

**PRESENT:** Councillor Carol Gahan (Chairman)

Councillors Paul Donovan, David Edwardes (reserve)  
Patrick Redstone, Jill Rhodes and Nathan Pardoe (reserve)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lata Anderson

Reserve Members: Councillors David Edwardes and Nathan Pardoe

Officers in attendance:	Gareth Pawlett	– Chief Information Officer
	Simon Riley	– Chief Operating Officer
	Paul Newman	– Archives and Local Studies Manager
	Chris Samuel	– Emergency Planning Team Manager
	Mandy Withington	– Legal Services
	Mark Leah	– Team Leader, APAS
	James Blacklock	– Consultant
	Deborah Ridgeley	– Democracy Business Manager

## **10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Declarations of Interest were made.

## **11 MINUTES**

**DECIDED: That**

the minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2024 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **12 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME/OPEN SESSION**

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

## **13 CHESHIRE'S ARCHIVES: A STORY SHARED - UPDATE REPORT**

The Archives and Local Studies Manager, Paul Newman, provided an update on the Archives relocation project and the progress made since the last meeting in September 2024. The project, "Cheshire's Archives: A Story Shared", is fully funded by both Councils, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Wolfson Foundation, Townsfund and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

It was reported that since the last meeting of the Shared Services Joint Committee 66 events and workshops had taken place across Cheshire, with 1,325 people attending. The volunteer programme had attracted 25 new volunteers since September 2024.

Following the procurement exercise, constructions contracts had been signed with Kier Construction, with all pre-commencement planning conditions now discharged and site clearance and demolition had commenced in Chester and site works started in Crewe.

Members were informed that when both new centres were operational, appeals would be lodged against Business Rates, which was in line with other Archives Services across England.

The Chair welcomed the update and placed on record the thanks of the Shared Services Joint Committee to all the teams involved in the achievements to date and was very much looking forward to the centres being open.

**DECIDED: That** the update be noted.

#### **14 THE FUTURE MODEL FOR ICT: PROGRAMME GEMINI UPDATE**

The Head of Digital, Data and Technology (Cheshire West and Chester Council) and the Chief Information Officer (Cheshire East) referred to the circulated report which provided a summary of the progress made to date on the Hybrid ICT Programme (Gemini) following the previous decision to proceed with a new service model.

Members were informed that Phase One of the Technical Workstream had completed successfully and attention had now moved to Phase Two. It was reported that the HR workstream had been established for the consultation with all staff with a programme of team briefings, Q&A sessions, and one to one meetings over a 45 day period. The feedback from this exercise was being evaluated.

Discussions were continuing with Cheshire Constabulary and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service who were currently provided with ICT services. It presented an opportunity for them to assess their ICT requirements and if the contracts were still fit for purpose, and the joint service would continue to support them until any replacement contracts were in place. In line with the expected outcome of the Gemini programme, any changes would be technologically driven and were already providing significant cost savings and increased efficiencies.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, expressed her appreciation to all the teams involved in the Gemini Project, and the support offered to staff during the changes to the joint service, which was described as a monumental task.

It was suggested that future reports could include in the recommendation the request to “consider and note” the updated information.

**DECIDED: That** the update be noted.

#### **15 FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS OF COUNCIL SERVICES FOR LIBRARIES SHARED SERVICES AND CHESHIRE RURAL TOURING ARTS**

The Archives and Local Studies Manager provided an overview of the circulated report which set out progress made on the implementation plan to support the move from the shared service model for Libraries Shared Services and Cheshire Rural Tourism Arts to a managed service and strategic partnership arrangement respectively.

Members discussed the proposals, which included an overarching Administrative Agreement, and requested clarity regarding the recommendations in the report and the process to recommend the required actions to the Corporate Policy Committee (Cheshire East Council) and Cabinet (Cheshire West and Chester Council). An amendment to paragraph 4.1 of the report was moved, duly seconded and agreed.

**DECIDED: That**

- (1) subject to paragraph 4.1 of the report being amended to read “ The Joint Committee is not the ultimate decision making body....” the following recommendations be recommended to the Corporate Policy Committee (Cheshire East Council) and Cabinet (Cheshire West and Chester Council)
  - a. the changes to the shared services in accordance with the Shared Services Review, as described in the Shared Services Joint Committee Report of 17 June 2022 be approved;
  - b. the proposed managed service and strategic partnership arrangements and principle of the revised Administration Agreement be approved; and
  - c. authority be delegated to the relevant officers in each Council to jointly implement the final transition to the separate arrangements including completion of the necessary legal agreements.

**16 SHARED SERVICE BUSINESS PLANNING - 2025/2026**

Members considered the joint report from the Interim Executive Director Resources (Cheshire East Council) and the Assistant Chief Executive (Cheshire West and Chester Council) concerning the proposed business plans for 2025/2026 for four of the five shared services.

The ICT Business plan for 2024/2025 would be rolled forward and reviewed again when the shared service was disaggregated, and updates would be considered under the Gemini Project.

Reports from each of the shared services were provided, summarised below.

1. **Archaeology Planning Advisory Service** – Mark Leah, Team Leader, APAS, provided an overview of the Business Plan which included a presentation on their six priority areas, and gave a pictorial review of the year, including radio carbon dating back to the 1600's. The team had reviewed nearly 10,000 planning applications and carried out 33 detailed field visits which was consistent with previous years. Members welcomed the opportunity to view the slides and it was confirmed the Annual Report would contain more information when published.
2. **Archives Service** – Paul Newman, Archives and Local History Manager, ran through the team's priorities which included the Accreditation Inspection by the National Archives Service which was due in May 2025. There were now 40 volunteers with a target of 1500 hours to support the service and projects which would run over the next 12 months.
3. **Emergency Planning** – Chris Samuel, Emergency Planning Manager, provided a presentation which summarised the activities supported during the last year. There were 17 supported events in Cheshire East and 20 in

Cheshire West and Chester area, and the team continued to be part of the Cheshire Resilience Forum. There were a number of training exercises planned for 2025/2026, including scheduled events at Capenhurst and with Astra Zeneca. There were plans to change the team structure, with the introduction of a career grade which had the aim of retaining staff once trained. A summary of the recent event at Vicars Cross, Chester was provided, and the Chair thanked the team for their continued support across both local authorities.

4. **Transactional Service Centre** – Mel Fitzpatrick, Head of Transactional Services, referred to the objectives and Key Performance Indicators set out in the report. The team continued to maximise the use of Unit 4, making improvements and increasing possible savings. The loss of the school income would be reported back to the Committee as it was viewed as a major workstream. The three main areas of the Service were outlined, with the key risks identified with corresponding mitigation measures. The team were thanked for their continued work in maximising Unit 4.

**DECIDED: That** the circulated reports, presentations and verbal updates be noted.

Chairman .....

Date .....