

# Corporate Property 2020

## News for Corporate Property employees

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On 1 September we passed a major milestone as our joint ventures with Vertas and Concertus went live. Thanks to all those involved in the work to make this happen and for your continuing work as the ventures become embedded.

I also wish to be clear with you about our plans for other parts of Corporate Property and you can read more information about this.

You will also find info about a Partnership Agreement that the joint venture companies have agreed with the trade unions, Unison, GMB and Unite. This arrangement ensures that council colleagues who have moved over to the joint venture companies will continue to be supported by these trade unions.

A recent edition of Our Derbyshire included a

message from the Executive Directors thanking colleagues who have adapted to working at home. The council wants to encourage more flexible ways of working, improve the efficiency of our buildings and make sure that colleagues have the opportunity to work in a range of locations that best suit the needs of our communities, our organisation and our people.

This is important for Corporate Property as we are responsible for providing Covid safe spaces and developing the plans and strategies to provide the council the buildings it needs in the future: *smart, safe, well placed space*.

Kind regards

**Dave Massingham**  
**Director of Property**

## Other services for Vertas and Concertus?

When the council established the joint venture companies it was anticipated that in future other services would be added.

Consultation has started with colleagues who provide grounds maintenance services and subject to Cabinet approval, part of this service will transfer to Vertas on 1 November.

We are only considering 'soft landscaping' mowing services and are not transferring the tree service, landscape workshop, landscape construction or tarmac team. This is because these services work closely with colleagues within the Economy Transport and Environment department and we want to see first if there are more efficient ways of working within the council.

We had started to look at moving the disability design team to Concertus. But because of the difficulties the service has had with gaining access to houses, due to the pandemic, we have decided to keep the service in house for now.

This means there are no current plans to transfer any further services to either Vertas or Concertus.

This will be kept under review and if there is a service that would benefit from greater commercial freedoms, more flexibility, or perhaps there is opportunity to market the service to other customers then we will look at it. If that happens then there would be a minimum of three months' notice to staff and trade unions about any changes.

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## Construction

Our construction teams which includes roofing and the joiners shop have been badly affected by the pandemic. There has been a reduction in construction projects across the country, and social distancing has been particularly difficult on construction sites.

Our plans for construction had three parts:

1. For projects that cost between £10,000 and £50,000 we would continue to use small local contractors.
2. For construction projects that cost over £50,000 we planned to appoint a lead contractor and those working in the construction teams in the council would be transferred to the lead contractor in accordance with the TUPE regulations.
3. For larger projects we wanted to make greater use of framework contractors. These are contractors who have been pre-selected and can be appointed more quickly and more easily and would be in addition the lead contractor.

Because of the difficulties being experienced in the construction industry it has not been possible to appoint a lead contractor. This means all those colleagues who work in the construction teams, roofing and the joiners shop will continue to be employed by the council for the immediate future. It is important that these teams have work and our projects team and Concertus will continue to try and direct work to these teams to keep them fully employed.

Later in the year we want to put in place the framework contractors, to provide resource that our in-house teams are unable to deliver. We will keep the appointment of a lead contractor under review and if there is any change we will let you know. If we do propose any changes we will make sure we give colleagues and the unions six months' notice. It will be when negotiations have commenced with a lead contractor when issues relating to employee terms and conditions, continuation of employment, contract length, project values will be addressed.

## Vertas and Concertus Trade Unions Partnership Agreement

In August Vertas and Concertus agreed a Partnership Agreement with the three trade unions, Unison, Unite and GMB. The council's arrangements with the trade unions are not all written down and the processes around negotiation and engagement have developed over many years based on custom and practice. Local authorities are also subject to national agreements with the trade unions, for example those that have resulted in the recent pay award.

As the joint venture companies are new organisations and there is no long-term custom and practice, a new arrangement has been agreed between the company and the trade unions. This is called a Partnership Agreement. This Agreement recognises the importance of proper representation and the importance of working in partnership with trade unions to ensure and maintain effective workplace employee relations. The Agreement also covers health safety, pay negotiations, business improvement initiatives and company policies.

The Partnership Agreement will apply to any other services that are added to the Vertas and Concertus joint ventures.