

## THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL AND WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Three Rivers and Watford Shared Services Joint Committee** held in the Watford Borough Council, on 18 November 2013 7.30 pm to 9.52 pm

Present: Councillors M Watkin (Chair), N Bell and G Derbyshire

Officers:

Alan Power	-	Head of Finance
Joanne Wagstaffe	-	Director of Finance Shared Services
Emma Tiernan	-	ICT Client Manager
Allan Caton	-	ICT Client Manger
Cathy Watson	-	Head of Human Resources
Elwyn Wilson	-	Democratic Services Manager
Lesley Palumbo	-	Head of Corporate Strategy – Client Services
Robert Della-Sala	-	Interim Head of Revenues and Benefits

### JSS17/13 **ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR**

RESOLVED –

- (1) that Councillor Mark Watkin be appointed Chairman of the Joint Shared Services Committee; and
- (2) that Councillor Brian White be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Joint Shared Services Committee.

### JSS18/13 **DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

None received.

### JSS19/13 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Shared Services Committee held on 23 September 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### JSS20/13 **NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

### JSS21/13 **SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PLANNING**

The Joint Committee considered the service plans and budgets for the shared services in the medium term.

The Heads of Services of Finance, Human Resources, ICT and Revenues and Benefits introduced their Service Plans and answered Members' questions.

## **Finance**

In reply to questions the Head of Finance stated that his Service had achieved savings of more than £400,000 since the introduction of the Shared Service Finance Service. The team had met every challenge and that further reductions through retirements would be managed.

The Service Plan of the Finance Section on being put to the meeting was Approved.

## **Human Resources**

The Head of Personnel outlined the Human Resources Service Plan.

The Service Plan on being put to the meeting was Approved, the voting being 6 in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions.

## **ICT**

The Client Manager outlined the ICT Service Plan.

In reply to questions and comments from Members:

- The Council Servers would be migrated to a site provided by CAPITA.
- The Council had made a submission to the Cabinet Office to seek accreditation in respect of the Public Service Network (PSN).
- There were sufficient controls to ensure that CAPITA delivered the service required under the contract.

The Service Plan on being put to the meeting was Approved, the voting being 5 in favour, 0 against and 1 abstention.

## **Revenues and Benefits**

The Interim Head of Revenues and Benefits circulated an updated Service Plan at the meeting which included Performance Indicator information. He stated:-

- The workload of the Revenues and Benefits had increased by 26% since the inception of Shared Services.
- Challenges in respect of Universal Credit were currently being overcome by the use of temporary staff.
- The budget for the service had not been set to the correct level, for example, the postage budget only met 10% of current costs.
- He had reviewed the service and there was a need for resources to be allocated to the correct place.

- There had been an increase in workload with backlogs but he hoped to have the Service sustainable by the end of the financial year.

In reply to comments and questions from Members he stated -

- System reports had been interrogated at to see if additional payments or underpayments would be created.
- The manner in which complaints were logged and dealt with would be investigated.
- The level of and type of calls from the public and how they were being dealt with to be checked to see if they could be dealt with in another way.
- Quality team monitoring to ensure error rate reduced.
- It was hoped to create space for Managers to manage.
- Encourage staff to come forward with ideas for improving the system and implementing those ideas.
- The introduction of Universal Credit was now a long way off and at that time the Council may convert temporary staff to permanent staff to deal with its introduction.

The Service Plan for the Revenues and Benefits, subject to Key Performance Indicator information being corrected and updated on being put to the meeting was Approved, the voting being 5 in favour, 0 against and 1 abstention.

RESOLVED –

that the Service Plans for Finance, ICT and Human Resources and the revised Service Plan for Revenue and Benefits, circulated at the meeting, be approved subject to the Key Performance Indicator information in respect of Revenue and Benefits being corrected and updated.

## JSS22/13 **MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE**

This report gave performance information for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of 2013/14.

The Committee noted updated figures for Revenues and Benefits in relation to change of circumstances, for Watford it was now 14.13 days and Three Rivers 13.55 days.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

**JSS23/13 FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SHARED SERVICES**

The Committee received a presentation on the future arrangements for shared services.

The Committee thanked the Director of Finance for the presentation but were concerned about the governance of implementation of those arrangements. The Director undertook to provide a progress report to the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED: -

- (1) that the presentation by the Director of Finance circulated at the meeting detailing future arrangements for Shared Services with a timetable for achieving the arrangements be noted; and
- (2) that a progress report on the implementation of the new arrangements be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

**JSS24/13 ICT SERVICE - UPDATE**

This report provided an update on the ICT Service Provision.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

**JSS25/13 REVENUE AND BENEFITS UPDATE**

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

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

**CHAIRMAN**