

JSCC Discussion Paper – Supporting employees through change

People are at the centre of many changes in the workplace, and the Local Government workforce face a significant change in the coming years – Local Government reorganisation (LGR). Recognising that change is challenging and appreciating the impact it will have on employees, the Council has taken steps in beginning to prepare.

Communication and Employee voice

Clear, timely and transparent communication is essential to effective change management. At the 2025 Staff Event, employees received an update on LGR progress and participated in a Q&A session with the Leadership Team. Ongoing updates are provided through staff briefings, email, FAQ sets, the staff magazine and the intranet, and engaged with employees through the first LGR staff survey. These communication channels will continue, with further engagement opportunities currently being developed.

Engagement with Regional and Branch Trade Union colleagues has commenced and will remain in place throughout the process. The Staff Consultation Forum will also receive regular updates.

Developing skills & wellbeing

At the Staff Event, we delivered a dedicated resilience session for all staff, marking the start of our structured approach to supporting wellbeing during this period of uncertainty. This session focused on coping strategies, stress management, and maintaining a positive mindset, reinforcing our commitment to staff wellbeing as organisational changes unfold, this was then re-iterated in the monthly staff magazine ensuring that all staff had access to the resources provided.

Our Personal Development Mornings have provided further opportunities for staff to focus on growth and adaptability. These mornings have been used for CPD activities, e-learning, and skills-based webinars, as well as IT bitesize learning sessions to enhance digital confidence. They also offer time for reflection and professional development, ensuring staff can build the capabilities needed for a changing environment.

Looking ahead, we will continue to deliver targeted workshops on resilience, change readiness, and wellbeing. Planned sessions will include practical tools for managing uncertainty, maintaining productivity, and supporting mental health.

Some of the LGR Reserve that we are looking to create as part of the 2026/27 budget is for training and development. This seeks to give our staff the opportunity to develop their

skills to get the best possible chance of getting the role that they want at the end of LGR. It is hoped that this helps empower staff, so that they be part of the change process.

Leadership and management

Managers at all levels play a key role in change management; they engage with employees on a day-to-day basis and ensure that individual impacts and emotions are supported and addressed at an early stage. Managers support the translation of what LGR means for the individual.

Open communication and transparency have a positive impact on change, increase engagement and build trust and at this stage, this can mean a response of 'we don't know yet'.

Our Senior Management Group have attended training to embed change management principles at leadership level. Through a targeted session, SMG explored change models to support them in leading teams through transition, re-iterating the message that change impacts people in different ways, and encouraging fostering open communication and modelling resilience.

Moving forward, skills development for managers will continue, we will ensure managers are aligned with key messages and we are updating our Regular Performance Review framework to support conversations about future careers and development with an LGR focus/ future skills focus.

Process & capacity

A clear and proper HR process and timeline for change is another key area which will be developed by our LGR workforce workstream and communicated when known.

It's acknowledged that LGR will significantly impact workloads across the Council and increased capacity is being considered. Large scale change risks increased turnover and difficulty in recruiting which would further impact capacity issues and these measures will be monitored throughout.

We seek the Committee's view on ideas of what else we can do to support our staff through this change.