



Transformation Committee 17th April 2019 Update on Joint Working with Borough Council of Wellingborough

Purpose of report

To provide an update on progress with East Northamptonshire Council's programme of joint working with the Borough Council of Wellingborough.

Attachment

Appendix 1: Progress update per service

1.0 Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 2nd July 2018 the Transformation Committee agreed a report recommending to Council the adoption of principles and a range of services to work jointly with the Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW). The report was approved at Council on 23rd July.
- 1.2 Further update reports were presented to the Transformation Committee on 5th September 2018, 7th November 2018 and 16th January 2019, which were noted.
- 1.3 The principles agreed were:
 - To optimise value for money for our customers and residents
 - To build on the investment in our shared IT platform
 - To create best practice processes, procedures and policies
 - To build capacity and resilience in our teams
 - To develop the skills of our workforce
 - To provide resilience during a period of change
- 1.4 The following services were agreed to be part of the joint working with BCW:
 - Revenues & Benefits
 - Building Control
 - Land Charges
 - Planning Administration
 - Democratic Services
 - Elections
 - Communications
- 1.5 This report provides an update on progress made on the joint working programme since the last Committee on 16th January 2019.

2.0 Update on progress with the Joint Working Programme

2.1 Since the last meeting of this Committee significant progress has been made to establishing and communicating ENC's joint working arrangements with the BCW. The key areas of progress are:

- A series of scrutiny meetings with each service are established and underway.
- Communication has taken place with UNISON to formally introduce them to the programme of work.
- A "What is Joint Working?" document has been published, which has been reviewed for comment by UNISON.
- Building Control's work is now so well established that at the time of writing it is about to launch its joint working. A verbal update will be given to the Committee.

2.2 A more detailed update is provided in the following paragraphs:

2.3 Team Charters

Following discussions with managers from the seven joint working services one of the critical success factors was identified as buy in and ownership of the arrangements amongst the teams in both councils. To facilitate this each service manager has worked with their team to complete a Joint Working Team Charter, which sets out the approach each service will take to joint working, how they will work together and the expected behaviours to be shown towards each other.

2.4 Joint Working Plans

Each service has completed a Joint Working Plan. These plans will include setting out the actions to be taken to optimise the opportunity of working together, resources required, risks to be managed and the benefits to customers.

2.5 Communication to Staff and Trade Union

There has been a number of communications with staff at each council, including:

- Meetings between senior managers and service managers to develop and approve their joint working plans.
- Team meetings led by services managers to further develop joint working with staff.
- Messages to all staff via both councils' intranets and a briefing note.
- Formal discussion with UNISON with further meetings planned where issues arise; so far, all issues have been resolved.
- Updates provided to the Middle Managers Group and Xchange.

2.6 Governance

The progress towards setting up the joint working governance arrangements is as follows:

- Reporting to councillors is in place at both councils. At ENC this is through the Transformation Committee.
- A Progress Monitoring Board, led by senior officers from each council, meets as required.
- Joint project teams for each service are established.
- The Project Board conducts regular scrutiny sessions with each service pair to challenge and approve their progress.

2.7 Local Government Re-organisation Proposal

At its meeting on 29th August 2018 the Council agreed to submit a proposal to government about local government re-organisation in Northamptonshire. The

outcome of this proposal would impact on the approach to our joint working with BCW and is actively being considered as part of developing joint working plans by each service, to ensure that the project's progress is aligned with the wider unitary journey.

2.8 Business Transformation Team (BTT)

One half of the BT team are working on this project, targeting their resources where most needed, with a lighter touch for the more self-directed services. BCW have recently recruited for a Policy and Compliance Officer, whose role could include providing project resource in their team in future. The successful candidate has started but is focusing on key priority areas for BCW at the moment. BCW will consider requests for his time as required.

3.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

3.1 The previously reported Equality Impact Assessment has been reviewed in conjunction with BCW. No further refinements were considered needed at this stage although the document remains subject to periodic review. A copy of the Equality Impact Assessment is available on request.

4.0 Privacy Impact Implications

4.1 A Privacy Impact Assessment has been completed in conjunction with ENC's Data Protection Officer. This work revealed that the services fall into four distinct types groups so the work has expanded to four PIAs to ensure greater accuracy.

4.2 Information Sharing Agreements are being prepared between the two councils where necessary, covering the staff of one council accessing relevant data of the other council, if required, for their own services.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the proposals. Any legal implications will be assessed as joint working plans develop and reported to committee accordingly.

6.0 Risk Management

6.1 The following are considered to be the major risks to the proposal, with mitigations:

Number	Risk	Mitigation
1	Negative service level impact	Regular communication and review
2	Failure to agree common objectives	Careful planning and communications between parties
3	Local government landscape in Northamptonshire doesn't move forward at the anticipated pace	Regular review of current position and alignment of activities
4	Lack of business transformation capacity and skills to successfully deliver the change	Regular review of workload and priorities.
5	Wellbeing of staff during a time of change is undermined	Regular and effective communication to staff and evaluation of responses

- 6.2 The reason for bringing this proposal forward is to directly influence these risks and mitigate them. They will be managed in accordance with the council's risk management framework.

7.0 Resource and Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct resource or financial implications arising from the proposals at present, as all work is being covered from services' budgets. Further requests may come forward as the project develops.
- 7.2 At individual service level there may be more resource provided by one council or the other, but across the programme the resource allocation is evenly balanced.

8.0 Constitutional Implications

- 8.1 The report does not have any constitutional implications, as each council will continue to retain its own autonomy and decision making processes. Any constitutional implications will continue to be assessed as part of the process of producing the detailed proposal.

9.0 Implications for our Customers

- 9.1 Service levels are planned to be at least at the same level they are currently. There are expected to be benefits to customers through streamlined and best practice working, as well as enhanced resilience within both councils. Any implications for customers will be assessed as part of the service teams reviewing opportunities to implement best practice approaches.

10.0 Corporate Outcomes



- 10.1 This proposal contributes to the following Corporate Outcomes.
- Good Value for Money – this project will deliver the benefits of joint working from within existing revenue budgets and capital programmes. Any savings made will be reinvested to further improve service delivery.
 - Effective Partnership Working – this project is a step towards the harmonisation that a unitary council will demand, allowing us to learn lessons and develop techniques and processes such that future joint working (either across more services or with more councils) can be achieved more effectively.
 - High Quality Service Delivery – sharing best practice and harmonising processes will ensure that service delivery improves. For services that serve the same customer across council areas (e.g. for Building Control) a possible single “front door” and account management structure would be beneficial.
 - Employees and Members with the Right Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours – this project will offer employees the exposure to best practice from the other council, leading to them improving their knowledge and skills.

11.0 Recommendations

11.1 The Committee is recommended to

- (1) Note the progress being made on joint working with the Borough Council of Wellingborough.

(Reason - Consistency with previous decisions)

Legal	Power: Local Government Act 1972					
	Other considerations:					
Background Papers: Reports on Joint Working with Borough Council of Wellingborough to Transformation Committee on 2 nd July 2018, 5 th September 2018, 7 th November 2018 and 16 th January 2019						
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