

Council

Business Case for Shared Democratic and Elections Team

29 September 2011

Report of Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable Council to consider the recommendation of the Joint Arrangements Steering Group (JASG) to implement a shared Democratic and Elections Team between this Council and South Northamptonshire Council (SNC).

This report is public

Appendix 4 to this report is exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

Recommendations

Council is recommended to:

- (1) Consider the consultation comments and responses contained in the log tabled at the meeting.
- (2) Consider the recommendation of the JASG to implement a shared Democratic and Elections Team between this Council and SNC.
- (3) (if the JASG recommendation is approved and SNC have resolved in similar terms) delegate authority to Head of Service 4 in the joint management team structure to take all necessary steps to implement the team in compliance with the Organisational Change Policy and in consultation with the HR officers at both Councils.

Details

- 1.1 On 8 September 2011 the JASG considered a business case for the implementation of a shared democratic and elections team between the Council and SNC. The business case is at **Appendix 1** with extracts containing exempt information separately at **Appendix 4**. Members should note that this version differs in some respects from the version that was included with the JASG agenda to reflect changes that were made to the document verbally by the SNC Head of Finance at the meeting and also to correct some factual discrepancies. None of the changes are of material significance to the overall justification for the proposal.

- 1.2 Although the proposed job descriptions for the four levels of post within the shared team were not available at the JASG meeting Members were content, given the time constraints referred to in the business case, for them to be finalised and evaluated by both Councils in the days following the meeting and this duly occurred. The job descriptions that were submitted for evaluation are at **Appendix 2** and the outcome of the evaluation process at each Council is at **Appendix 3**.
- 1.3 Formal consultation with affected staff and the recognised unions commenced on 14 September 2011 and a consultation log has been maintained pursuant to the adopted Organisational Change Policy that applies to this process. As the consultation period is still running at the time of publishing this report it is intended to table the final version of the log at the meeting. Members should give due consideration to the contents of this log before resolving their position.
- 1.4 The business case makes clear that there are sound reasons to move forward with the proposed shared team with urgency given, in particular, the improved resilience that will consequently apply at both Councils in this key support service. Efficiency savings will also be achieved as a result of the integration of the two main ICT systems and some marginal savings in staffing costs will also be achieved.
- 1.5 The business case is also being considered at the meeting of SNC on 28 September 2011 and Members will be informed of the outcome verbally.

Conclusion

- 1.6 The business case presents a compelling justification for the shared team to be implemented as soon as is practicable in order to provide the urgently needed resilience at both Councils for this key support service and to achieve the identified non cashable efficiency savings in full by the commencement of 2012/13.

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

- 2.1 The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward.

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| Option One | To accept the business case in full. |
| Option Two | To reject the business case. However the retention of separate teams across the two Councils will lead to major resilience issues and fail to achieve the efficiency gains identified in the business case. |
| Option Three | To approve the business case in part. However the creation of a partially shared team will lead to major operational issues and lack of consistent procedures and systems between the two Councils thereby failing to |

address the resilience issues in full and failing to maximise the non cashable efficiency savings identified.

Option Four To defer consideration in the event that any consultation responses need addressing prior to implementation. However delay would jeopardise the timely implementation of systems integration and achievement of financial savings in 2012/13.

Consultations

Joint Arrangements Steering Group – 8 September 2011

Implications

Financial The creation of a shared team will deliver annual revenue savings of circa £12,672. Due to the need for capital expenditure there is a pay back period of 2.6 years. The savings identified arise from changes in staffing, principally from sharing a team manager, and from systems changes. Since neither authority can realise these savings on their own, it is proposed that both the costs and savings be split on a 57½/42½ (CDC/SNC) basis. This results in estimated annual revenue saving of £7,286 for CDC.

This business case is not financially driven but seeks to secure the non cashable efficiency gains for both Councils from integrated working in this key support service area, as well as significantly improving the resilience of the service for both Councils.

Comments checked by Karen Curtin, CDC Head of Finance, 01295 221559, Karen.Curtin@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Legal None as the implementation of the shared team would be in accordance with the Organisational Change Policy adopted by both Councils.

Comments checked by Nigel Bell Team Leader - Planning and Litigation / Interim Monitoring Officer (CDC) 01295 221687, nigel.bell@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Risk Management Risk will be minimised via adherence to the Organisational Change Policy. In the event of non implementation of a shared team there is a risk to the ongoing resilience of both Councils' teams because of the current levels of staff vacancy, particularly at SNC.

Comments checked by Karen Curtin, Head of Finance (CDC) 01295 221559, Karen.Curtin@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
1	Business Case for Shared Democratic and Elections Team (with redaction of exempt information)
2	Job Descriptions
3	Evaluation Outcomes
4	Business Case Extracts (exempt information)
Background Papers	
None	
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