

MINUTES OF SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE Thursday, 6 September 2018

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Alistair Bradley (Chair), Councillor Mary Green (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Alan Cullens, Graham Dunn, Alistair Morwood, Peter Wilson, Michael Green, Paul Foster, Susan Snape and Matthew Tomlinson

OFFICERS: Gary Hall (Chief Executive - Chorley Borough Council), Heather McManus (Chief Executive - South Ribble Borough Council) and Nina Neisser (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

APOLOGIES: Garry Barclay (Head of Shared Assurance Services)

OTHER MEMBERS: Councillor Caroline Moon (South Ribble Council)

18.19 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Garry Barclay (Head of Shared Assurance Services).

18.20 Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair of the Joint Committee for 2018/19

RESOLVED – that Councillor Alistair Bradley (Chorley Council) be appointed as Chair to the Shared Services Joint Committee and Councillor Mary Green (South Ribble) be appointed as Vice Chair for 2018/19.

18.21 Minutes of the last meeting of the Joint Committee held on 11 January 2018

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the last meeting of the Shared Services Joint Committee held on 11 January 2018 be approved as a correct record.

18.22 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations of interest received.

18.23 Confirmation of the Terms of Reference for the Shared Services Joint Committee

The Joint Committee were presented with the Terms of Reference for the Shared Services Joint Committee. The Terms of Reference had not been amended since their approval in September 2017 however as the Joint Committee had not met for some time and due to the nature of the items and the agreement to move forward, it was suggested that these be revisited and confirmed. Members were asked for their views.

Cllr Michael Green queried point 14. It was considered normal practice that voting would be on a simple majority and in the event of a tied vote, the Chair would have the casting vote. However, Members felt that the function of a casting vote was not deemed appropriate for this committee and in the interest of joint working it was requested that this be removed and an amended solution brought forward.

It was also agreed that the Terms of Reference be amended to explicitly state that two substitutes be appointed from both councils to replicate the constitution.

RESOLVED – That the Terms of Reference of the Shared Services Joint Committee be noted and the agreed changes be implemented.

18.24 Scoping of Three Contractual Models

The Committee considered a report presented by Gary Hall, Chief Executive of Chorley Council, which identified the specification for consultancy support for the Shared Services transformation. Both councils had previously agreed the structures to progress and subsequently the details and models of delivery going forward needed to be agreed.

Officers proposed to appoint an external consultant with experience in supporting the development of the new service in order to move forward at pace based on best practice for agreeing Shared Services. This would be a direct appointment in line with the framework. The independent consultant would undertake two pieces of work. It was anticipated that the first phase of the Shared Services and the opportunity assessment would be completed by December 2018, with the further work undertaken by March 2019 to tie in with corporate deadlines.

Members welcomed the independent approach and discussed the benefits of appointing an external consultant to help develop the service going forward. Figures were provided in regards to cost of the potential appointment; however officers agreed to update Members with a formal costing. This approach would be taken forward in line with each sovereign council's governance arrangements and council procedures.

In addition, officers advised that the existing Administrative Collaboration Agreement (SSA) between Chorley Council and South Ribble Council was signed in 2008 and was nearly a decade old. It had not been updated to reflect any shared learning or changes that had taken place in that period. It was advised that this be reviewed following the proposed extension to the Shared Services arrangement and the recent employment difficulties with a shared post.

Reviewing the document provided an opportunity to modify the existing document and ensure it meets the needs for the agreed changes. It would also need to include a process for further extensions.

The committee discussed the options available to deliver this which included appointing an external specialist firm for legal advice and sourcing from in-house legal teams. It was agreed that a hybrid approach was preferable; this would include a balance of both internal and external legal advice with evidence and information largely sourced internally followed by external advice and expertise. Members were mindful to avoid duplication.

RESOLVED;

- 1. to seek proposals and costs to appoint an independent consultant to advise/support the approach of the Shared Services transformation.**
- 2. to review the Shared Services Agreement using both in house delivery by each council's legal teams and the joint instruction of a specialist firm to draft.**

18.25 Shared Financial and Assurance Services Business Plan 2018/19

Gary Hall presented the report of the Shared Financial and Assurance Services Business Plan 2018/19 which provided an outline of the key achievements for 2017/18 and the priorities for 2018/19.

Business as usual continued to be well executed and the targets for the year, including the signing off of accounts, had been achieved by the statutory deadlines. Both councils were slightly down on supply but up on the ten day targets for payments. Members and officers were satisfied with performance in 2017/18 and celebrated a good audit service. It was agreed that the actual figures for 2017/18 be circulated.

The Joint Committee would receive update reports during the course of the year highlighting the actions taken to deliver the service priorities and performance targets specified in the Business Plan, culminating in a detailed Annual Report at the year end.

Members expressed staffing concerns in regards to internal audit. Officers advised that Dawn Highton (Principal Auditor) had left the authorities and the recruitment process to fulfil this post was taking place. In the interim Internal Audit was being monitored by Gary Hall. In response to concerns Members were reminded of the Statutory Finance Officer's responsibility to ensure sufficient internal audit and reassurances were provided that this would be maintained. It was agreed that an update be provided on this at the next meeting.

Heather McManus indicated that there was a Lancashire wide shortage in audit functions resulting in costs going up that were not sustainable. Following initial research on this it was proposed to produce a piece of work to address the issue.

RESOLVED – To approve the Business Plan for 2018/19

18.26 Date of the next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Shared Services Joint Committee would take place following the meeting of the Shared Services Appointments Panel proposed for the end of October.

Chair

Date