

Meeting	Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	18 November 2020
Present	Councillors Crawshaw (Chair), Fenton (Vice-Chair), Hunter, Hollyer, Rowley, Pearson, Kilbane, Fisher and Melly (as substitute for Councillor Musson)
Apologies	Councillors Mason and Musson

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At this point in the meeting, Members of the Committee are asked to declare any personal, prejudicial or pecuniary interests in the business on the agenda. None were declared.

49. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chair reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's public participation scheme.

50. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Further to the decision of Full Council at its meeting on 29 October 2020, calling on this Committee to consider the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) with North Yorkshire, Members reviewed the SPA, questioning the Chief Operating Officer and Leader of the Council on a variety of aspects of the Agreement.

A joint presentation was given at the meeting. Firstly, the Leader set out the background context to the SPA as part of the devolution process: the aim being to work collaboratively with North Yorkshire in light of their single unitary bid, complimentary to York's single unitary submission. The Chief Operating Officer then went on to set out in more detail the key principles under which both authorities would work together, giving examples of existing joint working arrangements and highlighting future potential benefits and co-efficiencies, whilst remaining sovereign bodies.

A full and extensive debate ensued upon a range of issues associated with entering into such a Strategic Partnership Agreement and broadly covering:

- Why it was not possible to consider similar arrangements with other Councils at this point in time;
- Contingency arrangements should the Government not support York's preferred option;
- Existing joint working arrangements;
- The purpose of the SPA to deliver services effectively together where possible, whilst retaining individual sovereignty of services/staff;
- The potential for some staff to relocate in the longer term or operate from split sites;
- Continuing importance of involving scrutiny as the process on devolution, in general, emerges and develops;
- Future contractual arrangements and the need for careful consideration, including representation on any management boards, eg Yorwaste
- Any potential impact on directly elected Mayors, moving forward;

In addition to the above, there was a wider core debate about the potential for including within the SPA some key specific principles which might be of benefit to York residents, such as a commitment to staff being paid the minimum wage and embedding social value principles within any procurement contracts. In response to that debate, the Leader explained the context of the SPA within the wider proposals to unlock devolution and suggested adding a reference to the document to clarify the intention for it be read as part of the aspirations for York as a whole set out in its devolution 'Asks'. The Chief Operating Officer confirmed that the Council was currently bound by and operated in accordance with a range of codes, rules and policies, such as financial regulations and procurement rules, which governed York's key contractual arrangements, irrespective of any Strategic Partnership Agreement.

Finally, it was moved and seconded by Councillors Fenton and Pearson that a letter from this Committee be included as part of the final submission to the Secretary of State, endorsing the key principles of the proposed Strategic Partnership Agreement, having given the matter careful scrutiny and on the proviso that the context setting references suggested by the Leader be incorporated.

A named vote was taken, in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders for Remote Meetings, given the significance of the issue under debate for York, with the results being as follows:

Councillor	Vote
Fenton	For
Fisher	For
Hollyer	For
Hunter	For
Kilbane	For
Melly	For
Pearson	For
Rowley	For
Chair, Councillor Crawshaw	For

The motion being unanimously carried, it was

RESOLVED: That the proposed Strategic Partnership Agreement be supported by this Committee, after full consideration as requested by Full Council, on the proviso that an overarching statement, referred to by the Leader, be incorporated connecting it to the Council's wider aspirations within its devolution submission for York, and with a supporting letter being drafted by the Chair/Vice-Chair to the Secretary of State, for inclusion with the Council's final submission (such letter to be circulated to the Committee for information prior to it being sent).

Councillor J Crawshaw, Chair

[The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.45 am].