Shared Services- Best Practice

1. One of the benefits of shared services that has been identified as a main objective of the programme is the opportunity for the sharing of skills, expertise, experience, and best practice between the councils.

2. The shared services reviews have provided the opportunity to review the systems and processes in place across both Chorley and South Ribble, with the aim of developing a workable single operating model for the services in line with examples of best practice from each council, alongside other public and private sector organisations. For example, to ensure that new shared systems support the modernisation of services across the councils, the shared ICT review has included principles for ensuring that decisions on system procurement are based on objective measures such as meeting key specifications, userability, and overall contract costs. Similarly, new shared HR policies have been developed with consideration for current industry best practice, with the improved policies offering more robust, user-friendly and future-proof policies and processes across both councils.

3. Some further examples of best practice that has been shared between the councils is outlined below:

   South Ribble – Chorley

   - **Performance and Project Leads Network**: The network brings together colleagues who are involved in delivering key/ corporate projects and those who have responsibility for collecting and authorising indicators and performance. It provides an opportunity for training and sharing of best practice in these areas, with each session focusing on a specific topic, and also provides an opportunity to discuss how the management of performance and projects could be improved. The sessions are key to improving engagement with the shared project management methodologies and performance management framework in place across the councils.

   - **HR Policies:** Shared services has provided an opportunity to review the HR policies across Chorley and South Ribble and develop new shared policies which reflect best practice across the organisations and the wider sector. One example of this is the proposed Improving Attendance Policy which is most similar to the current South Ribble policy and ensures a flexible approach that is supportive of staff. The policy focuses on managers identifying and acting on areas of concern and, if approved, will replace the previous approach at Chorley which has focused on trigger or action points.

   - **Systems:** Several business systems that have previously been used at South Ribble have been procured for use in the shared teams due to their efficiencies or ability to offer a more complete solution to meet key specifications. One example of this is the use of the HFX system which will provide functionality for both door access and time management, which are currently managed by two separate solutions at Chorley. Similarly, Citizenspace is now used for surveys and consultation in place of SurveyMonkey as it offers a more comprehensive functionality.

- **Legal specialisms:** The review of legal services has provided an opportunity to review the resource and capacity within the team and how this is focused to meet key priorities and objectives. Shared services has enabled the restructure of the service to consider specialised roles for the legal team, something that was previously in place at South Ribble. The service is split into separate teams which will provide a lead for key aspects of the service's work, enabling staff to be more focused in their specialist areas, develop and maintain expertise, and better manage capacity for key pieces of work.

- **Customer services- specialised teams**: The review of the shared Customer Services and Revenue & Benefits service has introduced a service model and structure based around specialist teams for Customer Services, Revenues, and Benefits functions. This approach is similar to the structure currently in place at South Ribble, with the review focused on enabling customers to have direct access to a specialist in the area related to their enquiry, by creating teams of specialists for the functions with the largest volumes of customer contact. Another benefit of this approach is that it allows staff to practice and maintain specialist skills whilst developing routes of progression for staff as they gain more specialised and technical knowledge.

- **Green agenda:** The expertise and experience at South Ribble in relation to Climate Change and the Green Agenda, alongside the similarities between the boroughs, have been utilised at Chorley to help develop a programme of work to address climate change and other environmental issues. Whilst Chorley have also introduced their own projects in relation to the needs of the borough and the priorities of the administration, the Council has also drawn upon best practice from South Ribble such as the Tree Planting/ Giveaway programme.

Chorley- South Ribble

- **Governance:** Some of the existing policies and frameworks from Chorley have been reviewed and refreshed to meet the needs of South Ribble in relation to the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan. This has included areas such as an Organisational Development Strategy to support increased structure and resource for OD programmes including employee engagement and learning and development. Other examples included a reviewed performance management approach and Key Contracts and Partnerships framework. This has helped to ensure that robust governance systems are in place to ensure that the council is transparent and accountable as an organisation.

- **Service Leads:** The shared services reviews have established a Service Lead management level to provide strategic oversight of priorities, additional management capacity and resource for senior leadership. This has ensured that there is the right level of management resource in place in the shared services at South Ribble, enabling the efficiencies that have been created through the Shared Director posts.

- **Systems:** Some of the in-house systems at Chorley have been adapted for use at South Ribble in order to deliver cost or productivity efficiencies, for example the performance management system and performance review process. Chorley has also carried out a large programme of ICT work over the last few years to ensure

automation and best use of systems in order to make the most out of new technology. Where it has been reviewed to meet user specifications and deliver cost effectiveness, joint procurement has been carried out to deliver increased automation at South Ribble.

- **Events, graphic design and museums:** Shared services has introduced dedicated teams for events, graphic design, and museums, tourism and culture to South Ribble, allowing for the sharing of expertise and specialist knowledge in relation to these areas. This approach has provided additional capacity for service delivery and helped to ensure a consistent approach to branding.

- **OD Programme:** An OD strategy and programme has been introduced at South Ribble based on best practice applied in Chorley for a number of years. Tried and tested initiatives have been shared with teams at South Ribble and adapted to ensure local identity, as well as developing new schemes. Examples include an employee engagement forum, Staff Listening Days, enhanced performance review process and e-learning hub. Benefits include the implementation of more regular 'job and development discussions' to ensure that staff regularly have the opportunity to discuss personal progress with their manager. The online learning hub has enabled key training and development materials to be available and easily accessible to all staff in an interactive and engaging format, particularly during the restrictions of the pandemic.

- **Transformation:** Chorley have used a Transformation Strategy for several years to set out how the council will achieve financial sustainability and support changes to the way that people work including in relation to service delivery or customer needs. The introduction of a similar strategy at South Ribble ensures that there is a clear and measurable approach to transformation at the council.