

Chairman - Councillor P M M Farrington

Present (for all or part of the meeting):-

Councillors:

J M Pert	Deputy Leader and Community Portfolio
J K Price	Climate Change Portfolio
R M Smith	Resources Portfolio
C V Trowbridge	Leisure Portfolio
M J Winnington	Environment Portfolio

Also present Councillors R P Cooke, A T A Godfrey,
R A James and M Philips

Officers in attendance:-

Mr T Clegg	Chief Executive
Mrs J Aupers	Head of Governance
Mr W Conaghan	Press and Communications Manager
Mr J Dean	Democratic Services Officer

CAB38 Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2022 as published on 4 November 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

CAB39 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor F Beatty.

CAB40 Business Case for Shared Services

Considered a report setting out the business case proposing the sharing of services between Cannock Chase District Council and Stafford Borough Council, including the sharing of a Senior Management Team led by a shared Chief Executive.

Councillor P M M Farrington introduced the report by acknowledging that the proposals represented one of the most complex and significant decisions to be taken by the Council before reiterating the point made in Paragraph 5.16 that it 'will not be a merger of the two Councils' and the content of Paragraph 5.17 which detailed retaining the sovereignty of both Authorities.

Continuing, the Leader of the Council highlighted the detail contained within Paragraph 3, which would not have been possible without the hard work of Officers in developing said proposals and stressing that open communication with all Council staff was paramount throughout this process.

Councillor Farrington stated that on balance the benefits of increased sharing of services outweighed any associated risks and gave the best opportunity to maximise the benefits, as proven by those services which had been successfully shared for many years.

Reference was made to the financial pressures and savings as set out on pages 33 and 34 of the agenda with rationale provided for how the potential savings figures were calculated.

The Leader of the Council concluded his comments by recommending that the well thought out proposals as set out in Paragraph 2 be approved.

In seconding the motion to approve the recommendations, the Deputy Leader reiterated that the Council's finances were well run, as confirmed by the independent peer review and has continually shown itself to be innovative through sharing and outsourcing of functions. The recommendations of the report allowed for more resilience and greater financial stability allowing the Council to fulfil its aspirations to its residents.

Councillor M J Winnington reaffirmed the view that the role of the Council was to deliver its services to the community, which adoption of the proposals would allow to be developed further and be delivered in a more efficient manner.

Councillor R M Smith referred to the findings as set out in the report of Grant Thornton, the Council's external auditors, who found the Council's finances continued to be carefully managed, despite the current global pressures and the uncertainty of future funding streams. The report represented a logical step forward for both of the Councils concerned.

The Cabinet subsequently voted on the recommendation, which was declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:- that the proposals of the Leader of the Council be approved as follows:

That:-

- (a) Council be recommended to approve the wider sharing of services including a shared Chief Executive and Leadership Team (Option 1 set out in the business case). All services to be shared with the exception of:

- Housing services funded by the Housing Revenue Account at Cannock Chase Council;
- The management of the Housing Registers for both Councils; and
- The management and delivery of Elections

(b) subject to (a) being approved, Council be asked to approve:

(i) the Senior Management Structure as set out at section 9 of the business case which comprised:

- 1 x Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)
- 2 x Deputy Chief Executives (one of which to be the s151 Officer);
- 7 x Heads of Service (one of which to be the Monitoring Officer)

(This would give rise to a financial saving of £88k (6.7%) at current salary rates;

The shared senior management structure to be put into place as quickly as possible with a target start date of 1 April 2023).

- (ii) the delegation of authority to the Chief Executive (in consultation with the two Leaders) to finalise the terms and conditions of employment for the Chief Officers comprising the senior management structure;
- (iii) the creation of a joint appointments committee for elected members of both Councils to make appointments to vacant posts on the shared senior management team;
- (iv) to commence the recruitment process for the new Deputy Chief Executive - Place;
- (v) the governance arrangements for overseeing the implementation and ongoing oversight of shared services (set out in section 11 of the business case). This included establishing:
 - a Joint Strategic Shared Services Board;
 - a Joint Operational Shared Services Board

(c) For the transitional period from the date of the Council decision until the new shared services arrangements be bought into effect, Council be asked to approve:

- (i) the ongoing sharing of the Chief Executive;
and
- (ii) the continuation of the interim Deputy Chief Executive arrangements at both Councils in order to provide adequate cover and to provide a mechanism in relation to conflicts of interests whilst the arrangements for sharing services be put into place.
- (iii) the non-decision-making Shared Services Board continue to consider any matters that arise in the interim.
- (iv) the Head of Law and Administration together with the interim Head of Human Resources, in consultation with the Leader of each Council be authorised to finalise the necessary legal and HR arrangements in relation to the above recommendations.

(d) If Council determined to reject the business case for shared services, Council be asked to approve the ongoing sharing of the Chief Executive for a period to be agreed with both Leaders, to support Cannock Chase Council in putting interim arrangements in place pending the recruitment of a new Chief Executive.

CHAIR