

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MIDSUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

From: Head of Corporate Organisation	Report Number: M124
To: Council	Date of meeting: 18 December 2012

GOVERNANCE REVIEW

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Members of the process for the Governance Review and appoint a Joint Constitutional Review Working Group.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council forms a Joint Constitutional Review Working Group with Mid Suffolk/ Babergh Council on the Terms of Reference set out within the Report.
- 2.2 That the Council appoints four members to the Group on the basis set out in the Report.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 None at this stage.

4. Risk Management

5. Consultations

- 5.1 None at this stage.

6. Equality Analysis

- 6.1 None at this stage.

7. Shared Service / Partnership Implications

- 7.1 As set out in the report.

8. Key Information

- 8.1 Both Councils are facing difficult times as they work in partnership with each other to deliver services in the context of shrinking budgets and increased expectation of public and partner involvement in decisions on service delivery. The nature of Councils' roles in society are ever changing with less direct service provision and with an ever greater emphasis on community engagement, empowering others to carry out roles traditionally carried out by the Council and influencing and working in partnership with others to provide their communities with the best possible services.

- 8.2 Members recognise that in order to meet this challenge they must ensure that they lead an organisation which has governance arrangements which reflect and assist in the implementation of their emerging priorities, strengthen their ability to engage and influence others and provide a strong interface between the organisations, their communities and partners, enabling swift, robust and effective leadership and decision making. Both Councils have jointly commissioned a governance review of their organisations focusing on constitutional arrangements to assist them in this exercise.
- 8.3 Preliminary work has been completed and in order to progress the Review further to completion it is proposed that a Joint Constitutional Review Group “JCRG” be formed with Mid Suffolk /Babergh District Council to review the detail of the respective constitutions. It is suggested that the Group be made up of 8 Members. It need not be politically balanced and there should be representatives of differing groups and positions on the Councils including ward councillors, scrutiny members as well as Chairman / Portfolio holders.
- 8.4 Whilst it is anticipated that the Committee Structures adopted by each Council may be different to each other to reflect their differing political and cultural background the rules need not be. It is proposed that the Group work together to establish what elements of the Constitution can be the same and what elements need to be different and why.
- 8.5 It is proposed that the Terms of Reference of the Group will be to:
- 8.5.1 Review the Constitution with a view to proposing changes to the Councils Rules Processes and Procedures which embody the ethos behind the emerging priorities and supports effective leadership by minimising unnecessary bureaucracy, encouraging decision making which is robust and swift, embeds the greatest possible community engagement and community working. The table set out below shows the proposed timetable.

Action	Reporting to	Date
Proposals for appointment of Joint Constitutional Review Group	Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils	18 th and 20 th December 2012
Paper on alternative models and procedures for their adoption	Mid Suffolk Leader and Babergh Political Leaders Group	7 th Jan 2013
Options paper and proposals for discussion	Management Board	14 th Jan 2013 and 28 th Jan 2013
Options paper, proposals for member workshop	JMIB	24 th Jan 2013
Options paper for member consideration	Member workshop Mid Suffolk DC (Full shortened day) **	*Early Feb- dates to be confirmed
Option paper for member consideration	Member workshop Babergh DC (Full shortened day) **	*Early Feb dates to be confirmed
Review of Constitution	Joint Constitutional Review Group	*Feb 2013

Consideration of proposals report to Council	MB	Feb 2013
Consideration of proposals report to Council	JMIB	*Special JMIB End Of Feb 2013
Consideration of proposals report to Council	Mid Suffolk Executive Committee	11 th March 2013
Consideration of proposals report to Council	Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee	19 th March 2013
Consideration of report to Council	Babergh Council	*Special Council March 2013
Consideration of report to Council	Mid Suffolk District Council	*Special Council March 2013
Introduce any changes to Committee Structure	Babergh District Council	23 rd April 2013
Introduce any changes to Committee Structure	Mid Suffolk District Council	25 th April 2013

8.5.2 It is envisaged that the Group will come together a little before the Member workshops to familiarise themselves with the task before them and establish an appropriate working pattern but their work will start in earnest in February after the Member workshops. Members volunteering for this role should note that the work will be on going on a weekly basis throughout March and into April and it is not possible for substitutes to be used as the work will build upon work previously carried out.

9. Background Documents

9.1 None.

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