



WORKING TOGETHER

Minutes of Shared Services Joint Committee

Meeting date Tuesday, 7 November 2023

Members present: Councillor Matthew Tomlinson (Chair), Councillor Alistair Bradley (Vice-Chair), and Councillors Aniela Bylinski Gelder, Alan Cullens, Margaret France and Margaret Smith

Members present virtually (non-voting): Councillors Michelle Brown and Ian Watkinson

Officers: Chris Sinnott (Chief Executive), Caroline Winstanley (Transformation Co-ordinator) and Nina Neisser-Burke (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

Apologies: Councillors Karen Walton and Peter Wilson

Other Members: Councillors James Gleeson and Phil Smith

A video recording of the public session of this meeting is available to view on YouTube [here](#).

35 Appointment of Chair

Resolved (unanimously):

That Councillor Matthew Tomlinson be appointed as Chair of the Shared Services Joint Committee for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year.

36 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received for Councillors Karen Walton and Peter Wilson. Councillors Damian Bretherton and Hasina Khan were present as substitutes.

37 Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 6 September 2023 of Shared Services Joint Committee

Resolved (unanimously):

That the minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Joint Committee held on Wednesday, 6 September 2023 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

Council Margaret Smith requested an update on the joint training session on procurement and proposed that it be scheduled sooner rather than later.

38 Declarations of Any Interests

No declarations were declared.

39 Shared Services Monitoring Report

Chris Sinnott presented the report which provided an update on phases 1, 2 and 3 of shared services between Chorley Council and South Ribble Council in relation to budgets, service development objectives, performance, and risk.

Members were advised that the format of the report had been refreshed to take into account the increasing number of services that were shared across both councils. The overview report included a high-level progress summary of actions delivered against the shared services development plans. These included developing joint policies and processes where appropriate, rolling out shared technology, and progress around cyber security including undertaking a Cyber 360 review.

The Committee noted that overall, there had been an excess of £1.6m savings realised with over £900,000 at Chorley and £700,000 at South Ribble. Most services operate on a 50/50 basis with exceptions reflecting the specific needs of either authority. Following queries, Members were advised that these savings amounted from the start of shared services in 2008 when the shared financial and assurance services were created. The savings generated have been built into the councils' budget setting since 2008 to help balance their budgets.

Members noted the risk register and any actions and controls in place to mitigate the potential impact on the councils. Particular focus had been given to continuing to improve staff engagement and satisfaction.

A service focus was provided on Phase 1 of Shared Services. Service development plans were in place to continue to drive forward service improvements, some of these included:

- Continuing the implementation of shared terms and conditions across Chorley and South Ribble councils.
- Delivering HR transformation, including increasing resources in relation to recruitment.
- Strengthening the Health and Safety capacity and undertaking a review of the health and safety policies and processes, aligning where appropriate.
- Delivering the operation of Worden Hall and Astley Hall following the creation of a Shared Culture and Heritage Team.

The Committee recognised that the majority of key performance indicators for 2023/24 were performing better than in 2022/23 although staff satisfaction had decreased slightly by 3.94% from 71.7% to 67.6%. Members were concerned with this decrease and recognised the importance of staff satisfaction, especially in regards to staff retention. Further analysis was requested for the next set of results and if still below target, an understanding as to why be provided.

Members discussed whether there was a correlation between the drop in staff satisfaction within customer services and the number of calls being dropped or not being answered within a certain time. The possibility of a correlation was recognised, however changes such as bringing in training officers and apprentices becoming more skilled in their roles had created improvements. The latest quarterly performance

reports indicated that the targets included in the Customer Services Access Charter were now being met at both councils in terms of the number of percentage of calls answered in less than five minutes.

The Committee welcomed the report. Members requested the following:

- That the risks be reviewed and refreshed; potentially to include environmental risks as well as the wider local government position in terms of finance.
- An update on the ongoing extra costs of sharing additional teams, including Neighbourhoods and Waste, and Planning and Enforcement under the new terms and conditions.
- Expenditure and income generated from Worden Hall in the last 12 months.

Resolved (unanimously):

That the report be noted.

40 Shared ICT Contracts Update

Chris Sinnott, Chief Executive presented the report which provided an update on the alignment of ICT contracts that had been delivered since the phase 1 development of shared services in 2020/21.

In 2021, a Joint ICT Procurement Strategy was developed based on the implementation of shared ICT services and the Joint Digital Strategy which set out a shared vision for the councils' digital technology. The aim of this was to align software procured and used by both authorities to facilitate the alignment of services, ensuring standardised functionality and ways of working for staff in a shared environment and also for the shared ICT service in managing software and contracts. It was hoped that this would improve service efficiency whilst also enabling resilience and savings for shared systems.

An initial list of systems was identified based on priorities for the council in terms of alignment and current contract end dates. An update on progress against the alignment of these contracts was outlined within the report. Significant progress had been made, with only two contracts out of the 11 not yet completed or implemented.

The Committee considered the benefits of the shared ICT service and maximising the use of the shared systems through examples such as the shared telephony and printing systems. Members recognised that the success of the shared service was not just financial savings but also the resilience built.

Officers advised that there had not been significant cashable savings from aligning the systems as the costs of IT had increased considerably over the last few years. However, the councils had been able to maintain the cost of these systems within the individual council budgets.

Queries were raised in relation to ICT staffing issues and pressures faced as a result of taking on the management of new systems. In response, members were advised that although some of the hard to recruit posts had been recruited to, there were still vacancies within the team and pressures faced in relation to the helpdesk and business systems. Changes were being made to relieve these pressures including recruiting a helpdesk manager, reviewing how best to target recruiting to the business systems resource, and including ongoing customer support as part of negotiations for new contracts where necessary.

Following concerns that Members were not receiving enough IT Support, reassurances were provided that this was being addressed through iPad clinics, resourcing the helpdesk and ongoing case management system discussions through the member development working groups.

The Committee discussed the suggested 18-month timeframe for the new asset management system at South Ribble to be fully operational. Officers advised that this would be due to ensuring that the quality of the information being inputted into the system was correct, however the benefits would be realised as and when implementing the different elements. Chorley already used the same asset management system, and it was therefore proposed that South Ribble utilise the same templates to help assist the process. This again highlighted the benefits of shared services.

**Resolved (unanimously):
That the report be noted.**

Chair

Date