

Report of: Finance Scrutiny Committee

To: Executive Board

Date: 13th. August

Item No:

Title of Report : Local Government White Paper – Strong and prosperous communities. Enhanced two-tier working

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To report the recommendations of the Finance Scrutiny Committee arising from their initial consideration of the challenges in the recent White Paper concerning shared services and enhanced two-tier working

Key decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Councillor John Goddard

Scrutiny Responsibility: Finance Scrutiny Committee

Ward(s) affected: All

Report Approved by:

Cllr. Price – Chair Of Finance Scrutiny Committee

Sarah Fogden – Finance & Asset Management

Jeremy Thomas – Legal & Democratic Services

Policy Framework: No

Recommendation(s): The committee recommendations are those detailed in section 2 below. The Executive Board is asked to respond to the Scrutiny Committee:

1. If it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations outlined.

2. If it agrees , when will the recommendations be implemented, and who will take the lead.

3. If it disagrees, why.

4. If more information is required from other officers, when that will be considered.

1. Background

As part of its planned work programme, the Finance Scrutiny Committee has considered the proposals within the Local Government White Paper ' Strong and Prosperous Communities', concerning enhanced -tier working and shared services. In particular they asked for information on:

- 1 The proposals being considered by the authority with other public sector providers to produce efficiencies and service improvement through joint working;
- 2 Current thinking within the Council, the other Districts and the County Council on how to achieve clearer accountability to residents through enhanced two –tier working; and
- 3 How the Council plans to manage and enhance its “place shaping role” across all issues affecting the City residents, not simply those where it has direct responsibility.

The committee considered a report from the Chief Executive outlining the framework agreed within the County for consideration of proposals for shared services. The report also outlined the proposed new management structure, the cross party working group and a consultancy exercise on the role of area committees as drivers for the City Council's consideration of enhanced neighbourhood working and place shaping. This is attached at appendix 1.

2. Recommendations to the Executive Board

The Executive Board is recommended to:

- a) Approve the Committee's support for the options appraisal approach outlined in the Chief Executive's report (paragraph 12) if individual ideas and proposals for sharing services are pursued.
- b) Agree that a structure and process be put in place within the Council that brings forward ideas and proposals for services and functions that have the potential to achieve better outcomes for users or financial efficiencies through shared delivery
- c) Agree that the Chief Executive should be asked to accelerate

thinking on enhanced two-tier working and to bring forward issues and proposals where the City Council wishes to lead within its area and possibly more widely.

- d) Identify areas, issues and services where enhanced neighbourhood working would be of benefit to City residents

3. Strategic Director's Comments

Benefits from this approach may come in the form of lower costs, better productivity or more logical service delivery for customers.

Key issues will be to ensure

- We have a consistent and robust system for identifying which areas we should explore for enhanced two-tier working, and we consider other delivery models (as per our procurement strategy) at the same time.
- We carry out a risk and benefit exercise at the outset, so we understand what the aim of each exercise is and the likely timing of benefits and scale of potential risks.
- We integrate our estimates of savings and benefits into our budget and business planning systems.
- We review (and report) progress against interventions using our corporate performance management system.

Name and contact details of author:

**Pat Jones on behalf of Councillor Price
Chair of Finance Scrutiny Committee**

Background papers: None