

Management Team

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Report

Subject : Future Management Arrangements in the Lead Up to the Creation of a New Wiltshire Council.

Report to : The Cabinet

Date : Wednesday 05 September 2007

Author : Pam Fox / Debbie Dixon

Leader of the Cabinet: Councillor Paul Sample

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To seek Cabinet approval for the future management arrangements of the Council in the lead up to the creation of the new Wiltshire Council.

2. Background

- 2.1. On 25 July the Local Government Minister, John Healey, announced the Government's intention to set up 9 unitary authorities, including a unitary authority covering the whole of Wiltshire.
- 2.2. Although the Council is continuing to make representations to have this decision reversed, (including joining with West Wiltshire and Kennet District Councils in seeking a judicial review of the decision), the Council is nevertheless taking a proactive approach to engaging with Wiltshire County Council and other district councils in Wiltshire to ensure that it is able to play as full a role as possible in shaping the unitary authority and to ensure that the needs and interests of the people of Salisbury and South Wiltshire are taken into account.
- 2.3. It is important to recognise that councillors and staff are currently "mourning" the loss of Salisbury District Council. The next 18 months are likely to be challenging for the Council, as we will need to focus on both proactively influencing the new authority and ensuring that the people of Salisbury and South Wiltshire continue to receive good service from Salisbury District Council. This will become increasingly difficult, as staff will inevitably begin to seek alternative jobs.

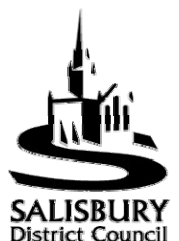


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2.4. This report focuses on outlining a structure and approach that maximises opportunities to influence the new Council including opportunities for developing staff and minimising disruption to existing services, whilst recognising the likely reducing staffing resources available to the Council.

3. Proposed Structure and Approach

3.1. It is proposed that in the lead up to the creation of the new Council that two project teams are created; one focusing on transition to the new council and one on ensuring business as usual.

3.2. The benefit of this team approach is that responsibilities can be shared amongst groups of senior staff, thus providing development opportunities and minimising the impact if staff turnover increases.

3.3. Section 4 and 5 outline the proposals for the transition and business as usual teams.

4. Transition Project Team

4.1. Shortly after the Minister's announcement the council appointed Pam Fox, who has been acting as interim Policy Director with the council for the last nine months, as Project Director for the transition process. Under her direction a Transition Project Team has been established. Appendix 1 outlines the membership of the team.

4.2. The role of the team is:

- Providing visible and robust leadership on unitary issues.
- Ensuring that the interests of the people of Salisbury and South Wiltshire are fully reflected in the setting up of the unitary authority.
- Ensuring that jobs and services are protected.
- Developing and consistently pursuing a strategic approach to dealing with unitary status for local government in Wiltshire.
- Drawing up and overseeing the implementation of a transition project plan which ensures the smooth transfer of SDC functions and services to the unitary authority.
- Providing a single point for internal and external communication on transition issues.

4.3. Full terms of reference for the Transition Project Team are attached in Appendix 2

The Transition Project Team will be supported by a series of Sub Groups, which will manage key workstreams including:

- Common Services (services already provided by County and in other districts)
- District Services (services only provided at District Level)
- HR and organisation capacity
- Legal
- Assets
- IT
- Communications
- Community and Stakeholder Engagement
- Partnership and area working
- Customer Interface
- Finance

4.4. Each of these Sub Groups (which will be led by a senior officer) will develop a project plan which fits in with the timescales being proposed for relevant aspects of County-wide preparations.

4.5. In consultation with Service Unit Heads and Team Leaders, a Transition Strategy for dealing with Unitary status, to guide the council's approach to the setting up of the new unitary authority has been drawn up and is attached for cabinet endorsement (see Appendix 3).

4.6. Rapid progress has been now made on number of fronts including:

- i. Agreeing a sub group structure and the main workstreams they will cover (see above).
- ii. Establishing a regular programme of Team meetings (they will be held every Tuesday at 9.30am).
- iii. Setting up project management infrastructure (an Outlook diary to keep track of all meetings relating to unitary status, document management systems, etc.).
- iv. Drafting a communications strategy emphasising communication with staff. Its content has been influenced by staff focus groups. An external communications strategy is now in the process of being drawn up. Because of the extent of communications work which it is envisaged will be attached to unitary preparations, line management for the council's communications team has now been transferred to the Project Director.
- v. Identifying the resources that will be needed to support the transition process (e.g. for additional staff, communications, etc.) as discussed further below.
- vi. Contacting the IDeA regarding the setting up a learning network for councils in other areas undergoing re-organisation.
- vii. Holding several discussions with the Government Office to gather additional information on current government thinking on the implementation process and register the council's keenness to be involved in shaping thinking on this.
- viii. Meeting with the County Council change programme management team to clarify its remit and way in which it will be operating.
- ix. Meeting with the County Chief Executive to discuss the way forward on area and partnership working.
- x. Drawing up a project plan covering both internal work and how the council will play into County-wide preparations.
- xi. Setting up systems for keeping abreast with meetings and contact relating to unitary preparations.
- xii. Gathering information on the statutory framework for unitary status (contents of the Bill, the process for laying Statutory Orders, the rules governing the disposal of assets, etc.).
- xiii. Commissioning a risk analysis of our proposed approach to the transition to unitary status.
- xiv. Agreeing protocols on how to deal with interim vacancies arising in Wiltshire authorities.
- xv. Producing a staff support strategy building on discussions with Service Unit Heads and Team Leaders (see Appendix 4).
- xvi. Commenced preparation of a member support strategy.
- xvii. Assessing the implications of documents relating to the County's proposed approach to change management.
- xviii. Arranging a programme of visits to team meetings across the council to obtain feedback on our intended approach and to identify staff concerns to which we will need to respond.
- xix. Carrying out a review of other unitary project arrangements to gain an overview of transition processes.
- xx. Shaping existing work streams so that they support unitary preparations (e. g the current corporate consultation exercise, the Annual Audit Plan, the role of the South Wiltshire Strategic Alliance).
- xxi. Meeting with trade unions to agree their involvement in the transition process.
- xxii. Reviewing the council's assets in the light of statutory provisions relating to asset disposal.
- xxiii. Reviewing partnership and area working in the light of unitary status.

- xxiv. Arranging for the County Council Chief Executive and Leader to meet with staff in Salisbury.

5. Business As Usual Team

- 5.1. Working in parallel will be the Business as Usual Team. Debbie Dixon has set up the team. However in future it will be led by David Crook, as Debbie leaves the Council in early October to join the Isle of Wight as a Strategic Director. Appendix 5 outlines the membership of the team.
- 5.2. The role of the team is:
- Providing visible and robust leadership on service continuity.
 - Ensuring the public are reassured about service delivery.
 - Monitoring and managing resources for the Cabinet's new priorities for Oct 2007 – Mar 2009.
 - Managing the capacity of the organisation to ensure services are maintained to agreed service standards.
 - Providing a focus for Business As Usual communication with the public and staff.
 - Identifying and managing risks.
- 5.3. The team will also ensure that new Cabinet priorities are monitored (report to go to October Cabinet) and any corporate issues managed in close consultation with portfolio holders.
- 5.4. Full terms of reference of the Business as Usual Team are attached as appendix 6.

6. Resourcing the Two Teams

- 6.1. It is projected that both teams are likely to need to access additional resources as new work is carried out against a backdrop of diminishing staff numbers.
- 6.2. The Transition Team anticipate that additional resources will be required for extra staffing costs, particularly in the area of Human Resources, honoraria for staff undertaking additional responsibilities, backfilling posts with temporary staff, consultancy, communication initiatives, training and development to equip staff for new roles in the future etc.
- 6.3. The Business As Usual Team estimates that additional resources are likely to be required if there is turnover in key areas that impact on service delivery to the public or in arrears with a focus on new priorities (report to go to October cabinet). The people and Organisational Development Unit have also been asked to develop a "Golden Handcuffs" policy that could be applied should the Council wish to retain key staff for a specific period of time. This will be subject to a Cabinet report in October.
- 6.4. It is proposed that a dedicated budget, managed by the Project Director and the Acting Chief Executive be established to cover these additional costs funded from within existing resources, freed up as a result of the Cabinet ceasing or amending projects to be outlined in another paper on the October agenda (having reviewed existing delegations to Management Team, it is considered that they are sufficient to enable Pam Fox and David Crook to draw on this budget). However, if this situation changes as unitary preparations progress, it may be necessary to seek Cabinet approval for more extensive delegations to be exercised in consultation with relevant members. Regular reports on use of the dedicated budget will be submitted to Cabinet.

7. Political Leadership

- 7.1. Both teams will be reporting to Cabinet on progress on the transition process and business as usual. There will be regular updates via Link Up, the Bulletin, etc. Member briefing sessions will also be held.
- 7.2. It is suggested that for transition arrangements political leadership is provided through the work of the various internal Sub Groups listed at 4.3. (e.g. Councillor Clegg in the Partnership and Area Working Sub Group). Cabinet is asked to put forward suggestions on which members might be involved in the work of the Sub Groups. It is also envisaged that the Leader and Deputy will have a key role to play in countywide issues.
- 7.3. As the agenda is a very fast moving one, it is envisaged that the monthly intervals between Cabinet meetings may be too long to gain member guidance and for relevant decisions to be taken. It is therefore suggested that, a member Transition Board should be established to work with the Project Director and the Transition Project Team. As the body will be performing executive functions on behalf of the cabinet, non-administration members are not able to form part of the membership. Obviously it is a matter for Cabinet as to which members of the Cabinet it wishes to appoint to the board.
- 7.4. It is suggested that a different approach is required for political input into business as usual since a key role already exists for portfolio holders in terms of service delivery. However, it will be important that the Business as Usual team have political support in the event of needing to redefine service standards, and prioritise project delivery in the event of diminishing staffing resources. It is therefore proposed that the Portfolio Holders for Budget and for Resources become the cabinet leads.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1. Cabinet is requested to approve:
 - i. The setting up of the Transition Team and Business As Usual Team.
 - ii. The terms of reference of both teams.
 - iii. Nominate members for the Transition Sub Groups.
 - iv. Invite group leaders to nominate members for the Member Transition Board.
 - v. Confirm the Budget and Resources Portfolio Holders as the Business As Usual member leads.
 - vi. The transition strategy of dealing with Unitary status.
 - vii. The staff support strategy.
 - viii. The drafting of a member support strategy for consideration in October 2007.
 - ix. An initial budget of £100,000 from within existing resources.

9. Implications

Financial: It is proposed that the £100,000 is funded from internal savings arising as a result of changes in work delivery because of LGR. This will need to be included in the forthcoming MTFS.

Legal

Personnel: Contained within the report.

Community Safety: N/A

Environmental Safety: N/A

Human Rights

Wards Affected: All

Transition Team Membership

Project Director - Pam Fox

Project Manager - Debbie Cameron

Communications - Carolyn Johannesen

HR - Anne McConkey

Legal / property - John Crawford

Community engagement, equalities and partnership working - Robin Townsend

District services/property - Derek Streek

Service Management - Phil Ruddle

Finance - Alan Osborne

Democratic Services - Stewart Agland

IT - Malcolm Lewin

Terms of reference for the unitary status Salisbury District Council Transition Project Team

Overall purpose:

Under the leadership of the Project Director, the Transition Project Team will have responsibility and will be held to account for:

- Providing visible and robust leadership on unitary issues.
- Ensuring that the interests of the people of South Wiltshire are fully reflected in the setting up of the unitary authority
- Ensuring that jobs and services are protected.
- Developing and consistently pursuing a strategic approach to for dealing with unitary status for local government in Wiltshire.
- Drawing up and overseeing the implementation of a transition project plan which ensures the smooth transfer of SDC functions and services to the unitary authority.
- Providing a single point for internal and external communication on transition issues.

Detailed responsibilities:

1. Developing and maintaining a full understanding of national developments impacting on the transition to unitary status including having a detailed knowledge of relevant legislation, statutory guidance, etc.
2. Developing and maintaining a detailed knowledge of plans and proposals relating to the setting up of the unitary authority.
3. Networking with other areas undergoing local government reorganisation to share learning and good practice.
4. Working closely with other councils across Wiltshire to ensure that there is a united approach to the transition to unitary status.
5. Ensuring that SDC makes a proactive and effective input to the shaping of the unitary authority both at a strategic level (the Steering and Reference Groups) and to teams working on more specific issues.
6. Ensuring that the work of the project team is geared to meeting political priorities and is closely linked to political decision making processes by making regular reports to Cabinet, regular member briefings, etc.
7. Ensuring that there is clarity of roles and responsibilities in relation to work on the transition to unitary status.
8. Regularly monitoring the implementation of the transition project plan
9. Developing and implementing a communications plan for ensuring effective internal and external communication on unitary issues, placing a particular emphasis on communication with SDC staff.
10. Maintaining an overview of the impact of transition to unitary status on morale and capacity and ensuring that staff and members are fully supported throughout the transition process and their interests are pursued at all times.
11. Carrying out regular risk analyses to ensure that key activities and services are maintained during the transition period.
12. Harnessing the full the skills, experience and resources available to SDC and managing funding and resources made available for the transition process.

13. Ensuring that the transition process is used to provide SDC staff and members with development opportunities and opportunities which will enhance their future roles.
14. Ensuring that equal opportunity and diversity considerations are an integral feature of the work of the project team and that equality impact assessments are carried out on all policies, plans and proposals emanating from the team.
15. Ensuring that relevant stakeholders and partner agencies in the private, voluntary and public sectors are fully involved in the transition process.
16. Ensuring that the work of the team is consistently informed by an understanding of the needs, views and interests of the people of South Wiltshire.
17. Making appropriate arrangements to ensure that the work of the team is transparent and open to challenge and scrutiny.
18. Ensuring that the work of the team is linked to the ongoing management of the Council.

Draft strategy for dealing with unitary status

The key tenets of the Council's approach to the transition to a unitary authority in Wiltshire will be:

- Robust leadership by both members and officers and at all levels in the council to ensure that the needs, views and interests of the people and communities of South Wiltshire are fully reflected in the setting up of the unitary authority. Citizen and community focus will remain paramount throughout the process.
- Proactive engagement (by both members and officers) with Wiltshire County Council and with other district councils in Wiltshire. The aim will be to ensure that the five councils move in the same direction and speak with one voice. The council will negotiate a protocol to guide relationships between the councils.
- Playing a full part in shaping the unitary authority by proactive involvement in county-wide structures and work streams and which builds on existing good practice across the County. The Council will seek to be an equal rather than a subsidiary partner working alongside the County Council. To this end we will press for the establishment of a Joint Committee made up of Members from all five councils which will be supported by senior officers. We will seek to make an input to:
 - The vision and direction of the unitary authority
 - It's business case
 - It's value and culture
 - Structures
 - Communication and information management processes
 - It's approach to people management
 - It's approach to service deliver
 - Contracts and assets
- Ensuring that we have a full understanding of the agenda – what needs to happen, by when, legal issues to be addressed, roles and responsibilities, etc.
- Seeking the establishment of a unitary authority which reflects best practice and modern thinking on the operation of local authorities i.e. seeking transformation as well as transition. Plans will need to be made to ensure that transformation continues beyond Vesting Day.
- Ensuring that the transition is managed as smoothly as possible by establishing across Wiltshire and within the council robust project and change management processes.
- Carrying out a risk analysis in relation to staff and the outsourcing of services.

- Supporting staff throughout the transition process and ensuring that their interests are pursued at all times. The council will pursue an inclusive process involving staff throughout the authority in all aspects of the transition process.
- Making the best use of resources to achieve the council's objectives in relation to the setting up of the unitary authority.
- Partnership working with local businesses, the voluntary sector and other public bodies to strengthen the "Voice" from South Wiltshire in the setting up of the unitary authority. The council will also work closely with relevant regional and sub regional stakeholders.
- Ensuring that key services area maintained during the transition process and that service users are kept fully informed of developments that might impact on services.
- Ensuring that the council is in a position to take forward any re-consultation activities should its Judicial Review prove successful.

Draft Strategy for Supporting Council Staff during the Transition to Unitary Status

The aim of the strategy is to:

- To provide staff with the skills and development opportunities that are needed to place them in the best position possible to compete for new roles in the unitary authority or in another organisation of their choosing.
- To ensure that staff are fully informed of preparations for unitary status both within the Council and across Wiltshire.
- To maintain staff morale and motivation during the transition period to ensure that they are able to deliver to their full potential and the quality of services is maintained.
- To ensure that the transition process and new unitary arrangements do not have an adverse impact on equal opportunity and diversity objectives.
- To build a sense of belonging to the future organisation.

The measures that will be put in place to achieve this are:

1. Strong and visible leadership of the transition process by both senior officers and leading members and by managers at all levels in the council. Leadership messages will be consistent, clear, positive but also realistic, honest and open.
2. An extended corporate training and development plan geared to the new environment which will include:
 - Training and development activities to help staff to apply for and compete for jobs (e.g. on producing CVs, interview skills, presentation skills, etc.).
 - Mentoring and job counselling.
 - Skills training for possible future roles building on training and development needs identified from staff appraisals. In some cases training and development plans may need to be re-worked.
 - Change and project management skills for those involved in unitary preparation activities.
3. Maximising secondment opportunities for Wiltshire-wide work with backfilling of posts to provide additional development opportunities within the council. Resources will be made available to support this.
4. Giving attention to staff welfare and health issues by setting up early warning systems to identify signs of stress and low morale and developing timely action plans to deal with any issues identified (e.g. access to external counselling and support). In order to initiate a corporate approach to these issues, an 'Employee Well-being' audit will be undertaken and combined with existing indicators of 'well-being'. The outcomes from this exercise will be used to inform action plans. Training may be required to

further sensitise managers and staff themselves to the symptoms of stress and other adverse health impacts.

5. As part of a wider communication strategy, developing a comprehensive programme of measures to ensure that all staff are kept informed of developments internally and externally. Particular efforts will be made to communicate with staff who work remotely or who are currently absent (e.g. on long term sick leave, maternity leave, etc.). An emphasis will be placed on face-to-face communication and responding to staff concerns. Systems will be established so that staff throughout the Council are able to access information on the activities of the Transition Project Team.
6. Taking a proactive approach to the early agreement of protocols on dealing with both interim and permanent appointments.
7. Making additional resources available to carry out the work involved in ensuring the smooth transfer of staff to the future organisation. The aim will be to ensure that issues relating to terms and conditions of employment such as; whether and if so, how terms and conditions will be harmonised, what salary protection arrangements will be in place, what will happen to current benefits, what relocation and expenses provision there will be, how will current and on-going financial support for professional qualifications be addressed together with many other similar areas are dealt with as speedily as possible.
8. Taking an inclusive approach to the council's preparation for the transition to unitary status (e.g. via involvement in sub groups, working groups, focus groups, leading work streams, etc.) so that as many staff as possible feel that they are involved in the process and are helping to shape the new authority.
9. Maintaining an overview of capacity in the council and ensuring that staffing resources are focussed on agreed priorities and maintaining key council services. There will be a clear specification of activities and projects that are no longer to be pursued and Innovative approaches will be identified for managing activities to release capacity to staff vital work streams.
10. Making resources available to fund salary enhancements and honoraria for staff taking on extra responsibilities. A consistent approach to the paying of honoraria and enhancements will be adopted to ensure that they do not have divisive impact.
11. Proactive engagement with trade unions and staff representatives on unitary issues and their involvement in unitary preparations.
12. Ensuring that specific issues relating to staff in Salisbury are, as far as it is possible to do so, fully taken into account in the setting up of the new authority. Groups on which the location of services to Trowbridge may have a disproportionate impact (compared to other district councils in Wiltshire) are likely to include part-time workers, those working some distance from Salisbury, those living in rural areas without transport, those who have caring responsibilities and people with mobility difficulties. Other groups on which there may be specific impacts are likely to emerge as work progresses.
13. Ensuring that Service Unit Heads and POD work together to ensure that HR impacts of change are managed strategically and consistently.

14. Taking a proactive approach to avoid the need for redundancies and where redundancies do occur, working to mitigate the consequences to the individuals concerned.
15. Managing the flow of information and request for data from outside the organisation to reduce the impact on staff.
16. Strengthening the Corporate Employer role of elected members so that they are able to make quick and timely decisions in relation to HR issues.
17. Providing appropriate opportunities for staff to:
 - Understand the culture, values and objectives of the future organisation.
 - Understand and plan for the part that they will play in transforming and continuously improving their services.
 - Meet managers and counterparts in Wiltshire County Council and other District Councils in order to build or maintain constructive and equal relationships.

Business As Usual team membership

Project Director – Debbie Dixon / David Crook

Project Manager - Helen Cowlard

Delivering through Customer Services lead - Helen Frances

Environmental Services plus Capacity lead - Matti Raudsepp

Housing Management - Derek Streek

Strategic Housing - Andrew Reynolds

Planning - Eric Teagle

Development Services - Steve Thorne

Community Initiatives plus Performance lead - Robin Townsend

Communications - Carolyn Johannesen

Legal / Property - John Crawford

HR - Anne McConkey / Rachel Herbert

Finance - Alan Osborne / Matthew Tiller

Democratic Services - Stewart Agland

Business As Usual Terms of Reference

Draft Terms of Reference for the Business as Usual Team

Overall Purpose

The Business as Usual team will have responsibility and will be held accountable for:

- Providing visible and robust leadership on agreed service continuity.
- Ensuring the public are reassured about agreed service delivery.
- Monitoring and managing resources for the delivery of the Cabinet's revised priorities for Oct 2007 – Mar 2009.
- Managing the capacity of the organisation to ensure services are maintained to agreed service standards.
- Providing a focus for service continuance communication with the public and staff.
- Identifying and managing new risks associated with transition and the potential effects on service delivery.

Detailed Responsibilities.

1. Review service standards in the event of reduced staffing levels.
2. Ensure that protocols designed to protect staff in the 5 councils enable service continuity.
3. Review and recommend the paring down or conclusion of some corporate and service unit activities to enable the freeing up of resources.
4. Keep pace with national / regional changes to ensure services develop in the long term under the new authority.
5. Ensure personnel policies support movement of staff within the authority to meet service needs.
6. Manage risks associated with maintaining services to agreed standards during transition.
7. Work in close collaboration with the Transition team to ensure clear corporate messages and synergy between Business as Usual and Transition activities.
8. Support initiatives aimed at motivating and retaining key staff eg. Golden handcuffs.
9. Review current contractual commitments, service agreements and grants.
10. Prepare exception reports to Cabinet and other members focusing on progress towards the revised priorities for Oct 2007 – Mar 2009 and the need for revised service standards.
11. Ensure staff have opportunities to broaden their skills and experience for the future.