

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 3rd March 2020

PRESENT: Councillor Jonathan Nunn, Chair, (Northampton Borough Council)
Councillor Richard Auger, Vice Chair, (Daventry District Council)

Councillor Adam Brown, Daventry District Council
Councillor Alan Chantler, Daventry District Council
Councillor Ken Ritchie, Daventry District Council
Councillor Phil Larratt, Northampton Borough Council
Councillor Stephen Hibbert, Northampton Borough Council
Councillor Danielle Stone, Northampton Borough Council
Councillor Matt Golby, Northamptonshire County Council
Councillor Stephen Legg, Northamptonshire County Council
Councillor Suresh Patel, Northamptonshire County Council
Councillor Ian McCord, South Northamptonshire Council
Councillor Rebecca Breese, South Northamptonshire Council
Councillor Peter Rawlinson, South Northamptonshire Council

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Chris Lofts, South Northamptonshire Council and Councillor Malcolm Longley, Northamptonshire County Council.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Wednesday 7th January 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE THE CHAIR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

There were none.

6. FUTURE NORTHANTS PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Programme Director gave the Committee a presentation on Future Northants - Programme Update. The salient points were highlighted.

In response to questions around communications and engagement, the Committee was informed that the programme was engaging with members of the planning policy teams as a pilot for all other programmes to follow.

In response to a question around the amount of public interest and engagement in the programme, the Committee heard that information was being circulated alongside council tax letters. It was hoped that this would generate more awareness of, and interest in, the programme. The Committee was advised that any publicity work undertaken would take into account the risk of being seen to promote a particular viewpoint. Other members reported a

high level of interest and engagement in their communities.

Councillor Ken Ritchie commented that the discussions that had taken place to date had focussed on design principles. He stated that he did not feel sufficiently well informed as to form a judgement about how successful this work had been. He stated that, in his view, the public would want to know about the impact of this work on services. The Committee was advised by the Chief Executive of Northamptonshire County Council that the programme had been developed under the oversight of the leaders of all eight democratically elected councils. The leaders were responsible for communicating with their authorities about this work.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the contents of the report be noted.**

7. FUTURE NORTHANTS FINANCE UPDATE

The Section 151 Officer for Daventry District Council submitted a report providing an update on the financial position for the Future Northants Programme and highlighted salient points.

In response to a question regarding current Government policy on funding local government, the Committee heard that a Business Rates review was underway, but the outcomes were not yet clear.

In response to questions regarding contingency measures, the Committee was advised that any increases or decreases to local government funding would be subject to a cap. This would provide a relatively stable space within which planning could take place.

RESOLVED:

- 1. The forecast outturn position for the Future Northants Programme be noted.**

8. FUTURE NORTHANTS RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Programme Director gave the Committee a presentation on the Future Northants Risk Management Strategy. The salient points were highlighted.

In response to a question relating to legal; HR and other support capacity, the Committee heard that the need for legal expertise had been identified and various such resources were available across the eight authorities. Specific external legal expertise would be obtained as and when it was needed. The Monitoring Officer of Northampton Borough Council confirmed that the matter had been discussed at their regular meetings.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The Joint Committee accepted and endorsed the Future Northants Programme Risk Management Strategy.**

9. IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

The Monitoring Officer of Northampton Borough Council submitted a report seeking authority to form a single team of officers, known as the Implementation Team, as required by the Northamptonshire (Structural Changes) Order 2020.

This report outlined the proposed approach and highlighted the proposal to appoint the

Chief Executive of Northamptonshire County Council as leader of the implementation team, with the Chief Executive of Northampton Borough Council as deputy leader for West Northamptonshire and the Chief Executive of Kettering Borough Council as deputy leader for North Northamptonshire.

Councillor Richard Auger welcomed the proposal and stated his confidence in the officers tasked with forming the implementation team.

RESOLVED: that:

- 1. 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;**
- 2. 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);**
- 3. 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.**

10. LOCATION FOR THE WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE SHADOW COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Chief Executive of Northampton Borough Council submitted a report providing an update on the work that had been undertaken to identify a suitable venue for meetings of the shadow full council and highlighted salient points. He advised the Committee that other meetings, such as those of the shadow executive, would rotate between venues. He would also be visiting the chamber later this week to review access arrangements for those with a disability.

The Committee commented as follows:

- The use of a single venue in Northampton represented a risk to creating a sense of belonging for shadow councillors from other areas;
- The proposal was rational and represented a sensible use of public money;
- Questions were asked about facilities for a crèche and a youth forum;
- It was suggested that an alternative venue be sourced for long-term use after vesting day.

In response to questions, the Chief Executive of Northampton Borough Council advised the Committee that the proposal concerned meetings of the full shadow council only.

RESOLVED: that:

- 1. That following a workshop session with the Leaders from Daventry District Council (DDC), Northampton Borough Council (NBC), Northamptonshire County Council. (NCC) and South Northamptonshire Council (SNC) (see Appendix 1) approve:**
- 2. The selection of County Hall, Northampton, as the location for the West**

Northants Shadow Council Meetings.

- 3. That all other committee meetings that will be required for West Northants Shadow Council will make use of existing rooms in the four local authority buildings.**

The meeting concluded at 7:10 pm