

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL AND WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **Three Rivers and Watford Shared Services Joint Committee** held in the Town Hall, Watford, on 28 May 2012 7.30 pm to 9.15 pm

Present: Councillors M Watkin (Chair), B White (Vice-Chair), G Derbyshire, A Khan, S Nelmes and R Sangster

Also present: Councillor N Bell

Officers: David Gardner - Director of Corporate Resources and Governance
Bernard Clarke - Head of Strategic Finance
Phil Adlard - Head of Revenues and Benefits
Elwyn Wilson - Democratic Services Manager
Alan Power - Head of Financial Services
Terry Baldwin - Head of Human Resources
Emma Tiernan - Business Manager, ICT
Howard Hughes - Procurement Manager

JSS1/08 **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

RESOLVED: -

that Councillor Mark Watkin be appointed Chairman of the Joint Committee until October 2012.

JSS2/08 **DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Councillor Nigel Bell declared a personal and non prejudicial interest in agenda items 7 (Revenues and Benefits Update) and Item 1 Part 2 (DWP Inspection report) as an employee of the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP).

JSS3/08 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Shared Services Committee held on 5 March 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

That in the future an item be placed on the agenda concerning 'Matters Arising'.

The Chairman requested that the thanks of the Committee be recorded to former Councillor Andy Wylie for his contribution in implementing the four shared services.

JSS4/08 **NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

JSS5/08 **ICT REQUIREMENTS SPECIFICATION**

This report provided an update on the ICT Shared Service Review.

Circulated at the meeting was an update by the Head of Strategic Finance in respect of the following:

ICT Staffing

It was noted that the Head of ICT had been ill for the past 4 weeks and was anticipated to be off for a further 4 weeks.

The ICT Business Manager was now Deputising as Head but was due to go on maternity leave on 13 July and would not return to work until April 2013 at the earliest.

The Committee therefore noted that the Director of Corporate Resources and Governance (TRDC) and the Head of Strategic Finance (Watford) would be carrying out immediate interviews to secure a temporary replacement of the Head of ICT to assist both with the ICT Tender evaluation and the running of the ICT Division. The appointment would be suitably flexible in order to accommodate the return to work of the Head of ICT.

Tender Evaluation/ Timetable

The Committee noted that the closing date for return of tenders was 25 June but that the first Joint Committee Meeting after this date was 2 July and in order to keep to the original timetable with a transfer date of the end of January 2013 a Special Joint Meeting would need to be arranged at the end of July. That left little time for the evaluation process/moderation discussions etc.

In the light of the staffing issues referred to above, the Joint Management Board was of the view that the evaluation process should not be rushed and that it was crucial that the future provision of ICT services should be fit for purpose.

As a consequence it was recommended that the evaluation of tenders should be reported to the Joint Committee meeting on 24 September. A transfer date of 31 January 2013 would still be the aim.

Tender Evaluation Panel

The Committee noted that the tender evaluation panel would comprise:

- A co-ordinating officer
- Two senior ICT representatives
- Procurement representative
- Finance representative
- Legal representative
- 2 Directors/ Heads of Service (one from each authority)
- TRDC CSC Service Head
- One service manager from Watford

This would result in an evaluation panel of 10 representatives and would be rather over-populated. The intention however was that the tender would naturally split into three component parts:

Technical Solution
Commercial / Price
Service Delivery

The evaluation panel would therefore be similarly split to accommodate each specialism (with a few key members of the team being involved in all three areas).

ICT Client Role

The tender documentation had now been finalised and included the following options in addition to the Base requirements:

- Management of assets (hardware and software)
- Management of third party contracts

Until it was established exactly what the ultimate service will look like, it was not feasible to finalise the extent of a client role. This issue would therefore be deferred until the 'shape' of the future outsourced contract was known.

The Joint Committee noted that as there was no in-house bid there was a need for the current cost of the in-house ICT service to be provided.

In view of the delay in reporting the results of the tender evaluation exercise to the September meeting of the Committee Members requested that a revised Project Plan be circulated to the Committee.

RESOLVED: -

- (1) that the report be noted;
- (2) that the appointment of an interim IT Manager be undertaken as soon as possible in consultation with the Vice-Chairman;
- (3) that the current costs of the IT service be provided to the Joint Committee against which tenders received can be judged;
- (4) that a revised project plan be circulated to Members of the Joint Committee; and
- (5) that the results of the tender exercise be reported to the 23 September meeting of the Joint Committee.

JSS6/08 REVENUES AND BENEFITS UPDATE

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

Members made comments on the report which they believed was critical of the performance of the Revenues and Benefits Service and sought confirmation that there were sufficient resources / capacity to deal with the peaks and troughs of the workload.

In reply officers stated that changes to the service had been implemented during the previous year but the improvements had not been as quick as required. Data on performance was gathered and reported on a weekly / monthly basis.

The Director of Corporate Resources and Governance stated that reports would be submitted to both Councils concerning localism of Council Tax Support and possible retention of National Non-Domestic Rate and universal credit.

In reply to questions of Members, officers confirmed that a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on the capacity of the Service.

RESOLVED: -

- (1) that the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) that a progress report be presented to the next meeting of the Joint Committee concerning the services' capacity.

JSS7/08 NEW STAFF APPRAISAL PROCESS

This report provided an update on the move to a new staff appraisal process.

RESOLVED: -

that the report be noted.

JSS8/08 CLOSING OF ACCOUNTS

The Head of Financial Services reported on the progress being made to close the accounts for 2011/12. He stated that the service was 4/5 weeks in front of where it was in respect of closing the accounts last year. An interim audit had been held which had not raised any issues.

RESOLVED: -

that the oral report that Officers are on target to close the accounts well before the statutory deadline be noted.

JSS9/08 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Members were asked to note the performance management information posted on the website and copies were circulated at the meeting.

The Chairman suggested that the information should be revamped.

RESOLVED: -

that officers, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, consider revamping the reporting of performance management information so that the essence of any discussion at the Joint Committee would be about expectations, with an explanation as to why the performance indicated had not been achieved to be included in the report.

JSS10/08 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: -

that, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if the press or public were present during consideration of the item(s) there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined under the respective paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

JSS11/08 DWP INSPECTION REPORT

This report allowed consideration of the findings of the DWP Inspection Team.

RESOLVED: -

that the findings of the DWP Inspection and the subsequent action plan be noted.

CHAIRMAN