

Cherwell District Council

Executive

2 November 2015

<p>A Business Case to Create a Joint Communications and Marketing Service with South Northamptonshire Council</p>
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Report of Head of Transformation

This report is public;

Appendix A and B are exempt from publication by virtue of paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of Local Government Act 1972.

Purpose of report

This report presents the final business case for a Joint Communications and Marketing Service across Cherwell District and South Northamptonshire Councils (hereafter “Cherwell” or “CDC” and “South Northamptonshire” or “SNC” respectively) following consultation with staff and Unison.

The report recommends the formation of a two way Joint Communications and Marketing Service, and in doing so seeks the Executive’s agreement for the non-staffing elements of the business case.

The proposal is part of the wider transformation programme across the two Councils.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To consider the attached final business case and the consultation responses in relation to non-staffing matters as outlined in section 5.1.
- 1.2 To note the decision of the Joint Commissioning Committee on 29 October 2015 with regard to staffing matters, which will be reported to Executive verbally.
- 1.3 To approve the proposed final business case to share a joint Communications and Marketing Service between CDC and SNC, subject to similar consideration and approval by SNC Cabinet.
- 1.4 To delegate to the Head of Transformation, in consultation with the Lead Member for Communications, any non-significant amendment/s that may be required to the business case following the decision of this meeting or SNC Cabinet.

- 1.5 To delegate to the Director of Resources and Head of Transformation, responsibility for implementation of the business case, including the costs of any potential redundancies, subject to the business case being agreed by both Councils.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Following the adoption of a business case for Joint Working by CDC and SNC in February 2015 and the commitment to deliver the business case objectives as soon as practicable, the three way transformation programme was reshaped to meet the needs of SNC and CDC pending a decision from Stratford-on-Avon regarding their participation after the local elections in 2015.
- 2.2 Following the decision of CDC and SNC Councils in February 2015 to approve the final business case for developing the approach to joint working and the delivery of local authority services, all services at both Councils are now included on the policy framework for the consideration of shared working.
- 2.3 This is one of a number of business cases for a two way shared service across CDC and SNC to be considered following the adoption of the business case in February 2015 and is part of the on-going Transformation Programme across the two Councils.
- 2.4 This business case does not seek to deliver financial savings as set out in the joint working business case considered by both Councils in February 2015, but seeks an initial investment in the service to increase the capacity, resilience and performance of the proposed joint team, leading to a financial saving for CDC in year 3.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 The draft business case for the Joint Communications and Marketing Service was endorsed for consultation with staff and Unison by the Joint Arrangements Steering Group (JASG) on 8 July 2015.
- 3.2 The final business case, amended to incorporate the majority of the comments arising from the staff and Unison consultation process is attached as Appendix A to this report. Section 5 of this report provides more detail on the consultation process, whilst recognising that it is not the responsibility of the Executive to deal with staffing matters; this is limited to the Joint Commissioning Committee.
- 3.3 Following an extended period of consultation with the affected staff and Unison, and whilst adding some minor amendments of its own, the Joint Transformation Working Group was satisfied that the business case was ready for progression through the democratic process at its meeting on 7 October 2015.

Proposal

- 3.4 The business case sets out the rationale for establishing a Joint Communications and Marketing Service.

- 3.5 Combining the current Communications Teams at CDC and SNC into a Joint Communications and Marketing Team would provide an improved service for both internal and external communications for both Councils across a range of channels including digital channels such as social media.
- 3.6 The external communications environment has changed dramatically over recent years with the advent of social media and the move away from traditional media such as local papers, as reinforced through the Council's own customer satisfaction survey results considered by Executive last month.
- 3.7 The proposed service is structured to provide greater managerial capacity in order to allow greater strategic planning and campaign management. This would be achieved through the introduction of two Senior Account Executive posts who would report to the Corporate Communications and Marketing Manager and take over the day to day management of the team.
- 3.8 The proposed joint team would also increase graphic design capacity.
- 3.9 A temporary post of Web Editor is included in the proposed structure for 2 years to allow time for the migration of both Councils' web sites to a single platform. Whilst both Councils would retain their own website, a common platform would allow the simplification of processes and procedures which in turn would only require a single post to manage them, supported by the service based web champions going forward.
- 3.10 A new post of Digital Editor is also proposed to focus on the quantity and quality of digital content published by the service. With the increasing importance of digital channels, having appropriate engaging content will directly contribute to the effectiveness of the Councils' communications.

Financial Case

- 3.11 The financial implications associated with the business case are set out in detail in Section 13 of Appendix A (the business case).
- 3.12 The business case is not initially based on achieving savings for CDC through a reduction in staffing levels, but on developing the service to effectively operate in a changing environment. As a result, the business case proposes a limited and proportional increase in the size of the joint team. While the proposal increases overall capacity, the existing differences between the size of the two teams results in a significant cost increase for SNC and a small initial cost increase for CDC, shown in table 1 below. After 2 years this would be converted into a saving of £14,000 for CDC.
- 3.13 In addition a further £10,750 of costs have been identified which would be split between the Councils.

Table 1: The initial additional cost to each Council

	Annual salary cost increase
Additional cost - CDC	£854
Additional cost - SNC	£51,105
Total additional salary cost	£51,960
Other additional costs (equipment & contingency)	£10,750
Overall additional costs	£62,710

HR Implications

- 3.14 It is not the responsibility of the Executive to consider staffing matters; this is not an Executive function and so is reserved for the consideration of the Joint Commissioning Committee of both Councils.
- 3.15 Consequently the staffing implications arising from this proposal were considered by the Joint Council Employee Engagement Committee and the Joint Commissioning Committee respectively on 29 October 2015. An oral update on the decisions of these two Committees will be given at this meeting due to the cross-over between the date of the meeting and the publication of these papers.
- 3.16 At this stage however, it is important to reassure all Members with responsibility for making a decision on this business case that a full and meaningful consultation process took place prior to the final business case being presented to the Joint Council Employee Engagement Committee, the Joint Commissioning Committee, Executive and Cabinet. As indicated above, section 5 of this report provides details of the consultation arrangements.

4 Decision making timetable

The timetable and recommendations arising from the democratic process for both Councils is outlined in table 2 below:

Table 2: Democratic process and decisions made

Date	Committee and Council	Decision
29.10.15	Joint Council Employee Engagement Committee	To be advised orally at this meeting
29.10.15	Joint Commissioning Committee	To be advised orally at this meeting.
02.11.15	CDC Executive	To be determined
09.11.15	SNC Cabinet	To be determined

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The business case represents a significant step in the transformation programme across CDC and SNC. The proposed joint team would provide an improved and

strengthened service to support both Councils in how they communicate internally and externally given the increasingly complex communications environment in which they operate.

5.0 Consultation

- CDC Lead Member for Communications; Councillor Barry Wood
- SNC Portfolio Holder for Communications; Councillor Ian McCord

Both the Lead Member (CDC) and Portfolio Holder (SNC) are satisfied with the business case as set out.

- All affected staff within the two Communications teams, and Unison Representatives from each Council were invited to engage in the consultation process, the timetable for which was extended twice to facilitate a fully inclusive process. The total consultation period was nine weeks. The minimum period of consultation required within the Organisational Change policy is 3 weeks. Following the consultation process a number of amendments were made to the business case relating to both staffing and non-staffing issues and these are summarised in Appendix B of the attached business case. Only the non-staffing issues are matters for the Executive to determine.
- Two way Joint Arrangements Steering Group (JASG)
- Transformation Joint Working Group (TJWG)
- Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer and JMT.

6.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 6.1 The detailed financial implications are set out in section 13 of the business case. In summary, the proposal results in additional costs of £62,710 for the two Councils.

The proposal does include a 2 year fixed-term post that will reduce costs by approximately £28,150, once the contract expires, to be shared equally between the two Councils.

There could be redundancy or pay protection costs as a result of implementing the proposal. These are outlined in section 13 of the business case.

Comments checked by:

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Legal Implications

- 7.1 As with all two way shared services this proposal, if implemented, will be covered by the section 113 agreement (as amended) entered into between the two Councils.

Decisions regarding staffing aspects of shared service business cases cannot be made by the Executive. These are matters for the Joint Commissioning Committee which meets on 29 October 2015.

A redundancy situation will arise where the requirements of the employing Council to have specific work undertaken cease or diminish.

Comments checked by:

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Risk Implications

7.2 Section 15 of the draft business case sets out the risk implications.

The risks associated with the HR elements of the business case relate to the usual range of employment risks which were considered by the Joint Council Employee Engagement Committee and the Joint Commissioning Committee on 29th October 2015. The Councils have HR policies in place to ensure that organisational change is managed in line with best practice and employment law which mitigates these risks as far as possible.

Comments checked by:

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Equality Implications

7.3 An Equality Impact Assessment initial screening assessment has been carried out and it has been determined that the proposal does not have any adverse impact on equality groups and as a result a full impact assessment and associated action plan is not required. This is included as part of the business case in Appendix A.

Comments checked by:

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8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: No

Community Impact Threshold Met: No

Wards Affected

All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

This business case relates to the strategic priority of “Sound budgets and customer focused Council”, and the associated key deliverables of:

1. “Reduce the costs of providing our services through partnerships, joint working and other service delivery models”
2. “Work to effectively communicate with local residents and businesses to better understand and respond to their needs” (as subsequently reflected in the 2015 customer satisfaction survey)
3. “Improve customer service through the use of technology and responding to customer feedback”
4. “Deliver rolling strategy of the five year business strategy, medium term financial plan and a capital programme that ensures that the Council is resourced to deliver its strategic priorities”

It further supports the following Performance Pledges of the Council in the current year:

5. “Extend the joint working Transformation Programme to enable the Council to save money and maintain a low council tax”
6. “Continue to improve our website and implement additional online services for customers”.

Lead Councillor

Councillor Barry Wood – Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Communications

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
A	A Business Case to create a Joint Communications and Marketing Service
B	Management Response to Alternative Proposals by Communications Employees
Background Papers	
None	
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