

Minutes of a meeting of the **Shared Services Joint Committee**  
held on Friday, 24th November, 2023 in the The Council Chamber, Wyvern  
House, The Drummer, Winsford, CW7 1AH

## **PRESENT**

Councillors J Rhodes (Chair), M Simon, J Bird, P Donovan, C Gahan (Vice Chair) and K Shore.

## **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE**

### Cheshire East Council

Alex Thompson, Director of Finance and Customer Services  
Gareth Pawlett, Chief Information Officer  
Julie Gregory, Legal Services Manager  
Nikki Bishop, Democratic Services Officer

### Cheshire West and Chester Council

Debbie Hall, Senior Manager - Financial Management  
Melanie Fitzpatrick, Programme Manager - Transactional Services  
Rob Butler, Care Act Programme Manager  
Simone Thomas Strategic Data Systems Senior Manager  
Roger Davis, Digital Transformation and ICT Senior Manager

## **ALSO IN ATTENDANCE**

James Blacklock, Gemini Programme Director

## **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Patrick Redstone. Councillor Margaret Simon was present as substitute.

## **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on Friday 30 June 2023 be approved as a correct record.

## **4 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION**

There were no members of the public registered to speak.

## **5 ICT SHARED SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN - 2023/24 MID-YEAR REVIEW**

The Committee considered a report which set out the 2023-24 Mid-Year Business Plan position for ICT Shared Services. The Committee received an overview of the budget position, priorities, performance against the agreed key performance indicators and associated risks.

The Committee queried the budget position and asked what steps could be taken to further improve this. It was reported that the ICT Shared Service had a forecasted overspend of £845,000 as a result of reduced income from projects and reduced income from schools however there were a number of mitigations that would help to reduce the overspend including; assessment of core capabilities, reduced delivery model, adoption of more standardised ways of working across both local authorities and development of staff to reduce the need for agency staff. The Committee were pleased that the overspend position had reduced from previous years and agreed that the direction of travel was positive.

The Committee requested more detail relating to the reduced income from schools and the reasons for this. The Committee were keen to understand the services delivered to schools (compulsory and non-compulsory) and which were more favourable than others. It was agreed that whilst the function of setting and managing budgets sat with each local authority, the Committee would benefit from a 'deep dive' into schools to understand the complex issues further.

It was therefore proposed, seconded and subsequently carried that the Committee receive a detailed report in relation to services provided to schools and associated costs at a future Committee meeting.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Committee note the 2023-24 Mid-Year Business Plan position.
2. That a detailed briefing on schools' income (services provided/costs) be brought back to the Committee in due course.

## **6 TRANSACTIONAL SHARED SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN - 23/24 MID-YEAR REVIEW**

The Committee considered a report which set out the 2023-24 Mid-Year Business Plan position for Transactional Shared Services, which encompassed Recruitment and Pay, Payments and Income and Governance Support Services.

The Committee noted that the Transactional Shared Service had forecasted a £276k overspend which related mainly to planned overspend in the Governance and Support Team however the number of vacancies in the team was reducing as a result of a new team structure. The service was on track to meet all but one key performance priorities for 2023-24. One priority action behind schedule related to the development and

refresh of the pay mechanism. It was confirmed that significant work had been undertaken and the intention was to mobilise the new mechanism with effect from the 2024-25 financial year.

A full health check of the Unit4 System would be commissioned by the end of the financial year which would review end to end business processes to help optimise the system and identify improvements for all users and customers. It was also noted that the Agilisys Support contract would be extended, subject to approval from Cheshire East's Corporate Policy Committee next week.

Alex Thompson agreed to meet with Committee Members who wished to receive a briefing on transactional services.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Committee note the Transactional Shared Service Business Plan 2023-24 Mid-Year Review.

**7 THE FUTURE MODEL FOR ICT: PROGRAMME GEMINI UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the progress made to date on the Hybrid ICT programme. The Committee were pleased to note that significant progress had been made with all key partners and effective government arrangements in place driving forward activities and managing risks.

The Committee's attention was drawn to paragraph 5.4 of the report which highlighted that whilst the intent for both local authorities was to move towards more applications being delivered as software as a service delivery, there needed to be further consideration to understand the implications and longer-term future of the agreed operating model. The Committee noted that this review was underway and would be reported back at a future Committee meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Committee note the report and update provided.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 10.35 am

Councillor Rhodes - Chair