

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Decision Made: 26 February 2014

MKIP - PLANNING SUPPORT SHARED SERVICE

Decision Made

1. That Maidstone be chosen as the employer for the Planning Support Shared Service (Mid Kent Planning Support);
2. That existing planning support staff at Swale and Tunbridge Wells be transferred to Maidstone Borough Council as their employer; and
3. That the principles agreed in the ICT Collaboration Agreement for the management of the risks arising from taking on additional staff be used as part of the planning support collaboration agreement to manage the risks of becoming the employer for this service.

Reasons for Decision

Choosing a single employer for the planning support shared service will deliver the significant benefit of providing one clear reporting line for the service. This will ensure that the staffing budget for the service is in one place and that all staff will be treated equally in relation to training opportunities, equipment provided, etc. The principle of having a single employer was established in the report to the Tri-Cabinet meeting on 12 June 2013 where the decision on choice of employer was delegated to Chief Executives.

Currently, the staff impacted by entering a shared service are split across three employers, each with its own appraisal system, corporate requirements and policies which is a significantly inefficient environment for managing staff.

One of the aims of a shared service is to bring the staff together as a single service providing the same service outcomes to its three customers. By bringing the staff together rather than remaining with their current employers enables a single culture for Mid Kent to be more easily embedded. The service levels for the three authorities will be set out in Service Level Agreements that will form part of the Collaboration Agreement (as schedules to it) underpinning the service. A shared service board with representatives from each authority will have operational strategy of the shared service and will define amendments to the service levels as part of service planning going forwards and to respond to national and local changes.

As the service will be located in Maidstone and the Mid Kent Planning Support team will be line managed through the Maidstone structure it is recommended that Maidstone be chosen as the employer for the service.

Following transfer it will be necessary to review the staffing requirements for delivering the new requirements of a remote shared service. The three authorities also provide different levels of service and functions for their planning authorities. In order to achieve the key benefit of resilience staff will have to cover each other within the team and this will involve staff picking up new technical skills and taking on additional responsibilities.

Staff have been consulted on the changes and proposals to planning support, with the consultation ending on 12 February 2014. The consultation was carried out on the basis that Maidstone would be agreed as the employer for the service. Because of this the consultation for TUPE took place at the same time as the re-structure consultation.

Depending on the outcome of the transfer of staff as it relates to individuals it is estimated that Maidstone will become the employer for approximately 20 additional staff, with an approximate extra salary cost of £530k which will be funded by Swale and Tunbridge Wells through the shared service arrangements.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

It could be decided to retain staff with their existing employers but this is not recommended for the reasons outlined above.

Background Papers

None

<p>Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call in form signed by any two Non-Executive Members to the Head of Policy and Communications by: 5 March 2014</p>
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