
A Proposed Shared Emergency Planning Service

Committee considering report:	Executive on 16 February 2017
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Marcus Franks
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	2 February 2017
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Forward Plan Ref:	EX3232

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To set out a proposal for a Shared Emergency Planning Service across Berkshire.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The six unitary authorities in Berkshire set up a shared Emergency Planning Service through delegation to West Berkshire Council to act as a lead authority. A collaboration agreement between the six unitary authorities will set out what will be provided by the lead authority to others. It is intended that the governance under the agreement would be through the Berkshire Chief Executives' Group.
- 2.2 The Shared Service will provide Emergency Planning, Business Continuity Planning and Out of Hours Coordination (where appropriate), to all six unitary authorities.
- 2.3 A Joint Team of 5 fte is established. The Team Manager will be based in the Lead Authority. 2 teams of 2 fte will be based in Berkshire West and Berkshire East. It is proposed that no fixed base is established. The Team Manager will be responsible for deciding on work locations in liaison with the six unitary authorities.
- 2.4 The budget for the service is set in the first year at £371k and apportioned to each unitary authority as an annual payment as follows;
- | | |
|--------------------|------|
| Bracknell Forest - | £45k |
| Reading - | £65k |
| RBWM - | £71k |
| Slough - | £48k |
| West Berkshire - | £82k |
| Wokingham - | £60k |
- 2.5 Permanent staff would TUPE to the Lead Authority on their existing terms and conditions and will be slotted into the staffing structure set out in this report where appropriate. Vacancies will be filled through internal/external recruitment where required. Subject to Executive approval in all six unitary authorities, the Service will commence on 1st October 2017.

Implications

- 2.6 **Financial:** The proposal is largely based on improved resilience and on creating a function which it is felt is better managed at a County level. Savings have therefore not been the driver, although the proposal set out in this Paper will deliver an annual saving of £7k to West Berkshire Council (8% of the budget).
- 2.7 **Policy:** There are no policy implications for the Council. It should be noted that the proposal is for West Berkshire Council to act as the lead authority.
- 2.8 **Personnel:** If approved, up to three staff may be transferred under TUPE to West Berkshire Council.
- 2.9 **Legal:** The powers to share services arise from Sections 101 and 102 Local Government Act 1972 and Sections 9EA and 9EB Local Government Act 2000 (as amended) for executive functions. The legislation is supplemented by the Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012/1019. These Regulations specify who is authorised to agree the shared services arrangements.
- Inter authority collaboration agreement will need to be put in place and agreed between the six authorities prior to the new shared service starting to set out what will be provided by the lead authority to others. Please note that the Councils may have to consider procurement rules if the arrangements look like a contract for services or where there is a subsequent assignment/sub-contracting of the service.
- 2.10 **Risk Management:** The new Shared Service will operate at a lower cost and with fewer staff. The new model will bring greater resilience, improved efficiency and should provide stronger leadership at a County level. There will however no longer be a dedicated emergency planning resource to each Authority. Resources will be deployed to where they are needed.
- 2.11 **Property:** None.
- 2.12 **Other:** None.

3. Other options considered

- 3.1 Retention of the status quo. This has been used as the basis for testing the Business Case which has been developed by BGG Associates.

4. Executive Summary

Introduction

- 4.1 This Paper sets out a proposed Shared Service for Emergency Planning across Berkshire. It builds on a detailed business case that was prepared by BGG Associates in 2015 which at the time found favour with only 4 of the 6 authorities. Since then significant resilience issues have emerged and the business case has been revisited. The new proposal is being put forward with a 8% cost reduction on that produced originally by BGG (over the entire County). The underlying framework for the Shared Service is little changed.

Background

- 4.2 The Emergency Planning arrangements in Berkshire have remained largely unchanged since they were established in 1998. Each unitary authority has its own dedicated resource with informal joint working being established through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which is reviewed annually. Over time the staffing resources devoted to the function have diminished. This has created resilience issues and undermined the MOU. This has led to renewed interest in a potential Shared Service.
- 4.3 The business case, prepared by BGG Associates, highlighted the following concerns with the current arrangement;
- (1) over reliance on one or two individuals with some authorities relying on others to do jointly agreed work;
 - (2) no managerial resource to drive change and improvement;
 - (3) no career structure;
 - (4) multiple points of contact with key partners leading to inefficiency.

Proposal

- 5.4 The proposed Shared Service would be based on the Lead Authority model, comprising of 5 FTE with a team in Berkshire East and one in Berkshire West. The manager would be based in the Lead Authority which is proposed to be West Berkshire. Under this proposal the Lead Authority would be responsible for the shared services i.e. Emergency Planning, Business Continuity and Out of Hours Coordination. An agreement would take form of a collaboration agreement and Governance would be through the Berkshire Chief Executives' Group.
- 5.5 The budget for the Shared Service would be around 7-10% less than the current cost. The contribution to be made by each unitary authority would be based on a combination of population share and inherent risk. These are detailed in the report. If approved by all six unitary authorities, a tentative start date of 1st October 2017 has been proposed.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The proposal for a Shared Service for Emergency Planning across Berkshire has been put forward on two occasions and rejected. Resilience issues have prompted a third attempt and it is this proposal which is put forward in this Paper. Significant

savings have never been a realistic prospect although this Paper proposes an 8% reduction in the current costs. The main driver behind this proposal is improved effectiveness through being able to allocate resources more effectively to where they are needed, reducing duplication of effort and providing more effective leadership across the county.

6. Appendices

- 6.1 Appendix A - Supporting Information
- 6.2 Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment