

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 26 March 2019

PRESENT: Councillors Auger (Northamptonshire County Council), Breese (South Northamptonshire Council), Brown (Daventry District Council), Chantler (Daventry District Council), Golby (Northamptonshire County Council), Hibbert (Northampton Borough Council), Larratt (Northampton Borough Council), Legg (Northamptonshire County Council), Lofts (South Northamptonshire Council), McCord (South Northamptonshire Council), Millar (Daventry District Council), Nunn (Northampton Borough Council), Patel (Northamptonshire County Council), Rawlinson (South Northamptonshire Council), Ritchie (Daventry District Council) and Stone (Northampton Borough Council)

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

2. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR OF THE WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT COMMITTEE

Councillor Ian McCord (South Northamptonshire District Council) proposed that Councillor Jonathan Nunn (Northampton Borough Council) be appointed Chair of the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee which was seconded by Councillor Chris Millar (Daventry District Council).

RESOLVED:

That upon a unanimous vote, Councillor Jonathan Nunn was appointed as the Chair of the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee.

Councillor Jonathan Nunn took up the Chair.

3. APPOINTMENT OF THE VICE CHAIR OF THE WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT COMMITTEE

Councillor Ian McCord (South Northamptonshire District Council) proposed that Councillor Chris Millar (Daventry District Council) be appointed Vice Chair of the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee which was seconded by Councillor Jonathan Nunn (Northampton Borough Council).

RESOLVED:

That upon a unanimous vote, Councillor Chris Millar was appointed as the Vice Chair of the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee.

4. QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND MEMBERS

The Chair, Councillor Jonathan Nunn explained the procedure by which the Committee will respond to submitted questions from the Public and Elected Members of the four authorities that form the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee (Daventry District Council, Northampton Borough Council, Northamptonshire County Council and South Northamptonshire Council).

Mr Standishday, representing Northamptonshire UNISON asked the Committee to consider an agreement on staffing services. The Committee was asked to note that

Northamptonshire County Council has inferior pay conditions to neighbouring authorities and were asked to consider ensuring there are no compulsory redundancies.

The Chair stated that the Authority's biggest asset is its staff. Councillor Danielle Stone commented that the future local authority will be responsible for looking at the wages of staff and that it should look to set a real Living Wage as defined by the Living Wage Foundation.

Mr Huffadine-Smith declared that he is addressing the Committee as a private individual and not in his role as Parish Councillor on Duston Parish Council. Mr Huffadine-Smith asked the Committee to refer to Section 25 on Page 21 of the Agenda Pack, and explained that the Committee terms explain the process by which to ask questions, but not the process to address the Committee. He further continued that parish councils should be encouraged to lead on matters concerning parishes.

The Chair noted Mr Huffadine-Smith's question to the Committee.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Borough Secretary (Northampton Borough Council) explained to Members for the purposes of declaring interests, that they are subject to their 'home' Authority's Constitution.

There were no declarations.

6. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Borough Secretary explained to Members that the terms of reference for the Committee has been agreed by each sovereign council within West Northamptonshire, as outlined in Appendix 1. He continued that the defined purposes for this Committee are narrow and focused. The Joint Committee will require four Members to be present to achieve quorum and in addition a representative from each constituent Authority must be in attendance.

RESOLVED:

That the Terms of Reference of the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee are noted.

7. COMMITTEE STANDING ORDERS

The Chair invited the Borough Secretary to present the Committee Standing Orders. The Borough Secretary explained to Members that the functions of the Committee will be limited as outlined in the report.

Councillor Phil Larratt questioned the Borough Secretary to ensure that Members receive reports on time. In response to questions, the Borough Secretary stated that the Agenda for all meetings of the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee must be published 5 clear working days before the scheduled date of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the Standing Orders with a request that changes outlined by the Committee will be brought to the attention of Monitoring Officers for consideration.

8. LGR UPDATE

The Chair asked the Chief Executive (Northampton Borough Council) to provide an update on the Local Government Re-organisation in Northamptonshire.

The Chief Executive took members through a series of presentation slides explaining current progress to date in relation to local government re-organisation in the county. He

continued that the two new authorities' websites will go live on 1st April 2020, and that elections will be held on the first Thursday in May 2020. The two authorities, as proposed, will form the fifth and ninth largest Unitary authorities in the country. The Committee heard that the programme of work to deliver the creation of the authorities will focus on new Councils which are: sustainable, safe and legal and seamlessly delivered on day one and beyond. The Unitary programme will be delivered in three phases. Phase 1 will focus on the creation of the new Unitary council. Phase 2 will consider preparation for delivering services, and Phase 3 will look at designing the new authority. The current programme governance (pre-Shadow Authority) will see the organisation of two individual West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire Joint Committees, a Joint Programme Board, Member Working Groups and West and North Programme Boards. The Chief Executive concluded by explaining the programme objectives and the Programme Reporting and Risk Management.

In response to questions from Members, the Chief Executive explained that the authorities in West Northamptonshire are committed to working towards the 1st April 2020. There remain many external risks to the timetable, especially the time given to the debate in Parliament given that Central Government is preparing for the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union.

Councillor Stone explained her concerns that there is an issue of democratic deficit and accountability given that 2019 local elections in Northamptonshire have been suspended.

RESOLVED:

That the update on Local Government Re-organisation in Northamptonshire be noted.

9. SET UP TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

The Borough Secretary advised Members of the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee that apart from the Chair, Members of the Task and Finish groups should not be drawn from this Committee.

Councillor Ken Ritchie stated that the Committee may wish to consider that a third of Task and Finish groups are made up of women members by introducing a quota. He further questioned whether there is a need to ensure a political balance for Task and Finish groups.

The Chair stated that it is essential that the most qualified Members sit on the Task and Finish groups to ensure excellent scrutiny of proposals.

Councillor Alan Chantler asked whether it may be possible to consult as many consultees as possible. In response, the Chair explained that Task and Finish groups will make use of all consultees. He continued to state that the Governance Task and Finish Group has a very specific task to create a Constitution for the new authority.

The Borough Secretary explained to Members that task and finish groups should stay focused on their role within the Unitary Programme.

Councillor Chris Millar (South Northamptonshire District Council) proposed that Councillor Peter Rawlinson (South Northamptonshire District Council) be appointed Chair of the Governance Task and Finish Group which was seconded by Councillor Jonathan Nunn (Northampton Borough Council).

Councillor Chris Millar (South Northamptonshire Council) proposed that Councillor Alan Chantler (Daventry District Council) be appointed Chair of the Interim Appointments Task and Finish Group which was seconded by Councillor Ian McCord (Northampton Borough Council).

Councillor Jonathan Nunn (Northampton Borough Council) proposed that Councillor Suresh Patel (Northamptonshire County Council) be appointed Chair of the Independent Remuneration Task and Finish Group which was seconded by Councillor Matt Golby (Northamptonshire County Council).

RESOLVED:

1. The following Task and Finish Groups be established:
 - a. Governance Task and Finish Group;
 - b. Interim Appointments Task and Finish Groups; and
 - c. Independent Remuneration Panel Task and Finish Group.
2. Members to each of the Task and Finish Groups referred to in paragraph 2.1 in accordance with the following criteria; be approved:
 - A Chair is drawn from the membership of the West Northamptonshire Joint Committee (WNJC); and
 - Members are drawn from the entire membership of each of the constituent Councils of the WNJC

ensuring that where possible, there is at least one Member from each of the WNJC's constituent Councils.
3. The draft Terms of Reference for each of the Task and Finish Groups as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report are approved
4. That upon a unanimous vote Councillor Alan Chantler be appointed Chair of the Interim Appointments Task and Finish Group
5. That upon a unanimous vote Councillor Peter Rawlinson be appointed Chair of the Governance Task and Finish Group
6. That upon a unanimous vote Councillor Suresh Patel be appointed Chair of the Independent Remuneration Task and Finish Group

10. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

The Chair, Councillor Jonathan Nunn asked the Borough Secretary to present the Schedule of Meetings. The Borough Secretary explained to Members that future meetings of the Joint Committee will be shared between the four different authorities (Daventry District Council, Northampton Borough Council, Northamptonshire County Council and South Northamptonshire District Council).

The Borough Secretary explained to Members that there will be a rotation on where future meetings of the Joint Committee are held, and this will be based on availability.

RESOLVED:

The draft schedule of meetings for the WNJC attached at Appendix 1 is accepted. The venue for meetings will be confirmed subject to confirming availability at local authorities.

11. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE

THE CHAIR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 7:28 pm