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REPORT TO COUNCIL

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL AND EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL PARTNERSHIP – SHARED SERVICES

KEY ISSUE/DECISION:

For Council Members to consider and agree whether to accept the delegation of a function from East Sussex County Council, under which Surrey County Council will provide transactional support and IT hosting services to East Sussex County Council under a partnership agreement between the two Councils.

BACKGROUND:

Surrey County Council, as with other public sector bodies, is faced with delivering services to the public in the context of reduced funding. One option to deliver better value for money is to work in collaboration with other councils to deliver services. The Council has entered into a number of discussions with other local authorities to explore collaboration opportunities under the SE7 initiative.

During 2012 East Sussex County Council approached Surrey County Council to explore the potential for collaboration in order to deliver benefits to both organisations and to explore the opportunity of sharing back office services, with Surrey County Council managing and providing those services for both authorities.

At the Surrey County Council Cabinet meeting on 18 December 2012, Members supported the establishment of a partnership agreement between the two Councils to share back office services.

Councils are able to make arrangements with another local authority for it to discharge functions on their behalf. The authorities participating in such arrangements may do so on terms and conditions they agree between themselves. The services proposed in this report are functions which fall within the executive powers of a Council. A report was therefore presented to East Sussex County Council's Cabinet on 11 December 2012 and its Members approved the establishment of the partnership agreement and the delegation of powers to Surrey County Council. Any delegated functions accepted by the Council will become the responsibility of Surrey County Council's Cabinet.

However, in order for the proposed partnership to be implemented the law requires Full Council to agree to accept the delegation by East Sussex's Cabinet. This Council's Cabinet commends to Council acceptance of the delegation. Cabinet Members agreed that the partnership will build upon the strength of Surrey County Council's shared services enabling both Surrey County Council and East Sussex County Council to make further efficiencies through economies of scale and build resilience in service delivery. Efficiencies will be delivered to the public sector from the joint procurement of IT technical support, utilisation of capacity within Surrey County Council's Data Centre and from shared management and reduced overheads. A detailed analysis of the business case is set out in the reports of Cabinet Member for Change and Efficiency to Cabinet on 18 December 2012.

Equalities and Diversity

An Equalities Impact Assessment on the joint working arrangements has been conducted and will be reviewed by the Cabinet Member for Community Safety. Further EIAs will be conducted at key points throughout the development of the partnership agreement and mobilisation phase to ensure that any mitigating actions required are put in place. The EIA will be updated in March 2013, following further consultation with East Sussex County Council and Serco PLC.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that Full Council support the establishment of a partnership agreement between Surrey County Council and East Sussex County Council, under which Surrey County Council will provide transactional support and IT hosting services to East Sussex County Council.

Contact Officer:

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Sources/background papers:

- Cabinet Report November 2011: Time for Leadership, Time for Change
- Cabinet Report July 2012 – Procurement Review and Partnership between Surrey County Council and East Sussex County Council
- Cabinet Reports and Minutes: 18 December 2012: Surrey County Council and East Sussex County Council Partnership – Shared Services