

MINUTES OF SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

MEETING DATE Monday, 3 June 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Paul Foster (Chair), A Bradley (Vice-Chair), M Boardman, Colin Clark, G Dunn, Margaret France, D C Shaw and Margaret Smith

SUBSTITUTES: Councillor Mick Titherington

OFFICERS: Gary Hall (Chief Executive), Rebecca Huddleston, Jane Blundell (Deputy Section 151 Officer), Janice Bamber (Interim Head of Shared Assurance Services), Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Team Leader) and James Thomson

OTHER MEMBERS:

PUBLIC: 0

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Matthew Tomlinson (South Ribble Borough Council) and Peter Wilson (Chorley Council).

2 Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

As per the Terms of Reference for the Joint Committee, the Chair and Vice Chair positions are alternated between the two Councils each year.

It was proposed by Councillor Alistair Bradley, seconded by Councillor Mick Titherington and

RESOLVED (Unanimously) that Councillor Paul Foster be appointed as Chair of the Shared Services Joint Committee for 2019/20.

It was proposed by Councillor Paul Foster, seconded by Councillor David Shaw and

RESOLVED (Unanimously) that Councillor Alistair Bradley be appointed as the Vice Chair of the Shared Services Joint Committee for 2019/20.

3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the Shared Services Joint Committee meeting held on 7 February 2019 were confirmed as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

4 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations of interests.

5 Shared Financial Assurance Business Plan 2019/20

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Policy and Governance (Chorley Council) that presented the 2019/20 shared financial and assurance service business plan for 2019/20.

The Shared Financial and Assurance Service was established in 2009 following the development of a shared services agreement between both councils. Each year, the Service produces a plan, setting out the key objectives for each service area, its achievements over the previous year and key pieces of work planned for the year ahead, over and above business as usual. Performance indicators, risks and resources also form part of the business plan.

Officers outlined the key tasks for each of the service areas and what actions would be taken to deliver them. Most of the work was around better ways of working across the two sites by streamlining processes, the procurement of new systems and ensuring that wherever possible best practices are shared between the teams.

The joint arrangements continued to provide financial savings of around £600k per annum and although it was recognised that there were no additional cash savings to be made, officers were confident that there were other beneficial efficiency savings achievable for both councils.

Members commented that it was important to produce regular monitoring reports to help keep Members updated on progress against the plan but an acceptance that this did not have to be reported to a formal meeting.

In response to a Member query it was reported that the leasing and or procurement of hybrids/electrical council vehicles, including the Mayoral car was high on the agenda for South Ribble Borough Council with a report expected soon to Cabinet. There was an acceptance from members that this was an area that needed to be reviewed across both Councils.

RESOLVED (Unanimously): That the Annual Shared Financial and Assurance Services Service Plan for 2019/20 be approved.

6 Shared Financial Service Staffing Review and Update and Proposals

The Director of Policy and Governance (Chorley Council) presented a report that briefed the Committee on the review of, and amendments to, the existing shared services for finance and assurance between South Ribble Borough Council and Chorley Borough Council.

Officers from both Council have met regularly over the past months to discuss the issues facing the service. In order to ensure that the service continues to provide value for money, as well as its statutory requirements for both councils through the provision of resources, recruitment and greater alignment of processes at both councils, it has been recognised that there is a need to future proof the service. This can be achieved through developing skills within the team and recruitment of personnel with the necessary skills to lead the teams within the service and facilitate succession within the team.

The current staffing has a number of temporary, agency and honoraria arrangements in place that need to be made permanent in the future. It is also extremely important to recruit to a more specialised post to facilitate a recent retirement request and allow for adequate succession planning to be put in place. Most job descriptions need updating so that they are aligned with new behaviours, competencies and values embedded at both council and reflect the roles and responsibilities being undertaken.

A review of the current financial system and differing payroll systems at both Councils is also considered a priority so that the service can continue to deliver efficiencies and improve performance.

Although the Chair expressed some concerns that the current Senior Management Structure at South Ribble did not seem to mirror what had been agreed at a Council meeting with regards to the shared arrangements, there was an acceptance by the Joint Committee that the proposals for the Shared Financial Services were needed to ensure its continued success, particularly around the closure of accounts.

RESOLVED (Unanimously): That

1. the report be noted alongside the Shared Financial and Assurance Services Service Plan 2019/20.
2. Members approve the creation of two new posts in Shared Financial Services so that the service can meet its statutory closure of accounts requirements in 2019/20 and provide additional capacity and succession planning for procurement services.
3. the approved report be taken to the most appropriate decision making body of both Councils to expedite the approval of the two new posts.
4. A more detailed review be brought back to the Shared Services Joint Committee to outline progress and further recommendations for approval.

7 Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business as it involved the discussion of information defined as exempt from publication under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, 'Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) 'and in which the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing it.

8 Extending Shared Services - C.Co Report

The Joint Committee considered a confidential report of the Director of Policy and Governance (Chorley Council) on a report that had been produced by an external consultant on progressing the agreed extended shared services arrangements between the two Councils.

Although progress had been stalled there was agreement from both Councils that this was still a view that was shared across all political parties at both authorities and that the work should now be progressed at pace.

RESOLVED (Unanimously) that

1. the current work being undertaken by the external consultants C.Co be revisited and concluded over the next few weeks.
2. a report on how the new shared services arrangements will be progressed be brought back to a meeting of the Shared Services Joint Committee at the end of June/early July for decision.

Chair

Date