

TRANSFORMATION COMMITTEE

Date: 7 November 2018

Venue: East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

Time: 7.30pm

Present: Councillors: Helen Howell (Chairman)
Colin Wright (Vice Chairman)
David Jenney (Deputy Leader of the Council)

Tony Boto
John Farrar
Richard Gell
Roger Glithero JP

Richard Lewis
Harriet Pentland
Janet Pinnock

269. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Marian Hollomon and Steven North.

270. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman invited those who wished to do so to declare any interests in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations were made.

271. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2018 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

272. UNITARY UPDATE

The Chief Executive provided a written update on unitary developments, covering the following areas:-

- i) On 6th November 2018 Peter Bone MP had asked a question in the House of Commons regarding when the Secretary of State's unitary consultation would commence and also if the 2020 district and borough elections would need to go ahead. The minister's response had been non-committal, but it had separately been reiterated to the Secretary of State that Northamptonshire councils' desire was for him to lodge the 'negative order' that was required in order for elections for both district and parish councils to be postponed;
- ii) Work was still ongoing to prepare for unitary governance in anticipation of a decision from the Secretary of State, with steering groups and programme boards for the north and west areas now in place;

- iii) The steering group was formed of the District and Borough leaders and Chief Executives of the five councils in relation to the north and had developed a programme of preparatory work to be ready for a shadow authority to be created;
- iv) The programme boards were made up of the Chief Executives of the five councils, with individuals to lead on the following workstreams:-
 - a. Legal;
 - b. Human Resources,
 - c. ICT;
 - d. Social Services;
 - e. Finance;
 - f. Information Governance;
 - g. Future Organisation; and
 - h. Communications and Engagement.
- v) Structural change orders would also be prepared which covered the rules for the makeup of the new council such as its new name and number of councillors;
- vi) Staff would be kept fully informed and consulted on what would happen during the expected period of transition.

RESOLVED:

That the unitary update be noted.

273. UPDATE ON THE OFFICE TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

The Committee considered an update of the Business Transformation Manager on the key elements of the Office Transformation Project.

It was reported that since the last meeting of the Committee significant progress had been with regard to obtaining, reviewing, clarifying and documenting costs for all aspects of the first stage of delivery. Good progress had also been made in offsetting the impact on and risk to staff and suppliers regarding delivery.

The total project budget was £216k. Members noted that following further development of the Programme the expected cost of the initial phase had risen from approximately £50k to £216k. This brought the newly estimated budget to £390k, with a high probability that the Programme would not be able to be delivered within the existing budget.

The uplift in expected costs had a number of factors, including:-

- i) As with many buildings of this type, no significant refurbishment of the Thrapston council offices had been undertaken since it had been built over 20 years ago;
- ii) The desire to create accommodation that would meet the needs of a modern workforce;
- iii) Improvements to be delivered would have a minimum 10 year life expectancy with a 6.5 year payback, representing good value for money;
- iv) Investment in the initial phases of the project would allow the 'Red Brick' part of the offices to be leased out, with an annual estimated rental income of £61k.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the progress being made on the Office Transformation Project be noted;
- b) That it be noted that a full financial appraisal of phase 1a, the estimated Programme costs and associated requests and recommendations will be part of the OTP update for the Transformation Committee at its next meeting;
- c) That the Finance and Performance Subcommittee be requested to keep the costs of the Office Transformation Programme under review.

(Reason – to place the Council in the best position possible during a significant period of transformation and change).

274. UPDATE ON JOINT WORKING WITH BOROUGH COUNCIL OF WELLINGBOROUGH

The Committee considered a report of the Business Transformation Manager providing an update on progress with the council's joint working arrangement with the Borough Council of Wellingborough.

It was noted that since the last meeting of the Committee a number of joint meetings had been held at a middle manager level to share knowledge and expertise and also between the service teams concerned to progress joint working on the ground.

The programme structure was now established and the new Business Transformation Manager had held one to ones with each of the service leads to gain an understanding of individual needs and to assess the different levels of integration and pace of change that could be expected.

Members were reassured that the programme of joint working was about back office processes and how efficiencies could be gained to help service customers more accurately and quickly, it specifically not being about reducing any levels of how customers could access services.

The initial equality impact assessment (EQIA) was considered and it was noted that minor negative impacts had been identified regarding particular groups for whom travelling to the other council's offices could be challenging, with a mitigation being that those groups be provided with remote access to the relevant systems if necessary, instead of travelling.

It was noted that the EQIA would be kept up to date and refreshed as individual service areas developed their joint working processes.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the initial equality impact assessment be noted;
(Reason - To accord with legislation and the policy of the Council)
- b) That the progress being made on joint working with Borough Council Wellingborough be noted;
- c) That service level team charters and initial workplans be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

(Reason – To increase the Committee’s understanding of joint working at a service level environment.)

275. HR SHARED SERVICE

The Committee considered an oral report of the Executive Director (Resources and Commercial) providing an update on progress with the council’s HR Shared Service.

It was noted that Personnel Subcommittee and Council had now approved a HR Shared Service with Corby Borough Council and Borough Council of Wellingborough, with work progressing well in its development.

The original go live date was now expected to be 1 December 2018 and in order to achieve a smooth transition; weekly meetings were being held with staff and the unions.

RESOLVED:

That the progress being made on the HR Shared Service be noted.

Chairman