

REPORT TO	DATE OF MEETING
Shared Services Joint Committee	29 th June 2015

Report template revised June 2008



SUBJECT	PORTFOLIO	AUTHOR	ITEM
Financial & Assurance Shared Services Annual Return 2014/15	N/A	S Guinness	7

SUMMARY AND LINK TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This report presents the Annual Return for 2014/15 (copy attached in Appendix One) to Joint Committee for approval and sign off by the Chair prior to it being submitted to the external auditor by the deadline of 20th July 2015.

The Shared Services Partnership is seen as a key project by both Chorley and South Ribble Councils and makes a direct and extensive contribution to the following strategic objectives:-

“**Chorley** is an ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area.”

“**South Ribble** will deliver value for money in all aspects of the council’s work, through challenging processes, supporting our employees and delivering exceptional customer service.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) The Joint Committee approves and signs off the 2014/15 Annual Return for the Financial and Assurance Shared Services Partnership which contains the Accounting Statements for 2014/15 and the 2014/15 Annual Governance Statement.
- (2) The Joint Committee considers a report in September 2015 containing a financial review of the shared service arrangement covering its future financial governance arrangements post Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 implementation.

DETAILS AND REASONING

The accounts and audit regulations came into affect from 31st March 2011 setting a threshold to qualify as a smaller relevant body at £6.5 million. As a result the Joint Committee is classed as a smaller relevant body and is now only required to produce simplified accounts in the form of the attached Annual Return. The return has been subject to the limited assurance audit regime since 2010/11.

The legislation, however, has changed under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 implemented with effect from 1st April 2015. This means that Joint Committees are no longer required to have their accounts separately prepared and audited. Therefore this will be the last annual return. Joint Committees should ensure that an effective financial and governance framework is maintained. Reporting of the Joint Committee’s account will remain as part of the Councils’ annual statutory Statement of Accounts and as such subject to external audit.

BDO LLP is the Joint Committee’s external auditors for this return. The appointment commenced with the accounts for year ending 31st March 2012. With regard to the cost of external audit the amount paid in 2014/15 was £2,030.

There is also a legal requirement to enable interested parties and local electors to exercise their rights with regard to the annual accounts. As part of this process we are required to provide the electors with the opportunity to inspect the accounts and other documents before the audit. This must be advertised by means of a notice displayed for 14 days prior to the availability period. The notice was displayed at Chorley and South Ribble from 8th June 2015 to 21st June 2015 and the accounts and other documents will then be available for 20 working days between 22nd June 2015 and 17th July 2015.

WIDER IMPLICATIONS

FINANCIAL	The annual return section 1 provides a summary of the financial out-turn for the Partnership as at the end of the 2014/15 financial year including support service recharges. Please note that the Annual Return does include internal recharges and therefore cannot be cross referenced with the Budget Out-turn in the Annual Report which contains cash budgets only.		
LEGAL	<p>External Auditor appointed under Section 3 of the Audit Commission Act 1998.</p> <p>The Annual Return is completed to comply with Statutory Instruments – 2011 No. 817, The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 came into affect from 31st March 2011 whereby the Joint Committee is classed as a Smaller Relevant Body. The legislation, however, has changed under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 w.e.f. 01/04/15. This means that Joint Committees are no longer required to have their accounts separately prepared and audited. Therefore this will be the last annual return.</p> <p>The Shared Services Joint Committee was established under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and provides the overall governance for the Shared Services Partnership.</p> <p>The terms of the Partnership are set out in an Administrative Collaborative Agreement which has been signed by both sponsoring Councils. The Collaborative Agreement in turn incorporates a Service Level Agreement which sets out the key outputs required of the Partnership and the individual performance measures against which it will be judged.</p>		
RISK	A dedicated Risk Register was established at the Partnership's inception and this has been updated to take account of the extensive progress that has now been made to mitigate the inherent risks that were faced at the outset, and to take account of any emerging risks now facing the Partnership. The updated Risk Register is set out in the Partnership Business Improvement Plan as approved by the Joint Committee.		
OTHER (see below)			
<i>Asset Management</i>	<i>Corporate Plans and Policies</i>	<i>Crime and Disorder</i>	<i>Efficiency Savings/Value for Money</i>
<i>Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion</i>	<i>Freedom of Information/ Data Protection</i>	<i>Health and Safety</i>	<i>Health Inequalities</i>
<i>Human Rights Act 1998</i>	<i>Implementing Electronic Government</i>	<i>Staffing, Training and Development</i>	<i>Sustainability</i>

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

1. Partnership Business Improvement Plans 2014/15 and 2015/16.