

North Tyneside Council

Report to Chief Executive

Date: 8 December 2022

Title: Future of The Coroner's Service in North Tyneside

Portfolio(s): Elected Mayor	Cabinet Member(s): Mrs N Redfearn CBE Elected Mayor
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Report from Service Area: Law and Governance

Responsible Officer: Jacqueline Laughton
Assistant Chief Executive (Tel: 0191 643 5724)

Wards affected: All Wards

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

The Chief Executive was given delegated authority by Cabinet on 28 November 2022 to make any amendments that were necessary to the Business Case on the merger of the Newcastle upon Tyne and North Tyneside Coronal areas, in consultation with the Elected Mayor, before its submission by him to the Chief Coroner and Ministry of Justice on behalf of the Authority.

It has been necessary for minor amendments to be made to the Business Case before its submission.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that the Chief Executive: -

- (1) Make the necessary amendments to the Business Case referred to in the report attached to this report;
- (2) Submit the Business Case as amended to the Chief Coroner and the Ministry of Justice on behalf of the Authority.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty eight days notice of the future of the Coroner's Service in North Tyneside first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 23 May 2022.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

- 1.4.1 This report does not directly align to the priorities in the Council Plan. The Authority has a statutory duty to appoint a Senior Coroner and to provide sufficient resources for the Coroner to be able to undertake that role.

1.5 Information:

- 1.5.1 Cabinet agreed in principle to the merger of the Newcastle upon Tyne and North Tyneside Coronial areas in September 2019 subject to development of a Business Case supporting the merger.
- 1.5.2 Officers from the Authority and Newcastle City Council have prepared a draft Business Case which Cabinet endorsed at its meeting on 28 November 2022 and formally agreed to the merger of the Coronial areas.
- 1.5.3 Cabinet agreed to give the Chief Executive the delegated authority to make any necessary amendments to the Business Case before its submission to the Chief Coroner and the Ministry of Justice on the basis that he would consult with the Elected Mayor on any such amendments.
- 1.5.4 It has been necessary to make amendments to the Business Case which are highlighted in the attached Business Case. The amendments do not significantly change the Business Case presented to Cabinet and corrects errors where necessary.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by the Elected Mayor: -

Option 1

That the Chief Executive agrees to the recommendations in paragraph 1.2

Option 2

That the Chief Executive does not agree to the recommendations in paragraph 1.2

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reason:

It implements the decision taken by Cabinet on 28 November 2022 to agree to the merger of the Newcastle upon Tyne and North Tyneside Coronial areas of which the submission of the Business Case is an interictal part.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Business Case as amended
Appendix 2 – Annex B
Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

1.9 Contact officers:

Jacqueline Laughton – Assistant Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer 0191 643 5724
Jon Ritchie – Director of Resources 07581 045261
John Barton – Principal Lawyer 0191 6435354

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

Cabinet Report 28 November 2022

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

The financial implications to the proposed merger of the Coronal areas were dealt with in the Cabinet report.

2.2 Legal

The Business Case is submitted to the Ministry of Justice as part of the process for the formal merging of the Coronal areas.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

Consultation with stakeholders on the proposed merger will be undertaken by the Ministry of Justice as part of the formal merger process.

2.4 Human rights

There are no direct human rights implications arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no equalities or diversity issues flowing from this decision as the existing arrangements that have been in place for over 3 years remain unchanged. An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared and is to be submitted with the Business Case.

2.6 Risk management

If the Business Case is not submitted within the timescales given to the Authority by the Ministry of Justice, namely, between 30 November and 8 December 2022 the secondary legislation merging the Coronal areas cannot be made in April 2023.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime or disorder implications from this decision.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no implications to the environment and sustainability from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive ☐
- Director(s) of Service ☐
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) ☐
- Chief Finance Officer ☐
- Monitoring Officer ☐
- Assistant Chief Executive ☐