

Report of the Director of Governance

Strategic Partnership Agreement

Summary

1. At the meeting of Full Council on Thursday 29 October, Full Council approved the submission to Government of a case for City of York Council remaining a unitary on its existing footprint, together with the submission of its devolution 'Asks' to enable discussions on devolution to be progressed as quickly as possible. Full Council also accepted an amendment to the Executive's proposal to submit a Strategic Partnership Agreement, alongside those submissions as follows:

"Approve the submission of a Strategic Partnership Agreement with North Yorkshire (Annex 4), which proposes areas of potential joint working between City of York Council and a new North Yorkshire unitary council to support efficient local government in the region, following consideration by Scrutiny and well in advance of the Government's final deadline for submission."

2. This meeting of Customer & Corporate Scrutiny Management & Policy Committee has been convened to allow scrutiny to consider the Strategic Partnership Agreement submitted to Full Council on 29 October and the Executive on 22 October 2020. The Leader of the Council and Chief Operating Officer will be in attendance to respond to any comments the Committee wish to make. The Agreement is attached at Annex A to this report.

Background

3. At its meeting on 22 October 2020, the Executive approved for submission to Full Council, the Strategic Partnership Agreement, set out at Annex A, with North Yorkshire, proposing areas of joint working between City of York Council and a new North Yorkshire Unitary Council.

In order to maximise efficiencies in a new local government structure, the Executive recognised that authorities must work closely together to take any opportunities for joint or shared working where there is a benefit of doing so. Attached at Annex A is the York and North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership Agreement outlining how City of York Council could build on the existing joint working with North Yorkshire County Council, working effectively with a new North Yorkshire Unitary authority to maximise efficiencies. Existing collaboration includes a shared Health & Safety Service, shared use of some HR support & HR advisory support for schools, joint founding shareholders in Veritau (internal audit & fraud management), joint shareholders in Yorwaste (waste management company) and partners in the public private partnership of the Allerton Park Waste Recovery Plant. This would lead to the consideration of options to share resources or lead service delivery across aspects where each authority was best placed to do so for mutual benefit, respecting the sovereignty of places and communities.

4. The initial submission of the case for York to remain as a unitary council on its existing footprint was made to Government on 9 November by the Chief Operating Officer, in line with the Council decision. The Strategic Partnership Agreement, which supports this case, will be submitted by 9 December as part of the Council's supplementary submission of further evidence.
5. All the submitted material received by the Government will be considered and form part of their decision as to which options they will consult upon and what will ultimately be determined by the Secretary of State.

Consultation

6. No specific consultation was required in the preparation of this report.

Options

7. The Committee is asked to consider the Strategic Partnership Agreement attached in line with the decision of Full Council;
8. The Leader and Chief Operating Officer will be in attendance at the meeting to receive any comments the Committee may make.

Council Plan 2019-23

9. The consideration of this report by scrutiny supports working as an 'open and effective council'.

Implications

10. Any implications associated with entering into a Strategic Partnership Agreement were taken into account by the Executive at its meeting on 22 October 2020, when it considered, in particular, the potential to maximise efficiencies through a joint working approach. There are no direct implications therefore associated with this report.

Risk Management

11. There are no known risks associated with the recommendations in this report, however CSMC's failure to consider the Strategic Partnership Agreement would directly contravene an agreed amendment at Full Council. Conversely, radically seeking to alter the Agreement might impact on any joint working approach under consideration with North Yorkshire.

Recommendations

12. The committee are asked to consider and comment on the Strategic Partnership Agreement, as submitted.

Contact Details

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Director of Governance

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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

N/A

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex A – Strategic Partnership Agreement

Abbreviations

None