



## Transformation Committee 29<sup>th</sup> May 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 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2018 the Transformation Committee agreed a report recommending to Council the adoption of principles for the following services to work jointly with the Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW):
    - Revenues & Benefits
    - Building Control
    - Land Charges
    - Planning Administration
    - Democratic Services
    - Elections
    - Communications
- The report was approved at Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2018.

- 1.2 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

- 1.3 This report provides an update on progress made on the joint working programme since the last Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2019.

### 2.0 Update on progress with the Joint Working Programme

- 2.1 Since the last meeting of this Committee members of the Business Transformation Team have continued progress in establishing, communicating and developing ENC's joint working arrangements with the BCW. The key areas of activity are:
- A series of regular scrutiny meetings with each service from each council are established and underway, measuring progress against their Team Plans and Charters, as explained at previous committees.
  - Group meetings with all involved services have been held, to share learning and best practice across services and councils.

- Communication continues with UNISON to keep them informed about the programme of work.

2.2 A more detailed update by service is provided at Appendix 1:

### 2.3 Governance

The joint working governance arrangements are as follows:

- Reporting to members is in place at both councils. At ENC this is to the Transformation Committee.
- Regular reporting via Highlight Report to the Transformation Programme Board, which is made up of CMT members.
- The Project Board, formed of a senior manager at each council, conducts regular scrutiny sessions with each service pair to challenge and approve their progress.
- Joint project teams for each service are established.

### 2.4 Local Government Re-organisation Proposal

The Secretary of State's announcement of 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019 gives the opportunity to develop the approach to our joint working with BCW, to ensure that the project's progress is aligned with the wider unitary journey.

## 3.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

3.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared and is available on request.

## 4.0 Privacy Impact Implications

4.1 A Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) 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 Data 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 and any efficiency savings will be reinvested into the services. 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 between councils.

## **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 both councils 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 and members 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 note the progress being made on joint working with the Borough Council of Wellingborough.

*(Reason - Consistency with previous decisions)*

<b>Legal</b>	Power: Local Government Act 1972					
	Other considerations:					
<b>Background Papers:</b> Reports on Joint Working with Borough Council of Wellingborough to Transformation Committee on 2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2018, 5 <sup>th</sup> September 2018, 7 <sup>th</sup> November 2018, 16 <sup>th</sup> January 2019 and 17 <sup>th</sup> April 2019.						
<b>Person Originating Report:</b> Jeremy Rawling, Business Transformation Manager ☎ 01832 742033 ✉ jrawling@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk						
Date: 10 <sup>th</sup> May 2019						
<b>CFO</b> 16/5/19			<b>MO</b> 16/5/19		<b>CX</b> 16/5/19	

**Progress update per service**

Each service is working at a different pace and will launch its formal joint working at different times.

This appendix explores each service in more detail; any subsequent updates will be given verbally to Committee at the meeting.

**Revenues and Benefits**

The team have made great progress by installing the test systems including the new Document Management System (DMS) into the Data Centre.

Testing to ensure the new systems meets requirements has made good progress; a few aspects remain, these will be tested following completion of technical pre-requisites.

The go-live of both these systems will be after Annual Billing to reduce impacts on people and service provision during this busy period. The project anticipates go-live mid-June for migration and mid-July for DMS. Note that an ICT change freeze 13th – 30th May has been imposed because of the EU Election.

Business readiness activities are in progress with weekly Project Team meetings focussing on the following areas to ensure that the business is ready for go-live:

- Business Processes
- Communications
- Testing
- Training
- Support
- Issue Resolution
- System Readiness
- Contingency Planning

Go/no-go meetings are programmed in to assess readiness and make an informed decision regarding go-live. User training for the new DMS is being planned for July.

At the time of writing there is a level of uncertainty regarding the SQL infrastructure assurance work; this may have further impacts on timescales so a verbal update will be provided to the committee.

The DMS provider (Swordfish in partnership with Capita) has completed further development work to ensure the product meets our requirements; enabling specific tasks to be prioritised at a more granular level. Once the test environment is available this will be tested by employees across the service to ensure it is fit for purpose.

The collaborative approach involving employees throughout the project to share best practice and increase resilience continues with considerable progress on the process discovery and streamlining work in Business Rates being led by the Business Analyst (BA) from the ENC Business Transformation Team. To support the embedding of new ways of working an EDRMS Quality Assurance approach has been defined, designed to balance the need for assurance and the business as usual pressure on resources. The BA has worked with users to develop an effective checking process that will demonstrate consistent and systematic approach to checking and provide senior stakeholders the information needed to make an informed decision about future action(s) required to assure quality and performance.

The BA continues to lead the process work including; guiding the business to make key decisions; incorporating learning from testing and Capita preparation days; adopting an agile approach and reiterating and refining processes where required.

Process work has commenced with Fraud, Recovery and Overpayments teams. The process discovery work is now programmed for all functional areas; the scope focuses on the 'must-have' processes for a successful implementation of the DMS. Business Rates; Council Tax and Benefits process work is paused until the test DMS system is operational, at which point the processes will be 'road tested' and any reiterations or follow up activities completed. There are a number of points which will require testing and refining.

The programmed process activity has been flexed to accommodate operational needs and the EU election it is expected to culminate in review sessions in June/July designed to capture change and learnings to date and also present opportunities for future change and continuous improvement.

### Building Control

The legal agreement to formalise the commencement of the joint Building Control service was signed on 28 March 2019.

Most recent progress includes:

- Naming conventions for a new digitised document management system have been agreed and work has commenced on a project to identify and scan historic records.
- A draft data retention guidance document has been produced for the retention of all registers and detailed records held by building control. If approved by both ENC and BCW, the retention periods can be applied to cleanse the system of historic detailed information automatically. This automated process will significantly improve data handling and compliance with GDPR. The retention periods will only be enabled at a point when the accuracy of historic records data is assured.
- A joint working privacy statement has been created and the document has been shared with BCW for approval and implementation. ENC Data Protection Officer is checking the wording of the legal agreement to ensure that it adequately covers the handling and sharing of personal information between ENC and BCW.
- Registration teams at ENC and BCW have held a joint meeting to identify how data is input into the Uniform system. It has been agreed that ENC will explore the benefit of mapping application polygons to align with the current processes at BCW. This also feeds into the work being carried out to improve the accuracy of ENC building control historic data that is used in local land charges.
- ENC has continued to build on its ISO accreditation by creating and updating all standard documents templates and control documents. This is a key piece of work which is planned to be rolled out for BCW. At a point where ENC and BCW have similarity with documents and processes, it will be appropriate to consider an application for ISO accreditation for the joint building control service (planned during 2019).

## Local Land Charges and Planning Administration

Local Land Charges depend on other teams' data, from Planning Administration and other teams inside ENC and BCW, and from external organisations (e.g. NCC or national statutory bodies).

There are differences between how each council record their data, and we cannot control the quality of data from external parties; accordingly significant alignment work is required before full joint working is possible.

The Transformation Programme Board has requested the Business Transformation Team to lead a new project to review the service operating model at ENC to improve timeliness and quality and reduce costs. The project has commenced a number of workstreams including:

- Running a live exercise with many stakeholders, entering, updating and reporting land and property information on Uniform, achieving learning on the day and capturing the exercise to use as a training tool in the future.
- Establishing a Quality Group drawn from across the organisation to identify challenges and design their solutions.

## Democratic Services

ENC has now procured a hosted electronic Committee Management System and is currently at implementation stage. The go-live date for web functionality has been delayed from May 2019 due to the impact the unexpected European election has had on the Democratic and Electoral Services team. The go-live date will be reviewed following the election which is being held on 23 May. The System will also provide for improved officer report management processes and provision for paperless committee meetings. Whilst the decision of BCW was to not go ahead with their own system, BCW staff will receive training and share in ongoing learning opportunities from this project exercise.

They are also mutually challenging each other's processes through attendance at each other's formal meetings, providing feedback and using this as a basis to review their internal policies and guidance in order to achieve greater alignment around the following three areas:-

- Civic;
- Committee management;
- Officer and Member Services

A Joint Working Plan is agreed and the teams are meeting regularly to progress actions. However, due to resource difficulties in the team, implementation will take longer.

## Electoral Services

The services are working together to harmonise electoral processes, noting the shared parliamentary constituency. As such, BCW staff worked at ENC's February county by-election and ENC staff likewise did the same for BCW's March parish by-election. Good practice is being shared in the run up to the European election taking place on 23 May and the teams will jointly review the outcome of the election in June.

They are reviewing together the lessons learned from the 2018 canvass with a view to harmonising their processes for summer/autumn 2019, learning from the strengths and weaknesses in both councils. This work is also being undertaken in conjunction with Corby

Borough Council and Kettering District Council. In doing so, efficiencies will be sought including alignment of timetables and communications messaging.

They are working together to review and map the related electoral registration processes and harmonise processes where this is appropriate.

They have shared their experiences of the Xpress software systems to upskill staff in terms of technology through tablet working and are investigating the use of a mobile election app for elections staff. They have used the opportunity through ENC's purchase of a mobile canvassing app to provide mutual support and learning between the services' visiting officers.

A Joint Working Plan is agreed and the teams are meeting regularly to progress actions.

### Communications

This service has completed its Joint Working Plan and has now successfully become Business as Usual and is removed from the Joint Working Programme. Both councils are enjoying the benefits of a shared Communications Officer.