

Report for:	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE SHADOW EXECUTIVE
Meeting Date:	10 September 2019

Title of Report:	Buckinghamshire Unitary Council Programme Update
Responsible Officer or Relevant Member:	Roger Goodes Programme Manager rgoodes@buckscc.gov.uk 07747 486750
Officer Contact:	Roger Goodes Programme Manager rgoodes@buckscc.gov.uk 07747 486750
Recommendations:	That the update be noted.
Corporate Implications:	n/a
Options: (If any)	n/a
Reason: (Executive only)	This report provides an update on the progress made with the programme to establish the new unitary council for Buckinghamshire.

Purpose of Report

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

Overview

2. Rachael Shimmin has been appointed as the first Chief Executive of Buckinghamshire Council; Rachael is currently the Chief Executive of Buckinghamshire County Council.
3. The Tier 2 recruitment has commenced and is expected to conclude by the middle of October. Tier 3 recruitment is planned to be concluded by Christmas.
4. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee met on the 8th July 2019 and confirmed the chairperson and vice chairperson for the transition year, agreed committee arrangements and a calendar of meetings.




5. The Shadow Executive met on the 9th July 2019 and agreed the Implementation Plan and Budget.
6. A Member Engagement Programme has been established to provide Members with an improved understanding of the baseline of the new Council.
7. A Cross Council debate involving over 50 councillors took place on 25th July discussing key issues and challenges with key partner speakers.
8. There are on-going regular communications, with a particular focus on members, staff, employee representatives, trade unions, town and parish councils and key partners.
9. Member working groups have been established looking at Localism, Branding and Member induction.
10. Principles for a new Constitution paper were reviewed by the Chief Executives Implementation Group and a Constitution Member Group is being established to take this forward.
11. Public consultations commenced week commencing 12th August for Community Boards and Council Tax Reduction (Support).

Shadow Executive

12. At the Shadow Executive meeting on the 9th July 2019 the Executive agreed the Programme Implementation Plan and Budget.
13. At the Shadow Executive meeting on the 23rd July 2019 the Executive agreed Rachael Shimmin be appointed as the first Chief Executive for Buckinghamshire Council.
14. At the same meeting the Executive also agreed to extend the contracts to Town and Parish Councils for the devolution of highways services.
15. At the Shadow Executive meeting on the 20th August 2019 the Executive agreed an interim Accommodation Strategy for the new council.

Overview & Scrutiny

16. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee met on 8th July 2019. At the meeting Councillor Alex Collingwood was voted as chair and Councillor John Gladwin the vice chairperson.
 17. The Committee discussed items for the work programme and the schedule for future meetings. This included establishing task and finish groups to look at the Budget and Implementation Plan.
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18. A workshop has been arranged with the Centre for Public Scrutiny on 2nd September which is intended to help the Committee develop their work programme.

Programme Boards Update

19. At the Chief Executives Implementation Group on the 24th July the first set of highlight reports for Communities, Housing, Growth & Economy and Resources, along with a composite highlight report for the overall programme were reviewed. These highlighted that good progress is being made and at this time there are no significant issues identified.
20. Since that meeting the PMO has worked with the Programme leads and Boards to develop further the reporting, in particular working to get the right level of detail. The Programme reporting pack now consists of the 3 Board highlight reports, the composite highlight report, the 'must haves' list, critical milestone map, dependencies, programme budget and risks and issues log.
21. The 'must haves' list is the list of what has to be done to ensure the new council is established for 1st April 2020. In total the list currently stands at 169 items and will be managed and used as the basis for reporting progress of the programme going forward. The Implementation Plan has been updated with this list.
22. The Programme Board and strategic risk register continue to be actively managed and overall progress is currently reporting as amber. Actions are in hand to manage the risks. An emerging risk that is being regularly monitored by the Chief Executives Implementation Group is the loss of key staff across the five councils.
23. The programme budget is currently reporting as amber as a number of requirements are still being developed and could result in additional costs that are not currently included within the budget forecast. There is however contingency within the budget to cover any additional costs should they arise. A more detailed budget report will be provided at a future date.

Communications

24. There are on-going regular communications, with a particular focus on members, staff, employee representatives, trade unions, town and parish councils and key partners.
25. The Member engagement programme is now underway which contains a mix of briefings and workshops to provide Members with detailed knowledge on the range of services provided, the budget across the existing councils and the opportunity to get involved and help share key pieces of work like the vision and values for the new Council, its Corporate Plan and the priorities for the



new council. Videos of these sessions are being shared with members as part of the programme to enable those unable to attend to keep informed.

26. A shared online space (intranet) has been launched for staff with work ongoing to develop and roll out to members.
27. A series of 10 joint staff roadshow events took place throughout July across all locations with the next round of staff roadshows planned from 9 September – 4 October.
28. Wider resident engagement and communications has begun focusing on the Community Boards and Council Tax Reduction (Support) public consultations. These consultations engage with residents and key stakeholders including town and parish councils, voluntary groups and partners.

Organisational Structure

29. The Corporate Management Team recruitment (second tier) has commenced and it is anticipated to make appointments to these posts by the end of September. The aim for third tier managers (those people who report to members of the Corporate Management Team) is that they will be appointed no later than mid-December 2019.

External Assurance

30. The first of three reviews has been carried out by our third party critical friend Ameo Professional Services. The findings were generally positive, although some opportunities have been identified that have been taken forward by the Programme Management Office. An action plan has been developed and agreed with the Chief Executives Implementation Group.
31. An audit of the Programme will take place in September by Mazars, an independent external organisation, to provide more programme assurance.

Summary/Conclusions

32. Progress remains strong and with the 'must haves' now identified there is a clearer focus on what is required for the 1st April to create the new council.
33. It is positive that external assurance has identified the programme is in good health and the governance is strong. This is really important with just 204 days to go until 1st April 2020 and still a lot of work to complete before then.

