

# Delivering Reorganisation

## Presentation 1

Shaun Field, Chief Executive and Director of Commercial Services  
Bedford **Borough** Council



## Presentation 1

- Everything is going fine
- Everyone is happy
- Everyone is co-operating
- On target
- On time
- Great support from Government Departments



## Presentation 1

- I also believe in fairies at the bottom of the garden, Father Christmas and the Easter Bunny
- Finally I'd really like to thank Government for making me apply for my own job



# Delivering Reorganisation

## Presentation 2

Shaun Field, Chief Executive and Director of Commercial Services  
Bedford **Borough** Council



## Scene Setting

- Local government White Paper published in October 2006
- Opportunities to
  - **bid for unitary status** (one council providing all services) or
  - to maintain the “status quo” and develop enhanced two-tier working arrangements”



### *Invitations to councils in England*

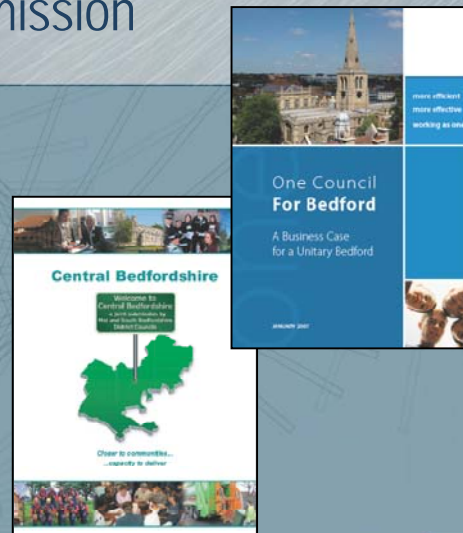
- to make proposals for future unitary structures
- to pioneer, as pathfinders, new two-tier models

## Why bid?

- Two-tier does not work well
  - Particularly true in Bedfordshire where there is a large Borough and a small county (rural vs. urban)
  - The Leadership of the county was in the south
  - In Bedfordshire all councils agreed unitary was the only solution
  - It is confusing for residents and customers
  - There are less joined visions and services
  - Policies and strategies may not be complementary, and may even be conflicting
  - Duplication of resources (building, officers, Members)
  - Costly and provides poor value for money
  - For Bedford it is “unfinished business”

## The Bedford submission

- Two unitary authorities in Bedfordshire
  - No County Council
  - A merged Mid Bedfordshire District Council and South Bedfordshire District Council
  - A Single Bedford Borough Council



## Highlights of our bid

- **Focus on the Borough** (in terms of needs and service delivery)
- **Improve education results at Key Stage 4 GCSE's**
  - Key priority for the new council
  - A determination to tackle the issue of 3 or 2 tier education structures
- **Reduce the number of elected Members to 37 (from 73)**
- **Deliver financial savings** (reduced council tax and/or increased service provision)
- **Clear single shared vision** for our area supported by residents, partners and stakeholders
- **Increases in service performance (better services)**
- **Focus on neighbourhoods and community engagement**

## What has happened? - (a dream realised or is it a nightmare?)

- Government publish a minded to decision to create a unitary Bedford Borough in July 2007
- Resubmission by Central Bedfordshire for unitary status
- Bedfordshire County Council challenge decision of the Government
- Judicial Review heard in February 2008
- Formal decision confirmed in April 2008
- New unitary council to be in place from 1 April 2009
- **12 months only to achieve this step change**



## Planning for Change

- **Our Objective**
  - As seamless a transition as possible from the current two-tier model of local government in Bedfordshire to the new unitary model
  - On day one service users notice no change, business as usual



## Planning for Change

- **Handling cultural integration and differences**
  - BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**
    - Bedford has a business-like culture to deliver services. Most, if not all key services, are delivered inhouse
    - We are assessed as an excellent VfM council (4\*)
    - We have more service PI's in the top quartile than any other council
  - BEDFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**
    - Bedfordshire County Council has a culture of outsourcing services
    - Poor outcomes from these, poor or medium VFM
    - BCC has lots more 'top down' 'transformational' and 'strategic' documents and initiatives.
      - These include lots of training days where individual and team building exercises are undertaken that include origami
  - BETTER OUTCOMES FOR THE BOROUGH**
    - BCC are focussed on the county, BBC are focussed on the Borough
    - Members are more involved even with a 'Directly Elected Mayor'



## Planning for Change

- **Our philosophy**
  - **A fair organisation**



## Planning for Change

- Our philosophy
  - A competitive organisation



## So what have been the problems?

- The scale of the task
  - Bedford has the least resource of all new unitaries; for example Shropshire has its own resources and those of the five districts being abolished; Northumberland County Council has its own resources and those of seven districts
  - Bedford is moving from a £85 million per annum organisation employing 1,000 staff to a £300 million per annum organisation employing 3,500 staff – some 400% BIGGER
- The problem of getting timely information
  - The difficulty of disaggregating staff from the county taking into account their own preferences of where they want to work
  - The same problem existing in some ways for existing borough employees who have to apply for their own jobs

## So what have been the problems?

- Political tensions
  - Resistance from county council members who see the Borough as instrumental in causing the abolition of the county council
  - Tensions from Borough Members as there will be less of them
- Officer Resistance
- The issue over shared services
- Sorting out IT

## Where are we?

- The senior staff structure is agreed
- Remaining structure will be agreed by end of this month
- Staff starting to be allocated to their new council
- Shared Services sorted - almost
- The budget is almost finished
- Decision on the council's financial and management systems made
- Agree to disagree on asset split but mainly sorted
- **203** days to go
- And remember all this has happened with most of our citizens not interested or unaware but they will expect their services to unaltered on Day One



Thank You

