
Organisational Change Policy

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils





Change Record

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1 Vision and Values

Our Vision

We are customer focused and approachable. We are honest and open and are committed to providing high quality cost-effective public services.

Our Values



Working Together

We are a committed professional team, who embrace change and help one another improve



People and Planet

We care about each other and the environment we share



Respect

We act with integrity, and champion diversity and inclusivity



Accountability

We take ownership, do what we say, strive for clarity and welcome feedback



Approachability

We are open, honest and accessible



2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose

This document outlines the councils' policy and procedure for dealing with organisational change, including arrangements for re-deployment in the event of a redundancy situation.

2.2 Scope

This Policy applies to all permanent and temporary employees of the councils excluding Contractors/Agency Workers who are the employees of third parties.

The councils reserve the right to revise, withdraw or replace policies at any time and to introduce new policies from time to time to reflect the changing needs of the councils.

This policy document supersedes any existing or alternative policies, agreements or arrangements relating to the organisational change at the councils.

When implementing any organisational change reasonable adjustments relating to any disability that are declared or known to exist, must be considered, and adjustments made for the relevant employee.

2.3 Contractual Status

This policy does not form part of your contract of employment. The councils are entitled to introduce minor and non-fundamental changes to this policy by notifying you of these changes in writing. The councils will consult with UNISON (on behalf of all employees as part of the collective agreement) on any major changes to the policy.

2.4 Relevant legislation

- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Trade Unions & Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992
- Data Protection Act 2018



2.5 Alternative formats

Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Equalities Team if you would like this policy in an alternative format, via: equalities@southandvale.gov.uk



3 Policy

3.1 Overview

The councils recognise that we have a duty to deliver services in the most cost-effective, efficient way as possible and need to remain responsive and flexible in the way services are organised.

Where this results in a need to make changes to our organisational structures, working practices and staffing demands, the councils will do so in a way that is fair, consistent, equitable, and transparent following ACAS (The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) guidance and in consultation with Unison as part of the agreed collective agreement.

Organisational change may impact individuals or teams in several ways:

- the removal of existing posts
- the introduction of new posts
- changed duties or responsibilities and/or conditions of service.
- changed existing internal work organisation, accountability or reporting arrangements or service structure.
- the introduction of significant new technology, management systems etc
- the permanent transfer of employees to another organisation, covered by TUPE legislation.

The councils will seek to minimise the need to make employees redundant by careful management and planning of services. Where redundancies are proposed the councils will consult with UNISON and employees who may be impacted by the proposals. For further information see the councils' Redundancy Policy.



3.2 Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of this policy and the supporting procedures explain the principles of effective organisational change and provide tools and guidance to ensure change is undertaken and embedded successfully. Managed effectively organisational change will:

- follow a fair, consistent, transparent, and equitable process.
- minimise any concerns experienced by those affected by the proposed changes.
- provide clear communication and rationale detailing the changes proposed.
- include meaningful consultation with the employees affected by the proposals, UNISON, and other relevant stakeholders in the event of major changes.
- communicate a clear timescale for the organisational change programme and ensure that the process is clear and understood by all relevant parties.
- actively encourage employee engagement

The term 'organisational change' encompasses a wide range of circumstances including changes to individual positions, reorganising a service's staffing structure, reductions in staffing numbers and the closure or merger of services. Organisational change can range from a council wide programme to a review of the way a service is delivered or structured.

3.3 Planning for organisational change

When considering an organisational change, a methodical approach will be taken to reviewing the service requirements and to planning for the organisational change programme. Managers should discuss any proposals with the Strategic HR Business Partner team, who will consult with UNISON to ensure clarity on the purpose, scope, and impact of any organisational change programme.

The time required to progress proposed changes will vary depending on whether the proposed changes are minor or major (see sections 4 and 5 below). Managers should ensure they allow adequate time and resource to implement changes and factor this into any proposed implementation dates. Effective planning at the beginning is vital to ensure an effective consultation and to make any change as smooth as possible which will help ensure employee wellbeing impacts are considered.

Key elements to consider as part of the planning exercise include:

- What are you hoping to achieve by the proposed changes?
- Is this the right approach?
- Have other options been considered? If so, what were they and what was the outcome?



- How does this fit with strategic direction of the service area and the councils?
- Who would be directly or indirectly affected by the proposed changes?
- How will the impact of a period of uncertainty on our customers and communities be minimised?
- How can we ensure employees and others affected are informed and have the opportunity to be involved in the organisational change programme?
- Should other areas and external parties such as clients and partners be involved?
- What are the potential impacts on other service areas?
- Timing of the consultation
- How and when will you consult meaningfully with the recognised trade union?
- How to communicate change to those affected, especially where they are not at work (e.g. sickness) or are seconded into other areas of the council.
- Assessing the equality impacts and how these can be mitigated to avoid discrimination.

Please refer to [appendix 1](#) for a change management planning template.

3.4 Roles and Responsibilities

Head of Service and Senior Managers in the service are responsible for the proposed change.

The Head of Service and their Senior Managers are responsible for initiating, planning, consulting with key stakeholders and employees and implementing organisational change. They must also consider the implications of proposals on service delivery, the wider team, other teams within the council and to take the necessary steps to ensure continuity of service after reorganisation.

Early engagement with Managers and Team Leaders is vital to ensure there is a clear rationale for the proposals. Depending on the nature of the proposals it may not be possible to engage line managers but where possible this should be done at the earliest opportunity as they are most likely to get questions from the staff and be involved in consultation meetings.

Heads of Service are responsible for the effective implementation of this policy within their service areas.

Employees

To consider the implications of the proposals for themselves as individuals and in terms of service delivery and to make comments, ask questions and suggest alternative options as appropriate.



UNISON

Managers need to consult with Strategic HR Business Partner Team and there will be genuine, meaningful, and timely consultation with UNISON, regarding all changes within the scope of this policy. UNISON will provide advice and support to their members. UNISON play a vital role in supporting the councils as both a critical friend and when supporting individual members.

Strategic HR Business Partner Team

Responsible for ensuring that the Policy and Procedure is applied consistently and fairly across the councils, assisting with the planning and implementation of the consultation, whilst working collaboratively throughout the change process.

3.5 Approval

The person responsible for the proposed change should work with their Strategic HR Business Partner to complete the organisational change proposal. This will need to be reviewed and approved by the Strategic HR Business Partner Lead or People and Culture Manager, and the appropriate Head of Service before submitting to Senior Management Team (SMT) for review in order for the Head of Paid Service to approve.

SMT will only consider a submission when the full Organisational Change Proposal has been presented.

It is important that any proposal has a clear rationale for the change, a timetable and any related job descriptions prepared, and new/ changed posts evaluated (where required) before starting consultation.



4 Minor Change

Minor changes are those which form part of day-to-day management and do not materially affect an employee's terms and conditions. Examples include (but are not limited to) a change of job title, minor amendments to the job profile, a change of line management, service area, or change of title of the department, service, or team.

To adapt to changing requirements, it is likely that from time to time, the councils will need to make changes to roles, responsibilities and/or working practices. Employees are expected to accept reasonable changes appropriate to the level of their post. Where changes are required, the reasons for these will be discussed with employees and they will be given the opportunity to state their views and suggest any alternative solutions.

Affected employees will be given reasonable notice of the implementation of any change and supported, as far as practical, to adapt to new ways of working.

Managers should carefully consider the impact of minor changes on employees e.g., well-being, caring responsibilities and on their learning and development needs and seek advice from the Strategic HR Business Partner Team as necessary. Additional support is available from the Organisational Development Advisor and Equalities and Wellbeing Advisors. In addition to the above, managers should consider all health and safety implications and ensure all systems and processes including job specific training, information and supervision is adequately provided.

Please see [appendix 2](#) for further guidance and principles in relation to managing change.



5 Major change

Examples of major change include department, service or team restructures, changes to terms and conditions of employment (which may include relocating employees e.g. new office or site) and significant changes to working practices (usually more than 30% change). All these changes, which may represent a substantial change to an employee's terms and conditions or an increase or reduction in work, necessitate formal consultation. If a major change is planned the following steps should be followed:

- cost analysis
- engagement and communication- it is recommended to devise a communication plan.
- early engagement with UNISON
- planning- including reviewing job descriptions, considering impact on other service areas.
- writing the action plan- a detailed timetable is recommended.
- briefing/training for those who will support the consultation.
- formal consultation
- consideration of counter proposals and response to suggestions by staff and UNISON
- final sign off from SMT at end of consultation
- implementation
- seeking to avoid or minimise redundancies where applicable and identify those potentially at risk.
- review of process (lessons learnt)

5.1 Formal consultation

Where major changes are proposed the councils will formally consult with all individuals affected by the proposals. The formal consultation process will be through a mixture of collective (group) meetings and individual (1:1) consultation meetings. Individuals affected by minor changes will have informal discussions either with their line manager or change manager.

The purpose of consultation is to share details of proposed changes and to ensure that employees fully understand the proposed business changes, the rationale and what the changes mean to them. Consultation also allows employees to have an opportunity to provide their feedback on the proposals and to make alternative suggestions for consideration.



Employees on periods of leave (i.e., maternity leave, sickness absence) need to be consulted with, as do employees in a secondment role where their substantive post and service may be affected by the proposed change.

Formal consultations will last for a period of 6 weeks. This may be longer if required and may be shortened with agreement from all parties. UNISON is available for members to consult with and seek support from throughout the process.

Within the 6-week consultation period there will be a period of time, which will be confirmed at the start of the consultation, where employees affected by the changes can give feedback on the proposals and put forward any suggestions or alternative options to the proposals originally set out. Feedback will be considered by the Head of Service and proposals **may** be amended as a result. In this case updates to the proposal will be shared with employees and discussed further at the formal consultation meetings.

At the end of the consultation period and after considering feedback on the proposals the Head of Service will take the final proposals to SMT for sign off where changes have been made through the consultation. Once approved the decision will be shared with those employees affected by the agreed changes and the structure will be confirmed as going ahead, it will no longer be a proposal at this stage. The consultation period will continue after this point, during which further individual consultation meetings will take place and any necessary selection processes (for posts in the new structure). The process will be concluded within the remainder of the 6-week consultation period. Where required, this period may be extended.

5.2 Filling posts in a new structure

As soon as possible after a formal decision to create new posts or to change posts is taken, the manager, with support from the Strategic HR Business Partner, will identify which of the following applies to each employee in the team:

- the post moves unchanged to a different team or service.
- the post has changed but not substantially.
- the post has changed substantially, and the post holder requests to be redeployed into a new post.



- the post has changed substantially, and the post holder does not request to be redeployed into a new post.

Depending on the circumstances of each situation, the Strategic HR Business Partner and the manager will seek to minimise compulsory redundancies where possible.

5.3 Assimilation

Where a post in the new structure is the same or substantially the same as the existing post, and where there is no other employee at risk who could be regarded as a suitable candidate, then the employee should be slotted into the job automatically, i.e., assimilated to the new post without the need for an interview.

Ordinarily this will involve the employee being assimilated into a post on the same grade. On occasions assimilation may occur to a post one grade higher or lower (and if the salary is lower, this would be protected for 18 months – see section [5.7](#)) Posts more than one grade higher or lower will not be available for assimilation and will be dealt with under the redeployment process- see section [5.4](#) below.

If there are more employees than suitable posts in a new structure and the manager, in consultation with Strategic HR, feels that more than one employee at risk of redundancy could be assimilated into a post, these would be ring-fenced for a recruitment selection process.

Employees assimilated into a new post will receive this in writing from the Strategic HR Business Partner team and any salary protection will commence from the date they start in the new post. (see section [5.7](#))

5.4 Redeployment

Redeployment may be offered in the event that an employee's post ceases to exist or changes substantially and a suitable alternative role is identified. Suitable alternative roles may include secondments/fixed term roles within the council. Employees securing posts through this process will be consulted with and receive written confirmation.

If suitable alternative employment is identified, the employee will be redeployed into this role.

Where more than one employee is at risk of redundancy and could be redeployed into a post, the role would be ring-fenced to those individuals and a recruitment selection process would be applied.



If an employee is redeployed the consultation process will cease, and the employee will no longer be 'at risk' of redundancy. If the employee, then chooses to leave the role or councils then no redundancy payment is applicable and contractual notice period will be required.

Should a suitable alternative role not be identified for an employee during the consultation period, then the employee will continue to be 'at risk' of redundancy. See the Redundancy Policy for more information.

If a suitable alternative is not identified during the consultation period and the employee is not successful in being redeployed into a new post, then they will be given written notice of redundancy. At this point the employee will have priority status when applying for vacancies within the councils, in line with the process outlined in the councils Redundancy Policy (see the councils Redundancy Policy Section 3.11)

If a suitable alternative post is identified for an employee and they choose not to take this role, then redundancy would not be applicable. A suitable alternative will usually be a role that is similar in grade, work, and skills to the current role. See the Redundancy Policy for more information.



5.5 Supernumerary posts

In exceptional circumstances consideration will be given to redeployment into a supernumerary position (this is a post that is not on the establishment and is not expected to be a permanent requirement) where a suitable vacancy does not exist but can be anticipated within the following six months.

During any supernumerary period, the affected employee will carry out such roles the councils deem appropriate, whilst taking account of their skills and experience.

In the event that the anticipated supernumerary period doesn't continue or ends early, then the process will revert back to 'at risk' and consultation processes being applied.

5.6 Trial periods

In some circumstances an employee may be entitled to a trial period in a new role, see section 2.12 of the Redundancy Policy.

5.7 Salary protection

Salary protection applies where an employee who has been given formal notice of redundancy is redeployed into a role which is a lower grade than their current role. Pay protection would not apply where an employee chooses to apply for and secures a new role whilst consultation is still ongoing. Whilst employees are "at risk" of redundancy, (i.e. the point they are notified at the start of a formal consultation their role may be redundant), salary protection does not apply. It only applies at the point notice of redundancy has been confirmed formally in writing.

When posts are downgraded, or employees are redeployed into lower grade posts, the employee will receive salary protection for 18 months from the date of starting in that post, as long as they remain in that post (i.e. do not **choose** to apply for another role in the council during that 18 month pay protection period. If they were to be redeployed for a second time a new period of pay protection would commence).

Salary at that time of redeployment will be protected and the employee will not receive pay increments until such time that the salary for the role is equal to, or more than, their protected salary. They will still receive any annual pay award. Any periods of salary protection are inclusive of any periods of contractual notice which may apply.



After 18 months of salary protection the employee will be placed at the top of the correct grade for the post.



6 Equalities

6.0 Equality Statement

We aspire to create an environment where everybody belongs and has a voice that will be heard. We will embrace our differences, the unique talents, beliefs, backgrounds, and abilities of all our staff and residents. Together we will make a positive difference.

In the event of organisational change, the manager will work alongside the Strategic HR Business Partner and the Equalities & Wellbeing Officer to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment.



7 Glossary of Terms

At risk- the period where employees are notified at the beginning of a consultation that their role may be “at risk” of redundancy (as required by legislation) but their role is not confirmed as redundant.

Priority status- once employees are given formal written notice of redundancy, they are entitled to view any potential vacancies within the organisation for three working days ahead of the vacancies being released more widely and can express an interest in the role. If they express an interest in the role during the priority period, the vacancy will be put on hold until a conversation has taken place between the at risk employee and the recruiting manager to assess whether the vacancy is suitable (the employee must meet essential criteria and be able to satisfy recruiting manager they are capable of performing the role with minimal training/induction during the trial period).

Trial Period- a trial period of at least 4 weeks will apply where an employee is redeployed into a new role as an alternative to redundancy. The trial period will be used to give the manager time to train the employee in obtaining the skills and knowledge to develop into the post. Trial periods only apply where an employee has received formal notice of redundancy not during any “at risk period”.

Salary protection- this applies where an employee is redeployed, or their role is downgraded following a consultation period. The employees pay is protected for a period of 18 months. At the end of the period the employee will move to the top of the scale of the redeployed role. Increments related to their previous role will not apply during the salary protection period, but cost of living increases will apply. Salary protection only applies where an employee has received notice of redundancy not during any “at risk period”.

Notice of redundancy- the point at which an employee is notified their role will be redundant (rather than potentially redundant/at risk)

Assimilation- this is when a role is being deleted from the structure and there is a suitable alternative (the same or substantially the same as their current role) in the new structure which is ringfenced to an individual as they are the **only** suitable person for the role. The employee automatically moves across without a need for an interview. Usually this would be a role that is no more than one grade higher or lower than their existing role. Salary protection would apply where the role is a lower grade.

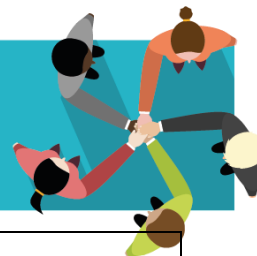


Appendix 1 – Change process planning template.

The starting point and focus of successful change planning is having a clear vision about what the scope and impacts of the future changed state will be. If the change vision is not clear or shared, commitment is unlikely, and change efforts will be short-lived. Further, without a clear vision, change efforts can easily dissolve into a list of confusing tasks, directives and sometimes incompatible projects that can take the organisation in the wrong direction or nowhere at all.

The vision should provide a clear overview so it is clear what the process is seeking to achieve, and brings everything together, showing where individual projects and initiatives fit into the big picture (for example redesigning the service are to meet customer needs whilst looking for opportunities to improve ways of working and implement new technology to streamline processes and utilise the customer service team to handle queries) . Please see below which will help teams plan organisational change.

Name of project:	
Project lead:	
Start date:	
Target end date:	
The solution:	
This section should provide a detailed description of what the change project will deliver and how this will be delivered, outlining the key elements of the change project.	
Tasks:	
This section should identify the tasks that need to be completed to achieve the change.	
Timescales:	
This section should set out realistic timescales for the different stages of implementation of the change and communication about the change.	
Costs:	
This section should calculate the cost of each aspect of the change project. The change team should involve the finance team in creating a costs model – essentially a budget – for the planned change. (to include any other associated costs such as changes to benefits, additional support staff in other areas, oncosts, etc)	
Technology/Equipment (i.e., new equipment, uniforms, PPE, software, or systems needed):	
This section should identify any changes in technology.	



Human impact:
This section should identify the potential impact of the change on the workforce, for example redundancies or a change in job roles or work processes and take this into account in the communications about the change.
Equalities impact:
In the event of organisational change, the change manager will work alongside Strategic HR and the Equalities Officer to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment.
Health & Safety impact:
For example, this should identify the potential H&S impact e.g., training, information, and supervision.
Change Team:
This section should identify the people who will be involved in delivering the change project and their role.
Key deliverables and milestones:
This section should outline the key milestones and key deliverables (items that will be delivered as part of the project) that are critical to the success of the project.
Risks and dependencies:
This section should outline the key risks and dependencies (other processes, systems, Services, and departments that could be affected by the change, i.e., increased customer calls) that may impact the delivery of the change project.
Legal / finance / environmental implications:
If there are any legal, financial, or environmental implication please detail here.
Governance:
This section should cover the governance of the change project, i.e., how it will be overseen to track and review progress against the project plan. It should set out the action that should be taken if the change project falls behind schedule or goes beyond budget, or if there is a deviation from the original plan, for example something comes into scope and changes the plan and cost model.
Approval:
Head of Service:
SMT:
Member / Portfolio approval required (If required):



Appendix 2 – Principles for change

Change processes, when managed well can enhance employee engagement and job satisfaction, therefore it is important to carefully plan and consider the approach to ensure staff are fully informed and continue to feel valued throughout.

The following principles should be discussed and agreed at planning stage which will assist in ensuring change is successful and staff remain engaged.

- Complete change process planning template (as per [appendix 1](#))
- Work with Strategic HR Business Partner to develop a list of staff who are impacted by the change, and how the change may affect them.
- Consider how any changes to staffing numbers, structures, roles or ways of working may result in health and safety implications and work to minimise the risks and carry out new risk assessments in consultation with the H&S team where necessary (e.g. reducing to team of one carrying out role will create a single point of failure and lone working conditions, are staff trained to the tasks being reassigned to them as part of the change in roles)
- If new jobs are being created, develop job descriptions, and send to job evaluation team so that grades of posts are confirmed prior to consultation.
- Work with Strategic HR Business Partner & finance to understand the financial implications of the proposed changes.
- Complete an Equality Impact Assessment form.
- Submit planning detail to Head of Service and SMT for approval.
- Discuss and consult with UNISON regarding the proposed change.
- Produce a Consultation document/action plan and create FAQs where applicable (include Communications team and consider creating a communication plan to inform the wider organisation of proposed changes once staff consultation is underway)
- Plan meeting guides to ensure consistency across consultation meetings.
- Consider timing of consultation – will it cross over key work peaks and/or holiday periods.
- Provide training and briefing for Managers and team leaders involved in the process or who may receive feedback and questions from staff.
- Inform staff and teams of the proposed changes and how this will impact them including details of the change process. If staff are at risk of redundancy timetable the meetings and messages. Staff at risk should be told individually and before the wider team discussion.
- Confirm details of the proposed changes in writing to those affected by the changes.
- Arrange group meetings to explain proposal and begin formal consultation period.



- Arrange 1-2-1 consultation meetings with employees directly affected.
- Allow time for team members to ask questions and offer suggestions.
- Be available to answer any questions or queries throughout consultation period.
- Change Team to consider any suggestions or counter proposals that may have been proposed by affected team members.
- Change Team to inform Head of Service / SMT if there are any amendments to the initial proposal and seek approval to change if required.
- Confirm final decision to affected staff and confirm in writing.
- Update HR and payroll of changes so new contracts and or letters can be issued.
- Carry out a lessons learnt exercise.