

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL CHESHIRE WEST & CHESTER COUNCIL

SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting:	26 July 2013
Report of:	Cheshire East – Head of Commercial Strategy, Business Innovation and Performance Cheshire West & Chester – Director of Resources
Subject/Title:	Shared Service Position Statement

1.0 Report Summary

This report provides a summary of the current position of the Shared Service arrangements between Cheshire East (CE) and Cheshire West and Chester Councils (CWAC). In particular it highlights progress on key projects namely:

- Archives Site Options / Feasibility Study
- Public Sector Network
- Superfast Broadband

- 1.1 Appendix 1 provides a summarised position statement on all current Shared Services.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Recommended that:

- a) The overall position statement relating to current Shared Services be noted;
- b) The brief for the Site Options / Feasibility Study for the Archive be approved;
- c) The future involvement of Members in the Archives project be considered, and;
- d) The progress on the Public Sector Network and Superfast Broadband Projects be noted

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The position statement aims to ensure that the Joint Committee are up to speed on recent developments and broader projects impacting on current 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 In October 2012 a bid was made via the annual Shared Services Budget Challenge for addition budget to fund the Archives and Local Studies Shared Services (CALS) Site Options / Feasibility Appraisal. A commitment of £50k was secured for this purpose to be divided equally between CE and CWAC.

7.2 In June 2013 a report was submitted to the Cheshire Finance Officers Group to stimulate a discussion concerning the Service Level Agreement between CALS and Halton and Warrington Borough Councils. In particular this addressed the future funding mechanism associated with the SLA and highlighted the project to address the Service's accommodation issues and potential funding implications to be informed by the feasibility study.

7.3 It was agreed that any future SLA arrangement for services provided by CALS to Halton and Warrington should be based on population and that any other proposals would be subject to further consultation.

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 Secondment Agreement set out the mechanisms for disaggregating transitional shared services.

8.2 The Secondment Agreement sets out the arrangements for seconding staff to the host authority for the shared service. Under these arrangements the secondees retain their employing council's terms and conditions. However in practice it has been necessary to develop several scenarios based on emerging case studies to ensure that staffing situations that arise in sharing arrangements are dealt with in an equitable way. In some areas this has resulted in an inordinate amount of management time being spent on addressing more complex staffing situations.

8.3 Staff transfers in the Libraries Support Shared Service (as noted in Appendix 1) will be subject to TUPE. The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) is the main piece of legislation governing the transfer to an undertaking, or part of one, to another. The regulations provide employment rights to employees when their employer changes as a result of a transfer of an undertaking. As such it applies to the private, public and voluntary sectors, irrespective of the size of the undertaking. An undertaking could be a large business employing thousands of staff, or just one person. In broad terms, the Regulations act to preserve the continuity of employment and terms and conditions of those employees who

are transferred to a new employer when a transfer takes place.

9.0 Risk Management

- 9.1 Each Shared Service has revised its Risk Register as part of the annual business planning process. These are currently being reviewed to ascertain if any service risks need to be escalated to the Shared Service Strategic Risk Register. This will be reviewed by the Joint Officer Board and any changes will be reported to the Joint Committee in due course.
- 9.2 There is an ongoing risk of the destabilisation of the CALS service through removal of The National Archive's approval if measures are not in place to address the deficiencies in accommodation.
- 9.3 The risk associated with the ICT projects highlighted in this report are being managed within each project. However the ICT Shared Service is monitoring its response to these projects and the risk associated in each case.

10.0 Background and Options

- 10.1 This report provides an update on the remaining shared service arrangements between CE and CWAC. A summary position statement for each of the current shared services is contained in Appendix 1. However there are some areas of activity where a more detailed update is required and these are outlined below and in further appendices as indicated below.

Archives and Local Studies Site Options / Feasibility Study

- 10.2 In 2011 a joint Officer / Member strategic review of the Archives and Local Studies Shared Service commenced. This look at the long term developments of the service and the more pressing accommodation issues facing the service as highlighted in a report from The National Archive.
- 10.3 The outcomes of the review set out a number of recommendations relating to long-term development, short to medium term accommodation, IT development and governance particularly in relation to Halton and Warrington Borough Councils. These were reported to the Joint Committee in July 2012. At that meeting it was requested that a Site Options / Feasibility Study be undertaken to inform potential future accommodation developments. Funding for this study was agreed as part of the Shared Services budget challenge process in October 2012 with funding coming on stream in April 2013.
- 10.4 A brief to inform the Site Options / Feasibility study has been prepared to inform the procurement exercise to engage of a suitable consultant to undertake this work. However before this is published the Joint Committee are invited to comment on the content of the brief as attached in Appendix 2.
- 10.5 The Committee is requested to provide a steer on the future involvement of members in this process.

Public Sector Network

- 10.5 The National Public Service Network (PSN) Programme is a joint Government and industry programme to revolutionise the way National Government, Local Authorities and the Third Sector buy with better efficiency and use voice and data networks and the ICT services that run over them. A collaborative approach has been adopted across Cheshire and Merseyside with the project being lead by Cheshire East's ICT Strategy Service. An overview of the PSN project and a summary of progress to date is contained in Appendix 3.

Superfast Broadband

- 10.7 The Connecting Cheshire Partnership of 4 local authorities across Cheshire is leading the roll out of Superfast Broadband across the area. This project will transform broadband speeds across Cheshire, narrowing the gap between speeds in urban and rural localities. In April 2013 the Partnership agreed a £28.5m contract with BT to deliver Fibre Broadband to over 80,000 premises in rural areas of Cheshire. An update on the roll out of this project is contained in Appendix 4.
- 10.6 Both the PSN project and the Superfast Broadband project will have implications for the ICT Shared Service in terms of updating existing infrastructure to support current and potential future clients.

11 Conclusion

- 11.1 This report provides an overview of progress on major project activity involving or impacting on some of the Services Shared between CE and CWAC. It also provides a summary of local activity aimed at improving and / or transitioning service delivery. It provides assurance that work in these areas is progressing.

12.0 Access to Information

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

Officer: Vivienne Quayle – Cheshire East – Head of Commercial Strategy, Business Innovation and Performance

Julie Gill, Director of Resources – Cheshire West & Chester Council

Tel No: 01270 686628 / 01244 977830

Email: vivienne.quayle@cheshireeast.gov.uk / Julie.gill@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Background Documents:

Cheshire East Cabinet Report – Shared Services – 7th October 2008

Cheshire West and Chester Executive Report – Joint Liaison Committee

Recommendations: Caretaker and Nominated Councils; Shared Services: Service Delivery Option; Shared Back Office Services – 15th October 2009

Cheshire East Cabinet Report – Shared Services – 3rd March 2009

Cheshire West and Chester Executive Report – Shared Services – 18th March 2009

Cheshire East Cabinet Report – Shared Services – 23rd March 2009
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 10th June 2009
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 13th July 2009
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 3rd September 2009
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 30th September 2009
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 26th October 2009
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 26th November 2009
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 3rd February 2010
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 12th March 2010
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 31st March 2010
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 28th May 2010
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 16th July 2010
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 17 September 2010
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 29 October 2010
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 26th November 2010
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 7th January 2011
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 25th February 2011
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 18th March 2011
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 29th July 2011
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 30th September 2011
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 25th November 2011
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 27th January 2012
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 24 February 2012
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 27th April 2012
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 18th May 2012
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 29th June 2012
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 27th July 2012
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 31st August 2012
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 28th September 2012
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 11th November 2013
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 22nd February 2013
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 26th April 2013
Cheshire Shared Services Joint Committee Report – 28th June 2013

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 2NP

SERVICE NAME	REVIEW / END	CURRENT STATUS
HR and Finance	N/A	Both Councils have agreed the transition of these two shared services to an SLE by 1 April 2014. An Executive Board has been established to oversee this project and an officer Project Board will oversee the delivery of the project. Senior Responsible Officers have been appointed and work packages have been identified. A Project Manager has been assigned and a detailed project plan is currently being developed. The recruitment process has commenced for key posts as highlighted in the SLE business case.
ICT	N/A	
Occupational Health	N/A	Following the approval of strategic review of the OHU recommendations are starting to be progressed. Work is currently underway to restructure the service to achieve the desired shift from administrative support to medical provision which will achieve a modest efficiency.
Farms Estate	N/A	The division of the Farms Estate portfolio has been agreed between CE and CWAC. In response to a request by Joint Committee a review of the continuing shared Estate Management arrangements will be commissioned in due course but this is currently not a priority
Civil Protection / Emergency Planning	N/A	'The team continues to perform well responding to 3 incidents since April 2013 including 2 Major Incident Standbys involving major fires in Styal and Sandbach. The team has run 7 Emergency Management Workshops (4 in CWaC and 3 in CE) for 49 Tier 1 to 4 managers (26 from CWaC and 23 from CE). 'Introduction to Emergency Planning' Workshops are planned for later in the year. Work has been undertaken to promote Community Resilience planning with parish and town councils across CWaC. This will be followed by a series of 6 Speed Training events in both CE and CWaC later in 2013 to empower communities to prepare for emergencies including severe weather incidents.
Libraries Specialist Service	N/A	Work is underway to implement the outcomes arising from the strategic review of the LSS. Co-location, staffing efficiencies and delivery fleet reductions have been achieved. Work is currently underway to transfer CE staff to CWAC to enable all staff to be employed on the same terms and conditions on the basis that this will free up management capacity. This process is subject to statutory staff consultation under TUPE regulations and it is anticipated that the transfer will be completed by early October 2013.
Archives	N/A	A project brief has been prepared to inform a site options / feasibility study with a view to address accommodation issues highlighted by a National Archive inspection report.
Rural Touring Arts Network	N/A	The RTA provides high quality professional arts activities and events for rural areas across Cheshire and involving local communities. Following on the agreement of the Joint Committee work is underway to transition this Shared Service to an alternative SLA arrangement between the two councils..
Archaeology Planning and Advisory Service	N/A	This is a transfer Shared Service with all staff now being employed by CWAC. It continues to perform well under this arrangement.
Youth Offending Service	30 September 2012	This shared service has transitioned as planned to separate alternative arrangements without any disruption to delivery. The transition log is currently being completed and will be reported to the Joint Committee in due course.
International Unit	Transitioned	Termination agreed by Joint Committee with transfer of funding to LEP but outstanding financial issues relating to Brussels office to be resolved. Latest indications are that this situation is close to finalised. Once legal costs have been paid residue budget will be split between the partner councils.

	Shared Services being considered as part of separate legal entity
	Shared Services to continue under governance model
	Shared Services in process of transitioning to alternate arrangements
	Shared services that have completed transition but final sign off outstanding

ARCHIVES AND LOCALS STUDIES: BRIEF FOR SITE OPTIONS APPRAISAL / FEASIBILITY STUDY

1 Introduction

Cheshire Archives and Local Studies service (CALS) is a shared service which provides archives and local studies services to both Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWAC) and Cheshire East Council (CEC). It also provides core archive services to Halton and Warrington Borough Council under a Service Level Agreement and provides local studies services across Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East through the provision of material in libraries. CALS is also appointed as the Diocesan Record Office for the Diocese of Chester and for those parts of the Diocese of Liverpool within Warrington and Halton Boroughs. It is based at the Cheshire Record Office in Chester.

CALS is appointed by The National Archives as a Place of Deposit for public records and works within a legislative framework, namely

- Local Government Acts, 1962 and 1972
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Data Protection Acts
- Manorial Document and Tithe Document Rules
- Parochial Records and Registers Measure
- Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967

The service increasingly delivers services via its website and has recently entered into arrangements with a commercial partner for the online delivery of genealogical material. CALS also has an excellent reputation for customer service, as evidenced by its holding of the Customer Excellence Standard (previously Charter Mark) since 1996.

Funding was secured for a site options appraisal/feasibility study late in 2012, to be carried out in 2013/14. CALS is now seeking to appoint a consultant to undertake this work.

2 Background

The Archives and Local Studies service has been based at the Cheshire Record Office since 1985. The building is no longer fit-for-purpose as storage conditions do not meet PD 5454:2012 and accommodation for staff, volunteers and public falls below current expectations and increasingly its suitability is being questioned on health and safety grounds. Storage is dispersed around the county, with consequent rents and travel costs falling on the service. It is estimated that the storage currently available to CALS is sufficient for 5 years further accumulation of archives.

An officer-member review of the service reported to members of the Shared Services Joint Committee in July 2012. The review was begun in 2011 at the request of elected members following a negative inspection report by The National Archives, which spelled out the need to find a long-term solution to the service's accommodation and governance arrangements.

Members of the Joint Committee decided that to do nothing was not an option and that the service should develop a long term vision and commission a site options appraisal/feasibility study into new premises, in order to meet the current expectations of customers and to

enable the delivery of a broader range of services and outreach activities for visitors and remote customers. The Committee also recommended that discussions be held with the Canal and Rivers Trust (CRT), whose archive is held at the Waterways Museum in Ellesmere Port and who have a similar need for new accommodation for their archive collections.

3 Vision

A site and new premises for CALS must help the service to deliver its vision. The vision for CALS is that by 2020 it will be

- based in new premises that
 - meet all current standards for the long-term preservation of Cheshire's unique and irreplaceable archives recording the history of the county over the last 1000 years
 - are an attractive, accessible, welcoming and inspiring space for the people of Cheshire and further afield to pursue their interests in the history of the county, built around what customers want
 - offer the facilities to present collections in new and innovative ways
 - enable the delivery of a broader range of services and activities to visitors, remote users and potential users
 - incorporate the space and facilities for staff and volunteers to work effectively, efficiently and safely with the collections
 - reduce revenue costs for the service and offer opportunities for income generation
- delivering high quality public services which support and enable individuals and communities to celebrate, preserve and learn about their heritage
- collecting and preserving archives and local studies material, in a variety of media, which reflect the activities and interests of the communities of Cheshire
- making collections and services available online
- identifying new and sustainable funding streams to support the development of the service
- working with libraries and other partners to ensure the local delivery of services
- acting as the corporate memory for CWAC and CEC
- an accredited archive service, building on its reputation for high quality and managing effective governance arrangements which provide a stable basis for the development of the service.

4 Purpose of the site options appraisal/feasibility study

4.1 Premises

CALS wishes to appoint a consultant to

Stage 1

- confirm the requirements of this project once appointed and refine or adapt them as necessary, in consultation with CALS, CWAC and CEC
- identify sites within Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East which are suitable for the site for new premises for CALS and which help it deliver its vision
- explore the potential of a partnership project with the CRT or another organisation whose requirements would be a good 'fit'

- present a report detailing the costs and benefits of each site identified, which should be seen in terms of budget, the criteria developed in consultation with CALS and its stakeholders, and the ability to help CALS deliver its vision.

Stage 2

- test the feasibility of sites which have most potential, building a cost plan for construction of new premises on the favoured sites, detailing the net capital costs, set-up costs, ongoing revenue costs and the potential for income generation. The risks and dependencies of identified sites should be clearly articulated.
- produce a report which supports decision-making by elected members on both CWAC and CEC and supports a bid for external funding to the Heritage Lottery Fund should match funding be secured from CWAC and CEC. Such a report should include a design brief to RIBA B, as required by the Heritage Lottery Fund for its Heritage Grants funding scheme.

Although the preference is for a single site for CALS, incorporating all staff, services and storage, the consultant is also asked to consider split-site solutions which might meet the service's storage requirements: it might be possible to store a proportion of the archive collections at an out store, but the costs and benefits of such a solution to the service and all its stakeholders will need to be articulated clearly.

The consultant will also need to explore the possibility of a adapting the Record Office in Chester to establish whether there is any potential to improve the building to meet the requirements of CALS and its customers. This must include the capital and revenue costs of such work and the long term benefits to the service and both councils, particularly in terms of the requirement to secure long term storage capacity.

4.2 Governance

The service's governance arrangements currently do not make provision for any capital investment in the service by either Warrington or Halton Borough Councils. The consultant is asked to explore the feasibility of altering the current arrangements to make this possible, the assumption being that bringing Warrington and Halton into the shared service arrangement will be the solution, but the consultant is asked to consider other possibilities. All four local authorities (CWAC, CEC, Warrington and Halton) will need to be consulted and a business case for the recommendation developed.

5 Criteria

CALS has identified the following criteria against which each option should be considered. The list is not exhaustive and the consultant will be expected to work with the service and stakeholders to develop/refine this list.

- a. The size of the site, considering a 25-year and 50-year expansion of the archive collections and different configurations of a potential building
- b. The potential of a site to meet the standards (relating to eg fire, flood and environmental pollution) articulated in PD 5454:2012
- c. Physical access to the service, including evenings and weekends, from across Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East, while also taking into account access from Warrington and Halton and further afield
- d. The potential to enhance the customer experience

- e. The operational costs of locating the service on a site
- f. The net cost of a site
- g. The deliverability and timescales of a site, including the availability of the ICT infrastructure to support eg large scale digitisation and online delivery of services
- h. Risks attached to development of a site
- i. The potential for a positive contribution to the local landscape and heritage
- j. The potential for a positive economic/regenerative impact on the surrounding area
- k. The potential for co-location with other visitor attractions
- l. The potential for partnerships with related services or organisations (eg CEC and CWAC Museum services, Family History Society of Cheshire, Canal and Rivers Trust)
- m. The potential of a site to attract external funding from such bodies as the Heritage Lottery Fund

6 Consultation

Consultation is critical to the success of this project. The consultant will need to work closely with CALS and CWAC/CEC officers to refine the requirements of the service and consult key stakeholders in order to understand their commitment, concerns and requirements. These stakeholders include, but are not necessarily limited to

- Staff
- Volunteers
- Elected members
- Other local authority services with which CALS works closely
- Users of the Record Office and local studies collections in libraries
- 'Remote' (ie online) users of CALS services
- Warrington and Halton Borough Councils
- Potential users of CALS
- Local and family history groups
- Depositors of archives
- The Dioceses of Chester and Liverpool

The consultant will need to be aware of equality and diversity issues and to seek advice on such matters as appropriate.

7 Background information

The consultant will be supplied with the following information:

- Possible schedules of accommodation which have been worked up in conjunction with the CWAC Capital Delivery team
- The review presented to members of the Shared Services Joint Committee in July 2012
- Results, with customer comments, of the Public Services Quality Group Survey of Visitors to British Archives
- The results of the last National Archives-administered self-assessment of the service
- Statistics relating to customer use of the service
- Staffing and volunteer numbers
- The latest National Archives inspection report

- CALS budget information
- An outline functional specification for the building

The list is not exhaustive and it is expected that the consultant will need to refer to/request additional information as the project develops.

The consultant will be expected to refer to

- The National Archives Standard for Record Repositories
- PD5454:2012 Guide for the Storage and Exhibition of Archival Materials
- The National Archives Accreditation Scheme
- The Standard for Access to Archives (National Council on Archives, 2008)
- PAS 197:2009, Code of Practice for Culture Collections Management
- Archives for the 21st Century (Government policy on archives)

8 Outputs

The consultant will be required to work with officers and elected members at key stages of the project, and present their findings to elected members.

There are key points in the project which can be identified and which require the following:

Start

- Agreement of brief with CALS and key stakeholders

End of stage 1 (24 January 2014)

- Report on outcome of site options appraisal to members of the Shared Services Joint Committee and CWAC/CEC portfolio holders

End of stage 2 (28 March 2014)

- Report on feasibility study/business case to Shared Services Joint Committee and CWAC/CEC portfolio holders
- Report on feasibility of bringing Warrington and Halton Borough Councils into the shared service governance arrangements and on the implications for capital spending on new premises

Please note that the dates are those of the Shared Services Joint Committee and may be subject to change.

Paul Newman
Archives and Local Studies Manager
July 2013

Executive Summary



The national Public Service Network (PSN) Programme is a joint Government and industry programme to revolutionise the way National Government, Local Authorities and the Third Sector buy with better efficiency and use voice and data networks and the ICT services that run over them.

In essence, the PSN will provide a 'network of networks' - a secure version of the internet for UK public sector by defining a set of standards with which industry suppliers will need to comply.

1. INTRODUCTION

We, as Local Government are currently experiencing rising demands for our services in a time of unprecedented austerity that curtails our finances. A solution for the future of local government lies in a true partnership of public, private and voluntary bodies to deliver effective and appropriate services to our citizens. True collaboration widens our horizon and opens up opportunities for innovations in service provision.

The broad direction of travel for Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West & Chester Council is a move to increased flexibility and agility in the business and the workforce, new delivery models for Council services driven by the localism agenda and the ongoing financial pressures.

"There is an overriding need for ICT (information and communications technology) to become an enabler to transformation and not a constraint on activity."

2. BACKGROUND – THE NEED FOR CHANGE

The Councils Wide Area Network (WAN) supports data communications (for main council offices, depots, libraries, schools, members etc); internet connectivity and voice traffic associated with the corporate IP telephony system, and provides secure connection to the Government Secure Extranet (GCSx) and the NHS (via N3).

The WAN has grown organically over a number of years with many of its underpinning contracts now out of term, increases in operating expenditure, assets being 'sweated' to end-of-life and non-collaborative / non-commercial service level agreement. This is coupled with an exponential growth in utilisation that is exposing limitations in its capacity to flex to demand and accommodation changes that reflect in resilience capability as well as user population location.

It is therefore timely that the WAN is refitted under a consolidated procurement.

3. PURPOSE OF CHANGE

Key requirements

- Deliver as cost-effective a service as possible, given the range of models available from the market.
- Financial & Contract Procedure Rules - Legal / Procurement compliant contracts.
- Target 10-20% savings when considering existing operating expenditure.
- Have a location-independent core network.
- Allow flexibility and rapid changes in provision of service in terms of location and bandwidth.
- Support data, voice and video, with appropriate class of service and quality of service controls.

- Increasingly embrace mobile working as an extension of the WAN.
- Be supported by commercial service level agreement (SLA), service management and network management tools and processes that enable integrated, timely and comprehensive service planning, provisioning, monitoring, management and reporting.

4. Work Programme

a) PSN compliant network procurement 1.0

Collaborative procurement with Cheshire West acting as contract lead.

An invitation to tender was issued in November 2012 using the Government Procurement Services framework RM860, resulting in 5 out of a possible 12 suppliers giving full tender responses. (BT, MDNX, KCom, Udata and Virgin Media).

In February 2013, Cheshire West and Chester Council and Cheshire East Council selected BT Global Services (BT) as the preferred bidder for the Cheshire & Merseyside Public Service Network (PSN). A 5 week period of due diligence followed to review the bid in more detail and clarify a number of issues.

As a result of this process the Councils reluctantly made a recommendation to Councillors to issue a notice of non award of contract and to notify BT and the other four bidders of the fact of non award.

b) PSN compliant network procurement 2.0

Using lessons learnt from the first procurement, the CMPSN board and Joint Officer Board concluded that the CMPSN I.T.T. shall be re-run. Consultants Analysys Mason have been commissioned to review and validate procurement route, tender specification and cost analysis.

Target date for CMPSN release of tender is 31st July, 2013 with the schedule for being 'in-contract' of January 2014.

5. The Partners collaborating on the Cheshire and Merseyside PSN project are:

1. **Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council** (direct customer)
2. **Cheshire East Borough Council** (indirect customer)
3. **Warrington Borough Council** (indirect customer)
4. **St. Helens Metropolitan Borough Council** (indirect customer)
5. **Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council** (indirect customer)
6. **Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council** (indirect customer)
7. **Cheshire Police Authority** (indirect customer)
8. **Merseyside Police Authority** (indirect customer)
9. **Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service** (indirect customer)
10. **Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service** (indirect customer)
11. **Cheshire & Wirral NHS Partnership Trust** (indirect customer)
12. **Central and Eastern Cheshire PCT** (indirect customer)
13. **Merseytravel** (indirect customer)

SUPERFAST BROADBAND UPDATE**Introduction**

The Connecting Cheshire Partnership of 4 local authorities across Cheshire awarded a contract to BT at the end of April to deliver fibre broadband to areas hitherto outside the commercial deployment of fibre broadband. Our contract award to BT marks the start of a 3 year project that will result in 96% of Cheshire premises able to access a fibre broadband service by the end of 2016.

The ongoing commercial roll-out of fibre broadband is expected to reach around 80% of premises; the remaining 16% coverage will be derived from the Connecting Cheshire project, this will specifically address an intervention area of some 93,000, primarily rural premises across Cheshire, that are not commercially viable for providers to service without subsidy. Within this BT have estimated we will be able to reach over 80,000 premises with a fibre service. The project has 3 principal work streams – infrastructure, demand stimulation and business support:

Infrastructure

We have now commenced a period of detailed work with Openreach, BT's local network division to plan the deployment and begin the process of planning the 'how, where and when' with engineers surveying locations and analysing the best way to roll out the network. The technical survey will play a major part in determining the feasibility of our proposed programme, to ensure we can deliver both an efficient and speedy deployment, whilst benefitting from opportunities to optimise the network and remove some of the anomalies inherited over decades whereby premises are not always served by their nearest exchange or cabinets.

This survey work will take some months, so we should be in a position to announce which localities will be included in the first stage of the roll-out around December 2013 with further announcements thereafter.

Demand Stimulation

Connecting Cheshire will deliver a demand stimulation and digital inclusion work stream that will build on our successful demand registration campaign that has received over 9,000 registrations to date. The principal objective of this work will be to ensure a fast take-up of fibre broadband and to ensure those currently off-line or low users of the internet can gain the digital literacy skills and confidence to exploit the technology more effectively.

Whilst delivering the social, environmental and educational benefits resulting from faster broadband, this will also support the wider 'digital by default' agenda underpinning the future provision of public services.

A key strand of this work will be to work with our network of Digital Champions to provide a community learning network to deliver individual support and assistance which will build on and complement a wide range of digital literacy support already available locally and nationally. At present there are around 100,000 people off-line across Cheshire, the majority of whom are elderly, disabled or on a low income.

Business Support

The project has received £15m funding from the ERDF, and within this is the requirement to deliver a Business Support Programme (BSP) that will enable eligible SMEs to access a comprehensive package of free support to enable them to exploit the benefits of fibre broadband such as HD video-conferencing, e-commerce and cloud computing.

Following a tender process Peninsula Enterprise (working with Groundwork Cheshire) were selected, pending a period of due diligence. The contract price offered was £1.5m, with Peninsula Enterprise committing to the delivery of 900 x 12 hour assists, which is above our contracted amount with ERDF of 830. The BSP will be launched in early autumn 2013 and run in parallel with the infrastructure programme.

Julian Cobley
Project SRO
July 2013