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**Officers across Dorset’s councils have begun to leave**

Shadow authorities managing the councils’ transitions have begun work on determining which of its employees will be made redundant as part of efficiencies identified as a key reason for the mergers.

However, the full cost of the work has yet to be established with council officers overseeing the work saying that it will not be known until later this year.

Although staffing work is still at an early stage, several high-ranking members of staff have left jobs at the councils. Among them are Bournemouth council’s head of planning, Andrew England, and Ian Kalra, the council’s head of transportation services.

At Dorset County Council, the director of highways and emergency planning, Andrew Martin, is to leave while its chief executive, Debbie Ward, missed out on securing the top job at either of the two new authorities.

The case for local government reorganisation in Dorset estimated that 450 jobs would be cut, with the majority being senior positions as part of cost-cutting work involved with the merger process. Staff redundancies were a key aspect of the move to combine the three councils with the merger making some roles redundant.

As is the case in business mergers, council officers have been putting together TUPE (transfer of undertakings (protection of employment) lists to determine which roles will be kept within the new council and covering those staff members’ contract transfers.

Speaking at Thursday’s meeting of the shadow authority’s overview and scrutiny committee, local government reorganisation programme director, Julian Osgathorpe, said: “TUPE lists have been made available anonymously to staff and delivery board chairmen who are working with HR on the next steps.”

Following the recommendation of Graham Farrant to the £180,000-a-year chief executive role, work is now focused on appointing people to the ‘tier two’ department director positions.

A provisional £1.5m budget has been allocated for redundancies however, Mr Osgathorpe added that the full cost will not be known until later this year. As a result, the full costs are excluded from an £8m funding request made to the existing three councils to cover the cost of transition work being undertaken by the shadow authority.

Restructuring and redundancy costs are one of the three ‘most significant’ areas of cost for local government reorganisation identified in a report to the shadow executive committee.

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