

Repatriation of NCC Professional Finance and Democratic Services Teams

To: LGSS Joint Committee

Meeting Date: 30th August 2018

From: Mark McLaughlin, Executive Director of Finance, Northamptonshire County Council

Purpose: The committee is asked to confirm the repatriation of the Northamptonshire County Council Professional Finance and Democratic Services Teams from LGSS to Northamptonshire County Council.

Recommendation: That the change in line management of two teams from LGSS to Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) is confirmed. These are the Professional Finance team (26.7 FTE) and the Democratic Services team (9.95 FTE).

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Discussion

The current arrangements whereby all professional and transactional services (Finance, HR, Procurement, IT, Internal Audit, Democratic Services) are provided by LGSS for Northamptonshire County Council has attracted attention in recent months, not least in the Best Value Inspection (The “Max Caller Report”) where it was concluded that the relationship between NCC and LGSS “confuses accountability and at worst prevents it”.

The Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government has sent Commissioners to NCC with specific powers. The Commissioners, along with the Executive Director of Finance, commissioned a review of the County Council’s budget and financial management. This review has led to the conclusion that the interests of improving the financial management of NCC at this most crucial time is best served by placing the Professional Finance Team under the direct line management of the NCC S151 Officer. At the same time the governance and democratic business management agenda is also

facing significant challenges and it has been concluded that the Democratic Services team should also be restored to the line management of the NCC Monitoring Officer.

Key aspects of this proposal are:

- The only officers affected are entirely NCC-facing. Officers who serve multiple local authorities within the LGSS arrangement (such as the Integrated Finance Team) are unaffected;
- The in question are NCC employees and are already on NCC terms and conditions;
- The officers in question are already, *de facto*, line managed by the NCC S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer;
- This move allows the NCC Leadership Team, working with the Commissioners, opportunities to flex and augment these resources to cope with the requirements of a fast moving environment.
- The teams will continue to work closely with LGSS colleagues in an open and collaborative way.

Mark McLaughlin
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