

Report for Resolution

Report to Council
30 March 2010

Report of Director of Transformation

Subject Unitary status for Norwich – proposed membership of
Implementation Executive

11

Purpose

To consider the political make-up of City Council representation on an Implementation Executive to manage the transition to a unitary council for Norwich by 31 March 2011.

Recommendations

To :

- (1) Note that the draft “Norwich and Norfolk (Structural Changes) Order 2010” sets out proposals for an Implementation Executive of 18 elected members, comprising 12 City Councillors and 6 City Councillors representing the city area
- (2) Agree that the 12 City Council seats on the Implementation Executive should be made up from:
 - 6 Labour city councillors
 - 4 Green city councillors
 - 1 Liberal Democrat city councillor
 - 1 Conservative city councillor
- (3) Make nominations to these roles.
- (4) Note that additional allowances will be payable for these roles, and that this will need to be considered by an independent panel, which would make recommendations to the Implementation Executive.

Financial Consequences

There are no financial implications arising directly from the report. There will be costs associated with the implementation of a new unitary council, but these will be subject to a separate report to the Implementation Executive. Savings arising from the implementation will exceed costs, and implementation costs will be paid back within a 3 year period.

Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

This report relate to all of the Council’s strategic objectives and priorities.

Executive Member: All

Ward: All

Contact Officers

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Background Documents

Nil

Report

1. On 10 February 2010 the Secretary of State announced his intention to lay orders for the implementation of a unitary council for Norwich, with effect from 1 April 2011. At the same time, the Secretary of State laid draft implementation orders ("*The Norwich and Norfolk (Structural Changes) Order 2010*") which would put in place the necessary legal and democratic arrangements to establish the new council.
2. At the time of writing this report, the draft orders are still progressing through Parliament. This report therefore makes the assumption that by the time of the Council meeting the draft orders have been passed in legislation. If not, then this report will need to be withdrawn.
3. A key consequence of the orders is that if they were agreed City Council elections in May 2010 would be cancelled, and sitting councillors' terms would be extended until all-out elections in May 2011. This would mean that an Implementation Executive (IE) would be need to be established in order to take the key decisions associated with the setting up of the new unitary council.
4. The orders also assume that Norwich City Council would act as a "preparing authority", and therefore would take the lead in setting up the new council. The orders set out that the leader of the City Council would chair the IE, and have a casting vote (if needed).
5. The draft orders provide for an IE comprising 18 members - 12 members drawn from the City Council and 6 from the County Council. The County Council members must be drawn from the Norwich City Council area. There is a presumption around strong and continuing leadership and a political balance that reasonably reflects the relative balance of party numbers.
6. After consultation with City Council members, it is proposed that the make-up of the IE be as follows:
 - **City Council (12 seats)**
Labour 6, Green 4, Lib Dem 1 and Cons 1
 - **County Council (6 seats)**
Labour 1, Green 3, Lib Dem 1 and Cons 1
 - **Totals (18 seats)**
Labour 7, Green 7, Lib Dem 2 and Cons 2
7. Council is asked to agree nominees for the 12 City Council seats.
8. We have already approached Norfolk County Council to seek their nominations for their places on the IE.
9. The IE will have a high workload, and will probably need to meet regularly to handle the large amount of business and decisions that will be needed

in order to effect implementation within a tight 12 month period. It is recognised that additional member allowances will be needed to reflect this very significant additional workload. Research is already underway into allowances paid to members of other new unitary council implementation executives in 2008/09. This will need to be considered by an independent panel, which will then make recommendations to the Implementation Executive in due course.