

## NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

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<b>Report Originator</b>	Councillor David Jenney Paul Goult	<i>Fwd Plan Ref No:</i> N/A	
<b>Wards Affected</b>	ALL	16 <sup>th</sup> September 19	
<b>Title</b>	<b>Terms of Reference Working Group – Report</b>		

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

For Members to receive a report from the Chair of the Terms of Reference Working Group, regarding their discussions on potential extension of the North Northamptonshire Joint Committee's terms of reference.

### 2. BACKGROUND

The North Northamptonshire Joint Committee agreed at its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019 to establish a working group to draw-up proposals for the potential expansion of the terms of reference of the Joint Committee.

It had been noted that the Structural Change Order was likely to include reference to the need to establish a joint committee, and to include duties and responsibilities to be determined by said committee.

The current terms of reference of the Joint Committee were fairly narrowly defined, as at the time of completion it had been unclear what the final timetable for local government reform was likely to be. It is now envisaged that the Joint Committee would have an expanded role up until May 2020 when the Shadow Period commences.

The Joint Committee felt that it was important to consider this expanded role as soon as possible. The Joint Committee cannot amend its own terms of reference, this responsibility currently rests with sovereign councils, however it could recommend amendments.

Councillor David Jenney (ENC) was appointed Chair of the Working Group. The other members of the Group include – Cllr Elayne Francis (BCW), Cllr Elise Elliston (CBC), Cllr Mark Rowley (KBC) & Cllr Wendy Brackenbury (NNC). The Group is supported by officers from CBC, KBC, ENC & NCC.

The Group's inaugural meeting will be on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019 in Thrapston.

The Joint Committee will receive an update from the Chair to supplement this report as agenda papers needed to be issued prior to the working group meeting.

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### 3. REPORT

The current terms of reference for the North Northamptonshire Joint Committee were agreed by the five principal authorities earlier this year, to enable partners to start to progress certain issues relating to the local government reform programme. The current agreement for the formation of a Joint Committee is voluntary.

Under any Structural Change Order (SCO) there may be a requirement for the principal authorities to form a joint committee, with specific roles and responsibilities. These roles and responsibilities are likely to be far more extensive and wide-ranging than the current terms of reference encompasses.

Any joint committee would exist until the formation of the Shadow Council in May 2020.

The suggested expanded terms of reference (included within the appendices accompanying this report) are to be considered by the Working Group. These suggested amendments/additions/deletions are based on:

- Conversations with representatives of the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government;
- Previous statutory instruments related to local government reorganisation e.g. in Cheshire, Dorset etc;
- Items identified by officers locally as issues likely to be required for direction and/or determination prior to May 2020; and
- Matters arising from discussion of current local government reorganisation work streams to date.

It should be noted that the Joint Committee cannot unilaterally amend its own terms of reference. Any amendments currently require the consent of all five principal authorities.

It is currently envisaged that the proposed Structural Change Order (SCO) will receive Parliamentary consent by the end of the calendar year. Given the time pressures on the reorganisation programme, it is being suggested that the five principal authorities consider expanding the current terms of reference as soon as possible. This will allow certain other issues and topics to be progressed in a timely manner.

Obviously only the Shadow Council can determine issues prescribed to it in the Structural Change Order, however the North Northamptonshire Joint Committee can assist in preparing and monitoring preparations ahead of May 2020, to ensure that the transition and transformation programme continues to gain momentum.

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Expansion of the terms of reference to allow the Joint Committee to consider other issues will also increase political control and accountability and allow greater public discussion of some topics.

The draft expanded terms of reference accompanying this report have been the subject of consultation with the County Monitoring Officer Group.

#### 4. **Financial Implications**

There are currently no direct additional costs related to the work of the Working Group. Officer support will continue to be drawn from partner authorities.

#### 5. **Legal Implications**

The Working Group is tasked with drafting suggested expanded terms of reference for the North Northamptonshire Joint Committee. It should be noted that currently the explicit consent of all five principal authorities would be required to amend the current terms of reference.

#### 6. **Conclusion**

The Working Group is due to meet on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019 (after the issue of this agenda and report). The Chair of the Working Group will update the Joint Committee on the Working Group's deliberations.

#### 7. **RECOMMENDATION**

- i) **Note the report and appendices circulated;**
- ii) **Receive an update from the Chair of the Working Group on the Group's meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019;**
- iii) **Consider what amended terms of reference, if any, to be directed to sovereign councils for consideration and determination.**

#### Appendix:

Copy of draft Scoping Report & appendices