

RESOLUTION OF THE JOINT PERFORMANCE MONITORING PANEL AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT PANEL OF 22 JULY 2021

SOUTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP

Following the Strategic Advisor's introduction of the draft Business Case and Memorandum of Agreement, Members' comments included:

- There were real opportunities to have an improved tourism offer
- Could members be sent ELDC's brochure setting out leisure plans for Skegness and Mablethorpe
- The Partnership needs to be able to react to opportunities very quickly.
- The importance of communicating with all staff throughout the process, following the Council meeting
- The Partnership offers a unique opportunity to apply pressure to Government to resolve the long-standing discrepancy in the way Internal Drainage Boards are funded.

The following questions were addressed by the Strategic Advisor:

- The risk that joining an existing partnership may result in SHDC having to accept existing agreed priorities – the Business Case identifies opportunities and it will be SHDC's choice whether to adopt the same. There will likely have to be an early priority to look at waste given the new Environment Bill. Each Council would also approve an Annual Delivery Plan.
- The stages for implementing the new alliance and structure looked lengthy and could slow down delivery – the stages for building the alliance appeared to be consecutive in the Business Plan, but they would in fact run in parallel.
- Potential requirement for SHDC to migrate to different systems – there were clear benefits in having uniformity in systems. PSPS had already been asked to produce a transformation plan to get all three councils on a common systems platform.
- Concern about the capacity for delivery in the Place – the Deputy Chief Executives for Growth and Programme Delivery would work together very closely. This was also important for Central Government which is seeking local views on the Place and the powers needed for delivery. The Partnership could assist by providing a strong united voice.
- Concerns that PSPS were already under pressure (delay in preparing annual accounts given as an example) – PSPS were already responsible for preparing the accounts for all three authorities so the strategic alliance would not increase pressure on the PSPS Finance Team.
- Concerns that some senior managers may be less invested in South Holland – the new Chief Executive/HoPS is a resident of SHDC, and (subject to consultation) the proposed Monitoring Officer is both a resident and a long-standing officer of SHDC and the proposed Director of Corporate Development/s151 Officer is the current sole Director of SHDC.
- Do we know what approach will be taken regarding agile working – whilst the benefits of agile working are recognised, no direction of travel has been set and it will be for each council to consider what is most effective for it.
- The Communities portfolio looks very big; have we got the staff to run with it – there are some very capable individuals, not least in SHDC. The other two councils have some specific skill sets in some areas that will also support SHDC – such as the green agenda.

- Will members be involved in recruitment to the vacant DCX post – initial ‘slot-ins’ are proposed to be delegated to the HoPS. Vacancies at DCX level will thereafter be member appointments through the Joint Employment Panel.
- Is a 12 month notice period long enough – the arrangement with BDC provided six months. A notice period longer than 12 months is a very long period, especially in the political sphere.

The Committee resolved that Members’ observations be put together to go forward to Full Council on 29 July 2021.

The main comments and suggestions were as follows:

- Partnership priorities should include leisure and markets, which should be pursued proactively.
- The corporate priority around Spalding and Holbeach, on page 31 of the Business Case, should be extended to all South Holland towns.
- The ‘Partnership Platform – One Team’ on page 89 should include the Governance and Audit Committee
- There should be a clear list of priorities for 2022/23 and a firm timeline for delivery.
- In order to ensure effective and prompt decision-making, the Council should wherever possible use its own facilities for meetings.
- The Council should be willing in the future to review and if necessary amend the Management Team Structure in light of experience.
- There needs to be a focus on looking after the welfare of all staff.
- The Partnership should be used as a vehicle to build greater partnership relationships, including with the Internal Drainage Boards.
- There should be a focus on keeping all members engaged in the process, including briefings to opposition members/leaders and consideration should be given to collaboration between the councils’ scrutiny panels.