

SHADOW EXECUTIVE

TUESDAY, 11TH JUNE, 2019

Present: Councillor Martin Tett in the Chair

Councillors B Chapple OBE, J Chilver, A Cranmer, I Darby, A Green, C Harriss, P Hogan, A Macpherson, D Martin, N Naylor, W Whyte, G Williams, F Wilson, K Wood and N Glover (In place of M Shaw)

Apologies: Councillors S Bowles and M Shaw

1 Declarations of interest

Councillor B Chapple OBE declared a personal interest as his son works at Buckinghamshire County Council.

The Monitoring Officer advised that all Members of the Shadow Authority would need to complete an additional register of interests form for the Shadow Authority. Members would be written to regarding this in due course.

2 Election of Deputy Leader

The Structural Changes Order required that at the first meeting of the Shadow Executive, the nominated Members by the District Councils must elect one person from amongst them to act as a Deputy Leader of the Shadow Executive.

Councillor T Green proposed the appointment of Councillor K Wood as Vice-Chairman of the Shadow Executive and Councillor I Darby seconded the nomination.

There being no other nominations it was

RESOLVED –

That Councillor K Wood be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Shadow Executive for the Shadow period up to 31 March 2020.

3 Question Time

The Chairman exercised discretion to allow Shadow Members the opportunity to ask any questions without notice. There were none.

4 28 Day Notice (Forward Plan)

The Shadow Executive received a report which detailed the current 28 Day Notice. It was recommended that the cycle of meetings for the Shadow Executive be amended to allow officers more time to prepare reports.

RESOLVED –

That the 28 Day Notice be noted and that the cycle of meetings for the Shadow Executive be amended.

5 Appointment Recommendations for the Interim Statutory Officer Roles: Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer, and Chief Finance Officer

The Shadow Executive received a report regarding the appointment of three interim positions: Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer. The Structural Changes Order required the Shadow Council to consider these appointments at their first meeting on 3 June 2019. At this meeting, the Buckinghamshire Shadow Council resolved to support the recommendation in the report. The Shadow Executive were asked to confirm the designations.

RESOLVED –

That the following designations be made:

- Rachael Shimmin as the interim Head of Paid Service
- Catherine Whitehead as the interim Monitoring Officer
- Richard Ambrose as the interim Chief Finance Officer

6 Arrangements for the Appointment of the Chief Executive Officer for the Buckinghamshire Council

The Shadow Executive were asked to endorse the arrangements proposed in a report regarding the appointment of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the new Buckinghamshire Council. The report outlined the timeline for the CEO appointment and also the arrangements for the Senior Appointments Sub Committee. Penna was the external Resourcing Partner and would be supported by the Human Resources & Organisational Development (HR&OD) work stream. The Head of HR, ICT and Facilities Management at Wycombe District Council presented the report and advised Members that recruitment principles would be agreed by the Senior Appointments Sub Committee and would be developed to cover:

- Equity
- Fairness
- Transparency
- Conflicts of interest

RESOLVED –

That the Shadow Executive endorse the creation of a Senior Appointments Sub Committee. Members also noted the following:-

- a) The resourcing timeline
- b) The Senior Appointments Sub Committee manage the CEO Resourcing process
- c) The final appointment to the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service for the Buckinghamshire Council be a matter for the Shadow Executive

7 Implementation Programme

A report was submitted that outlined the officer governance arrangements of the Implementation Team which were working on the implementation programme towards the creation of the new Buckinghamshire Council for 1 April 2020. The arrangements had already been in place informally since March 2019 and the programme would involve significant transformational work. The governance was headed up by a CEO Implementation Group, under which sat five programme boards and 28 programme work streams. The programme boards would manage a series of work streams and a full time Programme Management Office would support the entire programme.

The interim Head of Paid Service advised that focus was being maintained on delivering existing services along with the transitional work. The work carried out by the CEO

Implementation Group had also been positive and an implementation update would be presented to the Shadow Executive in due course.

Members acknowledged the collaborative work of all officers and Councillors across the five local authorities thus far and endorsed the sentiment of maintaining business as usual during implementation. The Shadow Executive agreed that the health and wellbeing of officers during the transition was important and that this should be carefully managed so that work-life balance was not impaired.

There was also a commitment to encourage all Shadow Authority Members to take ownership of the transition through cross-party working. A Member engagement programme was being developed to support Members in understanding the existing structures and functions of the five Buckinghamshire authorities. This was important so that Shadow Authority decisions, such as the budget setting, were fully informed and took into account responsibilities across the five authorities. A list of 'must have' deliverables for vesting day would be brought to a future Shadow Executive meeting for Members to consider.

RESOLVED –

That the Shadow Executive notes that the Implementation Team for the creation of the new unitary Council for Buckinghamshire has been established.

8 Spend Protocol

It was in the interest of the new Council that a spend protocol be introduced as any new commitments from the five local authorities may have a future financial impact. The report submitted outlined a protocol whereby all new financial commitments above a de-minimis level of £100,000 per annum be reported to the Shadow Authority's interim Section 151 Officer. New financial commitments above £500,000 per annum (or lower if in the view of the shadow Section 151 Officer the commitment requires further consideration) be further reported to the Shadow Executive for their approval. The shadow Section 151 officer presented the report and responded to questions regarding potential asset purchases not in the capital budget and special expenses. Members were advised that any local concerns regarding earmarked reserves should be raised with the sovereign council's Section 151 Officer as they were responsible for the stewardship of their council's finances. There was merit in the suggestion that officer reports submitted across the five Buckinghamshire authorities contained the financial implications of recommended decisions.

RESOLVED –

That the proposed protocol be agreed and that the proposed limits be reviewed after two months in terms of their appropriateness.

9 Communication and Engagement Strategy

A report had been submitted which summarised the Communications and Engagement Strategy for the transition to the new Buckinghamshire Council. The Programme Communications and Engagement Lead officer presented the strategy and advised that it was a working document. An important element of the strategy was that communication was coordinated to all key audiences throughout the transition period to increase awareness and understanding ahead of 1 April 2020. This would be led by the Programme Office on behalf of the Shadow Authority.

The communications strategy had three phases:

- Phase 1: the period up to the making of the Structural Change Orders
- Phase 2 (a): from the calling of the first Shadow Authority meeting to end March 2020 (including transition arrangements)

- Phase 2 (b): promote the lead-in to the new Council creation and then first 100 days in. This phase would be developed as the programme progressed.

Stakeholder plans had been identified for five main stakeholder group: Internal Staff, Elected Members, Town and Parish Councils, Residents and Strategic Partners and Businesses. Work was still ongoing towards the plans for the Residents and Strategic Partners and Businesses as they had to take into account information and requirements from the Communities Board and the Housing, Growth and Economy Board.

The internal communications and engagement plan focused on delivering a series of joint roadshows, newsletters and a shared online area for staff across all five councils. Initial feedback from the roadshows had been positive and an internal staff communications survey would be carried out later in the summer to seek more detailed feedback and inform the future strategy.

Members were supportive of the plan, particularly the staff roadshows, Localism events, change communications and the overarching key messages in the build-up to the Buckinghamshire Council. Further key messages would be developed as the transition was implemented.

RESOLVED –

That Members note the Communications and Engagement Strategy for the transition to the new council.