

REPORT TO COUNCIL

REPORT OF: Chief Executive

REPORT NO. CEX322

DATE: 27th April 2006

TITLE:	Nominations to Welland Joint Committee
KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	N/A
COUNCIL AIMS/PORTFOLIO HOLDER NAME AND DESIGNATION:	COUNCILLOR MRS. LINDA NEAL LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
CORPORATE PRIORITY:	N/A
CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS:	N/A
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IMPLICATIONS:	This report is available via the Local Democracy link on the Council's website www.southkesteven.gov.uk
BACKGROUND PAPERS:	N/A

Recommendation

1. That the Council nominate two members to represent the authority as voting members of the Welland Joint Committee and a further two members to serve as substitutes, one of whom will have observer status.

Background

2. Since its inception in 1998, the Partnership has operated on the basis of an informal meeting between 3 nominated representatives of each authority. This has meant that for any decisions to be taken, full ratification and approval is needed by each of the constituent authorities. This process can be slow but, to date, has not hindered the partnership from submitting and securing funding resources and developing IT infrastructure.

3. In the light of the Gershon Agenda and the increasing importance of achieving both economies and quality improvements through the sharing of services, an increasing amount of European activity is now being directed towards this need.

Currently the partnership is exploring the potential to share four services:

1. Procurement
2. Internal Audit
3. Revenue and Benefits
4. Legal

4. As a partnership of choice each authority is able to select which, if any, of these projects they wish to be party to. South Kesteven is currently a full party to the work on both Procurement and Revenues and Benefits (although the latter is only at the developmental stage).

We are not a partner for Internal Audit because we already have an external resourced service which we are satisfied with. To date, we have not joined the Legal Services because we were developing a shared services agreement with South Holland. However this arrangement has not developed at the pace we had anticipated and we will be restoring the potential of engagement with a Legal shared services partnership in the Welland.

5. In developing the shared services project for Procurement, the Welland has identified a legal impediment to proceeding under the current constitutional arrangements. Put simply, the European procurement rules would not allow one Welland authority to provide services to another Welland authority if the cost of this service exceeds the threshold set in European directives and the process of European-wide advertising and tendering had not been adopted.

This issue and potential remedies are set out in an advice from Eversheds (which was considered by the Executive Panel on 11th April) and which is attached an Appendix A to this report.

6. The Welland Executive Panel agreed that a Joint Committee be established and sought that each member authority provide two nominated voting members for the Joint Committee and one non-voting observer status member who could have substitution rights. In addition, each member authority will also need to provide one further substitute.

Duncan Kerr
Chief Executive