

additional papers 1

Executive Committee

Wed 27th Jan
2010
7.00 pm

Council Chamber
Town Hall
Redditch



www.redditchbc.gov.uk

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**If you have any queries on this Agenda or any of the decisions taken or wish to exercise any of the above rights of access to information, please contact
Ivor Westmore
Committee Support Services**

**Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH
Tel: 01527 64252 (Extn. 3269) Fax: (01527) 65216
e.mail: ivor.westmore@redditchbc.gov.uk Minicom: 595528**

Welcome to today's meeting.

Guidance for the Public

Agenda Papers

The **Agenda List** at the front of the Agenda summarises the issues to be discussed and is followed by the Officers' full supporting **Reports**.

Chair

The Chair is responsible for the proper conduct of the meeting. Generally to one side of the Chair is the Committee Support Officer who gives advice on the proper conduct of the meeting and ensures that the debate and the decisions are properly recorded. On the Chair's other side are the relevant Council Officers. The Councillors ("Members") of the Committee occupy the remaining seats around the table.

Running Order

Items will normally be taken in the order printed but, in particular circumstances, the Chair may agree to vary the order.

Refreshments : tea, coffee and water are normally available at meetings - please serve yourself.

Decisions

Decisions at the meeting will be taken by the **Councillors** who are the democratically elected representatives. They are advised by **Officers** who are paid professionals and do not have a vote.

Members of the Public

Members of the public may, by prior arrangement, speak at meetings of the Council or its Committees. Specific procedures exist for Appeals Hearings or for meetings involving Licence or Planning Applications. For further information on this point, please speak to the Committee Support Officer.

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Further Information

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If the alarm is sounded, please leave the building by the nearest available exit – these are clearly indicated within all the Committee Rooms.

If you discover a fire, inform a member of staff or operate the nearest alarm call point (wall mounted red rectangular box). In the event of the fire alarm sounding, leave the building immediately following the fire exit signs. Officers have been appointed with responsibility to ensure that all visitors are escorted from the building.

Do Not stop to collect personal belongings.

Do Not use lifts.

Do Not re-enter the building until told to do so.

The emergency Assembly Area is on Walter Stranz Square.

Declaration of Interests: Guidance for Councillors

DO I HAVE A "PERSONAL INTEREST" ?

- Where the item relates or is likely to affect your **registered interests** (what you have declared on the formal Register of Interests)

OR

- Where a decision in relation to the item might reasonably be regarded as affecting **your own** well-being or financial position, or that of your **family**, or your **close associates** more than most other people affected by the issue,

you have a personal interest.

WHAT MUST I DO? **Declare the existence, and nature, of your interest and stay**

- The declaration must relate to specific business being decided - a general scattergun approach is not needed
- **Exception** - where interest arises only because of your membership of another **public body**, there is no need to declare unless you **speak** on the matter.
- You **can vote** on the matter.

IS IT A "PREJUDICIAL INTEREST" ?

In general only if:-

- It is a personal interest **and**
- The item affects your **financial position** (or conveys other benefits), or the position of your **family, close associates** or bodies through which you have a **registered interest** (or relates to the exercise of **regulatory functions** in relation to these groups)

and

- A member of public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably believe the interest was likely to **prejudice** your judgement of the public interest.

WHAT MUST I DO? **Declare and Withdraw**

BUT you may make representations to the meeting before withdrawing, **if** the public have similar rights (such as the right to speak at Planning Committee).



Executive

Committee

27th January 2010

7.00 pm

Council Chamber Town Hall

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| <p>8. Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier (WETT) Programme (Pages 239 - 254) Chief Executive</p> | <p>To consider the proposed business cases for Regulatory, Audit and Property Services, produced as part of the Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier Programme.</p> <p>(Consultation summaries attached)</p> <p>(No Specific Ward Relevance)</p> |
| <p>12. Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Pages 255 - 262) Chief Executive</p> | <p>To receive the minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 25th November and 16th December 2009.</p> <p>(Minutes of meeting on 16th December 2009 attached).</p> |

Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier (WETT) Programme

Response to the issues arising from the staff consultation

Introduction

This report summarises and provides responses to the key points arising from the staff consultation exercise relating to the Business Cases for Regulatory, Internal Audit and Property Services.

Background

Following the presentation of the Business Cases to Members on November 5th, the staff consultation exercise started on November 10th with presentations to staff on November 10th and 11th at Worcester Rugby Club. At that stage, it was planned for the staff consultation on the three Business Cases to end on December 7th. However, in response to requests from unions and individual members of staff, the consultation period was extended until December 21st.

During the intervening period many different consultation events have taken place. Local consultation events have been held for all staff within the affected services, at each authority involved. Union representatives and individual members of staff have had the opportunity to discuss the Business Cases with local Managers, members of the Project Teams, HR representatives and members of the WETT Programme Team. This approach goes beyond the legal obligations on individual councils to consult with staff on such matters.

Throughout the process, a large number of submissions have been received. The purpose of this report is to summarise those submissions for the benefit of Members. All of those submissions will be made available to Members prior to their formal Cabinet or Council meetings.

The nature of the submissions falls into the following categories:

- Unions: a number of submissions were received from Unison and GMB, on behalf of their members. Some relate to individual services, some to individual authorities and others to the overall WETT Programme
- Individual members of staff
- Teams: both small and large, within individual authorities
- Professional Groups: a number of groups of staff from within the various elements of Environmental Health (eg: Food Safety, Health and Safety Liaison, Pollution Liaison, Contaminated Land) have formulated submissions themselves.

The next three sections of this report contain summaries of the issues raised in the various submissions, along with the observations and responses of the Project Teams,

as appropriate. The final three sections of this document are rather large matrices. These contain the key points from each submission, and they are included as a means of indicating the number of submissions received and the range of views expressed. As mentioned above, the full set of submissions is being made available to all Members of the seven councils.

Overview of consultation responses to Regulatory Shared Service business case

Introduction

The business case for a Regulatory Shared Service was made available to staff and unions for consultation and comment on 10th/ 11th November 2009. By the extended closing date of 21st December 2009 a total of 26 responses had been received from unions, professional staff groups and individuals.

All responses have been analysed to identify issues of concern. These issues have been grouped together into related themes and are set out in detail in the accompanying matrix showing the issues of concern to the various respondents. The detailed individual responses have also been made available for inspection in the Members Room.

This paper provides a high level overview of the themes of concern to consultation respondents along with observations from the Regulatory Services Project Team which are shown in italics.

Staff / union consultation process and timescale

There is widespread concern over delays in making the business case available for consultation and the length of the consultation period. Some respondents favoured more time being spent further developing the business case with consultees to reduce the risks identified with the proposals and felt there was a reluctance to engage with staff and unions early on or to provide timely enough responses to questions raised at the outset of the consultation process.

There are concerns about the impact of these changes in Councils with other major change programmes, especially the County Council's BOLD (Better Outcomes through Lean Delivery) programme and the Redditch / Bromsgrove single management team restructure. Some respondents raised wider implications for the future shape of their Council following implementation of this and related proposals. There were concerns about whether the decision being sought was one of principle or specifically in relation to Option 3 and the fact that scrutiny and decision making was taking place during the consultation period.

Project Team observations: It is acknowledged the detailed business case took longer to be made available than originally planned. This was due to the need to undertake additional work to ensure robustness and acceptability to all Councils. The period for consultation was extended by 2 weeks at the request of unions and staff. This now exceeds the statutory requirements. Whilst recognising the benefits longer engagement may bring there is an urgent need to be prepared for forthcoming reductions in public sector funding. Effective implementation using structured project management will avoid any potential impacts of other major change programmes and will include active engagement of staff and stakeholders. Furthermore, the significant risks that have been identified will be properly managed during the implementation process. Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils believe that there are synergies from aligning their change programme with the WETT Programme. The wider membership of the Project Team enabled the Business Case to be challenged at all stages, particularly Option 3.

Overview of consultation responses to Regulatory Shared Service business case

However, after taking all of the issues into account, the WETT Programme Board was unanimously in favour of the proposal, as were the Leaders and Chief Executives.

Business model, structure and capacity

Many respondents were concerned at the lack of detail about the proposed structure arguing that it made it difficult to comment meaningfully on whether the proposed service would work or deliver the identified benefits. The majority of respondents expressed concern that the proposed 120 staff is insufficient to undertake the range of services to acceptable standards, especially when staffing ratios are compared to other councils. Staffing levels are seen by most respondents to be driven by financial considerations rather than from a detailed analysis of workload. Many dismiss the scope for closer joint working between Environmental Health and Trading Standards staff.

Widespread concerns are raised about the reduction in management, especially in relation to those managers undertaking operational work and that professional disciplines will not be properly reflected in the proposed hierarchy.

There is common concern that the proposed capacity is insufficient to provide the claimed resilience and that the service will fail during peak demand. The business case is seen by some as unproven and lacking enough information on implementation, with specific concern about adequacy of HR capacity to support the change process.

There was some feeling that the Laboratory Service should be included within the shared service.

Project Team observations: The proposed structure is indicative, reflecting that the process of transformation and the incoming senior management team will finalise the detailed organisational structure. It is acknowledged that future affordability was a major consideration in developing the proposals however the Project Team considers the proposed capacity is sufficient with the investment in transformational change which will also enable a leaner management structure. Comparisons quoted with other Councils are based on current levels and do not take account of transformational opportunities or changes that future funding pressures will necessitate of them. It should be noted that the Detailed Business Case proposes a phased reduction to the indicative 120 FTE figure over a two year period. There are many examples of closer joint working between Trading Standards and Environmental Health professionals being successfully achieved throughout the country in unitary councils, eg: Herefordshire and Wiltshire Councils. Additional resources for the host in the business case will provide for HR support to the shared service. The Group welcomed the comments in relation to the inclusion of the Laboratory Service within the scope of the project. However, this would be considered following the implementation of the services within the current Business Case.

Impact on service delivery and performance

There is broad concern that different service levels across partner councils will lead to inconsistent service delivery and future planning. Many describe this as likely to lead to a “post-code lottery”. Many respondents express concern about the scope of services to

Overview of consultation responses to Regulatory Shared Service business case

be included and whether the detail of this has been adequately addressed to avoid risk of work going undone or incurring additional costs.

Many respondents are concerned about delivering the proposed transformational change which is widely seen as going beyond simply a shared service and increasing risks both financially and to public health. Examples of proposals elsewhere in the country that have faltered, in particular Lincolnshire, are cited as indicative of what may happen in Worcestershire. Concerns are also raised about whether learning from other Worcestershire shared services has been incorporated in developing the business case.

Many raise questions and concerns about proposed levels of service and exactly what improvements will be delivered and how. This lack of definition of service standards is seen by some as likely to lead to reduced performance. Many express concern about the consequences of the loss of local knowledge both for service recipients and managers. Some concern was expressed regarding the lack of reference to LAA objectives; and also the need to learn lessons from the Revenues and Benefits Shared Service.

Project Team observations: The Business Case recognises the need to locally tailor the proposed core services to meet the needs of each council. It is intended that individual partner performance against National Indicators will be maintained as a minimum. Performance will be monitored by the Joint Committee. There are risks to performance from these proposals which we consider are addressed in the business case. The proposals in this business case are not comparable to other models and the difficulties encountered elsewhere have been researched, are understood and no additional risks have been identified for the Worcestershire model. With regard to the post code lottery – this is the situation we currently have: this proposal opens up opportunities to standardise services across the county where this is desirable – and with Member agreement. With regard to the LAA, any changes in delivery arrangements should not impact upon the overall delivery of the service. Lessons from the Revenues and Benefits Shared Service have been taken into account, and will continue to feed into future phases of the project. (NB: It is delivering annual savings of over £1,000,000 for the South Worcestershire authorities, so the lessons are invaluable.)

Finance, savings and investment

Many respondents consider there is a lack of detail to demonstrate the proposals are financially beneficial and that not all services or costs are included. There is concern that this may lead to additional costs for services compared to current arrangements. Many express concern that the business case is financially driven and the accuracy of data upon which the financial model is built is questioned.

Many respondents recognise the inevitable need to deliver efficiency savings and transformational change including shared services and question the extent to which alternative ways in which this might be achieved have been considered though no respondent directly offers any alternative proposition. Some concerns are raised about the impact of the proposals on Council income from licensing and of the proposed procurement savings adversely impacting some local businesses.

Overview of consultation responses to Regulatory Shared Service business case

Project Team observations: The financial model is based on current information from each council, and is considered fit for purpose having been thoroughly challenged by the County Treasurers group acting independently. The Chief Executives and Leaders are clear that the need to meet future reduction in public service funding is an unavoidable imperative and no credible alternative proposals are available at this time. Each council will continue to determine its own licensing charges and will retain the income. The impact of procurement decisions on local businesses is not considered to be significant because of the nature of this expenditure.

ICT and technology

Many respondents expressed concern about the ICT proposals within the business case, in particular the adequacy of analysis, the potential for cost escalation and the practicability, reliability and security of future systems. Many felt the proposed ICT system should be implemented before the shared service organisation and some expressed concern about the impact of a South Worcestershire ICT shared service being set up in parallel with these proposals.

Project Team observations: The ICT proposals are based on well established and proven systems and technologies and do not represent an untested application. Costs have been established in conjunction with external consultants and are considered adequate and include implementation costs. Additional resources are allowed for the ongoing IT support by the host and the joining of council IT functions across the County will provide additional resilience to support projects such as this. The need to meet future reductions in public spending does not allow the extended implementation suggested. Separating the ICT investment from the overall transformational package would not allow the return on investment to be achieved within the timescales agreed by the Chief Executives and Leaders.

Worcestershire Hub

Most respondents consider the business case places an over reliance on the Worcestershire Hub which is regarded as being unable to cope in other areas of demand. Concerns are raised about the proposed level of additional Customer Service Adviser capacity and the extent to which the Hub will be able to deliver services in place of professional staff or cope in the event of a major incident, increasing risks to public health.

Project Team observations: Hub managers have been closely involved in the development of the business case. The proposed role of the Hub is both necessary and deliverable within the additional capacity identified. The Hub is a key component of service transformation which will ensure professional staff can be freed up to add real value from their skills and expertise. The wider range of access channels, the extended opening hours and the improvements in the use of technology to enable scripting and workflow, all provide the ability to enhance the service to the customer. Furthermore, significant additional resources have been made available by the County Council for the Hub in order to address previous capacity issues.

Overview of consultation responses to Regulatory Shared Service business case

Impact on staff terms, conditions and career prospects

There are broad concerns about the adequacy of safeguards for employees facing relocation, reductions in pay or redundancy and the honouring of existing pay and grading mechanisms. A particular concern is the intent to secure alternative employment across partner councils including vacancy freezes, redeployment and alternative work.

There is a widespread feeling that the proposed structure and ways of working will stifle career progression and that uncertainty around the shared service proposals will lead to staff seeking alternative employment.

Project Team observations: It is proposed to create the new service following transfer of staff in accordance with regulations that provide a statutory framework of protection and with ongoing consultation with staff and unions. We recognise the need to reach an early agreement on many of the issues identified and will work to achieve this. Given future pressures on public sector finances we consider the proposals provide a positive framework for career development and future employment.

Hosting proposals

A number of respondents express concern that the decision on hosting has been based on politics rather than rational argument raising questions over the proposed hosts ability to perform adequately. Some concern is also expressed that Councils paying higher salary levels have been avoided as host.

Project Team observations: Suitability of the hosting arrangements have been tested by external consultants who confirm the proposed host. Additional resources are included within the proposed shared service funding to meet the additional costs to the host of supporting the Shared Service. Each post will be subject to Job Evaluation, and not based simply on existing pay grades.

Governance

UNISON has sought a long-term commitment to keeping regulatory services in-house as a public sector shared service. Many respondents are concerned at the lack of detail of arrangements beyond the proposed Joint Committee and over reduction in influence and decision making by locally elected Members. There is concern that this “democratic deficit” will lead to a lack of engagement with tax payers.

Specific concerns are raised about licensing functions and how committee structures will relate to the proposed shared service. Many respondents are concerned at the lack of detail on scrutiny, monitoring and joint trade union negotiation.

Professional respondents expressed concerns over external scrutiny from central government agencies and possible difficulties in providing statutory returns.

Project Team observations: This proposal is a long term public sector. Detailed arrangements for representation on the Joint Committee will need to be agreed as part

Overview of consultation responses to Regulatory Shared Service business case

of concluding the legal agreement which coupled with detailed service specifications for each Council will ensure opportunities for input from elected Members. Furthermore, each Council will retain their licensing committees and sub-committees for relevant local decision making. The South Worcestershire Revenues and Benefits Shared Service provides a good model for joint scrutiny and external liaison. Existing Scrutiny functions at each authority will continue to exist and can call in issues if they so wish.

Equalities

Many respondents were concerned there was no evidence of equalities impact assessment of the proposals.

Project Team observations: Equality impact assessments are for each council to carry out and report on in accordance with their own policies / arrangements. It is recognised that full equality impact assessments will need to be carried out following further consultation with stakeholders in order to minimise any adverse impacts of the proposals. The impact of the proposals on staff following this first consultation can now be carried out and for some councils this has already taken place and the results made available.

Stakeholder consultation

Most respondents were concerned at inadequate consultation with stakeholders including service recipients, expert and professional bodies and the public. Some considered the public needed to be informed that introduction of a shared service in the form proposed will mean a reduction in services and standards.

Project Team observations: Initial engagement has been undertaken with a number of stakeholders which has been largely supportive of the proposals. The need for further consultation is set out in the business case (See Transformation section page 10).

Conclusion

There has been a wide ranging and detailed response to the consultation process that has raised many issues, with a good deal of common concerns. Many of the issues and concerns raised are understandable given the nature of the proposals and the impact they will have on individual employees. It was with this in mind that a commitment was given to staff and unions that the outcome of the consultation would be made fully available prior to decision making by the councils. The issues and concerns raised will be fully addressed in implementing the proposals should all partners commit to the Regulatory Shared Service.

WETT Regulatory Services Project Team

4th January 2010

Overview of consultation responses to Internal Audit Shared Service business case

Introduction

The business case for an Internal Audit Shared Service was made available to staff and unions for consultation and comment on 10th/ 11th November 2009. By the extended closing date of 21st December 2009 a total of 7 responses had been received from unions and individuals.

All responses have been analysed to identify issues of concern. These issues have been grouped together into related themes and are set out in detail in the accompanying matrix showing the issues of concern to the various respondents. The detailed individual responses have also been made available for inspection by Members at each of the councils.

This paper provides a high level overview of the themes of concern to consultation respondents along with observations from the Internal Audit Project Team, which are shown in italics. To avoid duplication, staff responses and Project Team observations regarding the consultation process and timescale are the same as for Regulatory Services and so have not been repeated here.

Staff / union consultation process and timescale

As for Regulatory Services. In addition, some comments were made about the unclear wording and inconsistencies in the Business Case.

Project Team observations: Given the nature of the task, and the number of individuals involved in producing the different elements of the Business Case, some inconsistency / lack of clarity is perhaps inevitable.

Business model, structure and capacity

Specific concerns were expressed about the structure – not very flat – and that Internal Audit Services have suffered from cuts in recent years, are already operating at minimum staffing levels and therefore that the savings are unachievable.

Project Team observations: The structure is indicative but is designed to allow for different levels of expertise / experience, and reflects the current range of job levels across the partners. The Project Team is confident that the savings are achievable and that adequate audit coverage will continue.

Impact on service delivery and performance

Concerns were raised about proposals to reduce the number of Audit days required by each authority, and yet deliver the same level of Audit assurance; in addition, how would the “optional” areas be covered from year two. There was also a concern expressed about achieving and delivering transformational change, which is beyond merely a shared service.

Overview of consultation responses to Internal Audit Shared Service business case

Project Team observations: Reductions in the number of Audit days delivered will be subject to local requirements, but achieved by a combination of improved efficiency from economies of scale, as well as the adoption of best practice. It is anticipated that councils will continue to receive (if they so choose) those services described as optional in the business case which they receive in year one. Transformational change will also arise from new approaches such as the proposed Audit Management System and “hot-desking”.

Finance, savings and investment

Most respondents were concerned about the financial assumptions built into the Business Case, including issues such as support costs, the reliability of income from external sources, and the “profit” element for Worcester City as host of the service. A specific concern was raised about the degree of certainty of the 100 days purchased from Wyre Forest, and the impact on the finances if this is not taken up.

Project Team observations: The financial model is considered robust and fit for purpose having been thoroughly challenged by the County Treasurers group. All participating authorities will benefit financially from this proposal over the period projected in the Business Case. If Wyre Forest decided not to proceed with the full 100 days, the service management would seek to replace that income through work for another external client.

ICT and technology

Concerns were expressed that the ICT networks of all participating authorities would not be linked in time for the implementation of this shared service. Questions have also been raised about how the ICT equipment would work in practice. Also, a concern about what happens if the investment funding from RIEP isn’t forthcoming.

Project Team observations: The seven ICT Managers have agreed to link the various networks in the timescales required or all of the proposed WETT shared services. This will enable the flexible deployment of staff, as required. The implementation for the proposed Audit Management System will be carried out in accordance with recognised project management best practice. The application for RIEP funding is proceeding very positively, so there is a high degree of confidence in it being forthcoming. In the unlikely event that it is not forthcoming, the individual authorities would seek to share the investment costs between them.

Worcestershire Hub

Not applicable for Internal Audit Services.

Impact on staff terms, conditions and career prospects

Overview of consultation responses to Internal Audit Shared Service business case

As for Regulatory Services, there are broad concerns about the adequacy of safeguards for employees facing relocation, reductions in pay or redundancy and the honouring of existing pay and grading mechanisms. Specific concerns have been expressed about changes such as “hot-desking” and additional travel time arising from relocation / flexible working arrangements.

Project Team observations: It is proposed to transfer staff in accordance with TUPE and there will be ongoing consultation with staff and unions. We recognise the need to reach an early agreement on many of the issues identified and will work to achieve this. We are confident that the experiences of staff in other services, where “hotdesking” and more flexible working is standard practice, will be a reassurance to staff.

Hosting proposals

Some concern expressed regarding the practicalities of a physical move to buildings already overstaffed, with poor parking provision.

Project Team observations: For the proposed shared Internal Audit service, it is anticipated that the same level of accommodation will be required and made available as now. So, there will be no additional strain on accommodation or parking arrangements at any one location.

Governance

In addition to the general concerns as for Regulatory Services, most respondents expressed concern about proposal for a Service Level Agreement (SLA), rather than a Joint Committee form of governance for Internal Audit.

Project Team observations: SLAs are a tried and tested method of delivering Internal Audit Services. Worcester City – the proposed host – already provides such services to its existing customers, including Malvern Hills District Council. A Joint Committee is considered unnecessarily bureaucratic for Internal Audit, particularly when there are already audit committees, or equivalent, at each council. A management board comprising the service management, together with the Section 151 officers from each council, is expected to oversee the arrangements.

Equalities

Many respondents were concerned there was no evidence of equalities impact assessment of the proposals.

Project Team observations: Equality impact assessments are for each council to carry out and report on in accordance with their own policies / arrangements. It is recognised that full equality impact assessments will need to be carried out following further consultation with stakeholders in order to minimise any adverse impacts of the proposals. The impact of the proposals on staff following this first consultation can now

Overview of consultation responses to Internal Audit Shared Service business case

be carried out and for some councils this has already taken place and the results made available.

Stakeholder consultation

No issues were raised with regard to Internal Audit Services.

Conclusion

There has been a wide ranging and detailed response to the consultation process that has raised many issues, with a good deal of common concerns. Many of the issues and concerns raised are understandable given the nature of the proposals and the impact they will have on individual employees. It was with this in mind that a commitment was given to staff and unions that the outcome of the consultation would be made fully available prior to decision making by the councils. The issues and concerns raised will be fully addressed in implementing the proposals should all partners commit to the Internal Audit Shared Service.

WETT Internal Audit Project Team

4th January 2010

Overview of consultation responses to Property Shared Service business case

Introduction

The business case for a Property Shared Service was made available to staff and unions for consultation and comment on 10th/ 11th November 2009. By the extended closing date of 21st December 2009 a total of 6 responses had been received from unions and individuals.

All responses have been analysed to identify issues of concern. These issues have been grouped together into related themes and are set out in detail in the accompanying matrix showing the issues of concern to the various respondents. The detailed individual responses have also been made available for inspection by Members at each of the councils.

This paper provides a high level overview of the themes of concern to consultation respondents along with observations from the WETT Property Services Project Team which are shown in italics. To avoid duplication, staff responses and Project Team observations regarding the consultation process and timescales are the same as for Regulatory Services and so have not been repeated here.

Staff/ union consultation process and timescale

As for Regulatory Services. In addition, some comments were made about unclear wording and inconsistencies in the Business Case.

Project Team observations: Given the nature of the task, and the number of individuals involved in producing the different elements of the Business Case, some inconsistency / lack of clarity is perhaps inevitable.

Business model, structure and capacity

Concerns were expressed about the TUPE process, and particularly the implementation timescale, given the present commitments regarding the number of initiatives that the County's Property Services are undertaking.

Project Team observations: Assuming the decision is taken to proceed with a shared Property service, a consultation exercise will be conducted specifically to deal with TUPE issues – a statutory requirement in such circumstances. One of the challenges of all change programmes is to prioritise the work to enable a number of workstreams to proceed in parallel. The transition to a shared Property service will be no different.

Impact on service delivery and performance

There are concerns about claims that a shared service will be better placed to meet local service needs, and that it might be too remote and less responsive to the needs of service users and members. A number of respondents expressed concern about the general lack of detail regarding structures, and the lack of clarity that the staffing levels would be adequate to deliver the required service levels. Differences between District and County property portfolios were also highlighted as an issue.

Overview of consultation responses to Property Shared Service business case

Project Team observations: The key benefit of a shared Property service is the increased flexibility of staff and resources that it offers. This provides the opportunity to allocate resources where they are needed, when they are needed, and enables timely responses to service users and members' requirements. It is this flexibility that enables economies of scale to deliver the savings whilst protecting service levels. The differences in portfolios are to do with scale and in some cases the nature of the portfolio as stated in the business case. The skills of the Property personnel however are readily transferrable across the combined portfolios.

Finance, savings and investment

Some respondents express concern over the accuracy of data upon which the financial model is built, given the different accounting structures of the participating authorities. The combination of delivering fixed savings and implementation being different in practice than theory is felt to be a high risk. The hidden costs of change are also felt to be an issue, particularly training / skills transfer.

Project Team observations: The financial model is considered robust and fit for purpose having been produced by Finance Managers and scrutinised by Treasurers from the participating councils. It is planned that the process of change during the implementation phase be gradual, and will take into account the need to develop and train staff as required.

ICT and technology

Concern was expressed regarding the capacity of the shared service to cope with the implementation of the new iProp system, during the TUPE process. The potential impact on management time was highlighted.

Project Team observations: The project to implement the County's iProp system is well established and progressing as planned. Officers will attend both iProp and WETT implementation project groups to ensure continuity. As referred to above, one of the challenges of all change programmes is to prioritise the work to enable a number of work streams to proceed in parallel. The transition to a shared Property service will be no different.

Worcestershire Hub

Not applicable for Property Services.

Impact on staff terms, conditions and career prospects

As for Regulatory Services, there are broad concerns about the adequacy of safeguards for employees facing relocation, reductions in pay or redundancy and the honouring of existing pay and grading mechanisms. Specific concerns have been expressed about changes such as "hot-desking" and additional travel time arising from relocation / flexible working arrangements. Some concerns were expressed regarding the proposed

Overview of consultation responses to Property Shared Service business case

reduction in the numbers of agency staff, and a potential consequential reduction in skills and capacity; and the possible impact on future training and development of staff.

Project Team observations: It is proposed to transfer staff in accordance with TUPE and with ongoing consultation with staff and unions. We recognise the need to reach an early agreement on many of the issues identified and will work to achieve this. We are confident that the experiences of staff in other services, where “hot-desking” and more flexible working is standard practice, will be a reassurance to staff. The references to a possible reduction in agency staff is a general point in the Business Case which demonstrates the intention to protect permanent staff. Ongoing training and development of staff will be crucial to the flexibility of resources on which the future success of the service will depend.

Hosting proposals

Concern was expressed that the host (in this case the County Council) would not have sufficient capacity to house all of the additional staff.

Project Team observations: The County’s use of accommodation is based on flexibility. It is not anticipated that this will cause any problems.

Governance

In addition to the general concerns as for Regulatory Services, most respondents expressed concern about proposal for a Service Level Agreement (SLA), rather than a joint Committee form of governance for Property Services.

Project Team observations: SLAs are a tried and tested method of delivering Property Services. In this case, the imbalance between the resources of the partners – 70% County; 30% Districts – makes it the most practicable arrangement.

Equalities

Many respondents were concerned there was no evidence of equalities impact assessment of the proposals.

Project Team observations: Equality impact assessments are for each council to carry out and report on in accordance with their own policies / arrangements. It is recognised that full equality impact assessments will need to be carried out following further consultation with stakeholders in order to minimise any adverse impacts of the proposals. The impact of the proposals on staff following this first consultation can now be carried out and for some councils this has already taken place and the results made available.

Stakeholder consultation

No issues were raised with regard to Property Services.

Overview of consultation responses to Property Shared Service business case

Conclusion

There has been a wide ranging and detailed response to the consultation process that has raised many issues, with a good deal of common concerns. Many of the issues and concerns raised are understandable given the nature of the proposals and the impact they will have on individual employees. It was with this in mind that a commitment was given to staff and unions that the outcome of the consultation would be made fully available prior to decision making by the councils. The issues and concerns raised will be fully addressed in implementing the proposals should all partners commit to the Regulatory Shared Service.

WETT Property Services Project Team

4th January 2010



Overview and Scrutiny

Committee

16th December 2009

Minutes

Present:

Councillor Phil Mould (Chair), Councillor David Smith (Vice-Chair) and Councillors K Banks, G Chance, R King and W Norton

Officers:

T Horne, S Horrobin and R Kindon

Committee Services Officers:

J Bayley and I Westmore

129. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Pearce, Taylor and Thomas.

130. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest or of any party whip.

131. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting held on 25th November 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

132. ACTIONS LIST

The Committee considered the latest version of the Actions List. Specific mention was made of the following matters:

a) Scrutiny Training Event

It was reported that a number of Councillors and the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer had attended a training event at Bromsgrove Council Chamber in November. The session had covered Councillor Calls for Action (CCfA) and Crime and Disorder Scrutiny and had confirmed that the

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Chair

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Council was very much in line with current good practice in both areas. The Chair added that the pioneers in the roll-out of CCfA had not experienced much of a response as yet.

133. CALL-IN AND PRE-SCRUTINY

Opt-in Chargeable Garden Waste Collection

The Committee received an update on the changes that had been made to the proposals for the Opt-in Chargeable Garden Waste Collection that had been made following the resubmission of the report to the Executive Committee on 9th December 2009.

Officers attended to outline the major amendments that had been made following the initial consideration of the report in November. One of the more significant amendments had been to the pilot scheme, whereby the pilot area was being extended to give a clearer reflection of the impact on the entire Borough. The pilot would now take place in two parts of the Borough, one in the east and the other in the west.

The tone of the report had been altered in those sections that had elicited most comment from Members. It was made clear that an educative approach would be taken with regard to the discouragement of garden waste from being placed in grey bins. This educative approach would be extended to the future provision of the orange sacks throughout the Borough, this service being continued and accompanied by the provision of information on the possibilities available for recycling.

Additional information on sustainability and economy had been incorporated, with predictions of performance and the out-turn for recycling in Worcestershire. On a purely practical level it was now proposed to use green bins with appropriate stickers rather than brown bins for the additional service.

In response to questions from Members it was clarified that there would be no charge for this additional bin, that the charge for the service was to be £35 per annum and that provision had been made through a draft service standard for the charging for missing bins. It was also clarified that the area in the east of the town that was to be the subject of the pilot was a part of Matchborough East and Winyates East and West.

It was acknowledged that this would be an additional bin for those householders that took up the service, but the optional nature of the

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service was highlighted. The bins were also to be collected from properties rather than being put out on the highway for collection.

Voluntary Sector Grant Applications 2009/10

Officers informed the Committee that the Grants Officer post that had come about as a result of the Third Sector Task and Finish Group Review was to be made up to a full-time post following a decision made at the meeting of the Executive on 9th December. It was explained that funding for this was being made available through the County Council.

There were no call-ins.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

134. TASK & FINISH REVIEWS - DRAFT SCOPING DOCUMENTS

There were no scoping documents for the Committee to review.

135. TASK AND FINISH GROUPS - PROGRESS REPORTS

The Committee received reports in relation to current reviews:

a) Dial-A-Ride – Chair, Councillor R King

Councillor King informed the Committee that the Group's activity had been temporarily curtailed following the postponement of several meetings and the loss of the Group's support officer to a secondment. Members were made aware of the Group's concerns at the lack of progress they had been able to make and the circumstances leading to the failure of the Council to secure grant funding from the County Council and the Worcestershire Acute NHS Trust.

It was agreed that Councillor King would seek an answer in writing from the relevant Director as to the reasons for failing to secure the grant funding. It was also agreed that the completion date for the review be put back to March 2010 in the light of the difficulties that were being experienced.

b) Local Strategic Partnership – Chair, Councillor W Norton

Councillor Norton reported that the first meeting of the Group would be taking place on 14th January 2010.

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RESOLVED that**the progress reports be noted.****136. FORMER COVERED MARKET**

The Committee received a draft report on the subject of the Former Covered Market in the Town Centre for pre-scrutiny.

Officers provided a brief update on the background to the Covered Market site, noting that the Council did not currently have a use for this asset. The Town Centre Strategy, which had recently been considered by some Members of the Committee, recommended what the consultants deemed to be the best possible use for the site. This was for a single-aspect residential development with ancillary restaurant or retail use. The Committee was informed that the Executive was minded not to proceed with recommendations 3 and 5 in the draft report.

Members expressed a number of views as to their vision for this site. On the one hand it was suggested that the site could be used as a residential scheme for older people. However, support was also given to its use for a residential scheme aimed more at younger people, given the site's proximity to the night time economy of the town. Officers highlighted the other aspects of the Town Centre Strategy that would impact on this site, such as the proposed removal of the Redditch Ringway and the opening up of roads into the town centre.

There was support for declaring the site surplus as there was seen to be little benefit in the Council retaining the asset in the long term. It was suggested that the Council might look to realise some income from use of the site in the time before disposal could be achieved. Members were reassured that the production of a detailed development brief of the site would be expected to be met from within existing resources. The Committee recommended that the Executive Committee approve the course of action that was contained within recommendations 1), 2) and 4) of the draft report.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the site be declared surplus to the Council's requirements;**
- 2) Property Services, in conjunction with Planning Services, be authorised to work up a detailed**

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development brief to be reported to a future meeting of the Executive Committee; and

- 3) Property Services be authorised to secure any short term interim uses of the former covered market area that would generate income, subject to planning.**

137. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BIDS 2009/10 TO 2012/13

Due to the absence of the reporting Officer, this item was not considered in detail by the Committee. Members did raise a number of matters of interest, however.

There was concern that the fencing proposal for local allotments would not be successful as it had been deemed low priority. Members noted that the recent increases in charges for allotments had been predicated on the assumption that maintenance work would be carried out. Officers were also requested to establish which were the two allotments that were due to be provided with a water supply as detailed in bid no. 19.

Concern was also expressed at the potential revenue implications of the capitalisation of the costs arising through the creation of the single management team. This extended to the predictions for the costs of Job Evaluation and for the redundancy costs of the single management team proposal.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

138. FEES AND CHARGES 2010/11

Due to the absence of the reporting Officer, this item was not considered in detail by the Committee.

It was noted that there was one recommendation, for the Home Support Service, that allowed Members to choose between a rise of 2% or a rise that reflected the cost of the provision of the service in respect of the Home Support Service. Members were informed that the Executive Committee had agreed that this be increased by 2%, which was in accordance with the views expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

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139. WORCESTERSHIRE HUB - SCRUTINY

The Committee considered a scrutiny proposal from the County Council for a joint scrutiny of the Worcestershire Hub. It was proposed that a member of the Overview and Scrutiny be co-opted onto the Group undertaking this exercise.

RECOMMENDED that

Councillor Robin King be nominated to represent the Council as a co-optee on the Worcestershire Hub Scrutiny Group.

140. CENTRE FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY - GOOD SCRUTINY AWARDS

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer reported that Councillor Thomas had attended the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) Good Scrutiny Awards 2009 and had subsequently proposed that the Council put forward nominations for the coming year. The Chair proposed that this be considered further at the meeting on 3rd February when additional information would be available to the Committee.

RESOLVED that

the nomination of Redditch Borough Council reviews for the CFPS Good Scrutiny Awards be considered further at the meeting of the Committee on 3rd February 2010.

141. REFERRALS

There were no referrals.

142. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its current Work Programme.

Officers highlighted the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny training that was due to take place on Wednesday, 6th January 2010. All Members had been invited but the priority was for Sub-Committee members to attend.

The forthcoming monitoring of the implementation of some of the recommendations made by the Council Flat Communal Cleaning Task and Finish Group was also noted.

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Members noted the outcome of the OnePlace Survey which had been published by the Audit Commission and identified Redditch as having a significant issue to address. The Committee was keen to assist in helping the Council fight for the necessary resources to enable these issues to be addressed and asked for this matter to be considered further at the following meeting.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the current Work Programme be noted; and**
- 2) the outcome of the One Place Survey be considered at the meeting of the Committee on 13th January 2010.**

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.25 pm

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Chair

