

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL AND WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Three Rivers and Watford Shared Services Joint Committee** held in the Three Rivers District Council, on 23 September 2013 7.30 pm to 9.46 pm

Present: Councillors B White (Chair), M Watkin (Vice-Chair), G Derbyshire, S Nelmes and D Sansom

Officers:	Alan Power	Head of Finance
	Dot Reynolds	Finance Manager
	Joanne Wagstaffe	Shared Director of Finance
	Emma Tiernan	ICT Client Manager
	Cathy Watson	Head of Human Resources
	Lesley Palumbo	Head of Corporate Strategy and Client Services
	Elwyn Wilson	Democratic Services Manager

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Nigel Bell

Also in attendance: Richard Lawson (Grant Thornton)

JSS10/13 **DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

None received.

JSS11/13 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Shared Services Committee held on 3 June 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to 'Stephen Exton – Finance Manager ' being added to the Officers Present.

JSS12/13 **NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS**

- (1) The Chairman ruled that the following report which had not been available for five clear days before the meeting was of sufficient urgency to be considered by the Committee for the reason indicated:

Items 7 ICT Transition Update

To protect the Council's position following the transfer of ICT functions to Capita.

2) **Governance Arrangements**

In reply to a request by the chairman and endorsed by the Committee, the Officers undertook to submit an information report to the next meeting of the Committee on the future Governance arrangements of all Joint and Shared Services.

JSS13/13 **EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE - ISA260 - (SEPTEMBER 2013) AND APPROVAL OF THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR 2012/13**

This report allowed the Committee to ask questions of the external auditor concerning his 'Report to those charged with Governance (ISA260)' and to approve the Statement of Accounts for 2012/13.

The Committee:

- (a) Congratulated the officers for closing the accounts by the deadline required.
- (b) Noted that the Council had a policy and procedure concerning Whistleblowing which had been agreed by the Council and which had been communicated to officers through the induction process.
- (c) Amended the wording of paragraph 4 Revenue Accounts £6.65m to read £6.74m paragraph 4, Revenue Activities and paragraph 5.2 Watford Borough Council to read:

“(3) Welfare Benefit Changes and the preparation for Universal Credit needs to ensure no unacceptable impact on the service delivery to benefit recipients” in the Statement of Accounts.

RESOLVED –

- (1) that the Committee notes the external auditor's 'Report to those charged with Governance';
- (2) that the Committee confirms that it is satisfied that the accounting policies adopted are the most appropriate; and
- (3) that the Statement of Accounts for 2012/13 be approved subject to the following arrangements;

Paragraph 4 Revenue Activities – Revenue Out-Turn 2012/13
Amend '£6.65m' to read '£6.74m'

Paragraph 5.2 Watford Borough Council

Amend to read

'(3) Welfare Benefit changes and the preparation for Universal Credit needs to ensure no unacceptable impact on the service delivered to benefit recipients'

JSS14/13 **MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE**

This report gave performance information for the 1st Quarter of 2013/14.

Officers highlighted the following areas:

- (1) The Head of Personnel reported on new stretch targets for sickness absence at Watford Borough Council; and that 80% of Appraisals had been completed.
- (2) The Head of Finance reported that Creditor payments paid within 30 days had improved and that the target for Closure of Annual Accounts had been met.
- (3) The Director of Finance reported on improved figures in respect of the Revenue and Benefits Service. Members noted the action being taken to get the change of circumstances benefit applications down to an acceptable level. The Committee noted that a review of the Service would be undertaken by the Director of Finance.

RESOLVED –

- (1) that the performance reports for the first quarter of 2013/14 be noted.
- (2) that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on the review to be carried out by the Director of Finance in respect of the Revenue and Benefits Service.

JSS15/13 **ICT SERVICE - UPDATE**

This report provided an update on the ICT Service Provision.

Members asked for information on the separation of duties between ICT Client Managers.

RESOLVED –

- (1) that the report be noted.
- (2) that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on the separation of duties between ICT Client Managers.

JSS16/13 REVENUES AND BENEFITS UPDATE

This report gave an update on the Revenues and Benefits service.

RESOLVED –

that the contents of the report are noted.

CHAIRMAN