

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL AND WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Three Rivers and Watford Shared Services Joint Committee** held in the Colne Suite, Watersmeet, Rickmansworth, on Monday 12 September 2011 from 7.30 pm to 9.33 pm

Present: Councillors B White (Chair), A Wylie (Vice-Chair), M Bedford, E, Bishop (substitute for Councillor Ralph Sangster), G Derbyshire and A Khan

Officers: David Gardner - Director of Corporate Resources and Governance
Tricia Taylor - Executive Director Resources
Avni Patel - Head of ICT
Phil Adlard - Head of Revenues and Benefits
Elwyn Wilson - Democratic Services Manager
Dot Reynolds - Finance Manager
Alan Power - Head of Financial Services
Paul Dossett - Grant Thornton
Richard Lawson - Grant Thornton

Also in attendance:- Councillor David Sansom (Three Rivers District Council)

Apology An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ralph Sangster.

JSS23/11 **DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

None.

JSS24/11 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Shared Services Committee held on 19 July 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to "Arif" being amended to read "Asif".

JSS25/11 **NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS**

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:

Item 6 – ICT Projects and Options Appraisal

To enable the ICT infrastructure to be improved as soon as possible.

JSS26/11 EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE - ISO260 (SEPTEMBER 2011) AND APPROVAL OF THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR 2010/11

This report allowed the Committee to ask questions of the external auditor concerning his 'Report to those charged with Governance' and to approve the Joint Committee's Statement of Accounts for 2010/11.

Richard Lawson stated that although the audit was still to be completed there were no issues and they would be issuing an unqualified opinion.

Councillor George Derbyshire requested classification on the overspend of £500,000 on the shared budget for 2010/11. The Director of Corporate Resources and Governance reported that the majority of this was to cover staffing in Revenue and Benefits.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) that the Committee note the external auditor's 'Report to those charged with Governance';
- (2) that the clarification received concerning the overspend on the administration of Benefits be noted;
- (3) that the Committee confirms that it is satisfied that the accounting policies adopted are the most appropriate; and
- (4) that the Statement of Accounts for 2010/11 be approved.

JSS27/11 ICT PROJECTS AND OPTIONS APPRAISAL UPDATE

This report outlined the project priorities for ICT this financial year, the work that was in progress to prioritise and cost projects for next year and gave Members an update on the progress with the options appraisal for alternative ICT service delivery.

Keith Thomas (Actica Consulting Ltd) in attendance explained to the Committee that his Company had been employed to formulate an options appraisal and requirements specification concerning alternative ICT service delivery and the actions he would be taking. Members questioned the Head of ICT on the Infrastructure Priorities that would be undertaken by ICT. The estimated time to undertake Stage 1 would be 12 weeks during which time there would be a freeze on non-essential infrastructure changes. Stage 2 would be to complete essential remedial work identified from activities in Stage 1.

Members made comments on the need for the Project Initiative Document to be completed; that they would wish to have figures concerning the downtime of the ICT service and the projects that would be requested to be implemented in 2012/2013.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) that the contents of the report and the oral update from the Council's Consultant be noted;
- (2) that details of downtime in respect of ICT services be circulated to Members of the Joint Committee;
- (3) that the Project Initiative Document in respect of the ICT options appraisal and requirements specification be completed by the end of September; and
- (4) that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Committee on ICT projects which had been requested for implementation in 2012/2013.

JSS28/11 REVENUES AND BENEFITS - UPDATE

This report gave an update on the revenues and benefits service and specifically the migration to the windows version of Academy and the work carried out by SERCO.

The Head of Revenues and Benefits reported the sad death of Mel Brown, a member of staff in the Benefits Section. The Joint Committee expressed its condolences.

The Head of Revenues and Benefits explained further the work carried out by SERCO and that he would be using internal staff to clear the workload in relation to revenues. SERCO would still be retained to undertake work on benefits.

In respect of migration to the Academy Software system, the Head of Revenues and Benefits reported that the work to move the operating platform from UNIX to Windows was completed for Three Rivers over the weekend of 27-29 August 2011 and wished to record his thanks to Neville Jones of the ICT section for his invaluable contribution in assisting the Benefits Manager and Revenues Manager to complete the exercise.

In order to complete the subsequent project to implement additional modules to the Academy before January 2012 he requested that delegated authority be given to the Director of Corporate Resources and Governance to approve the appointment of technical resources

RESOLVED:-

- (1) that the contents of the report and oral update be noted;
- (2) that the restriction of telephone access on Wednesday afternoons be continued but that a report on its operation be made at the end of December; and

- (3) that the Project Initiation Document for Academy E – Services be completed by 16 September, identifying the resources and hence the budget required to complete the project prior to billing in January 2012 and the Director of Corporate Resources and Governance be delegated to approve the appointment of technical resources subject to consultation with the Chairman and Portfolio Holders and the decision being circulated to the Joint Committee.

JSS29/11 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

This report provided information on budget monitoring and performance indicators for 2011/12.

RESOLVED:-

that the report be noted but in future monitoring reports actual expenditure against profile budgets be included.

JSS30/11 SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PLANNING

This report sought agreement to the service and financial planning process for 2012-2015.

RESOLVED:-

that the Service and Financial planning process for 2012-2015 be agreed.

JSS31/11 OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting of the Joint Committee would be held on 21 November 2011 at Watford Borough Council.

CHAIRMAN