



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT COMMITTEE

3rd March 2020

Report Title	IMPLEMENTATION TEAM
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek authority for the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee (“WNJC”) to form a single team of officers (“the Implementation Team”) to enable it to discharge its functions under the Northamptonshire (Structural Changes Order) 2020.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that:

- a) The WNJC agrees to form a single team of officers as required by Article 26 of the Northamptonshire (Structural Changes) Order 2020 (“SCO”) and that the current Programme Management Office be designated as the Implementation Team for the purposes of the SCO with immediate effect;
- b) That it be noted that, as required by the SCO, the leader of the Implementation Team is the Chief Executive of Northamptonshire County Council (Theresa Grant);
- c) That it be noted that Northampton Borough Council Chief Executive (George Candler) is West Northamptonshire Joint Committee deputy leader of the Implementation Team and that Kettering Borough Council Chief Executive (Graham Soulsby) is North Northamptonshire Joint Committee deputy leader of the Implementation Team.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

As members of the WNJC may be aware, prior to the SCO coming into force, sovereign councils across Northamptonshire entered into a voluntary agreement to establish a single team of officers to assist with preparations for the creation of two new unitary councils in Northamptonshire.

The following resolutions were agreed by all sovereign councils in Northamptonshire in 2018 -

Subject to the submission of “Northamptonshire Local Government Reform Proposal” by any council, Council endorses the Chief Executive’s deployment of resources required to progress work on the next steps including those ahead of any decision by the Secretary of State, up to a maximum of £500,000 to be taken from existing budgets and/or reserves; and

Subject to the submission of the “Northamptonshire Local Government Reform Proposal” by any council, Council approves the interim governance structure of a Northamptonshire Central Programme Team overseeing a West Northamptonshire Project Board and a North Northamptonshire Project Board for the preparatory phase leading up to shadow authorities.

The current Programme Management Office (PMO) was created with the agreement of sovereign councils arising from these resolutions. The PMO under the direction of the Strategic Delivery Director (Theresa Grant) consists of seconded officers from the sovereign councils and staff directly recruited externally.

The current PMO supports the work of the various work streams, as previously reported to the WNJC, for the creation and administration of the Shadow Council, arrangements for the continuation of service delivery on Vesting Day and initial preparations for the unitary councils. In addition, the PMO seeks to support the principles of the Transformation Programme through the various work streams. **Appendix A** to this report outlines diagrammatically the broad programme structure currently operating and which is being recommended by this report. Clearly the Implementation Team and PMO may change depending on the transformation programme’s requirements.

It is recognised that the Shadow Councils will ultimately determine the governance and service delivery models of the two new councils, however the PMO has initiated important work to provide baseline data and early consideration of options for service delivery.

It is proposed that the PMO and Implementation Plan continues in its current format until consideration by the new Shadow Councils once established.

Article 26 of the Order requires the WNJC to form an “Implementation Team”. The role of the team will be to continue the work undertaken to date for the preparation ahead of the Shadow Council and the longer-term Implementation Plan for the unitary councils.

Article 26 (3) of the Order requires the lead officer of the Implementation Team to be the Chief Executive of Northamptonshire County Council (Theresa Grant).

Article 26 (4) of the Order also requires deputy lead officers to be appointed, one from the North sovereign councils and one from the West sovereign councils. These appointments have been made as outlined in this report.

There is a duty placed on sovereign councils within the Order to co-operate in the establishment of the team and allow for the release of officers on their existing staffing establishment to assist in the team’s activities. All sovereign councils have directly through both financial and staffing resources contributed to the establishment of the team.

The PMO has operated to date through the leadership of the Chief Executive of Northamptonshire County Council; this is continued under the Order.

George Candler (Northampton Borough Council Chief Executive) has been appointed as the West's deputy leader of the Implementation Team and Graham Soulsby (Kettering Borough Council Chief Executive) has been appointed as the North's deputy leader of the Implementation Team.

The Implementation Team will support the respective Joint Committees until the Shadow Councils hold their inaugural full council meetings. The Joint Committees will as required of the SCO then be dissolved on the day following those inaugural meetings.

The new Shadow Councils will need to affirm that the Implementation Team continues through the Shadow Period in its current format or may propose a revised structure. The Implementation Team will be required to support the Shadow Council and continue to oversee preparations for Vesting Day on 1st April 2021 and the agreed implementation and transformation programme.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Financial

- 4.1.1 Costs associated with the operation of the team are being met from the previously agreed contributions from the sovereign councils. WNJC receives regular financial reports on the cost of the programme, including staffing costs.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 At the time of writing this report, each of the councils are processing their respective budgets for 2020-21, these recognise the initial funding agreed of £0.500M from each council, with an increased contribution taking the committed funding to £2.400M toward the costs of transformation, transition and formation of the two new Unitary Councils.
- 4.2.2 The costs incurred and committed by the West Joint Committee will be drawn from these funds.
- 4.2.3 There are no additional costs directly arising as a result of this SCO.

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 There is a legal requirement under the SCO for the County Council and the West Northamptonshire councils to within 14 days of the SCO coming into force to establish a joint committee under Section 101 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972. WNJC was established in anticipation of the passing of the SCO.
- 4.3.2 The Northamptonshire (Structural Changes) Order 2020 was made on 13th February 2020. The Order is now in force. there are obligations and responsibilities placed directly on WNJC to in effect take steps and make initial preparations for Unitary government in Northamptonshire pending the formal setting up of the Shadow Council post the May election.

4.3.3 The SCO also requires the relevant councils no later than 21 days from the coming into force of the Order to form an Implementation Team. This report seeks the authority from the WNJC to address this requirement.

4.4 Equality and Health

4.4.1 There are no specific equality and health implications arising directly, from this report. However, the relevant Councils normal policies and procedures will be used to ensure equality in the way personnel are and have been selected and deployed to roles within the PMO and Implementation Team. Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken through the programme as required.

5. Background Papers

5.1 The Northamptonshire (Structural Changes) Order 2020 SI 2020/156.

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