

# TRANSFORMATION COMMITTEE

**Date:** 16 January 2019

**Venue:** East Northamptonshire House, Cedar Drive, Thrapston

**Time:** 7.30pm

**Present:**

<b>Councillors:</b>	<b>Helen Howell</b>	<b>(Chairman)</b>
	<b>Colin Wright</b>	<b>(Vice Chairman)</b>
	<b>David Jenney</b>	<b>(Deputy Leader of the Council)</b>
	<b>Tony Boto</b>	<b>Richard Lewis</b>
	<b>Harriet Pentland</b>	<b>Richard Gell</b>
	<b>Janet Pinnock</b>	<b>Roger Glithero JP</b>

## **354. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

## **355. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2018 were approved and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:-

Minute 272. Unitary Update i)

'2019' being substituted for '2020' in line three of the paragraph.

## **356. 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.

## **357. UNITARY UPDATE**

The Chief Executive provided a report on unitary developments, which included the following areas of update:

- i) The election postponement order had come into effect on 14 January 2019, which meant the district/borough and town/parish council elections would now be delayed from May 2019 to May 2020, avoiding the need to elect councillors potentially for a period of only one year prior to unitary elections taking place;
- ii) The Secretary of State (SoS) for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had commenced formal consultation on the unitary proposal submitted to Government in August 2018, which would run until 25 January 2019;

- iii) Once the SoS had finished his consultation, a draft Structural Change Order would be brought to this committee, prior to being presented to full council, enabling members to express a preference as to its contents prior to a decision by the SoS;
- iv) MHCLG had provided Northamptonshire County Council with the flexibility to use £35m of its capital receipts to deal with its 2018/19 revenue budget deficit and a further £35m to replenish its reserves. This was welcome news and meant that the two new unitary councils, should they be created, were more likely to be financially sustainable;
- v) The County and District/Borough Councils had been successful in their business rates pilot joint bid, which would mean Northamptonshire councils would collectively receive around £17m, potentially helping to offset the costs of preparing for a new council and any staffing requirements and backfilling requirements needed.

**RESOLVED:**

That the unitary update be noted.

*(Reason: to keep Members up to date with developments on the unitary proposal)*

**358. UPDATE ON THE OFFICE TRANSFORMATION PROJECT**

The Business Transformation Manager provided a report on the progress of the key elements of the Office Transformation Project (OTP).

In respect of delivery of phase 1a – Planning Services the following principal points were noted:-

- i) Pre-existing furniture and equipment no longer required for use had been, where possible, refurbished, re-used or rehomed by local councils, schools and council employees to minimise the amount of waste requiring disposal;
- ii) Staff from the planning team had been displaced across the council during the period of refurbishment. Feedback from both planning staff and their hosts in other areas of the council described this as a very positive experience with the opportunity for staff to understand and interact with parts of the work of the council they had previously not been so familiar with;
- iii) The final elements of the implementation of phase 1a were expected to be installed over the coming week. Members who had already visited the new office space commended the new environment for staff and looked forward to it being used to its full capability;
- iv) Due to the new open plan environment, all planning staff were now able to be located together, enabling the ability to lease or refurbish ready for leasing of the 'red brick' part of the council offices.

**RESOLVED:** that

- a) Progress being made on the Office Transformation Project be noted;

- b) It be noted details of the phase 1a review/lessons learnt process, which will include a full financial appraisal of phase 1a, and the implications for the whole OPT Programme, will be reported to the next transformation committee on 6 March 2019.
- c) Progress on the internal Business Transformation Paperless and iDOX programmes will be reported to the next Transformation Committee on 6 March 2019.

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

### **359. UPDATE ON JOINT WORKING WITH BOROUGH COUNCIL OF WELLINGBOROUGH**

The Business Transformation Manager provided a report detailing progress of the council's joint working arrangement with the Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW).

It was noted that since the last meeting of the Committee, team charters and joint working plans had been agreed across all participating service areas.

It was reported that Borough Council of Wellingborough had recently recruited a Policy and Compliance Officer who would commence in post shortly and supplement the project resource already being supplied by East Northamptonshire Council.

Good progress across each service was being made, albeit it at a different pace which was expected due to the range of service areas participating. It was confirmed that the Communications Team had now completed its joint working plan and was the first service area to become business as usual, therefore being removed from the programme.

Members also noted that the previously reported equality impact has been reviewed and refined in conjunction with BCW, minor negative impacts having been identified but simple mitigations meaning the overall impact remained neutral.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- a) That the progress being made on joint working with Borough Council Wellingborough be noted;

*(Reason – consistency with previous decisions)*

- b) The initial equality impact assessment be noted;

*(Reason - To accord with legislation and the policy of the Council)*

### **360. COMMITTEE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM – ESTABLISHMENT OF MEMBER WORKING GROUP**

The Committee considered a report of the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager which sought approval for the establishment of a member working group to support councillors' utilisation of the committee management system.

It was noted that the Working Group would assist officers in the development of the committee management system from a member perspective, including in the following areas:

- the review of councillor information to be placed on the Committee Management section of the council website;
- utilisation of cost effective equipment to deliver and promote the use of paperless meetings;
- assessing system efficiencies that could benefit members in support of their governance activities.

Whilst not all councillors were expected to utilise paperless meetings, it was hoped that through the Working Group helping to develop member training and guidance in this area, as many councillors as possible would be encouraged to participate.

**RESOLVED:** That

- a) A working group of five members from this committee be established to support the use of the committee management system from a councillor perspective;
- b) In consultation with the Leader of the Council, delegation be given to the Chief Executive to approve the membership of the working group;
- c) The Terms of Reference be approved;
- d) The working group reports on its activity at regular intervals to the Transformation Committee.

*(Reason: to enable improvements to governance activities and to prepare councillors for new ways of working)*

**Chairman**