

## **Service Improvement & Efficiency Committee**

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Minutes of a meeting of the **Service Improvement & Efficiency Committee** held at Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich on **14 June 2018** at **2.00 pm** when there were present:

Mr G Peck – Chairman

Mrs J K Copplestone  
Mr S Riley

Mrs L H Hempsall  
Mr D Ward

Mrs J Leggett  
Mr Whymark

Also in attendance were the Head of Corporate Resources, the Head of Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer, the Service Improvement Officer and the Committee Officer (DM).

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr C Harrison and Mr G K Nurden.

### **2 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

*Minute no: 37 – Work Programme*

With regard to the suggested workshop session to address current expectations and issues with Members ICT, it was noted that only a few issues had so far been raised. Members were urged to forward their concerns to the IT Manager. It was believed that Cllrs Harrison, Riley and J Leggett had a number of suggestions to put forward and it was agreed that these should also be sent to the IT Manager to enable him to address these issues at a future meeting.

### **3 COLLABORATIVE WORKING**

The Chairman of the Committee reported that the draft feasibility report had been considered by the Joint Lead Members Group and the Joint Lead Scrutiny Group and that the Head of Corporate Resources, the Council's Lead Officer on Collaborative Working with South Norfolk would be making a presentation to the Committee on the feasibility report. He went on to set out in detail, the background to the feasibility study, the focus areas and the recommendations as follows:

*Since the initial paper in September 2017 to both full councils, the draft report forms the culmination of 8-months work on the feasibility study undertaken jointly*

*by Members and Officers from both councils.*

### **Background approach**

- *The September 2017 paper requested officers to begin working together on the feasibility study to outline potential opportunities from a strategic collaboration between the two authorities.*
- *Working with Shared Service Architects (SSA), Joint Lead Members Group and the Joint Informal Cabinet took part in a facilitated workshop. Members agreed that they wanted to develop a **preferred partner model** – this encompasses:*
  - *Specific named partners, cross-organisational efficiencies, shared management, organisational development led, co-ownership and co-creation relationship, strong cultural alignment and interdependence.*
- *Informal Member-led groups were established to oversee and support the delivery of the programme and provide strategic direction:*
  - **Joint Informal Lead Members Group**
  - **Joint Informal Scrutiny Group**
  - **Joint Informal Cabinet**
  - **‘Quad’**
- *In November 2017, Informal Joint Cabinet and Informal Joint Lead Members agreed the scope of the feasibility study. It was agreed that the study would focus on activities that impact directly on economic and housing growth and those services that enable us to work differently in support of a joint management team – this is all alongside any early opportunities that may arise.*
- *Focus areas included:*

#### **Focus Area 1 – Enabling services to support the two-council’s strategic intent**

- *Economic Development*
- *Planning*
- *Strategic Housing*

#### **Focus Area 2– Enabling services to support transformation**

- *‘Better use of technology’ – IT/Digital*
- *HR and Organisational Development*
- *Business Improvement and Customer Intelligence/Insight*
- *Communications and Marketing*

### **Focus area 3 – Early Opportunities**

- *Potential opportunities which presented themselves for shared service working due to staff changes, external opportunities etc.*
- *Service leads from the focus areas worked jointly together through a series of workshops to develop the ideas/collaborative proposals which are included in this final feasibility report.*
- *For certain workstreams, external support was acquired which included East of England LGA (to support the HR/One Joint Officer Team workstream) and external QA support from the LGA (Kevin Dicks, CEX of Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils).*

### **Recap: Why do we want to collaborate? – our strategic drivers for working together**

- *By working more collaboratively together we want to show strong leadership of place and are committed to building a larger and more prosperous local economy.*
- *We are jointly committed to making our area one of the best places to live in the country, enabling the delivery of good quality homes that meet our residents' needs.*
- *Working more closely together on locally led initiatives will offer both councils increased capacity and resilience for the benefit of our communities, enabling us to work across a geography they can recognise and relate to.*
- *We want a local government that moves with the times and innovates. In a world where we need to do more with less, a one shared officer team partnership can make us more efficient and strengthen our hand when working with partners.*
- *Our joint aim is for two strong councils to work together with the ambition and resources to make our combined area one of the best places to live and work in the country, whilst ensuring those that rely upon us the most are not left behind.*
- *We are progressing opportunities for a shared culture, shared management and one shared officer team that represent an evolution in the way we work for the benefit of our communities. We want to retain and attract the most talented staff, offering them positive futures and career development opportunities.*

- *We will increase our ability to take advantage of commercial opportunities to deliver better value for our residents, ensuring we move with the times and innovate.*

### **Engagement**

- *In March 2018, a progress report was brought to the informal member groups and both councils. This report provided an update on the progress of the feasibility study and also outlined additional focus areas to be included in the study:*
  - *Governance, Financial Analysis, Commercial Opportunities, Partnership Working and One Joint Officer Team*
- *Informal Member and Officer Networking Events – two networking events were held during the development of the feasibility study as an opportunity for Members and senior officers to meet informally and ask questions to those directly involved in the programme of work.*
- *Staff engagement – Services leads and teams developed the proposals jointly through workshops with senior management teams from both councils. Briefings were held at key points of the programme to update and engage staff in the on-going work, Joint Staff Side/Staff Forum and Unison sessions, Development of the Shared Voice pages on our intranets, Blogs and Top Stories on intranets.*

### **Report recommendations**

*In the report there are two recommendations:*

- *The first seeks agreement to the proposals in the report (effectively agreement of the A-to-G inter-dependent elements below).*
- *The second recommendation (for South Norfolk to agree, Broadland to note) relates to the South Norfolk Constitutional requirement to formally request ceasing of the current CEX employment as and when required.*

**Recommendation 1 (includes agreement of 'a' to 'g' below):** *Broadland and South Norfolk Councils to agree the proposals set out in the feasibility report for collaborative working, forming One Joint Officer Team across the two autonomous Councils. The required interdependent elements to deliver this are set out below:*

- a.** *the routemap for delivery of the collaborative working. (Sections 9 to 19)*

- b. the deletion of both councils' current Chief Executive roles and that a new post of Joint Managing Director be created. Details of the proposed appointment to this post will be provided to the Councils in line with the timeline outlined in this report. (Sections 10.4 to 10.8)*
- c. subsequent to the appointment of a Joint Managing Director, the establishment of a joint senior management team and one joint officer team across the two autonomous councils. (Sections 10.10 to 10.12)*
- d. that the current joint management arrangements in planning continue in line with the existing 12 months interim arrangements until January 2019 and that work commences on the development of a joint planning team in accordance with the timeline as set out in the report. (Section 10.13)*
- e. the establishment of a growth delivery team to accelerate and add qualitative value to the delivery of the districts' strategic sites as set out in Appendix 4 and delegate authority to the Chief Executives in consultation with the Leaders, to establish the most appropriate operational approach and resource to establish the growth delivery team within an agreed budget.*
- f. the budget for the one joint officer team transition costs, and the other identified implementation costs. (Sections 20.33 to 20.37)*
- g. the provisional costs/savings split as set out in section 20 of this report and its accompanying principles and that responsibility to refine this cost/savings split be delegated to the S151 officers of both Councils, in consultation with the Leaders of each Council, as part of the development of budgets for 2019/20. The final decision by Members on the cost/saving split between the two councils will be made as part of the budget setting process for 2019/20. (Sections 20.16 to 20.25)*

**Recommendation 2 (South Norfolk Council approve, Broadland Council note):** *South Norfolk Council approve the ceasing of employment of the Chief Executive with the delegation of the exit arrangements, including the effective date and terms to the South Norfolk Section 151 Officer and the lead HR Business Partner, the details of which will be shared with the South Norfolk Leader and the Deputy Leader. This is in line with South Norfolk Council's Constitution and the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001. This decision is subject to a five-day objection period. (Sections 10.4 to 10.9)*

With regard to staff engagement, the Chairman commented that the lead Member from South Norfolk, Cllr K Mason-Billig had attended recent briefings with Unison and staff representatives and she reported that Unison were very much on board with the proposals, though they did have some concerns. They welcomed the potential to attract additional funding, and the potential for

improvement to services and savings but understandably had concerns about potential job losses, less favourable conditions and concerns that the decision was already made. The Chairman stated this was unfounded as the decision was still to be made and it was not the intention for the proposals to lead to less favourable conditions.

In response to a question regarding the extent of roles included within the shared “Joint Management Team”, the Head of Corporate Resources explained that the early steps to the formulation of a shared officer team included firstly the appointment of a Joint Managing Director, followed by the appointment of a Joint Senior Management Team. The newly appointed Managing Director would need to lead on the appointment of the Joint Senior Management Team and the report did not include details regarding those roles which were regarded as part of any Joint Management Team. The roles within the two authorities which would likely fall to be considered were the CE, DCE and Heads of Service at Broadland and the equivalent posts at South Norfolk, the CE, 2 Directors, Assistant Director and a number of Heads of Service. In total approximately 8 posts at Broadland and 12 posts at South Norfolk. This was underpinned by an aspiration for no compulsory redundancies given to the work force which would apply at all staffing levels. The report and recommendations gave no guarantee of no redundancies but there was no intention amongst members for them to arise from the collaborative proposal. Over the implementation period of the new structure, which could be up to 5 years, there would be a degree of natural turnover and any resulting gaps/vacancies considered accordingly. A Member raised a degree of concern about the lack of shape of the proposed Senior Management Team and the Head of Corporate Resources reiterated that the report was only seeking acceptance in principle of the proposals at this stage. The timeline for development of the new Senior Management Team was expected to be from January to June 2019. A view was expressed that this timeline was ambitious.

A Member raised a question about the staff survey and sought further details of the response rates. The responses from Broadland staff was 45% (90/203) and the South Norfolk response rate had been 17% with 53 responses.

The Head of Corporate Resources then went through his presentation (copy attached to the signed copy of these Minutes). He commented that the feasibility report was still being updated and Members asked that they be advised of any changes to the report they had already received.

With regard to the timeline for the appointment of the new Joint Managing Director, it was hoped the new post holder would be in place by January 2019. As members of the EELGA, the Association had been engaged to help with the appointment process which would help keep recruitment costs at an appropriate level. Careful preparation of the job specification would help ensure the right appointment. The appointing Committee was likely to consist of equal numbers from each Council with no casting vote ensuring agreement was reached.

With regard to savings, whilst these were not the main driver behind the proposals, it was envisaged that savings would be made, mainly from staff budgets, based on predicted turnover of staff and not filling an estimated 1 in 4 posts which would naturally become vacant over a 5 year period. Some concerns were made about the indicative savings and the Head of Corporate Resources emphasised that the report being considered was a feasibility study and not a full business case and therefore costings could only be indicative. They did include resources to support the scale of change proposed in terms of ICT/infrastructure and other costs and estimates indicated a £2.9m joint saving at year 5 off the revenue budgets and a combined total saving of £8.6m over the initial 5-year period. The two Councils would continue to operate independent budgets and draws on reserves but this would not restrict their combined ability to access new funding opportunities which would be sought via collaborative bidding.

In response to questions about the breakdown of staff turnover at both authorities by grades, and how decisions would be made about the retention of staff, the Head of Corporate Resources commented that the feasibility study did not include this level of detailed data but they were aware of the data. Whilst there was no desire to reduce front line staff, the merging of services as part of the proposals was likely to take a transformational journey involving reviewing services which could then lead to savings in redesigning services. Again, he reiterated that this level of detail was not part of the feasibility study. Part of the process of appointing the new Joint Managing Director would be the development of the reporting structure and levels of delegation as well as links between the new Director and Members. It was stressed that the Joint Lead Member Group would likely continue to oversee collaboration work into the future if approved on 12 July.

In response to a question about the planned review of Performance Related Pay by Broadland Council, it was noted that this would likely be integrated into a broader collaborative review of terms and conditions of service. Joint Governance arrangements which would underpin this were still to be discussed and developed. The two Councils would continue to be autonomous with any proposals requiring a decision of both Councils. There was a lack of detail about this in the route map in the feasibility report and the Head of Corporate Resources noted Members desire to see more detail on this if the Councils agreed to move forward.

In terms of the next stage, the Chairman reported that the updated feasibility study would be made available to all Members and staff on Friday 15 June. Anyone with any concerns or questions or needing clarification was being invited to contact himself or the Chairman of the Joint Informal Scrutiny Group and also Members of the Joint Lead Members Group, the Joint Scrutiny Group or Broadland's lead officer Stephen Fennell. The Conservative Group was holding its own group meeting to discuss the matter on 23 June.

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Members were reminded that the report would now be considered at the following meetings and that they were entitled and encouraged to attend those meetings to raise any questions / issues / concerns they might have:

BDC Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Tuesday 26 June

SNC Scrutiny Committee – Wednesday 27 June

BDC Cabinet and SNC Cabinet – Monday 2 July

BDC Council and SNC Full Councils – Thursday 12 July

Further details of the arrangements for these meetings would be circulated to Members – joint presentations open to the press and public would be held before the Cabinet and the Council meetings, for questions and answers only prior to the respective Cabinets / Councils convening to consider the report. It was anticipated that Unison / staff side would be making a submission to those meetings.

A Member raised concerns about the exit strategy having regard to the potential for either authority to want to remove itself from the process and how this would be managed and if there was a date by which there was no option to leave the arrangement. It was confirmed that there was no date by which either party could no longer leave the arrangement and that broad principles for an exit strategy had been drawn up. These were only broad principles as the detailed arrangements would be dependent on the stage at which a Council decided to leave the partnership. Reference was made to the implications for any staff engaged as part of the combined workforce if either Council withdrew from the arrangement and the Head of Corporate Resources commented that provision existed to deal with this if and when it arose.

The Chairman commended the report to Members and invited them to evaluate the proposal based on the benefits for the constituents of the two areas and not on personalities. He hoped Members would support the proposal and recommend Cabinet to support the recommendations contained in the feasibility study.

In thanking officers for the work they had undertaken in preparing the report, a Member raised concerns about recommending Cabinet to support the report. There was much indicative information in the report and many assumptions, particularly associated with the finances, and it was suggested that the Committee should, instead, just note the report at this stage as it needed further investigation and detail. Other Members were of the view that as a feasibility study, the report naturally included indicative information and it was not envisaged there would be any more detail provided before 12 July 2018. At the start of the process, it had been agreed to proceed with the development of a feasibility study and not a business case which would have taken much longer to research and prepare. The full business case would be developed once the new Joint Managing Director was in place. The Chairman reminded Members that this was an opportunity for the Council to have more



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control over its own future and increase its resilience to future imposed changes mindful of the emerging national picture for partnership working.

It was then proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED**, with 6 Members voting for, 1 against,

to **RECOMMEND** Cabinet to support the recommendations contained in the feasibility study.

*The meeting closed at 4.10 pm*