



FUTURE NORTHANTS

Latest news on
the unitary
programme

Stakeholder update

January 2020

New year brings design stage for unitary services

Welcome to the latest update from the Future Northants Programme, our councils working together to create two new unitary authorities to serve Northamptonshire.

As we enter 2020, the Structural Change Order – legislation that formalises the creation of the two new unitaries – is continuing its passage through Parliament. And with 14 months to go now until the proposed 'go live' date of 1 April 2021, work across the programme is understandably picking up significant pace.

We're making steady progress across the programme's 13 portfolios, with the Discovery phase of the work – pulling together all the information about the current services and how they are delivered – now complete.

We're now beginning the Design Phase of the programme, to start shaping how the new services for the two unitary authorities will look and work.

Some of you may have already heard about the work that is now starting towards creating a 'Strawman' – this is a project planning term for an early draft model of how the new services might be designed. All programme teams are currently working towards creating a Strawman for each new authority which, once complete will then be refined and worked on further to create draft service designs, which will be known as 'blueprints'.

The intention is to have all this design work and draft blueprints ready for the new shadow authorities to consider and



*Paul Helsby
Programme Director*

approve this summer. Of course first we must also hold elections to the shadow authorities and these are due to take place on 7 May, alongside the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and parish elections.

Until these shadow authorities are set up, joint committees for the West and North are steering forward the unitary preparations. At their latest meetings this month they considered arrangements for managing and monitoring finances and the process for recruiting senior managers to the new unitaries (you can find out more in this bulletin).

I would also like to update you on the Change Champions – a staff network across the eight councils that will play a fundamental role in helping and supporting employees to prepare for the new unitaries. With 246 Change Champions now on board, it's encouraging to see such enthusiasm as we progress on this unique journey.

Portfolio updates

Portfolios from across the Future Northants Programme are busy progressing their various work streams.

Click on the links below to read the latest updates from Senior Responsible Officers across the Programme:

[Adult Social Care and Health & Social Care Integration](#)

[Children's Social care and Education Services](#)

[Growth, Infrastructure and Public Estates](#)

[Revenues & Benefits and Community & Leisure](#)

[Housing](#)

[Corporate Services and Customer & Digital](#)

[Environmental Services and Regulatory Services](#)

Spotlight on finance and recruitment at latest joint committee meetings

Finance and recruitment formed the focus for the latest meetings of the two joint committees tasked with progressing Northamptonshire's unitary proposals.

The West Northamptonshire and North Northamptonshire Joint Committees met recently to consider and endorse how finances will be managed and monitored for the Future Northants unitary programme, to create the two new unitary councils by 1 April 2021.

At the meetings, which took place in Northampton on 7 January and in Corby on 16 January, the two committees received information on the programme's financial baseline position – this the starting point of assumed costs for creating the new councils and potential savings that could be made.

The baseline figures estimate required investment of £43.5m, which includes £18m of Business Rates Pilot funding, to transform and move across their services to form the two new authorities,

which could achieve a possible yearly budget saving of £85.9m. Members heard these were being used as benchmark figures to monitor and report future financial progress and are therefore likely to change.

The two joint committees also welcomed arrangements for recruiting the senior managers that will head the proposed new unitary authorities.

Members endorsed an approach and timescales for appointing statutory roles required by law to be filled when the two Shadow authorities are created in May, including a Head of Paid Service, Chief Finance (Section 151) Officer and Monitoring Officer each for North and West.

The arrangements include putting in place interim appointments in these roles from May 2020 pending the recruitment process and appointments being made permanently to the posts later in the summer.

The two Shadow Authorities are scheduled to be formed in May 2020 with responsibility for delivering the new unitary councils and setting their first budgets and council tax. Until then, the joint committees continue to take responsibility for putting unitary plans in place.

The next meeting of the North Northants Joint Committee will take place on Monday, 10 February at 6.30pm at East Northamptonshire Council in Thrapston. Agendas and papers will be available nearer the time at www.kettering.gov.uk/meetings/committee/52/north_northamptonshire_joint_committee

The next West Northants Joint Committee will be held on Monday, 3 February at 6pm at Daventry District Council. Agendas and papers for this meeting are available at <http://www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com/councillors/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=886>



Engine Room outlines Programme mechanics

The progress being made towards the preparation of the two new unitaries is being charted in a new hub for the Future Northants Programme.

The Engine Room, based at One Angel Square, is a workspace for Programme staff and also provides a visual representation of the unitary journey, with portfolio and project plans on display along with timelines for the progress ahead.

We will arrange an open day for partners and stakeholders interested in visiting the Engine Room and finding out more - watch this space for more details.