

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 19 July 2011 7.30 pm to 9.40 pm

Present: Councillors B White (Chairman), A Wylie (Vice-Chair), G Derbyshire and A Khan, S Nelmes (substitute for Councillor M Bedford) and R Sangster

Officers:	David Gardner	Director of Corporate Resources and Governance
	Tricia Taylor	Executive Director Resources
	Terry Baldwin	Head of HR
	Avni Patel	Head of ICT
	Phil Adlard	Head of Revenues and Benefits
	Garry Turner	Fraud Manager
	Elwyn Wilson	Democratic Services Manager

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Matthew Bedford.

14/11 **DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

None.

15/11 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Shared Services Committee held on 13 June 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16/11 **NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

17/11 **FRAUD ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11**

This report informed Members of the work of the Fraud Section for the financial year 2010/2011 and provided an update on developments for the current financial year.

In reply to questions from Members the Fraud Manager stated:

- That there were 114 cases awaiting decision and when those were taken into account the figures would reflect the split of 60/40% between the two authorities.
- The publicity that the Section had received from recent television programmes had acted as a deterrent.

- The Section had achieved its targets and the performance figures in the report were those of the Section in its first full year as a Shared Service.
- A further report would be submitted at the end of this Calendar Year in respect of the New Welfare Reform Bill and Guidance issued by the Communities Secretary.

RESOLVED:-

that the contents of this report be noted.

18/11 **HARMONISATION UPDATE AND RESULT OF UNISON BALLOT**

This report provided an update on the harmonisation of terms and conditions and the result of the Unison ballot at Watford Borough Council on annual leave.

In reply to questions the Head of Human Resources stated that:

- It was the ultimate aim to achieve harmonisation of leave, however, that may be at some stage in the future. The current reduction in leave for Watford Staff had been the correct step to take.
- All Harmonisation proposals would be effective from 1 April 2012.

RESOLVED:-

that Joint Committee Members note that all changes under Harmonisation are effective from 1 April 2012 and the contents of the report be approved.

19/11 **ICT PROJECTS**

This report updated the Committee on the ICT work-strands. The Head of ICT also gave an oral update.

The Head of ICT reported that at a recent Leadership Team meeting priorities had been agreed for the Section.

Officers had received quotations from three companies for the provision of an options appraisal in respect of the provision of the IT Service. The quotations ranged from £16,000 to £40,000.

Members agreed that officers should be authorised to accept the most suitable quotation subject to the cost not exceeding £30,000. The aim was to complete the project by October 2012.

The Head of ICT undertook to circulate the background papers to the Joint Committee.

In reply to comments made officers undertook to set a date when a review of all IT projects had to be completed.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) that the contents of the report and the oral update be noted;
- (2) that Officers be authorised to appoint a company to carry out an options appraisal and requirements specification for the IT service provision up to a cost of £30,000, and the Head of ICT circulate background papers to Members of this Committee; and
- (3) that Officers set a target date by which the review of ICT projects will be completed.

20/11

REVENUES AND BENEFITS - UPDATE

This report updated the Joint Committee on the Revenues and Benefits service and the Head of Revenues and Benefits also gave an oral update.

The Head of Revenues and Benefits reported that the employment of SERCO Staff had only recently started due to problems with access to the Council system.

He also reported an increase in the last three months of claims; at present there were 9,400 claims in respect of Three Rivers and 12,000 claims for Watford with increases of 1.8% and 2½% respectively. The revised working arrangements had been implemented from 13 July 2011 and had gone smoothly.

The migration of the database to Windows had been tested on 4/5 July 2011.

The Department of Work and Pensions had reviewed over two days the performance of the Department and a report would be received by 10 August 2011.

Extra capacity to meet the backlog had been created by the employment of SERCO and improved procedures. It was hoped that the Service would be stable by December 2011.

Members were of the opinion that as the new working arrangements had started later than previously agreed officers should be authorised to extend the arrangement in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) that the contents of the report and oral update are noted;
- (2) that, if required, the Director of Corporate Resources and Governance, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee be

authorised to extend the new working arrangements and report back to the next meeting of this Committee; and

- (3) that the Head of Revenues and Benefits submit a report to the next meeting of the Committee giving details of the employment of staff from SERCO.

21/11

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS AND BUDGET MONITORING

The purpose of this report was to provide the outturn figures for 2010/11 and seek approval to the Annual Governance Statement and the position on the current year's budget.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) that the Committee notes the out-turn for 2010/11;
- (2) that the Committee approves the Annual Governance Statement for inclusion in the draft Statement of Accounts subject to the agreement of the Three Rivers Audit Committee Chairman on significant governance issues (paragraph 5.1); and
- (3) that the Committee notes the position on the current year's budget.

22/11

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Joint Committee would be held on 12 September 2011 at Three Rivers House.

CHAIRMAN