



## Transformation Committee 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019 Update on Joint Working with Borough Council of Wellingborough

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### Purpose of report

To provide an update on progress with East Northamptonshire Council's programme of joint working with the Borough Council of Wellingborough and to seek approval to develop our joint working approach to support the Local Government Reform programme forming a new unitary council for North Northamptonshire.

### Attachment

Appendix 1: Progress update per service

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### 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 for the following services to work jointly with the Borough Council of Wellingborough (BCW):

- Revenues & Benefits
- Building Control
- Local Land Charges and 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 1<sup>st</sup> July 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 and engagement 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 Reports 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 - Following the Secretary of State's announcement of 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019 about moving to unitary status, the constituent councils will ensure that this project's progress is aligned with the wider unitary journey as they develop their plans.

2.5 Future direction - With clear momentum established across the programme, one service already in business as usual (BAU), another imminent and a third anticipated around Christmas, it is appropriate to consider the future direction of the Joint Working Programme, to:

- Build on the progress and organisational learning to date,
- Bring it into closer alignment with the Local Government Reform programme for the whole of North Northamptonshire,
- Ensure that our Business Transformation Team generates the best return on investment.

2.6 Details of progress made will be reported to a future meeting of this Committee for consideration.

### **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 series of Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) have been completed in conjunction with ENC's Data Protection Officer. These will be reviewed and developed as required for existing and new services.

4.2 Data Sharing Agreements at service level 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 and vice versa.

### **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 this Committee

accordingly.

## **6.0 Risk Management**

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

<b>Number</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
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:

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

*(Reason - Consistency with previous decisions)*

- 2) Approve exploration of developing our joint working approach to support the Local Government Reform programme forming a North Northamptonshire unitary council.

*(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, 17 <sup>th</sup> April 2019, 29 <sup>th</sup> May 2019 and 1 <sup>st</sup> July 2019.				
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<b>Date:</b> 8 <sup>th</sup> August 2019					
<b>CFO</b> 22/08/19		<b>MO</b> (Deputy) 22/08/19		<b>CX</b> 21/08/19	