



COTSWOLD
DISTRICT COUNCIL



Forest of Dean
DISTRICT COUNCIL



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

2020 Vision for Joint Working Programme Board

Date: 31st October 2014

Time: 10 – 12

Location: Montpellier Room, Municipal Offices, Cheltenham

Attendees

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Councillor Steve Jordan (apologies) | Councillor Jon Walklett |
| Councillor Barry Norton | Councillor Mark Booty (apologies) |
| Councillor Patrick Molyneux | Councillor Brian Robinson |
| Councillor Lynden Stowe (apologies) | Councillor Chris Hancock |
| Andrew North | David Neudegg |
| Ralph Young | Peter Hibberd |
| Pat Pratley | Jenny Poole |
| Phil Martin | Julie McCarthy |
| Eric Bohl – Activist group | Karen Rushworth |
| Joe Papineschi - Eunomia | |

Agenda

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Barry Norton in the absence of Cllr Steve Jordan.

1. Notes from previous meeting and actions arising

- 1.1 DN confirmed that the TCA bid was submitted and the outcome is expected to be known mid November 2014. There were 6 part A bids for extending shared services amounting to around £10 million.

2. Activist report and interim management arrangements

- 2.1 EB presented his draft report and advised that two of the four appendices still need to be completed. He advised that any points raised during the Programme Board meeting will be addressed in the final version of the report.
- 2.2 EB explained that Chapter three sets out what is motivating the programme, shared strengths and unique differences; Chapter four summarises the feedback as a set of challenges and Chapters five and six set out how these can be addressed in terms of service design and sourcing options.
- 2.3 The table on page 41 sets out the proposed outcomes framework and recommendation 5.3 on page 52 suggests that for each shared service partners agree at the outset which policies and operational decision making that can be delegated and those over which they wish to retain sovereignty.
- 2.4 Cllr BN stressed that, in order to exercise local accountability, members will need access to officers in the shared services and EB confirmed that this would be managed through Communications Protocols and will be assisted by a focus on local knowledge. Retaining local authority branding will help with the sense of identity and avoid confusion.
- 2.5 The report recommends that the commissioning function be retained, and ideally shared, but should be lean and relatively small. It also recommends that the number of retained services be kept to a minimum.
- 2.6 Table 6.10 on page 72 summarises the recommended way forward, initially moving to an interim Joint Committee (supported by a light-touch Memorandum of Understanding) with a decision in autumn 2015 regarding the preferred model. This will be added to the recommendations in the final version of the report.

2.7 The interim management arrangements include four main roles, one is new and two are additions to existing roles. A full time Programme Director is proposed, together with part time roles for an Interim Lead Commissioner and an Interim Managing Director, with the latter likely to be a role that grows over time. The Head of Paid Service role needs to continue in each Council. Cllr BN emphasised that each Council will need to consider the implications of these roles on officers' existing responsibilities. Both DN and AN confirmed that this had already been the case but that further consideration was necessary.

Action: A paper be brought to a future Programme Board meeting reflecting the implications of these interim roles both on individual authorities and collectively.

2.8 EB advised that Chapter 8 brings all the recommendations together and highlights that the key issues are to identify a way forward for the pensions issue and to keep all four partners involved to build on the track record of success.

2.9 Cllr BN requested that the issue of possible redundancies be managed sensitively.

2.10 Cllr JW asked that the population figures for Cheltenham in Appendix A be corrected.

Action: EB to circulate information included in Appendix A to Programme Team members in the each Council for them to check/update.

2.11 The report and recommendations were accepted by the Programme Board and recommended for consideration by the four Cabinets in December.

Action: The Activist report and recommendations be considered by the four Cabinets in December 2014.

3. Ubico Depot Services Report from Eunomia

3.1 RY explained that Eunomia has been commissioned to investigate the costs and benefits (both financial and qualitative) of both Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire District Councils joining Ubico to draw down 'depot services' (excluding waste). This would require a decision by each Council about whether they want to join, together with a decision from Ubico to allow them to join and approval of both Cheltenham Borough Council and Cotswold District Council as shareholders.

3.2 AN and RY declared an interest as they are Directors of Ubico but it was agreed that there was no conflict of interest.

3.3 Joe Papineschi from Eunomia explained that Ubico is a Teckal company with no profit margin and the benefit of being exempt from EU procurement rules. Their shareholding can be expanded and Stroud District Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council are actively looking to join.

- 3.4 The Eunomia report focussed on depot services in the short term, but in the longer term waste services could potentially be brought in which would lead to greater benefits. Their financial analysis has been fairly conservative and has resulted in projected savings of £61,586 for West Oxfordshire and £11,300 for Forest of Dean, although Joe felt that additional savings could probably be achieved in practice.
- 3.5 Joe explained the background to how the cost element of the business case for FoDDC Depot Services has been calculated. He advised that Ubico has agreed that in marginal cases the contribution from a new partner towards initial set up costs will not be applied until another service such as waste is included and the potential savings are higher. This option is not necessary in the West Oxfordshire business case as potential savings are considerably higher. Cllr PM asked what would happen if we didn't include waste in future and RY confirmed that it would just become a deferred issue.
- 3.6 Joe confirmed that qualitative benefits of joining included future opportunities to save: e.g. on provision of waste services and procurement, improved resilience and increased flexibility. There are also financial benefits of reduced overheads.
- 3.7 Responding to questions from Cllr BN and AN, Joe explained that there would be more potential to trade and that the business case included some recognition of the potential for a larger organisation to get better procurement prices. He also confirmed that he was confident that Ubico could maintain or improve recycling rates.
- 3.8 Cllr JW expressed concern that Ubico could grow threefold overnight but Joe reassured him that new services would be added in on a phased basis.
- 3.9 The report was accepted and referred to the two authorities for consideration.

Action: The Eunomia report be considered by Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire District Councils.

4. ICT Proposals

- 4.1 PM presented his ICT paper outlining the importance of a strong ICT foundation to underpin the shared services vision. The paper included a high level ICT strategy and applications plan as appendices. Indicative costs were also included in the TCA bid when it was submitted.
- 4.2 AN asked whether the TCA award was necessary to fund the work. PM confirmed that the Strategy has been written in a flexible way. The infrastructure has been developed as a layered approach as aspects of this would be necessary for joint working so would provide payback. However, the proposals for applications would need to be revisited and probably scaled down if the TCA funding was not available.

- 4.3 JP confirmed that all the costs were factored into the original business case and TCA bid and DN observed that decisions around the ICT proposals can only really be made once the outcome of the bid is known.
- 4.4 The Programme Board:
- a) approved the proposed Joint ICT Strategy;
 - b) agreed that all the Councils and Partners ICT arrangements should be stable before the new infrastructure /network is rolled out; and
 - c) asked that a report regarding the future operational structure of ICT is presented to a future meeting.

5. Reporting and recommendations to Councils

- 5.1 DN advised that following the report to the four Cabinets in June 2014 a further report will be required in December 2014 to consider:
- a) the Activist work, particularly recommendations and principles;
 - b) a summary of the outline business case, programme plan and outcome of TCA bid; and
 - c) the potential quick wins.
- 5.2 In addition, the Public Protection proposals will be reported separately in November/December and a report on a potential shared Revenues and Benefits service at some stage in the future.
- 5.3 DN will draft a Cabinet report for the next Programme Board to consider.

Action: A Cabinet report is drafted for consideration at Programme Board 28/11/14.

- 5.4 PH is taking the lead on Communications and Engagement and has asked that the Engagement Team draft a press release to cover the TCA bid announcement, and a reactive press statement in case there are media enquiries following publication of the Cabinet papers. Briefings are also being arranged for staff, members and unions.
- 5.5 It was agreed that the report on a Shared Public Protection should recognise how Cheltenham's REST project links to the Public Protection workstream, and Cllr JW requested that an allocation of £25k be made from the TCA funding towards systems thinking work.

Action: The Shared Public Protection service report should recognise that Cheltenham's REST project links to the Public Protection workstream. £25k should be made available from the TCA funding towards systems thinking work for the Cheltenham Borough Council REST project.

6. Member Engagement Proposal

- 6.1 PH presented the revised paper that reflects views expressed previously on this proposal. This will now form part of the introduction to the Engagement Plan as a statement of intent from the Programme Board.

6.2 Cllr JW suggested that the paper be renamed Member Engagement Groups as this better reflects both consultation and briefing activity. AN requested that 'overview and' be added before scrutiny in line one of paragraph two.

Action: Amendments to Member Engagement Proposal to be incorporated as discussed.

7. Pensions Paper

7.1 JP explained that the paper brings forward the next steps to be taken in an effort to resolve the pensions issue, in the light of the response from Eric Pickles and advice from Alison Murray from AON Hewitt.

7.2 Approval for an additional £25k funding in principle is being requested to support discussions with pension fund administrators and DCLG officials.

7.3 The recommendations in the report were accepted and the Programme Board:

- a) Endorsed the actions set out in the pensions briefing note; and
- b) Approved an allocation of up to £25k to enable AON Hewitt to support CFOs in discussions with the county pension fund administrators and DCLG officials.

8. Programme budget update and cost and benefit sharing principles

8.1 The paper reflects expenditure and commitment to date and has been updated to reflect the vision.

8.2 It only includes what we've received to date and will need to have future funding built in at the appropriate time.

8.3 Paper to be prepared for the next Programme Board to request funding for the next stage of the Programme.

Action: Paper to be prepared for the next Programme Board to request funding for the next stage of the Programme.

8.4 A set of costs and benefit savings principles had been produced based on those already applied when creating the GO Shared Service. The principles may need to be adapted as the programme progresses.

8.5 A section is included specifically to deal with redundancy costs as the multiplier is different for FoDDC.

8.6 AN was concerned that savings achieved from an existing project in CBC regarding accommodation costs might be included in this proposal. It was agreed that each case will be judged on its own merits. The desire is to be fair and equitable to all partners so that no-one is disadvantaged. A more detailed cost sharing proposal will be required by autumn 2015.

8.7 The Programme Board:

- a) Endorsed the general cost and benefit sharing principles; and
- b) Endorsed the redundancy cost model.

9. Any other business

9.1 The Programme Highlight Report will be circulated after the meeting, all workstreams are on track.

Action: To circulate to Programme Highlight Report to Programme Board members.

9.2 A revised Programme Team structure will be required moving forwards.

9.3 Cllr JW thanked JG for all her work and support and this was echoed by other members of the Programme Board.

Next Meeting – 28th November 2014