

PRESENT: Councillor Eveleigh Moore Dutton (Chairman)

Councillors Barry Moran, David Brown and Peter Raynes and Lynda Jones

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lynne Riley

Officers in attendance:	Peter Bates	Chief Operating Officer
	Debbie Hall	Senior Manager - Financial Management
	Suzanne Antrobus	Senior Lawyer
	Kath Brodie	Strategic Legal Manager, Property and Employment
	Tracey Brown	Democracy and Elections Officer
	Eric Burt	Health and Safety Manager
	Jackie Gray	Corporate Manager, Business Intelligence and Data, Cheshire East Council

45 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were made.

46 MINUTES

DECIDED: That

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

47 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME/OPEN SESSION

No members of the public were in attendance and no questions had been submitted prior to the meeting.

48 REVIEW OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH UNIT

Members considered the report of the Head of Professional Services, (Cheshire West and Chester Council). The report outlined the options open for the future delivery of the service. It was highlighted that lack of resilience in service delivery and budget uncertainties were the main areas of concern.

Members expressed concern about the situation and discussed several issues including:

- Potential for the existing manager to lead transition into an alternative delivery model e.g. staff mutual
- Declining schools buy-in and their alternative providers
- Need to put a contingency plan in place which could involve buying in from other providers on an ad hoc basis

The charging mechanism for schools was explained in detail and the alternatives that had been explored e.g. pay as you go. Members noted that

arrangements were in place to cover short term absences in the Unit through an external provider.

Members noted that the Unit Manager was actively pursuing schools that had sought OHU service elsewhere with a view to bringing them back to the shared service however, the success of this initiative would not be clear until about July 2015.

Members acknowledged that there was a need for a back-up plan to ensure that the Unit remained viable particularly as they recognised that moving to the private sector would potentially be more expensive. It was recognised that alternative delivery options had been looked at but these required more detailed financial appraisal and associated risks needed to be articulated more fully to enable a more informed view capable of demonstrating the advantages/disadvantages of each model.

Members requested to see more detail on alternative options and a model that would guarantee income to the Unit e.g. introduction of differential services (e.g. similar to gold/silver HR services offered to schools by Cheshire East)

Members acknowledged that internal restructuring of services in each Council had impacted on the OHU. It was also suggested that the impact of changes on existing external contracts with the OHU should be assessed. Members said that they needed to understand the preferred business model and the dynamics of this in terms of its ability to respond to ongoing change.

DECIDED: That

the progress made regarding the review of the Occupational Health Services be noted and a further report containing recommendations be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

49 SHARED SERVICES UPDATE

Members considered the report which provided a summary of the current position of the Shared Services arrangements between Cheshire East Council and Cheshire west and Chester Council. A summarised position statement on all shared services arrangements was appended to the report for Members information.

Members noted that just seven shared services operations remained and on the whole these continued to meet the needs of both Councils. It was now timely to assess the overall direction of travel for each of these arrangements to ensure that they remained viable and that they continued to meet the needs of each client moving forward. It was anticipated that the proposed discussions in each authority would be helpful in assessing the ongoing commitment to Shared Services and a report on the outcomes would be brought back to this Committee in due course

Members noted that the position statement and interim report on the current review activity aimed to ensure that the Joint Committee was up to speed

with recent developments concerning the remaining Shared Service arrangements.

DECIDED: That

- (1) the current position statement as detailed in Appendix 1 on the Shared Service arrangements between Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Council be noted.
- (2) the proposal for each Council to review the viability of the remaining sharing arrangements for the foreseeable future be endorsed.
- (3) the proposal to reconvene an Officer/Member workshop to progress the Archives and Local Studies Accommodation and Service improvement project in late May/early June be endorsed.
- (4) the proposed developments regarding the Archaeology Planning Advisory Service be noted

50 COSOCIUS SERVICE REVIEW

Members considered the joint report of the Head of Finance (Cheshire West and Chester Council) and the Chief Operating Officer (Cheshire East Council) which updated Members on the key activity taken place post the Committee meeting held on 27 February 2015.

It was noted that the contract with CoSocius represented a significant spend for each Council and the proposals contained within the report would ensure that the Councils received value for money for their taxpayers. The service reviews proposed in the report would ensure that the situation was continually monitored in a fast changing ICT environment.

Members requested further details about the recruitment of the Review Programme Team and if there was a potential to speed up the process. Chief Operating Officer (Cheshire East Council) gave assurances that the situation was not holding up the review activity but considered it was important to ensure that the right people were appointed.

Members requested clarification on the appointment of the Managing Director as it was recognised that this appointment was important to the ongoing stability of the CoSocius workforce. It was recognised that there was a need to get a message out to staff about the future commitment to CoSocius and that there was a need to develop a strategy/timeline to move the review forward.

Members supported the need for communication and suggested that Members from both Councils should visit CoSocius with a view to boosting moral. The fact that CoSocius and its people are a key asset needed to be articulated and it was important that this message was conveyed to all concerned.

DECIDED: That

the latest position with regard to the CoSocius service reviews be noted.

51 ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT THAT MAY BE DEALT WITH IN THE PUBLIC PART OF THE MEETING

There were no items of urgent business brought forward.

Chairman

Date