.
   - The future of the New Homes Bonus.
   - The Green Paper on Social Care, which is likely to impact on both the funding and statutory responsibilities in relation to Social Care in the future.
   - The impact of Brexit on key funding strands of Council Tax and Business Rates and Commercial Development and Income.

60. The new council's Medium Term Financial Plan will be agreed for a minimum of 3 years and built around the following principles:

- A balanced and robust budget is prepared and agreed to statutory deadlines.
- The financial plan is fully aligned to the Strategic/Corporate Plan/Statutory Responsibilities and underpinned by the development of operational plans.
- Available resources are reviewed, funding assumptions and existing savings plans are challenged and agreed at an appropriate level, and planning is based on such assumptions.
- Unavoidable pressures are suitably identified in the planning stage and accounted for in the initial modelling to manage financial resilience and meet foreseen demands.
- Proposals for review and change have clearly identified and accountable owners, both at a political and an officer level, who are accountable for proposing them and subsequently delivering them.
- Proposals are checked and challenged at regular intervals by appropriate member and officer group.
- Public consultation with key stakeholder groups is undertaken.
- The Shadow Authority has appropriate scrutiny of the budget including the role of a Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the proposed shadow constitution.

61. Early decisions will need to be taken by the Shadow Executive about the equalisation of Council Tax across the whole of the new authority area, the integration of savings and investments in changes to service delivery models as described in the Unitary business case, and the alignment of fees & charges and policies.

Capital Programme

62. Physical space will have an important role to play in realising the benefits of a brand new unitary council.

63. In advance of Vesting Day, key priorities will be to develop a clear understanding of the combined portfolio of property and assets and the existing capital projects and ensure that these are effectively novated to the new council. A Property Asset Management Plan, a Capital Investment Strategy and a combined capital programme will be developed for agreement by the Shadow Authority prior to Vesting Day.

64. Post Vesting Day, the new council will have the opportunity to explore opportunities for rationalisation and disposal of assets and new investments to support its ambitions in relation to regeneration and income generation.

PART C –
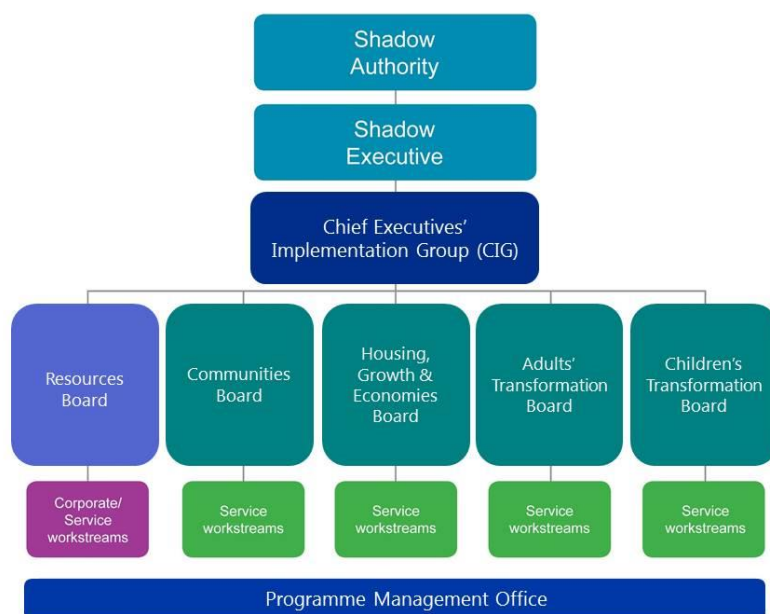# TRANSITION PROGRAMME GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Member Governance

65. The Shadow Authority will bring together Members across the five existing councils to oversee the creation of the new council. In particular, the Shadow Authority will have a key role in setting the budget for the new council in February 2020.

66. The Shadow Executive will lead the delivery of the Implementation Plan and also consider critical 'business as usual' decisions by each of the five councils that have longer term implications for the new council.

67. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will hold the Executive to account for the delivery of the Implementation plan.

68. Informal Member arrangements will also be developed to ensure that Executive Members are aligned to the five Programme Boards, and also engaged in task and finish groups on key policy issues such as localism and budget development.

Governance Arrangements

69. Key features of the officer governance arrangements are set out below, and are illustrated at Figure 1:

Figure 1 – Officer Programme Governance

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                    │     Shadow      │
                    │   Authority     │
                    ├─────────────────┤
                    │     Shadow      │
                    │    Executive    │
                    ├─────────────────┤
                    │ Chief Executives'│
                    │ Implementation  │
                    │   Group (CIG)   │
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The CEO

Shadow Authority

Shadow Executive

Chief Executives' Implementation Group (CIG)

Resources Board | Communities Board | Housing, Growth & Economies Board | Adults' Transformation Board | Children's Transformation Board

Corporate/ Service workstreams | Service workstreams | Service workstreams | Service workstreams | Service workstreams

Programme Management Office

Implementation Group (CIG)

70.   Details of the CEO Implementation Group are as follows:

- Membership: County and District CEOs, the co-chairs for each programme board, the interim Monitoring Officer, the interim Section 151 officer and the joint Programme Managers.
- Chair: the chair will be the Interim Head of Paid Service and Implementation Lead (or by the Deputy Implementation Lead in their absence).
- Frequency: fortnightly.
- Location: to revolve around the county.

Programme Boards

71.   The Programme Boards will manage a series of discrete workstreams focussed on developing the outcomes required during the transition period to create the new council on 1 April 2020. They will consider whether there are any gaps in the work programme and make recommendations to the CIG in relation to new workstreams/boards.

72.   The boards will oversee the workstream activity including work commissioned by the corporate workstreams (see below), managing the dependencies, co-ordinating activity and avoiding duplication.

73.   Reports which need to go onto to CIG for consideration will be agreed at the boards first, who will also determine any additional resourcing requirements, as part of this process.

74.   A summary of the programme boards is noted below:

- Membership: lead officers for each supporting workstream.
- Chair: co-chairs from County Council and a District Council (excluding the Childrens and Adults Boards)
- Frequency: fortnightly initially. Ongoing frequency to be agreed by programme board chairs in conjunction with programme managers.
- Location: to revolve around the county.

Programme Workstreams

75. There are currently 28 workstreams across the five programme boards. These are split into two groups; Corporate/cross cutting workstreams and service workstreams.   Underneath these workstreams are a number of sub workstreams and task and finish groups.

76. The corporate/cross cutting workstreams are grouped under the Resources Programme Board. They will undertake the work required to ensure corporate services are established on day one. In addition to the governance of the work of the relevant workstreams this board will:

- Deliver the cross cutting activity critical to ensure a smooth transition to the new council on day one.
- Determine the principles and working arrangements which will apply to customer services on day one.

77. The service workstreams are spilt across the four other boards and focus on front line service delivery. The activity will include:

- Delivering activity agreed by the CIG and commissioned through the Programme Management Office.
- Review of policies as required.
- Establishment Service continuity plans and priorities.
- Governance tasks as appropriate to the relevant workstream – e.g. Scheme of delegation, privacy notices, develop KPIs, and file storage protocols.
- Finance tasks – e.g. harmonisation of fees and charges, budget structures, service procurement issues.
- Staff tasks – review TUPE lists, tailor communications plans.
- Where appropriate specific discovery work will be undertaken as agreed by the boards/individual workstreams.

Programme Management Office (PMO)

78. The PMO has a clear structure and leadership.

79. The PMO is responsible for the overall coordination of the programme and for commissioning workstreams on behalf of the CIG as well as supporting the Shadow Executive. It will also oversee the budget for the programme.

80. Regular programme progress reports will be provided to the CIG and Shadow Executive and the PMO will develop and manage the forward plans for both groups.

81. The PMO also contains communications resource who will provide regular updates for all staff, Members, employee representatives and trade unions in relation to the transition work as well as providing specific communications support for workstream activity.

Resource Implications

82. Leads for Boards or workstreams will not automatically be backfilled. It will be for individual organisations to make decisions in relation to reprioritisation of work/ backfilling if required. Each workstream will identify additional

capacity/expertise needed to deliver agreed plans, which will be funded from the transition budget.

Assurance

83. Independent assurance of the programme will be critical and will be undertaken through a number of elements which will complement each other.

Challenge Partner

84. The Implementation Team have appointed Ameo Professional Services as an external partner to provide some critical challenge to the programme at key stages. This will focus on programme set up, structure and priorities. They have undertaken similar work on other recent unitary implementations.

Internal Audit

85. The County Council internal audit partner Mazars will provide assurance on how the governance of the programme is operating and in particular decision making and the application of appropriate controls.

External Audit

86. External auditors for the sovereign councils and the Shadow Authority will be updated on the progress of the unitary programme as part of their statutory governance work.

Childrens Commissioner

87. There is also a requirement to provide assurance to the Childrens commissioner who is supporting the County Councils Ofsted improvement programme. This will be undertaken through a series of regular updates to coincide with planned visits to the county council.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

88. As referenced above Member assurance will be provided through the Shadow Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee who will meet during the transition period and review appropriate elements of the programme, holding the Shadow Executive to account for the delivery of this Implementation plan.

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

89. The final aspect to the assurance will be from MHCLG. As the government department overseeing the unitary programme there will be regular meetings with civil servants together with a monthly updates provided to them.

90. A summary of the assurance activity is provided below:

Assurance Timetable													
	Timeline												
Type of Assurance	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20
Ameo Professional Services (Critical Friend)		■		■		■		■		■			
Mazars (Internal Audit Partners)			■			■		■	■				
External Audit				■	■				■				
Childrens Commissioner		■	■		■								
Overview and Scrutiny Committee		■		■				■					
MHCLG	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Risk Management

91. Alongside the assurance activity above a full and comprehensive risk management process will be in place including an escalation framework. This process will operate across all levels of the programme to enable the Programme Management Office, Programme Boards, Workstream Leads and the nominated Risk Leads to identify, evaluate and monitor risks and ensure actions are taken to mitigate them.

92. The Implementation Risk Register will be reported to the Chief Executives Implementation Group and Shadow Executive. In terms of existing strategic risks, sovereign councils will retain responsibility for managing these until vesting day, but the Shadow Executive will need to remain sighted on the content, which could inform decision making and its initial Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Transition budget

93. The existing councils have collectively established a budget of £22m to support the creation of the new Buckinghamshire council.

94. An initial budget requirement for one-off transitional costs of £12.85m has been identified for 2019/20. This expenditure will meet the costs of the transition programme team, redundancy and/or retirement costs, and interim shadow arrangements. These costs will be covered through the immediate savings arising from reduction in senior management, contract efficiencies etc.

Conclusion

95. This plan provides a high level overview of the programme to create the new Buckinghamshire Council and is underpinned by detailed plans managed through a robust governance model, supplemented by external assurance.

96. The plan will evolve as the programme develops and be kept up to date. Members will be provided with regular updates on changes to the plan as well as on the progress of the programme.