

AGENDA ITEM 14

POLICY, FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

13 APRIL 2016

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

CORPORATE ISSUES

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to brief members on certain Corporate Issues which have occurred since the last meeting of this Committee and to advise on current and future intentions.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 **The progress with the Combined Authority be noted.**
- 2.2 **The arrangements for the funding of Disabled Facilities Grants be approved.**
- 2.3 **The consultation response to the Tourism review set out in appendix A be approved for submission.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

3.1 leSE

Since the last meeting of the committee the Council has been successful in gaining two awards from leSE for its innovative services. The first was a Silver Award for Innovation and the second was a Bronze Award for Transforming Access to Services. Both of these areas have been actively supported by Members in the context of Melton's work within its places and communities. To gain two awards was a significant achievement and illustrates the Council's progress in these innovative areas of work over the last twelve months, as previously it received a Certificate of Excellence in recognition rather than being successful in the Award categories themselves. The Council intends to continue its relationship with leSE and it considers becoming a member of the organisation. The costs of this if membership is considered appropriate will be met by existing budgets.

3.2 Visits from interested colleagues/partners

As Members are aware the Council continues to receive visits from Councils and partners who are interested in our work and development. Newark and Sherwood District Council made a return visit to discuss the detail of some of the issues around Council's relocation to Parkside and adapting staff working practices, accompanied by the relevant Member portfolio holder. A further visit by one of their partners is being scheduled.

- 3.2.1 A major visit by Bath and North East Somerset was also held supported by the Centre of Excellence for information sharing, where colleagues wished to understand the ethos and principles of the working of Me and My Learning. The Council also gained insight from BANES about the relevance of a facility such as Me and My Learning in relation to the support for Syrian Refugees, a report relating to this is elsewhere on this agenda. Havant Borough Council will also be making a return visit in the coming weeks to develop their understanding of the Councils integrated model of working.
- 3.2.2 The Centre of Excellence for Information Sharing also recently paid a visit to Me and My Learning seeking insight into the barriers to work and methods to tackle these. Also The Chief Executive and the Director of the Centre shared a platform at the recent Capita Conference dealing with Information Sharing in a modern setting in particular, Melton was able to illustrate the extension of its working with new partners such as Health and the Voluntary Sector.
- 3.2.3 Links are developing with Aylesbury Vale District Council who are taking a focused approach to commercialism in their services. This provides learning to the council in a newer area of activity.

3.3 Combined Authority

Discussions continue concerning the development of the proposed organisation for the Combined Authority for Leicester and Leicestershire. The draft Constitution has been produced and has been considered in detail by the nine councils Monitoring Officers and Solicitors. The Operating Agreement covering how the authority will be managed and run is still in draft form and has not been reviewed by Partners.

- 3.3.1 As Members are aware Full Council will hold a debate on the voting rights of certain Members to the Combined Authority. The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) is being considered for voting rights within the Authority. Detailed consideration of this is set out within the Constitution and once those proposals are understood and considered a debate can be held at Full Council on this matter and the potential for other Partners including other Councils or public sector bodies joining can be held. Currently it is anticipated that this will be Full Council on the 27th April 2016, should all development work be completed by that time in order to fully advise Members.

3.4 Efficiency Plan

Officers have been required by Full Council to prepare an Efficiency Plan to cover the next 3/4 years of the Councils Mid Term Financial Strategy. The Officers are proposing an integrated approach to the achievement of necessary savings by action across all Council areas of activity. This will include the traditional Value for Money areas of focus of efficiency effectiveness and economy as well as examination of business expansion and change, through work on the services the Council offers, the partners it deals with and the opportunities for income and grant generation to support service delivery. The bottom line however must be business contraction if necessary and if earlier projects/ proposals are not able to deliver the Council must be ready with its necessary alternative approach.

3.4.1 The Officers are on course to prepare and deliver the Plan to this Committee at its meeting in the June Cycle. Key elements of the Councils approach will be to focus activity on priority areas which will release the major savings or promote increased income however smaller sums as able to be realised will be captured and included within the Plan monitoring as it is implemented. As directed by Members Officers will adhere to the Corporate Plan priorities in terms of its management of delivery. This latter point is in line with good practice and advice from major commentators who indicate that Councils need to find approaches which are in line with their ethos and underpinning business approach.

3.5 Better Care Fund

As Members may recall the government included monies for district council delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) within funds paid to upper tier authorities in the Better Care Fund. Government advised that these sums should be passported in full to district councils for delivery. This was implemented in 2015/16. In 2016/17 the Government also included these sums in the Fund, however, it increased the sums available to district councils whilst reducing monies available to health and county/ unitary partners in relation to other committed activities from the Fund. In Melton's case this amounts to in the region of £100k.

3.5.1 In Leicestershire sums have been committed to areas of activity relating to assisted technology and other support to keep older people and others in need living in their homes for longer periods. In order to continue that work the additional sums made available to districts through the Fund have not been passported to those districts. The districts have been guaranteed funding at the 2015/16 sums. For Melton Borough Council support for assisted technology, services for keeping people in their homes longer other than delivery of aids, adaptations and major alterations fits in with the Councils approach to the Lightbulb Project, Local Area Coordination for which this Council is a pilot area and locality working with health partners. The Councils professional managing DFGs has confirmed that in her opinion the more coordinated approach to assisted technology and related services would be a better use of the Councils additional funding than to allocated the monies directly to Melton where there may not be the demand for take up. Officers suggest Members approve this approach. A Business case in this future approach will be presented to Community and Social Affairs Committee in the new Civic Year.

3.6 Tourism Review

In October 2015 an independent review was started by Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council to see how tourism management and promotion could be improved, including future delivery models. The review was completed in February 2016 with the publication of *Tourism Support Services Report* undertaken by Blue Sail. The report was submitted to Leicestershire County Council Cabinet on 1st March 2016, which reported that stakeholders perceive a lack of strategic leadership and coordination across tourism and place marketing as a whole. Three options are being considered as a possible way forward and form part of the consultation due to close on Friday 16th April 2016:

- Reformed public private partnership – an independent not for profit company similar to the Leicestershire Promotions Ltd model.
- A destination management function within a local authority – initially a department in a lead authority with a view to subsequent move to the control of the proposed Combined Authority
- A local authority controlled company – similar in function to the above but established as a company owned by the city and county councils.

The review comes after the city, county and district councils submitted a bid for Government approval to set up a combined authority to guide key decisions on transparent planning, skills and other key issues, which could include tourism and place marketing.

- 3.6.1 There are currently five district tourism partnerships including Melton Promotions as well as a Leicester based Tourism Forum and a countywide Tourism Partnership, which evidences the commitment from local stakeholders and businesses to working collaboratively. However, it has been proposed that a county wide strategic Tourism Advisory Board with local leaders be established. Districts are keen to retain the autonomy associated with local District Tourism Partnerships, and to support cross border working at this maximises funding potential. Therefore as part of a co-ordinated response Melton Promotions has circulated information to raise awareness of the opportunities and members are asked to support the attached response set out in appendix A, for submission.

4.0 **FINANCE AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Policy and Corporate Implications

Support for the submission of a proposal to establish a Combined Authority was approved by Full Council at its meeting in December 2015. This report sets out the further work with respect to the necessary framework for the Combined Authority, in particular work on the Constitution and the Operating Agreement. Further work is also progressing across the City and County on a range of topic areas for focus for the Combined Authority. The Leader of the Council sits on the Economic Growth Board which is currently acting as the shadow Combined Authority.

The districts are a partner with the key lead agencies of social care and health with respect to the Better Care Fund which supports social care and health integration within the County. The Executive oversees projects such as the Public Health project on Local Area Coordination and the Lightbulb project which majors on Housing and Health integration in support of older and vulnerable people living in their homes.

4.2 Financial Implications

The Council is supported in its engagement with the Lightbulb Project and its pilot status with respect to the Local Area Coordination by grant funding

The Council has been advised previously that its contribution to the Combined Local Authority running costs will be in the region on £5,000 and this can be accommodated within existing budgets.

5.0 **EQUALITIES**

Lead partners such as Blaby with respect to the Lightbulb Project carry out the necessary Equalities Impact Assessments in relation to the individual work streams, as required.

6.0 **RISKS**

6.1

L I K E L I H O O D	A	Very High			3	
	B	High				
	C	Significant			1	
	D	Low			2	
	E	Very Low				
	F	Almost Impossible				
			Negligible 1	Marginal 2	Critical 3	Catastrophic 4

IMPACT

Risk No	Risk Description
1	Corporate Risk: Challenge of cultural issues which could undermine our ability to transform the Council and delivery of the required savings.
2	Loss of Destination Management Organisation undermines local coordination and dilutes Melton's strong brand, image and profile resulting in reputational damage.
3	Corporate Finance Risks.

7.0 **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

7.1 There are no particular implications arising from this report.

8.0 **LEGAL**

8.1 The establishment of the Combined Authority is pursuant to specific to legislation relating to these vehicles. The Council working in partnership with the other Local Authorities in Leicester and Leicestershire will comply with the requirements of the legislation as advised by the Department of Communities and Local Government.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE**

9.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

10.0 **CONSULTATION**

10.1 Extensive City and County wide consultation was carried out with respect to the submission of a proposal for a Combined Authority in the Autumn of 2015. This was supportive of such a proposal.

11.0 **WARDS AFFECTED**

11.1 All

Contact Officer: Lynn Aisbett – Chief Executive

Date: 05.04.2016

Background Papers: Topic template- Combined Authority March 2016
Efficiency plan template

Appendices : Appendix A: Letter from Melton Leicestershire promotions

Reference : X:\Cttee, Council & Sub Cttees\PFA\2015-16\13April2016\Item 14 – LA Corporate Issues