



## **Performance Scrutiny Committee Thursday, 9 March 2017**

### **ADDENDA 2**

#### **5. Proposals for the Future Organisation of Local Government in Oxfordshire (Pages 1 - 2)**

To consider feedback on One Oxfordshire and discuss any recommendations to Cabinet.

1. Presentation.
2. Public addresses.
3. Non-committee Councillors and responses from Officers.
4. Committee discussion (for the final 45 minutes).

In September 2016, Performance Scrutiny considered reports from Grant Thornton and PwC and made a recommendation to Cabinet on options for reorganisation of local government within Oxfordshire. Cabinet subsequently directed officers to engage with stakeholders and the public to prepare proposals for a new unitary council to cover the whole county.

A discussion document was published in January 2017 to inform an extensive stakeholder and public engagement process. This process has now been completed. Performance Scrutiny will receive a copy of the full bid document and a presentation on the feedback from the engagement process.

The Cabinet report, including the full proposal, will be available to Performance Scrutiny from Friday 3 March. This will be accompanied by a Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA).

**The Committee is RECOMMENDED to consider the presentation giving feedback on the public and stakeholder engagement process and the revised bid document and make any such comments to Cabinet as they consider should be taken into account before determining whether or not to submit the bid to the Secretary of State.**

This page is intentionally left blank

# Agenda Item 5

## **Addendum to Annex 3 Report of the public and stakeholder engagement**

Addition to Paragraph 2.20

### **West Oxfordshire (15 February, Corn Exchange Witney, attended by 18 people)**

Initially four of the 18 participants favoured a reduction in the number of councils, only four were explicitly against and the remainder 10 people were don't knows. For those supporting a reduction this was on the grounds of efficiency, cost-effectiveness and the provision of more joined-up services. Those against were concerned that local identity and democratic accountability would be lost and that the needs of the "very different" areas of Oxfordshire could not be adequately served by one large unitary authority) while the rest were 'don't knows'.

After detailed discussions, the number favouring a reduction from six to one unitary council increased to 10 - whereas the remaining eight firmly disagreed. The former were persuaded that a single council would result in greater efficiency, large cost-savings and more joined-up services - and that the area boards have significant merits in promoting democracy at a local level. The latter, though, disagreed and felt the proposed change would result in the loss of democratic accountability locally and a lack of political diversity across the county more generally.

This page is intentionally left blank