

Babergh District Council

FROM: Director of Corporate Services	REPORT NUMBER: K221
TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (STEWARDSHIP) COMMITTEE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (COMMUNITY SERVICES) COMMITTEE	DATE OF MEETING: 22 March 2011 and 29 March 2011

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROLE AND PURPOSE OF THE JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Both Councils agreed that a Joint Scrutiny Committee (JSC) would be set up as part of the governance of the integration / merger process. This report informs Overview and Scrutiny Members of the arrangements that have been put in place.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the report be noted.

The Committee is able to resolve this matter.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 £3,500 has been earmarked from the Transitional Costs Budget for engagement with citizens and other stakeholders.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 With both councils having agreed to the set up of a JSC it is important that there is:
- Clarity on its role and purpose, and how will function.
 - Clarity on what it will do and that this set out in a work programme.
 - The avoidance of duplication between the JSC and the Joint Implementation Board (JMIB), and other panels or bodies set up as part of the project governance arrangements.

- 4.2 A JSC workshop explored these risks with a view to removing or minimising them.

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 The approach to the Joint Scrutiny Committee has been endorsed by both the Joint Officer Board and JMIB.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT

- 6.1 There are no equality and diversity implications with this report. That is to say, the contents of the report will have no impact on persons covered by the protected characteristics - age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation. However, any engagement with citizens and other stakeholders will need to pay particular attention to equality and diversity implications.

7. KEY INFORMATION

- 7.1 Both Councils agreed that a JSC should be set up to keep the overall Implementation Plan and Business Case under review, and to keep proposals under review from a customer perspective.

- 7.2 The Councils also chose membership:

Babergh DC

Cllrs Busby, Cave, Hurren, Riley and Rose

Mid Suffolk DC

Cllrs Byles, Matthissen, Melvin, Michell and Redbond

- 7.3 A JSC workshop was held to:

- Consider the elements that should be in the work programme.
- Consider how the JSC will function and be supported.

- 7.4 With regard to the work programme elements, the following was agreed:

- That there should be regular reports on Implementation Plan progress and transitional costs. Simple monitoring arrangements should be put in place (traffic lights, by exception reporting etc). The committee was keen to ensure that it did not duplicate to any great extent any arrangements that JMIB may have, or to increase unnecessarily officers' workloads. The committee understood that JMIB had the primary responsibility for the implementation of the integration programme, but needed to be able to fulfill its obligation of keeping the overall Implementation Plan and Business Case under review. The committee was also aware that it was intended that joint HR and IT Member task groups be set up. The role and purpose of such bodies needed to be clear to avoid duplication and confusion. To that end officers were asked to clarify all such arrangements with other bodies.
- At the relevant times and later in the work programme, reports would be submitted on whether the benefits and savings set out in the updated Business Case had been achieved.

- That the committee would engage with citizens and other stakeholders to test and develop arrangements and services - especially on locality arrangements and service delivery. This should be an integral part of the development of locality arrangements and service integration, so that scrutiny was not being carried out just at the end of any particular piece of work when it might be necessary to ask for work to be repeated or further work undertaken. An additional benefit could also be a more joined-up, efficient and economic approach to consultation and engagement across a number of workstreams.
- 7.5 With regards to engagement it was felt that existing consultation and engagement groups should be used (parish / town councils, businesses, youth), joining up between the two councils wherever possible and appropriate, to make the optimum use of scarce officer resource available to do this work. However the JSC felt that neither Council had robust engagement processes for the general public. Historically this had been carried out through Suffolk Speaks; but that initiative has become diluted over the last couple of years and, because it covers the whole of the county (which also means swift decisions cannot be made) was not the appropriate mechanism for the integration / merger project.
- 7.6 It was agreed that the councils should be asked to consider the development of a citizens' panel for the integration / merger project, but which could also be used for other strategic work such as budget development and the review of strategic plans.
- 7.7 There would need to be a budget for such a panel and for other engagement arrangements, to cover such things as essential travel costs, occasional venue hire, refreshments and occasional facilitation. The Transitional Cost Budget has £7,000 allocated in 2010/11 for engagement and it has been agreed that half of this is earmarked for the panel and other engagement arrangements, pending further details of how this money would be spent.
- 7.8 With regards to how the JSC will function and be supported, the committee agreed that meetings should be held alternatively at Hadleigh and Needham Market. There may also be occasions when other venues would be more suitable. The committee also supported the principle that meetings would be open to the public. Not only would this demonstrate and allow openness and transparency, they could also be used as a specific form of engagement.
- 7.9 The committee supported the principle of co-chairmanship, based on where the committee meeting was taking place. Committee administration would also be undertaken by the host authority. Further consideration would be given by officers to how the chairs should be appointed – for example, would this decision need to be made by the two Full Councils.
- 7.10 The committee considered how frequently it should meet. The options put forward were:
- On a regular basis (for example quarter-yearly).
 - Each or every other committee cycle.
 - In line with key milestones within the Implementation Plan.
 - In line with the JMIB meeting schedule (bearing in mind that this would probably be aligned with the Implementation Plan and committee cycle as well).

- 7.11 The committee agreed that it would like to give this further consideration based on the experience of a couple of meetings and a better understanding of the phases and timelines within the Implementation Plan, but was minded to go for regular meetings.
- 7.12 The committee wished to have a couple of meetings within this Council year to deal with the learning curve and to determine meeting frequency, chairmanship arrangements and to deal with any other issues that may arise, such as duplication. It would also like to review the legal services integration pilot.
- 7.13 It was recognised that committee membership may change as a result of the district elections, but the experience gained by both Members and officers would be useful in ensuring that sound arrangements were put in place for the new Council.
- 7.14 To that end, two meetings were scheduled – one in March (15 March at Mid Suffolk) and one in April (5 or 12 April at Babergh)

8. APPENDICES

None.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

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