

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL CHESHIRE WEST & CHESTER COUNCIL

SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 16 April 2018

Report of: Dominic Oakeshott – Chair of the Joint Officer Board

Subject/Title: Shared Services Joint Committee Governance Update

1. Report Summary

- 1.1 The Shared Services Joint Committee (SSJC) was formed in 2009 as part of the overall governance arrangements between the two Councils at the time of the Local Government Review (LGR), supporting the high level of shared services, prior to the separation of those services. The committee was formed with its own Constitution, Terms of Reference and Financial Memorandum along with a supporting Joint Officer Board. The arrangements have been periodically reviewed and this report seeks the views of members on the completion of a more fundamental review ahead of the new Council year in May 2018.
- 1.2 The governance arrangements for the Joint Committee have remained in their originating format since LGR, although the remit of sharing of services has changed fundamentally over the same time. One of the most significant changes has been that the work of the committee has altered from overseeing the sharing of services to contributing to developing and shaping the change agenda where the two Councils can share services. The two Councils share five services that operate in a stable fashion, with the activity being effectively managed through commissioning, service, and client managers, with three areas, ICT, Transactional Services and Archives and Local Studies transforming their models of operation.
- 1.3 Reflecting on the recent working arrangements for the committee there is an opportunity to bring a new focus for the shared services and this report summarises a few possible suggested changes and approaches to a review, aiming at updating to the Constitution, Terms of Reference and the Financial Memorandum at the Joint Committee meeting in May 2018.

2 Decision Requested

Members are asked to:

- 2.1 Consider the approach that they would like see adopted to the review of the governance arrangements for the Shared Services Joint Committee and provide guidance to update the formal constitutional documents to be brought to the May meeting of the Shared Services Joint Committee.

- 2.2 Agree to form a joint working group made up from representatives of this committee along with officers from the Joint Officer Board (JOB), who will consider and develop the ideas into a formal set of proposals, along with recast constitutional documentation.

3 Reasons for the recommendation

- 3.1 The changing nature of the sharing of services provides the Shared Services Joint Committee an opportunity to review and update its constitutional arrangements helping to provide a stronger future focus.

4 Background

- 4.1 The Shared Services Joint Committee was formed in 2009 after LGR, when it had responsibility for a wide range of shared activity between the two Councils (approximately 65 shared services). It was required to oversee the separation of County Council services between the two new Councils and ensure this was managed in an orderly and financially prudent manner. The current number of shared services has remained stable in the recent past and currently stands at eight as detailed below:

- Libraries Specialist Support
- Civil Contingencies and Emergency Planning
- Farms Estate
- Archaeology Planning Advisory
- Cheshire Rural Touring Arts Network
- ICT
- Transactional Service Centre
- Archives and Local Studies

- 4.2 ICT Shared Services and the Transactional Service Centre (TSC) are the largest of the current shared services, both of which are transforming their service arrangements following a common approach. There is a further update on these two areas at this meeting.

- 4.3 The Archives and Local Studies Service is undertaking a review of its buildings estate and is working on proposals that will see a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) that will modernise the building infrastructure and through that the ways of working, continuing to share service across the County area. Updates on the projects are regularly reported through to this committee and will continue at later meetings.

- 4.4 The remaining five shared services are stable, with service managers and client managers working together to agree and implement service and budget plans through each Council's own planning processes. Outturn reports have not highlighted any areas of concern. The JOB met with the managers of these service areas and established that there are agreed commissioning plans and performance is reviewed as part of the normal Council(s) outturn processes. The nature of the shared arrangement has developed over the recent years resulting in more formalised shared arrangements, with the service and staff being provided by one or other of the Councils, operating under an agreed service contract.

- 4.5 Through this period of stability the JOB has reviewed the basis of commissioning and performance management and is suggesting that it might help the Joint Committee if there was one focussed performance meeting each year, where time could be spent reviewing both the commissioning plans and performance in the preceding year to be completed in one meeting. If the timing were right, say July, it could be possible to both look back at the preceding year and forwards to the remainder of the current year at the same meeting.
- 4.6 The Shared Services Joint Committee currently meets six times per year: May, July, September, November, January and March. Frequently there is insufficient business and that meeting been cancelled, whilst at other meetings the content has simply been short update reports, resulting in shorter meetings. One approach could be to reduce the number of meetings held each year. One meeting could be utilised to report on the performance of the five service areas mentioned in paragraph 4.5 above, with a further two meetings per year focussing on the three developing service areas (ICT, TSC and Archives) alongside the wider opportunities to share in other service areas. The JOB would look to develop a timeline of activity where the committee could add value to the sharing of services between the Councils, providing a focal point for wider shared opportunities. Taking into account developing the timeline, it could be possible to retain the remaining three meetings in the diaries, cancelling if no business were needed to be discussed.
- 4.7 The two Councils utilise a shared Joint Officer Board (JOB), which supports the Joint Committee with its work. The JOB has also evolved its membership and approach over the years helping to steer and shape the Joint Committee agenda. It is suggested that the JOB retains its role supporting and facilitating the work of the Joint Committee, focussing more of its activity and time on shared opportunities, whilst also reducing its frequency of meetings from bi-monthly to quarterly.
- 4.8 Following the discussion and conclusions at this meeting, it is suggested that a small working group is formed from members of this meeting along with officers from the JOB, who would work on the arrangements and reviewing and updating the SSJC Constitution, Terms of Reference and Financial Memorandum, alongside those of the JOB. The changed arrangements being included in a comprehensive update report to the May SSJC meeting, setting the revised governance in place for the future.
- 4.9 There are no specific HR or Finance implications however the stream lining will improve and increase the focus due to the nature of the suggestions whilst also reducing the work load and time commitment for all involved.

5.0 Access to Information

- 5.1 Any questions relating to this report should be directed to the following officer:

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