

CHILTERN AND SOUTH BUCKS JOINT COMMITTEE

Meeting - 2 April 2014

Present: Mr Rose (Chairman)
Mr Busby, Mrs Cranmer, Mrs Darby, Mr Harris, Mr Martin, Mr Naylor,
Mr Reed, Mr Stannard, Mrs Woolveridge and Mr D Smith

Apologies for absence: Mr M Smith

35. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 4 February 2014 were agreed by the Committee and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

37. PROGRAMME OF REPORT

The Joint Committee received the latest programme report detailing the progress on milestones and future activities, the latest budget position including cumulative savings, joint projects outside of service reviews and risks for the programme.

It was noted that service reviews for six service areas had now been completed and signed off. Shared services for Building Control, Licensing, Housing and Community Safety had also been implemented. At the next meeting, the Joint Committee would receive reports on the reviews of Planning Policy, Property and Facilities, and Community and Leisure.

There was a discussion regarding the reference in the report to the completion of the harmonisation of terms and conditions of employment. Members were disappointed that this had not been concluded by 1 April. It was noted that the report had been written prior to the meeting of the Joint Appointments and Implementation Committee (JAIC) when it had been reported that Management had submitted an improved offer to UNISON, and were now seeking to reach agreement on this improved offer. The Chief Executive had also been given delegated authority, in consultation with the Joint Chairmen of the JAIC, to enter into the detail of formal negotiations with UNISON and move forward to implementation. The Committee felt strongly that an agreement needed to be reached as a matter of urgency. In response to a question, the Chief Executive confirmed that it was their intention to conclude implementation by 1 May, as had been confirmed at the meeting of the JAIC held on 24 March.

RESOLVED -

That the report be noted.

38. INFORMATION ITEM: ICT HIGHLIGHT REPORT

The Joint Committee received the latest shared IT highlight report detailing progress, including tasks completed, on the following shared projects during the period 27 January 2014 - 21 March 2014:

- Idox Uniform and DMS
- WEB
- Telephony / United Communications

RESOLVED -

That the report be noted.

39. **INFORMATION ITEM: PEER REVIEW/CHALLENGE**

The Committee received a report providing a summary of the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Process which would take place across Chiltern and South Bucks Councils later in the year. This would provide an opportunity to pause and reflect on the partnership between both Councils on what had been achieved so far and consider the future. The report set out the dates of the peer challenge, team make-up and roles, onsite activity and feedback.

RESOLVED -

That the report and the dates set aside for the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge be noted.

40. **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC**

RESOLVED -

That under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Note: the relevant paragraph number and description is indicated under the Minute heading

41. **LEGAL SHARED SERVICE REVIEW**

Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The Joint Committee received a report setting out the results of a shared service review of legal services. The report detailed the business case and the conclusion of which was that the rationale for a joint service had been proven and should be established. The proposed joint service would deliver greater resilience, improved service quality, and increase capacity, in addition to reducing costs.

In response to a question it was confirmed that administrative processes such as Tree Preservation Orders and Freedom of Information (FOI) requests were already dealt with by internal clients at South Bucks, rather than by the legal team, and that this arrangement would be implemented at Chiltern.

It was noted that the flexible legal service could reduce costs for internal clients by taking on work currently provided by external legal resources. The associated internal costs would however need to be funded from each project. There would also be an opportunity to take on work from external clients which provided an opportunity to generate additional income, although this was difficult to quantify at this stage.

Following a discussion regarding the proposed cost sharing arrangements it was agreed that a review would be carried out after the 15 month initial period of the shared legal services, using information from the case management system. The Joint Committee then

RECOMMENDED -

- 1. That the case for a joint legal service is proven, and that both Councils should proceed to establish a joint legal service.**
- 2. That staff in the respective legal services can be shared to work across the two local authority areas.**

AND RESOLVED -

That if the decision taken in respect of Recommendation 1 is to proceed to establish a joint legal service, then

3. That the joint legal service to be implemented should be as described in Sections 4 and 5 of the report which proposes co-location of the service at Capswood.
4. That the cost sharing arrangements set out in the financial benefits section 6 of the report be agreed and that after the initial period the percentage cost split will be reviewed having regard to actual legal costs incurred by the respective Councils as recorded in the proposed new case management and time-recording system, and that this would be the basis for cost sharing going forward.
5. That the high level implementation plan (appendix 5) be agreed as the basis for reviewing progress in line with delegations and responsibilities decided for the implementation phase of the service review.
6. That it be noted that the proposed shared service generates potential full year savings in 2015/16 of £5,146 (1.2%) rising to £26,889 (6.1%) by 2017/18 and that these are taken into account in the Authorities' respective financial plans.
7. That the purchase of an electronic case management and time-recording system for the shared legal service be agreed, and that the Director of Resources be authorised, in consultation with the respective Cabinet portfolio-holders for Legal Services, to accept the most economically advantageous quotation.

The meeting terminated at 6.25 pm

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