

Minutes of Shared Services Joint Committee

Meeting date Tuesday, 9 January 2024

Committee members present: Councillor Alistair Bradley (Chair), Aniela Bylinski Gelder, Alan Cullens, Margaret France, Margaret Smith, Peter Wilson, Karen Walton and Ian Watkinson

Officers present: Chris Sinnott (Chief Executive), Caroline Wolfenden (Director of Change and Delivery), Asim Khan (Director of Customer and Digital), Hollie Walmsley (Head of Human Resources) and Nina Neisser-Burke (Democratic and Member Services Officer) and Christine Wood (Democratic & Member Services Officer)

Apologies: Councillors Michelle Brown and Matthew Tomlinson

Other Members: Councillors Damian Bretherton (virtual), Kath Unsworth (virtual), Phil Smith

41 Welcome and apologies for Absence

Councillor Bradley (Vice-Chair) took the chair.

Councillor Alistair Bradley welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Caroline Wolfenden, recently appointed Director of Change and Delivery and Christine Wood, Temporary Democratic and Member Services Officer who would be covering for Nina Neisser-Burke who would shortly be going on maternity leave. Councillor Bradley and the Committee expressed best wishes to Nina.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Matthew Tomlinson (Chair) and Michelle Brown.

42 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 7 November 2023 of Shared Services Joint Committee

That the minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Joint Committee held on Tuesday, 7 November 2023 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Vice-Chair.

43 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

44 Shared Services Monitoring Report

The Chief Executive presented the report which provided an update on the first three phases of the expansion of shared services between Chorley Council and South Ribble Borough Council in relation to budgets, service development objectives, performance, and risk.

Detailed in the report, was a high-level progress summary of actions delivered against the shared services development plans since the previous meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday, 7 November 2023.

Key points from the report were highlighted to the Committee as follows:

- Phase 1 - Significant progress had been made with the new recruitment system, Eploy.
- Phase 2 - Twenty-two new Health and Safety policies had been developed.
- The Councils' risk assessment system 'Harriet' was also now being embedded across the organisations.
- Phase 3 – A Utility Management Company had now been procured at South Ribble to assist in managing the Council's utilities and to ensure best rates on utility contracts. Two officers had been recruited to provide additional capacity to support the data cleansing, upload work and had commenced in their post.

As previously reported at the meeting held on 7 November 2023, the Committee was advised that overall, there had been in excess of £1.6m savings realised with over £900,000 at Chorley and over £700,000 at South Ribble.

A change to risk six 'Different levels of future budgets for shared services across both Councils' was reported. The Committee was advised that the risk level had increased from three (low risk) to six (medium risk). Grounds for the increased risk rating were outlined within the report. All risks would continue to be monitored as part of the shared services project and corporate risk registers. Changes in risk would be captured through reporting to the Shared Services Joint Committee.

A service focus was provided on Phase 2 of Shared Services which had been implemented in 2021/2022, developing shared services for Customer Services (including Revenues and Benefits), and ICT. A summary of the Councils' objectives in sharing these services and some examples of how they had been achieved were outlined within the report.

Key points from the summary were highlighted to the Committee as follows:

- Budget savings of £81,000 per year for the shared ICT service.
- Budget savings of £323,000 for shared customer services.
- Reduced duplication had been delivered by aligning key processes across the Councils' and by making processes more efficient. The efficiencies were outlined within the report.

The Committee was advised that each of the phase two services had a service development plan in place to continue to drive forward service improvement across the shared service. A summary of progress against the objectives was appended to the report for information.

Key performance indicators available for Phase two Shared Services from Quarter two 2023/24 were appended to the report at Appendix A.

The Committee welcomed the report. The following points were made by Committee Members:

- Waiting times between September and October had been erratic. *The Committee was advised that waiting times increased at certain points during the year e.g. When annual Council Tax Bills were issued.*
- The Committee requested a more detailed breakdown report containing qualitative and quantitative information.
- A Member requested that a review of the terms of reference and remit of Committee be undertaken and that a proposal be presented to the Committee for consideration or alternatively, a workshop take place to consider the issue.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

45 Exclusion of Press and Public

Decision: To exclude the public and press for the following item of business on the grounds they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

46 Shared Management of Neighbourhoods, Waste and Streetscene Services

The Chief Executive presented the report which set out proposals for shared management of Neighbourhoods, Waste and Streetscene services across Chorley and South Ribble Councils.

The Committee was requested to consider the proposal for sharing the management of the Neighbourhoods, Waste and Streetscene services across the two Councils, initially for a period of 12 months, as outlined in the report.

Appended to the report at Appendix A was a document 'Shared Management of Neighbourhoods, Waste and Streetscene.

Subject to recommendation of approval by the Committee of the above proposal, the Committee was also requested to consider the options for the naming of the service as set out in the report.

The Committee was advised that the proposal reflected the principles for sharing agreed by the Shared Services Joint Committee and would help to build resilience in the management of the service and help to deliver efficiencies through the economies of scale. Rationale for sharing of the services was outlined within the report.

Subject to recommendation of approval of the proposal at the Shared Services Joint Committee, pre-consultation would be conducted with staff in January 2024, followed by a four-week formal consultation period in February 2024. The final proposals would then be presented for Executive Member Decision at the end of March 2024.

The Committee considered the proposal and other options that had been considered and rejected as outlined in the report.

Resolved:

- 1. That the Shared Services Joint Committee recommends approval of the proposal for sharing the management of the Neighbourhoods, Waste and Streetscene services across the two Councils, initially for a period of 12 months. To include:**
- 2. The creation of a new shared Head of Service post and keeping the current two Head of Service posts vacant; and**
- 3. To consult with affected staff on a review of other management posts engaged in operational management of the combined service; and**
- 4. A progress report be submitted to the SSJC following the initial 12-month period; and**
- 5. Funding from the vacant Head of Service posts be invested in accelerating the project to unify processes, systems, and training staff in support of the programme; and**
- 6. That option 15 as detailed in the report, for naming of the service be recommended for approval.**

Chair

Date