

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

FROM: Joint Member Integration Board (JMIB)	REPORT NUMBER: L60
TO: Council	DATE OF MEETING: 5 September 2011

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR 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.
- 1.2 At the Annual Council meetings in May, both Councils approved terms of reference for the JSC, but Mid Suffolk asked that a further report be presented to its next Council meeting adding to and refining the terms of reference. This report seeks agreement to the proposed additions and refinements.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the additions and refinements to the terms of reference in Appendix A be approved.

3. Financial Implications

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

4. Key Information

- 4.1 Both Councils agreed (December 2010) that a JSC should be set up to:
 - Keep the proposals and Implementation Plan under review from a customer perspective, as envisaged in the High Level Outline Business Case
 - Keep the overall project Implementation Plan under review, as requested by Mid Suffolk DC and endorsed by the JMIB
 - Set up customer panels, focus groups or other arrangements as necessary to secure effective stakeholder engagement in developing key elements of the Implementation Plan.
- 4.2 It was also agreed that the JSC would not have any decision-making powers, but could call the JMIB, Executive and Strategy Committees to account on matters related to the project, and make recommendations to the JMIB, Executive and Strategy Committees or direct to both Full Councils as appropriate.
- 4.3 The JSC developed and agreed terms of reference and at the Annual Council meetings in May, both Councils approved these, but Mid Suffolk asked that a further report be presented to its next Council meeting adding to and refining the terms of reference.

4.4 The terms of reference have been added to and refined by:

- Setting out the relationship between the JSC and the JMIB
- Stipulating the number of times the JSC will meet and the reports it will receive
- Setting out the areas where citizen and other stakeholder engagement will take place and how these will be developed.

4.5 The paragraphs that have been added are numbers 2.3 to 2.7

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JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In September 2010 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils agreed to integrate the staff and services across the two Councils during 2011, and to merge the two Councils into one new Council in 2013 - the latter being subject to the outcome of a public poll and agreement by the Secretary of State.
- 1.2 The Babergh – Mid Suffolk integration and merger programme seeks to deliver benefits and savings arising from economies of scale, sharing of assets and resources in teams, sharing of senior managers, pooling of scarce skills and expertise, increased capacity and resilience to deliver services to the community, and reductions in the cost of democracy. In summary:
- Efficiency savings
 - Increased resilience
 - Increased performance
 - Increased (local) strategic capacity
 - A new model for locality working.
- 1.3 Both Councils agreed that value for money for council tax payers should be the paramount objective, and that any programme of strategic integration should aim to achieve a jointly agreed balance between financial savings and future resilience in all aspects of service delivery.
- 1.4 As part of the governance arrangements, both Councils agreed that a Joint Scrutiny Committee (JSC) would be set up.

2. OBJECTIVES FOR THE JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- To keep the overall Implementation Plan and Business Case under review.
 - To keep proposals under review from a citizen perspective.
- 2.1 Specifically to:
- Review whether the Implementation Plan is being implemented in accordance with its timescales, phases and costs. To scrutinise remedial action in place to deal with any slippage or variances.
 - Review whether the benefits (especially savings) set out in the Business Case are being realised.
 - As necessary set up citizen panels, focus groups or other arrangements to secure effective stakeholder engagement in developing key elements of the Implementation Plan. This will build on the various stakeholder engagement mechanisms already in place.

- 2.2 The Committee has no decision-making powers, but is able to call the Joint Member Implementation Board (JMIB), Executive and Strategy Committees to account on matters related to this project. It can also make recommendations to the JMIB, Executive and Strategy Committees or direct to both Full Councils as appropriate.
- 2.3 The JSC will not overlap or duplicate the work of the JMIB, which is the Programme Board for the overall project: an important role for the JSC will be to act as a sounding board, complementing and supporting the role of the JMIB. The JSC will need however to fulfill its obligation of keeping the overall Implementation Plan and Business Case under review.
- 2.4 The Committee will meet a programmed four times per year to review whether the Implementation Plan is being implemented in accordance with its timescales, phases and costs. It will receive:
- A progress report based on the key milestones set out in the Outline Project Plan. Simple monitoring arrangements will be put in place (traffic lights, by exception reporting etc)
 - A financial report tracking actual implementation costs against projected implementation costs
 - A report setting out whether the financial (savings) and other benefits set out in the business case have been realised and the extent of their realisation.
- 2.5 With regard to keeping proposals under review from a citizen perspective, the Committee will focus on access to the Councils and their services. This will link into the Localities and Service Integration work streams (geographical access to services) and Enabling Infrastructure work stream (development of the website and electronic access).
- 2.6 Members of the Committee will engage with citizens and other stakeholders to develop and test arrangements and services, using wherever possible existing consultation and engagement groups (parish / town councils, businesses, youth). Neither Council has robust engagement processes for the general public, and on behalf of both Councils, working closely with work stream leads, the Committee will develop these engagement processes. An additional benefit to this work will be that these arrangements may also be suitable for other strategic work such as budget development and the review of strategic plans.
- 2.7 The Transitional Cost Budget has £7,000 allocated for engagement and £3,500 has been earmarked for these engagement arrangements.

3. MEMBERSHIP

- 3.1 A politically balanced committee of 10 Members (five from each Council) who are not on the Strategy or Executive Committees. Members will be appointed for a term of one year at the Annual Council meetings.
- 3.2 The Committee will be co-chaired by a Member from each authority, elected at the Councils' Annual Council meetings. The meeting will be chaired by the Chairman of the host authority, with the venue being alternated between Babergh and Mid Suffolk.