

## CASE STUDIES

### 1. Introduction

The following examples are offered as successful lead authority models where member accountability is not to a Joint Committee:-

#### ***Cannock Chase District Council (CCDC) and Stafford Borough Council (SBC)***

##### *Brief Overview*

CCDC and SBC have shared a range of predominantly back-office services. The arrangements have been based on a lead authority model with a broadly even share of the services between the two Councils.

Services led by SBC:

- Technology – wef 1 January 2011
- Legal Services – wef 1 April 2011
- Human Resources – wef 1 April 2011

Services led by CCDC:

- Building Control – wef 1 January 2011
- Revenues & Benefits – wef 1 April 2011
- Finance – wef 1 April 2011
- Audit, Risk & Resilience and Procurement – wef 1 April 2011.

There is no shared management team as part of this approach, though Heads of Services for the services concerned attend, as appropriate, the Leadership Teams of both Councils.

Service Level Agreements are in place and client officers at each recipient council monitor performance.

As predominantly back office services, members have been content to receive monitoring reports at the appropriate scrutiny committee. The SLA allows for the head of service from the lead authority to attend the committee if necessary.

##### *The Councils' Success*

## **Watchdog thumbs up for shared services work**

Published on Thursday 27th September 2012

A Government watchdog has praised Cannock Chase Council and Stafford Borough Council for working together to save hundreds of thousands of pounds by sharing services.

And the independent Audit Commission described it as a 'notable achievement' that despite cutting costs, performance had 'improved' in some of the shared services which Stafford Borough and Cannock District Councils deliver.

The councils now share seven services having gone into partnership in January of last year. They include Information Technology, Revenues and Benefits, Building Control and Legal Services.

The move is expected to make annual savings of £550,000 for the 2012 / 2013 budget for each council - following on from the £250,000 they each saved in the last financial year.

**Cllr Dennis Dixon, Cannock Chase Council Corporate Improvement Leader**, said: "Shared services is resulting in annual savings for both authorities. The Audit Commission also notes that performance in some areas has improved too. We'll be monitoring this to make sure this continues and that service quality is never affected by the sharing of services."

**Cllr Ken Williamson, cabinet member for resources at Stafford**, said: "We said this would not just be about making savings but maintaining, and in some cases improving, on the services to our community and protecting our workforce. And it is really pleasing that an independent body has praised us for the way we have carried out this work."

In their letter, the Audit Commission said both councils had:

- Delivered the planned savings for last year
- Ensured the economic climate did not have a detrimental effect on services
- Improved services in some cases
- Put in place a clear leadership structure

It also singled out the revenues and benefits function which had "demonstrated a marked improvement in performance for the user".

The shared service agenda was also backed by the West Midlands Regional Improvements and Efficiencies Partnership, which gave £118,000 to support the project.

Further information:-

<http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/>

<http://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/>

### ***Hertfordshire Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS)***

The Committee will be aware of the arrangements for Internal Audit. 7 districts, the County Council and the Hertfordshire Police procure audit from SIAS. The lead authority is the County Council. At officer level the service is managed by a Board consisting of the County Council's Deputy Chief Executive and the Section 151 officers of the recipient bodies. Member accountability is to the relevant committee at each council, i.e. the Audit Committee.

## **2. Lead Authority Models Generally**

It should be remembered that shared services is still in its infancy, Three Rivers and Watford were in the vanguard. Officer research has discovered that there are diverse arrangements around the country. Some authorities, e.g. Stevenage and East Herts, for their shared revenues and benefits service, have adopted a lead authority at officer level and run a Joint Committee. In Kent a lead authority model is governed by the East Kent (Joint Arrangements) Committee and the East Kent (Joint Scrutiny) Committee, i.e. two joint committees one determining policy and the other scrutinising the services.

It should also be noted that, without exception, all of the examples of lead authority models researched by officers have TUPE'd staff to the lead authority.