

Minutes of a meeting of the **Shared Services Joint Committee**  
held on Friday, 26th November, 2021 in the Council Chamber, Wyvern  
House, The Drumber, Winsford CW7 1AH

**PRESENT**

**Cheshire East Council**

Councillors Steve Edgar (substitute for Councillor Paul Findlow), Jill Rhodes and Amanda Stott

**Cheshire West and Chester Council**

Councillors Carol Gahan and Paul Donovan

Officers in attendance: **Cheshire East Council**

Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate Services  
Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services  
Gareth Pawlett, Head of ICT and Chief Information Officer  
Julie Gregory, Legal Team Manager  
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services Manager

**Cheshire West and Chester Council**

Laurence Ainsworth, Director of Public Service Reform  
Aaron Thomas, B4B PMO and Governance Lead  
Clare Jones, Senior Manager, Financial Management  
Paul Newman, Archives and Local Studies Manager  
Catherine Salt, Corporate Legal Manager

**17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor JP Findlow (Cheshire East Council) and Councillor K Shore (Cheshire West and Chester Council).

**18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

**19 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION**

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

**20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2021 be approved as a correct record.

## **21 ARCHIVES PROJECT UPDATE**

Consideration was given to the report which provided an update on the Archives Relocation Project.

Since the last update report to the Joint Committee extensive consultation in the form of workshops, informal meetings and surveys had taken place with target audiences with the results identifying what users of the service would like to see provided in the new history centres.

The project had also been piloting new digital services and tools to encourage more people to use the archives. The digital services included online exhibitions and events, interactive quizzes, and walks which enabled people to listen to oral history recordings at various points along the routes via their mobile devices.

The RIBA Stage 2 development of the detailed plans for the proposed new centres in Chester and Crewe had been signed off and development would now move towards RIBA Stage 3 in early 2022, with public consultation included in the project plan.

It was noted that the initial cost estimates were higher than the current financial envelope and any increases would need to be considered as part of each Council's capital planning process. Once the design process was completed and prior to submission of the funding application, an updated business case would be submitted taking account of the actual projected build costs.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the current status of the Archives Project be noted.

## **22 SHARED SERVICES BUSINESS PLANS 2021- 22 - MID-YEAR REVIEW**

Consideration was given to the report which provided a summary of the Shared Services Business Plans progress at the mid-year position for the shared services between Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council. The report included financial and non-financial performance information over the period 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021.

Members noted that section 5 of the report contained summaries of each service for the following key areas: budget position; priorities and objectives; key performance indicators; and risk and issues. Dashboards for each service and a more detailed summary of their position in relation to performance were highlighted in section 6 of the report.

The overall position for the mid-year review point was that in terms of performance was that most services were meeting expectations in the business plans. It was noted that both ICT and Transactional Services continued to report financial pressure associated with Best4Business and

unachievable income. Budget provisions for this had been made by the two Councils.

**RESOLVED:** That

- 1 the Shared Services Mid-year performance for 2021-22 be noted; and
- 2 the financial pressures on IT and TS Shared Services budgets be noted.

## 23 SHARED SERVICE REVIEW UPDATE REPORT

Consideration was given to the report which provided an update on the progress with the Shared Services Review.

With regards to the in-depth review of ICT Shared Services, a specification had been developed, setting out the further detail and assurance required to understand the impacts, the delivery plan, the costs, and the benefits of moving to the recommended ICT model so that both Councils could make a decision.

The final draft of the Transactional Services review report had now been submitted and was being taken through Officer governance for final comment before being shared with Members. The report outlined that because of the strategic alignment between the two councils and implementation of Unit 4 ERP, the current extent of the shared services model could not feasibly be changed and that the best option would be to optimise the current service first. Benchmarking information showed that Transactional Services were competitive on both costs and service delivery volumes across payments and income, and payroll and recruitment.

A draft report on the remaining six shared services was nearing completion and had identified there was a mixed approach to how these smaller shared services operated and also areas for review relating to funding, pricing and governance had been identified.

**RESOLVED:** That the Joint Committee

- 1 agrees and notes the progress of the review and contents of the report;
- 2 notes the next steps for ICT;
- 3 notes the latest findings for Transactional Services;
- 4 notes the latest findings for the six smaller Shared Services;
- 5 notes the cross-cutting themes emerging from the review.

## 24 **BEST4BUSINESS UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report which detailed the latest position regarding the implementation of the replacement HR and Finance system for the Councils and their partners.

The report provided an update on the second programme 'go live' decision and system launch, the next steps leading to programme closure, the financial position of the remaining programme, and an update on ongoing Elected Member oversight of the programme.

It was noted that the new HR and Payroll functionality was now live and that the first payroll run had been undertaken in November for pensions, Academies, and external payroll customers, with the Councils and Council-owned companies transitioning to the new system in December.

As the Best4Business programme was nearing conclusion it was anticipated that it would shortly reach a point where a technical programme closure could be achieved, with formal full closure following at a later point. It was proposed that a formal post implementation review would be carried out and the finding reported to the Joint Committee and Scrutiny members.

**RESOLVED:** That Members

- 1 note the launch of the HR and Payroll elements of the new Unit4 ERP system and the remaining steps to transfer all remaining payroll activity to the new system for December;
- 2 note and approve the proposed next steps leading to formal closure of the Best4Business programme;
- 3 note the reported financial position of the remaining programme;  
and
- 4 agree ongoing activity in relation to Member oversight and governance.

## 25 **DATE AND VENUE FOR NEXT MEETING**

Consideration was given to the Work Programme for the remaining Joint Committee meeting in 2021/22.

The next meetings would be on Friday 21 January 2022 at 10 am in the Council Chamber at Wyvern House, Winsford.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 10.36 am

Councillor J Rhodes