



REPORT TO:	Policy Development Panel
DATE:	23 March 2022
SUBJECT:	ICT Joint Scrutiny between BBC, ELDC & SHDC partner councils in the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership (S&ELCP)
PURPOSE:	To agree a protocol for joint scrutiny between the partner councils in the S&ELCP; to agree the scope for a Joint ICT Strategy Task and Finish Group; and to agree the appointment of three members to the Joint Task and Finish Group.
KEY DECISION:	N
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Portfolio Holder for Corporate & Communications
REPORT OF:	Assistant Director - Governance (Monitoring Officer)
REPORT AUTHOR:	Mark Stinson, Andrea Tait
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All
EXEMPT REPORT?	N

SUMMARY

This report outlines a proposal for the three councils in the S&ELCP to undertake joint scrutiny on matters of common strategic importance; and the proposed process to achieve this. The report also proposes establishment of a Joint ICT Strategy Task and Finish Group.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) That the proposals for joint scrutiny arrangements, as set out in Appendix A, be approved;
- b) That the scope for the proposed Joint ICT Strategy Task and Finish Group, as set out in Appendix B, be approved;
- c) That the Panel appoints three members to the proposed Joint ICT Strategy Task and Finish Group; and

d) That the Task and Finish Group be authorised to determine the detail of its remit and the required lines of enquiry and witnesses

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

A co-ordinated approach to matters of common strategic interest is a significant benefit to the S&ELCP and its constituent councils. Efficient and effective joint scrutiny will be key to achieving that benefit. The proposals in this report outline a clear mechanism for this to be achieved/implemented.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Do nothing: not recommended – this approach would not support collaborative working and would potentially lead to a duplication of work across the S&ELCP.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In establishing the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership, members of each of the partner councils recognised that matters of common strategic interest would benefit from a co-ordinated partnership approach.
- 1.2 It is considered that the establishment of a joint scrutiny function, to consider matters in depth from a Partnership perspective, would be beneficial and would support the co-ordinated partnership approach.
- 1.3 At an initial meeting between the Chairs of the councils' scrutiny committees, a list of potential scrutiny items was considered (these were largely taken from the Annual Delivery Plan). Whilst scrutiny committees will, of course, wish to identify their own priorities for joint scrutiny, there was general support for a Joint Task and Finish Group to consider an ICT Strategy. The proposed scope is set out at Appendix B. The Task and Finish Group will not begin to meet immediately as it is anticipated that transport will be the first scrutiny topic to be considered.

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposed approach to joint scrutiny is set out in Appendix A. However, in short, each council's relevant scrutiny committee will appoint up to three members and any external representatives (following that committee's usual processes) to a joint task and finish group for any given topic. Each agreed topic will have its own task and finish group.
- 2.2 The 'parent' scrutiny committees will set the broad remit of the task and finish groups, but each task and finish group will have authority to determine the detail and the lines of enquiry/witnesses. A Lead Officer will be appointed by the relevant Deputy Chief Executive, and that Lead Officer will support the task and finish group and will prepare any final report (in consultation with the task and finish group).
- 2.3 Final task and finish group reports will be submitted to each council's parent scrutiny committee for final review/adoption and subsequent recommendation on to the relevant decision-making body as appropriate.

- 2.4 Feedback on the proposal was obtained from the scrutiny Chairs of each council and that feedback has been reflected in this report and/or Appendix A. In summary, feedback was that:
- there should be no more than three or four topics considered each year.
 - there needs to be clarity around who approves/implements any recommendations and that recommendations be tracked.
 - the arrangements need to be kept as simple as possible.
 - there should be clarity as to whether Joint Task and Finish Groups meet privately or publicly.
- 2.5 Political Group Leaders were also consulted and again their feedback has been reflected in this report and/or Appendix A. In summary, feedback was that:
- place based scrutiny arrangements may need to be examined in order to ensure that joint scrutiny is successful.
 - given that there are limited resources, any joint scrutiny needs to be restricted to areas where there is a genuine need, identified benefits and anticipation of real outcomes.
- 2.6 Whilst the scrutiny committees of each Council will wish to identify their own topics for joint scrutiny, a number of proposed topics have been identified, largely from the Annual Delivery Plan, and are listed in Appendix C.
- 2.7 Finally, it should be noted that two of the councils have more than one 'parent' scrutiny committee. The proposal at Appendix A assumes that the approval of scopes and the appointment of members to Task and Finish Groups will be determined by the parent committee whose terms of reference most closely reflect the topic in question – but with the overarching aim of equal distribution of topics between those parent committees so far as practicable.
- 2.8 The process set out in Appendix A, when viewed in light of local custom and practice in scrutiny, will be kept under review and brought back to parent scrutiny committees for consideration and/or amendment as may be necessary.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 This report seeks approval of the proposals for joint scrutiny of matters of strategic importance to the Partnership and the establishment of the Joint ICT Strategy Task and Finish Group.

4. EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

- 4.1 Collaborative working on areas of strategic importance.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL'S PARTNERSHIP

- 5.1.1 The approach proposed in this report fully supports the strategic objectives of the S&ELCP.

5.2 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5.2.1 Task and Finish Groups will be established to address joint strategic objectives of the S&ELCP. This means that, over time, many such priorities will be covered and many of these will align to or support local corporate priorities.

5.3 STAFFING

5.3.1 There will be some additional meetings which will have an impact on officer and member time. However, in light of feedback from scrutiny chairs, the number of task and finish groups will be limited to a maximum of four per year.

5.4 CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.4.1 All recommendations arising from joint task and finish groups will be reported to each sovereign council's parent scrutiny committee. If supported, those recommendations will then be considered by the relevant decision-maker for each sovereign council. As such, the process is legally and constitutionally sound.

5.4.2 Suitable provision will be made in the Constitutions of each council as part of the proposed review of the constitutions set out in the Annual Delivery Plan.

5.5 DATA PROTECTION

5.5.1 It is likely that most of the work of task and finish groups will not involve the use of personal data. However, should personal data be processed, each of the councils have appropriate technical and organisational measures in place to protect the same. There are also suitable protocols in place between the councils.

5.6 FINANCIAL

5.6.1 There are unlikely to be any significant financial implications. There may be a small additional cost in terms of the cost of travel and venue hire (if required).

5.7 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.7.1 None at this stage.

5.8 STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES

5.8.1 A draft of these proposals has been shared with scrutiny chairs, political group leaders and Cabinet members. Feedback as a result of that consultation has been incorporated in the report and/or the proposals at Appendix A.

5.9 REPUTATION

5.9.1 Successful delivery of joint scrutiny, which leads to improved strategic outcomes, will be important to the reputation of the S&ELCP.

5.10 CONTRACTS

5.10.1 None at this stage.

5.11 CRIME AND DISORDER

5.11.1 None at this stage.

5.12 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

5.12.1 None at this stage.

5.13 HEALTH AND WELL BEING

5.13.1 None at this stage.

5.14 CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

5.14.1 None at this stage – although the outcome of scrutinising various topics has the potential to impact positively on climate change and environmental matters.

6. ACRONYMS

6.1	BBC	– Boston Borough Council
	ELDC	– East Lindsey District Council
	SHDC	– South Holland District Council
	S&ELCP	– South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

APPENDICES

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -

APPENDIX A	Joint Scrutiny Proposal
APPENDIX B	Joint ICT Strategy Scope
APPENDIX C	List of potential joint scrutiny topics (arising mostly from the Annual Delivery Plan)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

A report on this item has been considered the Performance Monitoring Panel (in respect of the general proposals, not the ICT Strategy Task and Finish Group)

REPORT APPROVAL

Report author:	Mark Stinson, Andrea Tait Mark.Stinson@sholland.gov.uk, atait@sholland.gov.uk
Signed off by:	Assistant Director - Governance (Monitoring Officer)

	Mark.Stinson@sholland.gov.uk
Approved for publication:	Portfolio Holder for Corporate & Communications