

# **Pre-Scrutiny questions and answers on reports being considered by Overview & Scrutiny and Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committees on 2 and 3 November 2021**

## **6/7. Update on Joint Work with SDC**

### Questions asked by Councillor Syson

In the Programme Risk Register PR006 it mentions the "Programme Management Office established to track and monitor delivery of the programme" - can you tell me a bit more about this please. Is it a joint office?

### Response from Chief Executive:

It is a joint team. We have jointly appointed a team of two people – Tim Oruye and Tina Brain. They are on contracts to 2024 to oversee and manage the various workstreams involved.

Under PR006 it talks about "Transformational funding will be required to fund additional Council Staff posts to manage the change. This has been initially agreed at £200k annually for a 3-year period and will be monitored by the programme board." Is this £200,000 from WDC or shared between the authorities?

### Response from Chief Executive:

It is £100k a year for WDC and SDC – so its shared.

PR007 The Risk is described as "Newly formed teams and organisational cultures are not fully integrated."

The existing controls are described as "A communications strategy and plan should be produced explaining the transition process and the operating principles of the new authority."

The implication is that this has not yet been produced. Have we a timescale for when it will be?

### Response from Chief Executive:

Yes, we have just reviewed the first draft strategy which will come to JASG for consideration at its next meeting and an action plan will be worked up thereafter.

PR012 The risk is described as "The Grading Review as part of this process may result in potential extra costs due to some posts being uplifted and others being protected."

I know that it was recently raised, with concern, at the Employment Committee that it appeared that staff in the 2 authorities doing the same work were being paid different salaries, that there were potential extra costs involved, and by implication that the proposed savings of joint working would not be quite as great as first thought. Are staff aware of the grading review and what the implications/ safeguards are? How large are the potential extra costs likely to be?

### Response from Chief Executive:

We are only at the first stages of scoping this work and reviewing options, so it is too early to discuss this with staff. It is a complex piece of work and requires thorough considerations of all factors including any cost

implications. We will be discussing this with Unison/staff and relevant Council Committees at both SDC/WDC as we progress. However, at Employment Committee the issue was raised and responded to. The report in December will give a high-level cost implication if indeed there is one. It is though only when we have the detailed service integration plans that we will know of the precise cost implications if there are indeed any.