

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL CHESHIRE WEST & CHESTER COUNCIL

SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting:	27 November 2015
Report of:	Cheshire East – Chief Operating Officer Cheshire West & Chester – Head of Finance
Subject/Title:	Shared Services Project Update.

1.0 Report Summary

The purpose of this report is to update members on the progress being made on key change projects within the Shared Service arrangements between Cheshire West and Chester Council and Cheshire East Council. In particular it highlights progress in two areas: Archives and Local Studies and the Archaeology Planning and Advisory Service (APAS).

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the progress on the delivery of the Cheshire Archives and Local Studies Relocation Project, and;
- 2.2 To note the progress on the second phase of the service review of the Archaeology Planning Advisory Service.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The interim report on current review activity aims to ensure that the Joint Committee is up to speed with recent developments concerning the remaining Shared Service arrangements.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 This report relates to Shared Services that operate across both Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester so all wards are affected in both Councils.

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 None.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The purpose of the Archives project is to establish alternative premises for the Cheshire Archives. Once a solution has been identified the costs for premises will be met in part through the capital programmes in each council although it is anticipated that this will be supplemented by an external funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).
- 7.2 A key reason for APAS being a shared service is the ongoing maintenance of the Cheshire-wide Heritage Environment Records (HERs) which would be costly to split. In the event that a shared way forward for APAS cannot be achieved and required the splitting of the HERs this is likely to incur significant cost for both Councils.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 The Administrative Agreement sets out the overall arrangements in relation to the manner in which the Authorities will work together. The Shared Service Agreement and, in this case, (Staff) Transfer Agreements set out the mechanisms for disaggregating transitional Shared Services.
- 8.2 The agreed Archives staff transfer was completed on 01.10.15 but this in no way determines the future location of the Service.
- 8.3 APAS operates on the basis of a renewable legal agreement which is due to expire on 31.03.16. It is anticipated that the review activity underway will inform the next iteration of the Agreement although at this stage the duration of the arrangement is still to be determined i.e. 12 months or a longer period.
- 8.4 Further legal advice will be required as the project develops on such matters as vires, procurement, contractual, grant funding, employment and property. Other legal advice may be required depending on the future direction of this project.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 The capital bidding processes of each council will need to be coordinated, so as to ensure the parallel progress of the Archives accommodation project through both councils and to reduce duplication of effort. It is anticipated that the Shared Services Budget Challenge session held in October 2015 has gone some way to mitigating this risk.
- 9.2 Accessing external funding streams will be fundamental to the delivery of alternative Archives accommodation. Initial enquiries with HLF suggest that the development of innovative service delivery will be a deciding factor in terms of success. It is important to ensure that sufficient effort is put into this aspect of the project if it is to reduce the risk of an external funding bid failing.

- 9.3 There is a risk that if an agreed way forward on APAS cannot be achieved between the two councils the current arrangements will need to be rolled forward or the service will need to be disaggregated at significant cost to both Councils.

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 The remaining Shared Services are underpinned by formal legal agreement put in place in April 2009. These require that current business plans and service delivery statements are maintained to provide an overview of the Shared Service operation, objectives and any activity to improve service delivery to clients.
- 10.2 In October 2015 a report proposing the future direction of travel for the remaining seven shared services was endorsed by the Joint Committee thereby setting the context for delivery going forward. This highlighted current and planned review activity for two shared services as summarised below.

REF	SERVICE	HOST	RECOMMENDATION
A06	Archives and Local Studies	CWAC	That this continues "as is" until the future premises issue is clear but consideration be given to completing the agreed staff transfer to address inequalities in terms and conditions of employment.
B14	Archaeology Planning and Advisory Service (APAS)	CWAC (Transfer)	Develop in consultation (CWAC and CE) a revised arrangement (shared or otherwise) for the provision of Archaeological planning advice and management of the HERS before 01.04.2016

The purpose of this report is to update members on the progress being made in each case.

11 Cheshire Archives and Local Studies

- 11.1 In July 2012 a report was received outlining the conclusion of a strategic review of the Cheshire Archives and Local Studies Service. This followed an inspection by The National Archives exercising its powers under the Public Records Acts and the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts. Their findings spelled out, amongst other things, the need for a long-term solution to address the service's accommodation issues.
- 11.2 The Archives Review report set out a long-term vision for the service including the need to provide accommodation capable of providing facilities that would meet the expectations of customers; enable the delivery of a broader range of services, and; deliver a wider range of outreach activities for communities and remote users. Consequently a project was instigated and work is being progressed with a view to realising this vision.
- 11.3 Late in 2014 it was agreed that the search for a suitable alternative site for the Archive would focus on three locations: Chester, Crewe and Winsford with the potential for a two site solution not being ruled out. However prior to determining the accommodation requirements it was agreed that the Archives

Service needed to focus on shaping service delivery to meet future demands not least in terms of technological developments. It is considered that developing this vision will be fundamental to informing a successful Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) bid and thereby securing external funding.

- 11.4 Consequently much of the recent activity on the Archives Relocation Project has focused on improving service delivery which will in turn go on to inform a further site appraisal. It is anticipated that a service delivery options assessment will be completed by the end of 2015 and reported to the Joint Committee early in the new year together with a firm timeline for the next stages of the project.
- 11.5 During the course of this activity the Archives Shared Service has been subjected to a further inspection under the new National Archives Accreditation Scheme. The inspection findings are imminent and an update on the key outcomes will be provided at this meeting.

12 Archaeology Advisory and Planning Service (APAS)

- 12.1 This Shared Service operates under a transfer arrangement put in place in July 2011. This ran until March 2014 however prior to its renewal it was considered timely to review APAS and its capacity to continue to meet the needs of both clients going forward. It was also important to assess the impact of national developments concerning local authority delivery of conservation type services.
- 12.2 The outcomes from the review were reported to this Committee in March 2015 and a summary of progress is noted in the table below:

APAS REVIEW 2014-15 - SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROGRESS		
1	Incorporation of APAS into phased roll out of CWAC Total Environment Make or Buy project implementation programme,	Work on developing CWaC's Total Environment model continues with the intention of having a business plan in place by 2016-17 however the inclusion (or not) of APAS will be dependent on the outcomes arising from further anticipated discussions at a regional level
2	Future consideration of APAS as part of a CWAC Cultural Trust subject to further discussion and agreement with CEC about the future of the service.	Consultation is currently underway on the future delivery options for a number of cultural services within CWaC. APAS is referenced within the consultation documentation but discussions around this issue have not been substantively advanced.
3	Submission of paper to English Heritage to explore closer working with and between local authorities and English Heritage.	A paper aimed at exploring the potential for closer working was submitted to English Heritage earlier in the year but a response remains outstanding. Further enquiries are to be made with their North West Regional Director Discussions with the Merseyside Environment and Archaeology Service

		(MEAS) have commenced regarding opportunities for closer working with CWaC's Total Environment Service. Options to include APAS in this arrangement will be explored.
4	Reassessment of the current Shared Service Agreement between CWAC and CE to determine the most appropriate and effective means of joint working arrangements in the light of the wider scope of developing service delivery options and commercial opportunities.	Current sharing arrangements are in place until 31.03.16 and discussions are underway to assess the options for joint working beyond this date. These will need to be informed by discussions underway at the regional level.
5	Progress discussions with English Heritage on additional work carried out by APAS in the Chester Area of Archaeological Importance.	Further enquiries with English Heritage suggest that there is no scope for increasing income generation through this activity given the reciprocal nature of work undertaken by them on projects within Chester City Walls
6	Continued exploration of potential for closer project working with Chester University	Enquiries with Chester University suggest that they are not interested in providing a Archaeology Planning Advice Service however they are willing to take on activity linked to the annual Archaeology Day. This will free up modest capacity in APAS to focus on planning issues.
7	Development of Charging Schedule for selected archaeological development management services	Further discussions around charging have taken place but a definitive position is to be agreed on the detail of or the requirement for a schedule related to development management services.
8	Restructure Service to reduce staffing costs	Amendments to the management and staffing structure have been completed and have achieved modest savings for both Councils

12.3 As noted above the second phase of this review activity has commenced to determine the most appropriate and effective means of joint working arrangements post 31 March 2016. This needs to take account of the wider scope of developing service delivery options and commercial opportunities currently being explored in CWaC. A recommended way forward will be reported to the Committee in due course.

13.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writers:

*Officer: Peter Bates, Chief Operating Officer – Cheshire East Council /
Mark Wynn, Head of Finance – Cheshire West & Chester Council*

Tel No: 01270 686013 / 01244 977830

*Email: peter.bates@cheshireeast.gov.uk /
markwynn@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk*

Background Documents:

Documents are available for inspection at:

Cheshire East Democratic Services

Westfields

Middlewich Road

Sandbach

CW11 1HZ

or:

Cheshire West & Chester Democratic Services

HQ Building,

Nicholas Street,

Chester,

CH1