

MINUTE EXTRACT FROM THE WESTMORLAND AND FURNESS JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29 MARCH 2022

W&F/9 FORMATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

The Programme Director presented a report informing the Joint Committee about “the Implementation Team,” a single team of officers as required by Article 26 of the Cumbria (Structural Changes) Order 2022 (SCO).

The members of the Implementation Team were to be officers of the sovereign Councils, with the members of that Team appointing a leader of the Team, and the deputy leaders of the Implementation Team being an officer of one of the Cumberland Councils and an officer of one of the Westmorland and Furness Councils. There was a duty placed within the Order on sovereign Councils to co-operate in the formation of the Implementation Team and to release the officers concerned from their normal duties to assist in the work as reasonably required by Joint Committees or Shadow Authorities, as well as a general duty to consult and co-operate with one another and the Shadow Authorities.

Since the announcement in July 2021, and prior to this Joint Committee having been stood up, preparations had commenced to enable the smooth operation of the two new Councils from Vesting Day, key details of which were provided within the report.

Diagrams illustrating the officer programme structure and governance that had been established to deliver the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Programme were set out at Appendix 2 to the report. Work to move to the two new Councils had been organised into six thematic areas: People; Place; Corporate/Enabling Services; ICT; Customer and Digital; and Finance.

The design and delivery of the LGR Programme was being overseen by a Chief Executive/senior officer Board (the LGR Programme Board), chaired by the Senior Responsible Officer(s). LGR Programme Board membership included all Chief Executives of the sovereign authorities, the Chairs of the thematic groups (where these were not Chief Executives); the Programme Finance Lead (and Section 151 Officer); and the Programme Director. In due course, once Interim Heads of Paid Service had been appointed by the Shadow Authorities, it was intended that they would also join the Board.

In terms of meeting the requirements of the SCO, the LGR Programme Board, described above would be “the Implementation Team”. They would be supported in this role by the Programme Management Team and Programme Management Office that had been established, together with the officers of all seven sovereign Councils involved in the arrangements described above and supplemented by the capacity available via the Strategic Partner arrangement where appropriate.

In terms of the (Senior Responsible Officer) SRO arrangements, the programme had operated a three-way joint SRO approach since December 2021 which had served the programme well. For continuity in the next phase of the programme, this arrangement was to be extended, and the SCO leadership requirements, (for a team leader and two deputies, one from the Cumberland Councils and one from the Westmorland and Furness Councils), would be discharged by the three SROs continuing to work together. This arrangement would operate until such time as it was reviewed; following the appointment of the two Interim Heads of Paid Service, and the Chief Executive of the County Council would also be in post. It would be appropriate to reflect the roles of Interim Head of Paid Service (and subsequently the Heads of Paid Service) in the leadership of the Implementation Team, and it was the intention to bring a report to the first meeting of the Shadow Authorities in this regard.

RESOLVED – That the arrangements for the formation of a single team of officers (“the Implementation Team”) as required by Article 26 of the Cumbria (Structural Changes) Order 2022, as set out at paragraphs 3.6-3.8 of the report and above, be agreed.