

CHILTERN AND SOUTH BUCKS JOINT COMMITTEE

Meeting - 16 October 2014

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

Apologies for absence: Mr Stannard

7. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 16 July 2014 were agreed by the Committee and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

8. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

9. SHARED SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee received the Annual report for 2014 which detailed the progress of the joint working between Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils over the last year. Members recognised that the progress and achievements of the last year, and that shared services programme management officers had learnt a great deal through the shared service process, and Members wished to place on record their thanks to all the staff involved in the process.

The savings arising from the implementation of shared services helped to significantly offset the reduced funding received from Central Government and other income streams; however both Councils continued to explore other areas of potential savings in light of increased costs in some areas. The Councils had set aside budgets to fund investments into facilitating transformation and change based on the consideration of business cases.

It was suggested that a press release could be used to draw attention to the positive contents of the report at an appropriate time.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

10. CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE POSITION STATEMENT

Members' comments were sought on the position statement for the corporate peer challenge which would be used at joint Member briefings. It was suggested that the paragraph relating to the implementation of the housing framework in South Bucks be updated and amended. Reference was made to the concern about the number of district Members that could be represented on the Health and Wellbeing Board. Committee Members also requested an opportunity to comment on the document prior to publication.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

11. **PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT REVIEW**

The Committee considered a report setting out three options in relation to the proposed Planning and Enforcement shared service review. The report provided a high level description, and set out the risks, advantages and disadvantages of each option. During the discussion the following key points were made:

The operation of Planning Committees would be looked at separately since this was a matter for each separate authority. In reviewing Planning Committee processes and procedures Members were keen to learn from other local authorities and not to restrict this to local authorities in Buckinghamshire only.

There was concern about implementing harmonised staff terms and conditions separately from the conclusion of the shared service review due to increased costs.

There was some concern regarding option A specifically relating to maintaining Member continuity throughout the service review in light of the close proximity to the forthcoming elections.

It was suggested that planning enforcement, conservation and arboriculture might reasonably be dealt with as a separate review in order to reduce the size and complexity of the planning review.

As the service was particularly high profile it was considered essential that the review was done thoroughly and that the public and other Members in particular were also involved in the review process. When engaging with the public it was felt to be important to be proactive and present options for change rather than relying on the public to come forward with proposals. The need to do the review thoroughly led Members not to be in favour of Option B.

Members were also keen to avoid delaying the service review to 2017 due to concerns regarding recruitment and to avoid staff uncertainty. This was counterbalanced by Members also commenting that the review needed to be undertaken properly, including securing inputs from customers, even if that meant the process was longer than it might otherwise be. Therefore they wished to commence some work now, to be available post May 2015 when the full review would then be progressed, and accepted that this would require nominations to a Member Working Group, and this would be done.

The Committee felt it was important for the Member Working Group to consider what should be the scope of the full review that would commence after May 2015, and this should be part of the Group's reporting back to the Joint Committee.

The Committee, following the discussion, agreed on balance to recommend an amended option C to the respective Councils, and that a Member Working Group be established to provide input to the work and to advise on the scope of the review to commence post May 2015.

RESOLVED –

That option C be pursued as an initial piece of work prior to May 2015 which would be limited to addressing the scoping of those elements of the service which were effectively internal looking and include a Member Working Group to oversee the project and advise on the scope of future work.

Note: Councillor A Busby entered the meeting at 5.40 pm

12. **PROGRAMME 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.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

13. **SHARED IT HIGHLIGHT REPORT**

The Joint Committee noted a report providing an update on the shared IT projects including the risks and budget summary position. The joint telephony system would be rolled out across both Councils by the end of the month. The cost of this would be lower than initially anticipated due to shared deployment with BCC.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted

14. **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 included under the Minute heading.

15. **PROPERTY & FACILITIES MANAGEMENT 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 considered a report and received a presentation setting out the results of a shared service review of property and facility management. The report detailed the business case and the conclusion of which was that the rational for a joint service had been proven and should be established. The proposed joint service would deliver greater resilience, cost savings, improved service quality, and provide opportunities for further service improvements.

During the discussion the following key points were made:

It was important to maintain the standard of service provided by the post and print facility in light of proposed primary co-location of the service at Amersham.

It was confirmed that the cost of purchasing the property management system was included in the budget project costs.

One Member emphasised the importance of maintaining a caretaker post at Capswood.

Following the discussion Members expressed thanks to the Head of Environment and Shared Service Review Project Support Officer for the clear and comprehensive report.

RECOMMENDED –

- 1. That the case for a joint service is proven, and that both Councils should proceed to establish a joint property and facility management service.**
- 2. That staff in the respective property and facility management 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 property and facility management service, then

- 3. That the joint property and facility management service to be implemented should be as described in Section 4 and 5 of the report which proposes co-location of the service primarily at Amersham with officer presence at Denham.**
- 4. That the cost sharing arrangements split of 65% CDC and 35% SBDC set out in the financial benefits section of the report (Section 6, Table 8) be agreed.**
- 5. That the high level implementation plan (Section 8) 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 the potential full year salary saving of £56,000 (11%) against current operating costs, split 65% CDC and 35% SBDC, and £10,000 contract savings in 2015/16 be taken account in the authorities' respective financial plans.**
- 7. That the proposed timetable for implementation, as detailed in Section 8, be agreed.**
- 8. That the purchase of an electronic facilities management maintenance system be agreed, and that the Director of Resources be authorised, in consultation with the respective Cabinet portfolio-holders for Environmental Services, to accept the most economically advantageous quotation.**

The meeting terminated at 6.34 pm