

Report of	Meeting	Date
Chief Executive	Shared Services Joint Committee	9 January 2024

Shared Services Monitoring Report - January 2024

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides an update on the first three phases of the expansion of shared services between Chorley Council and South Ribble Borough Council in relation to budgets, service development objectives, performance and risk.

Recommendations to Shared Services Joint Committee

2. To consider the shared services monitoring report and note the current progress.

Reasons for recommendations

3. The monitoring report provides regular updates on Chorley and South Ribble's shared services arrangements, allowing the Committee to regularly monitor progress and performance.

Other options considered and rejected

4. This report is for noting only and so there are no other options to consider.

Executive summary

5. This report provides an update on the first three phases of the expansion of shared services between Chorley Council and South Ribble Borough Council including updates in relation to:
 - a) Progression against service development objectives
 - b) Financial overview
 - c) Risk register
 - d) Service focus.
6. The format of the report has been refreshed to take into account the increasing number of services that are shared across the councils. The service focus is a new section of

the report which will provide a more in-depth look at one of the phases of shared services in each of the monitoring reports to the committee.

7. Staff satisfaction will be reported on when a whole organisation pulse survey has taken place, which is currently scheduled for twice a year.

Shared Services Overview Report

Progress Summary

8. Set out below is a high-level progress summary of actions delivered against the shared services development plans since the last update at the start of November 2023. There is a development plan in place for each of the shared services to support the delivery of a shared model and continued service improvement.

Phase 1	Transformation and Partnerships	<p>The HR transformation project has now concluded with efficiencies generated from the new HR Hub, greater self-service for staff and managers, and improved and streamlined processes.</p> <p>The new recruitment system Eploy is also due to go live in January 2024 and briefings and training have been delivered to recruiting managers in preparation for its launch. The new system has developed a branded recruitment site for the councils and will support a streamlined process for applicants and recruiting managers.</p>
	Governance	<p>Twenty two new Health and Safety policies have now been developed and circulated across the organisations, setting out clear procedures and responsibilities for key health and safety risks. Two new mandatory training modules have also been developed for roll out on the councils' e-learning platform, for Manual Handling and Fire Safety, which will be completed as part of the induction for new starters and then repeated at a set frequency. This will help to ensure consistency to the training that officers receive around health and safety, raising awareness and maintaining a record of completion rates.</p> <p>The councils' risk assessment system 'Harriet' is also now being embedded across the organisations, with the Health and Safety team supporting services across the councils to upload their risk assessments to the system.</p>
	Communications & Visitor Economy	<p>The operation of the two historical buildings, Worden Hall and Astley Hall, has continued over the winter months. In November, the Duke of Gloucester visited Worden Hall for an official tree planting to commemorate the King's Coronation and to unveil a plaque at the Hall. New tenants, El Tano Wines, opened within the stable block and a Worden Christmas Market weekend was held. This has helped to generate income for the council through tenancies, whilst also supporting the local economy. At Astley, Christmas at Astley Hall commenced in December with the Hall decorated for the</p>

		<p>12 Days of Christmas theme and hosting festive events including Santa's Grotto.</p> <p>The internal communications plan has also progressed, with the new intranet due to be rolled out to South Ribble in January following the successful implementation of the new system at Chorley. This will provide a single intranet for all staff across both councils, sharing news, core service information and links to key forms and internal council systems.</p>
Phase 2	Customer Services	<p>Recruitment to vacant posts within customer services has continued with all Customer Services Officer roles now filled within the service.</p> <p>Progress has been made on the second stage of the roll out of the new telephony system, with the customer satisfaction survey introduced on the 1 December which will allow the councils to better monitor and report on customer satisfaction.</p> <p>A consultation has also been carried out on one of the final policies to be aligned across the councils, the Council Tax Local Discount and Premiums Policy. The consultation with stakeholders is due to close of the 22 December and will then feed into the final policy for approval. The other remaining policy is the Business Rate Discretionary Relief Policy which is currently being finalised for approval in Q4.</p>
	ICT	<p>Work has continued to progress in ICT, particularly around the development of line of business systems across the organisation and raising awareness of cyber security.</p> <p>Current work includes projects to progress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDOX (regulatory services system) • Civica Property Management system • Yotta asset management system <p>Work to improve awareness of cyber security has also taken place including finalising a new training module to be rolled out on the councils' e-learning platform and regular communications through the council intranets and a regular programme of ICT briefings for staff.</p>
Phase 3	Property and Assets	<p>A utility management company has now been procured at South Ribble to help manage the council's utilities and ensure best rates on utility contracts. The team are working with the utility management company at the moment and will be able to start tracking usage in the New Year. The plan is then to contract a utility management company at Chorley.</p> <p>Progress has also been made on the implementation of the Civica Property Management system. Data sets and the data</p>

		<p>required to be uploaded into the new system have now been identified and work has started on collating the data into a spreadsheet ready to upload from the New Year. Two officers have been recruited to provide additional capacity to support the data cleansing and upload work and have now started in post.</p> <p>Following the upload of data, the project will then look to implement modules and processes for the Property Management system which will allow jobs to be created and automated. The system will help to deliver efficiencies and automation for property services, whilst ensuring a single source of information.</p>
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Financial Overview

9. Overall, there has been in excess of £1.6m savings realised with over £900,000 at Chorley and over £700,000 at South Ribble.
10. Most services operate on a 50/50 basis with exceptions reflecting the specific needs of either authority. These exceptions include:
 - IT Infrastructure Team which is split 40% CBC and 60% SRBC
 - IT Digitisation Team which is split 20% CBC and 80% SRBC
 - Events Team which is split 60% CBC and 40% SRBC
 - Property services team which is split 60% CBC and 40% SRBC
 - Services that relate entirely to one Council including CBC Town Hall and Civic Services staff.
11. Unlike the rest of Shared Services, within Customer Services, ICT, Property and Assets and Building Control there is no specific host Council. The posts are employed and shared across both Councils and recharged on a 50:50 basis or according to the relevant exceptions.

Risk

12. The following risk register provides a summary of the key risks for shared services, in addition to the actions and controls that are in place to mitigate the potential impact on the councils.
13. 5 risks are identified as **medium-risk** in relation to impact and likelihood, and 1 risk is identified as **low-risk**. The highest risk is 'staff uncertainty and impact on employee wellbeing' with a matrix risk score of 9 which means that, due to the continuing organisational change across the councils, the risk would be likely to occur and would have a serious impact if no mitigating actions were taken. Many of the lower scored risks are mitigated by the established governance arrangements for shared services including the shared services agreement.

14. Risks remain relatively stable across shared services, with work progressing to support the delivery of actions including interventions to help support staff wellbeing and development across both councils and the continued recruitment to any vacant posts to support capacity within the ICT and Customer Services teams.
15. A change to R6 'Different levels of future budgets for shared services across both councils' has increased the risk level from 3 (low risk) to 6 (medium risk.) This is to reflect the increased likelihood of different budget levels for shared services across the councils and to consider the budgetary pressures that both councils face. Whilst this risk has increased, it still remains a relatively low and unlikely risk as the shared services structures have offered cost savings for the councils and deliver efficient services.
16. All risks will continue to be monitored as part of the shared services project and corporate risk registers, and any changes in risk will be captured through reporting to Shared Services Joint Committee.

Risk No. (Rnn)	Description	Controls in Place	Impact	Likelihood	Matrix Score	Actions Planned	Target Action Date	Comment
R1	Organisational disruption and impact on performance and service delivery	<p>Performance management mechanisms have been strengthened to ensure close corporate oversight throughout any shared services changes.</p> <p>Regular monitoring reports.</p> <p>Lessons learned from previous shared services to better consider the capacity required to implement a shared service.</p>	3	2	6	Additional capacity is currently being recruited to for the Customer Services and ICT teams by filling vacant posts within the service.	Ongoing – September 2023	<p>Further recruitment has taken place including for Software Developer, Cyber Security and Digitisation Assistant roles in ICT. All vacant Customer Services Officer roles have also now been recruited to.</p> <p>In December, roles were advertised internally for a ICT and Helpdesk Manager and Business Systems Officer.</p>
R2	Staff uncertainty and impact on workforce wellbeing	<p>Staff will be fully engaged and consulted throughout the changes, both informally and formally in line with the refreshed Change Policy.</p> <p>Regular pulse surveys are in place to monitor staff wellbeing and any issues.</p> <p>The People Strategy has introduced a range of initiatives to support staff wellbeing and morale.</p>	3	3	9	<p>Lessons learned will be incorporated into the delivery of future phases of shared services to reduce staff uncertainty and impact on wellbeing, this includes taking a more measured approach to shared services so that resources can be focused on supporting functions which are going through a shared services review.</p> <p>Employee recognition initiatives/ developing shared values for the organisations</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>February 2024</p>	<p>Incorporating lessons learned into the future delivery of shared services has made a positive impact on the implementation of existing shared services. However, the overall risk remains at a 9 due to the impact of organisational change on staff.</p> <p>It is expected that this risk will reduce further as shared services continued to become further embedded across the councils, alongside the refreshed approach to internal communications, employee engagement and recognition.</p>

R3	Wider strategic changes to local government structures	Both organisations are fully engaged and working proactively to understand the implications of local government reorganisation. Shared services helps to strengthen the strategic position of both councils and the ability to influence and shape change through greater scale.	3	2	6		No changes, both councils continue to engage in any potential changes to wider local government structures
R4	Change in political control leading to a lack of cross party support	Arrangements specified in the shared services agreement including an extended agreement and exit arrangements.	3	2	6	Updates on options for future shared services to be provided to the Shared Services Joint Committee in June.	Complete No changes, shared building control was identified as a future shared service in summer 2023 and is due to be implemented on the 1 January 2024.
R5	Loss of sovereignty	Both councils retain political independence and decision making. Robust governance and clear protocols within the shared services agreement ensure that both councils maintain individual sovereignty.	3	1	3		No changes, this remains low risk
R6	Different levels of future budgets for shared services across both councils	Shared Services provides opportunities for continued savings for both councils. The shared services agreement recognises committed budgets for each council.	3	2	6		This risk has been increased from 3 (low risk) to 6 (medium risk) to reflect the challenges facing both councils in relation to budgetary pressures and the increased likelihood of facing a budget gap. Whilst this is a risk, the overall risk level remains low as shared services has provided an opportunity to reduce costs for the councils and deliver efficient services.

Service focus- Phase 2

17. This section of the report provides a service-level focus on the different phases of the expansion of shared services. There will be a focus on a different phase at each meeting of the Shared Services Joint Committee as follows:

- 7 November 2023: Phase 1
- 9 January 2024: Phase 2
- 6 March 2024: Phase 3
- 2024/25 meetings TBC

18. The Phase 2 shared services were implemented in 2021/22, developing shared services for Customer Services (including Revenues and Benefits), and ICT. Set out below is a summary of the councils' objectives in sharing these services and some examples of how they have been achieved:

Financial Savings	The financial savings delivered from phase 2 shared services include ongoing revenue budget savings of £81,000 per year for the shared ICT service and £323,000 for shared customer services. The customer services apprentices were funded out of reserves at a total of £136,000 per year.
Reduced duplication and the delivery of efficient services	<p>Reduced duplication has been delivered by aligning key processes across the councils and by making processes more efficient:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation of the shared Capita system has enabled the introduction of new modules to support the automation of key revenues and benefits processes. • A review of policies across customer services has taken on examples of best practice from across both councils and other organisations to ensure policies are clear, easy to understand and support customers effectively. • Key processes have been reviewed across the councils to help better manage service demand, an example of this is garden waste renewals. • The shared ICT service has delivered efficiencies by carrying out work to develop or implement improved ICT infrastructure and systems, with the planning and management of this work being carried out once but delivering improvements across both councils. An example of this is the in-house performance management system, or work to roll out the new ICT end point devices such as laptops and tablets.
Resilience for the organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A larger, shared ICT team has provided resilience to support the organisations when dealing with ICT issues which impact on service delivery. • A shared customer services team means that when there have been issues with telephony in one location, customer services officers have still been

	<p>able to work from the other location or at home, allowing services and customer contact to continue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A larger shared team has helped the councils to be able to maintain service delivery and deliver a large ICT programme despite challenges in recruitment to the service.
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Service Delivery

19. Each of the phase 2 services has a service development plan in place to continue to drive forward service improvements across the shared service. A summary of progress against the objectives is included within the table:

Customer Services			
Objective	Aim	Status	Update December 2023
Review policies and processes	Align policies and processes to enable efficiencies, consider best practice and process improvements	In progress	The final policies to be reviewed in the service are the Council Tax Local Discount and Premiums Policy and the Business Rate Discretionary Relief Policy. The Local Discounts and Premiums Policy has been drafted and is currently being consulted on with stakeholders including council tax payers who may be impacted by the proposed changes to the policy, a sample of non-impacted council tax payers, other authorities which receive our council tax income (such as the County Council) and groups such as Citizens Advice. The consultation will close on the 22 December and then the policy, incorporating any final changes, will be presented for approval at the start of 2024. The report for the Business Rate Discretionary Relief Policy is also being finalised for approval.
Review duty officers	To review duty officers across front facing 'services to ensure customers can access specialists in key front facing areas in line with the principle established in the management stage of the review.	In progress	<p>Arrangements are in place for duty officers for several key customer facing services including housing and licensing. Duty officer procedure guidance is currently being finalised for the services.</p> <p>Work has progressed on direct dials for relevant services to support customer's to directly access services. The list of direct dials is currently being reviewed to ensure all relevant service areas are covered.</p> <p>Mandatory Customer Services training will also be rolled out in April as part of a wider programme of mandatory training across the organisation. This will support duty officers and other officers who have contact with customers to work in line with the councils' Customer Access Charter.</p>

<p>Create a shared customer services culture</p>	<p>Both councils have a similar customer services culture and standards but this should be aligned where possible to enable staff to deliver a consistent customer experience across both councils</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>A shared customer service culture will be embedded in line with the new Customer Access Charter. As set out above, customer services training will help to support the roll out of the charter to officers and ensure a clear approach to customer service.</p>
<p>Develop a service transformation programme</p>	<p>To enable efficiencies to be delivered across the service and support the customer services vision. Staff development would be delivered in line with the transformation programme and new service model including individual development reviews.</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>A service transformation plan has been identified based on system and process changes and training and service development. This is set out in the table below</p>

Item	Description
Garden Waste Review	<p>The Garden Waste Review has resulted in improvements to processes and a proactive Direct Debit campaign to help manage capacity for the garden waste renewal for 2023. Workshops with staff have been delivered to explore improvements to be made to the process in 2024 with several actions identified.</p> <p>Customer Services have drafted a Pay Strategy for the councils which is currently going through the approval process. A key focus of the strategy is improving the percentage of direct debit payments to the council as an efficient form of payment for both customers and the councils.</p>
Review of Revenues and Benefits Processes	<p>A review of Revenues and Benefits processes is currently being progressed in line with the Capita software to ensure that processes are streamlined and automated wherever possible. The new software for Capita was implemented in October 2022 and processes have been developed and implemented over the last 12 months to align and streamline processes across the organisations. Staff from the service area have been involved in workshops to map out the current processes to review improvements to be made.</p> <p>Over the last few months there has been a rollout of a shared desktop for the Capita system which means that staff can view records for both authorities from within a single application. Work has also been undertaken to automate key processes including housing benefit review, council tax direct debits and council tax discounts and exemptions forms. The next module to be introduced is the change of address form which is expected to go live in December. This will help to deliver significant efficiencies for the service and improve capacity for the team.</p>
Review of hybrid mail and virtual mail room	<p>Review of hybrid mail and virtual mail room for scanning and indexing incoming post. This automates the process of digitising correspondence and records, alongside the printing and posting of outgoing mail. The virtual mail room has been implemented at Chorley and South Ribble.</p>
Telephony system	<p>A review into shared telephony has now been completed with the implementation of the new Enghouse cloud-based system in January 2023. The telephony system provides skills based routing of calls to enable customer enquiries to be resolved at the first point of contact. The system also increases resilience by enabling virtual call handling. The new system provides improved visibility of calls waiting and better reporting to monitor demand and enable future planning. The telephony system has now moved into phase 2 of the implementation to introduce additional contact</p>

channels and a customer satisfaction functionality. The customer satisfaction survey went live on the 1 December and will be able to be used to start reporting on customer satisfaction from the 1 January onwards.

ICT			
Objective	Aim	Status	December 2023
<p>Review current line of business systems on a rolling programme, working with teams to identify relevant specifications</p>	<p>To ensure that all line of business systems are fit for purpose, that we are making best use of our systems, and to support efficient processes in service areas across the councils.</p> <p>Many of the new systems will also be cloud based which helps to support resilience and security, as they can be accessed from any location and are maintained by the provider rather than on the council servers.</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>Good progress continues to be made against this action with several line of business systems now implemented including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEC (document management system) has now moved onto the new cloud-based system. The next phase of this project is for this to be set out as a single system across the councils, so that shared services officers can view documents in date order for either council through one system. • The ModGov system for meeting and agenda management is now live as a cloud system at both councils to support council meetings and democratic services. • The IKEN legal business system has also been implemented. <p>Moving forwards, other business systems due to be implemented include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new IDOX system for regulatory services. The councils are currently in the process of moving both authorities to the newest version of IDOX which will allow improvements to be made to operational processes. This has been implemented for electoral services in early 2023 and a programme is now being developed to roll out to other services including licensing, housing, planning, environmental health and building control. • The Civica Property Management System is in the process of being implemented, with data currently being collected for upload into the new system. • The Yotta asset management system is due to be rolled out at South Ribble to identify and manage all neighbourhood assets in the borough including bus shelters, car parks, boundary signs and waste bins. The assets are due to be recorded by the end of December 2023, ready to feed

			into the new system. Yotta will replace the existing paper-based system and help to support effective schedules for the maintenance of assets.
Review paper-based information across the authority and identify digitisation requirements for the authorities.	To ensure a consistent approach, minimising impact on business continuity and compiling will all relevant policies and procedures.	In Progress	Work is ongoing with the digitisation of paper-based information. A review of paper based information has been carried out to identify what needs to be digitised and work is now taking place to scan paper copies to create digital version. This has been delayed slightly due to capacity within the team. Resources within the service have been reviewed and a new post for a Digitisation Officer has now been recruited to in order to help progress this work.
Finalising the kit roll out of all end-point devices	Following on from the roll out of end point devices, old legacy kit now needs to be returned to ICT in order to remove all legacy hardware and ensure consistency across the organisations.	Complete	Complete. All new kit has been rolled out and old legacy kit including tables and phones has been returned to ICT.
Continue to improve cyber security and awareness across the Councils		In progress	<p>Training has been delivered to staff on email security and a new Cyber Security mandatory training module has been developed for staff to complete on the council's Learning Hub.</p> <p>The ICT service has written a number of regular articles for the council's intranet to advise and remind officers of cyber security issues with plans to extend these communications to members.</p> <p>The councils have also undertaken a Local Government Association Cyber 360 review and penetration testing on the system and network. A series of improvements and suggestions are now being implemented to help further improve the councils' security.</p>

			A programme of regular ICT briefings have been established for the Director of Customer and Digital to brief staff on ICT issues, updates and changes. This provides an opportunity to highlight cyber security to staff.
Refreshed digital strategy	To refresh the digital strategy following it's completion at the end of 2023/24. This will be reviewed and completed in the last quarter of the year.	Not started	As the Head of ICT left the organisation in November, the review of the digital strategy is to be on hold until the new Head of Service is in post to allow them to contribute to the shaping of the new strategy.

Key indicator performance

20. The key indicator performance that is available for Phase 2 Shared Services from Q2 2023/24 is set out within appendix A. This shows that the call centre performance within customer services is continuing to improve in terms of the number of calls answered within 90 seconds and 5 minutes.

Climate change and air quality

21. The work noted in this report does not impact the climate change and sustainability targets of the Councils Green Agenda and all environmental considerations are in place. The ICT hardware and software delivered by the shared ICT service has helped the councils to support digital working, enabling the reduction of paper and supporting hybrid working to reduce travel.

Equality and diversity

22. This report has no equality or diversity implications.

Risk

23. Risk is outlined within the report.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

24. There are no financial implications of this report. Shared Services costs and savings now form a significant and growing part of both Councils MTFS. This is monitored in year and relevant costs are attributed to each Council.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

25. There are no direct legal implications arising. The report is for information and noting.

Appendices

Appendix A- Performance Indicators

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