

SHARED SERVICES BOARD

18th August 2011 at 5.30pm

COMMITTEE ROOM 3, TOWN HALL, REDDITCH

Present: Councillors Carole Gandy (Chair), Michael Braley, Malcolm Hall and Bill Hartnett (Redditch Borough Council).
Councillors Steve Colella, Margaret Sherrey and Mike Webb (Bromsgrove District Council).

Also in attendance: Cllr Kit Taylor (Observer, BDC).

Officers: Kevin Dicks, Claire Felton, Sue Hanley, Angie Heighway, Teresa Kristunas, Helen Mole, Jayne Pickering, Deb Poole, Guy Revans, John Staniland, Amanda de Warr, Judith Willis (RBC / BDC) and Mike Parker (Wyre Forest DC).

Notes: Steve Skinner.

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Cllr Roger Hollingworth (BDC)

2. MINUTES

Subject to the correction of:

- a) the spelling of Cllr Sherrey's name; and
- b) under Minute 3) "Progress Report - Single Business Case, reference to *"the end of the calendar year"* to read *"the end of the financial year"* in Recommendation 2;

the minutes of the previous meeting of the Board held on 30th June 2011 were agreed as a correct record.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The content of the reports to this meeting, although widely circulated to Members and Council employees, remain confidential / 'exempt' at this stage in view of the fact that:

- a) meetings of the Board are not subject to statutory Access to Information requirements; and
- b) information relating to individual post holders and employee relations matters would be revealed.

However, these Minutes themselves are an open public record of proceedings of the Board.

3. **MATTERS ARISING – FINANCIAL REPORTING**

Cllr Hartnett requested that the agreement to provide more detailed financial reports, including record of costs / savings allocated Council by Council, be formally recorded.

Mr Dicks confirmed that this matter would be addressed for the next meeting of the Board and had been picked up in the action monitoring for RBC's Executive Committee.

4. **LAND DRAINAGE AND WATERCOURSES - BUSINESS CASE**

The Board considered a report covering shared service restructuring proposals in relation to Land Drainage and Watercourse-related service areas. The proposal was for a fully integrated service to cover all three North Worcestershire Districts, hosted by Wyre Forest District Council.

Guy Revans, Head of Environmental Services, and Mike Parker of Wyre Forest DC introduced the report and provided Members with further explanations and responses to their questions.

Officers advised that as well as combining the functions of the proposed three partner Districts, some County functions would also be taken in.

Officers clarified that reference to 'Specialist Fees' in the report was perhaps slightly misleading, and should say 'Budget for Works'.

Board Members specified that Councillors should definitely be represented in the membership of the proposed 'Higher Management Group'.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the shared Land Drainage Service proposals detailed in the Business Case at Option 3 be approved, in accordance with the previously agreed Project Initiation Document dated 22nd June 2011;**
- 2) the three Councils agree this new service be known as the "North Worcestershire Land Drainage Service"; and**
- 3) all initial set up costs be met from within existing budgets.**

5. SINGLE BUSINESS CASE – SEVEN SERVICES

The Board considered a report covering shared service restructuring proposals in relation to seven distinct service areas.

Mr Dicks introduced the report, advising that:

- a) Staff were aware of the proposals and had generally welcomed them being brought forward in a single business case.
- b) the proposals contained in the Business Cases would provide a firmer base for transformational working across the two authorities.
- c) Transformation reviews still needed to be undertaken in due course, and that further savings would arise from those. However, the present Shared Services proposals would release some savings at an early stage to the benefit of both Councils.
- d) Financial assessments, future salaries and staffing figures were all indicative only at this stage: Human Resources Officers would be further checking the staffing details, including all indicated potentially redundant posts.
- e) In terms of Job Evaluation of the Grades which would be attached to new posts, Mr Dicks advised that Officers now had a reasonable understanding of likely Job Evaluations based on prior BDC / RBC experience to date.
- f) Current proposals could not, take account of a number of issues, known to be in the pipeline, but not yet in place, such as proposals under the Localism Bill for Local Development Plans, for example, and associated Council resource requirements. As soon as such implications could be assessed, they would be dealt with.

Mr Dicks expressed his thanks to the team of Directors and Heads of Service for achieving this substantial piece of work so quickly. He also thanked Helen Mole, Transformation Programme Manager, and Susan Tasker, the Chief Executive's Personal Assistant, for the parts they had respectively played in getting the reports together in time for the present meeting of the Board.

Members echoed those expressions of gratitude, and in turn thanked Officers for the Redundancy / Pension costs information now being provided in reports, which they felt was in a format which was much easier to read and understand.

Cllr Braley, RBC Portfolio Holder for Corporate Management, suggested that figures reported over at least a three-year period would provide a more accurate picture of the benefits of the Shared Service reviews. He also enquired about the possibility of capitalising any of the costs implicit in the present proposals. Officers agreed to look into this further in time for next consideration of these proposals by the RBC Executive Committee / BDC Cabinet.

In response to a specific question about severance costs, Officers advised that these would initially be taken from balances.

Members also asked about future recruitment processes. Officers responded that their intention was to have formal Assessment Centre processes in respect of all new 4th tier Manager posts. Less intensive recruitment processes would apply for staff at lower levels. Officers clarified that this was not intended to discredit any existing Managers but only to ensure the necessary skills would be met to serve two separate Councils.

Finally, further to detailed consideration of each of the Business Cases, as set out in the separate Minutes below, Members considered the covering recommendations, as follows:

RECOMMENDED that

subject to any matters detailed under the separate records below,

- 1) the Single Business Case proposals be approved in respect of shared services for the following seven services:**
 - **Community Services**
 - **Customer Services**
 - **Environmental Services**
 - **Financial Services**
 - **Legal and Democratic Services**
 - **Planning and Regeneration**
 - **Secretariat and Directorate Support Services; and**
- 2) the Operational Agreement at Appendix Two, which is in draft only at this stage, be finalised in readiness for approval by BDC Cabinet / RBC Executive Committee.**

6. SINGLE BUSINESS CASE – COMMUNITY SERVICES

Angie Heighway, Head of Community Services, introduced this Case, and made mention of existing successful shared services which fell within her area of management control, namely CCTV /Lifeline and Community Safety.

Ms Heighway explained the context of the current further Shared Services proposals with reference to the position of the Private Housing and Housing Strategy functions.

In this connection, she also mentioned the exceptional position and reporting line of the current RBC Grants Officer. In respect of this post the Chair requested Officers to review where the post should sit within new structures, as it was not felt that it was currently best located.

The service was proposed to be hosted by Bromsgrove District Council, principally because of existing 3rd party contractual relationships, in this case with the Bromsgrove District Housing Trust.

It was **AGREED** that

In respect of the RBC Grants Officer post, Officers be requested to review where the post ought properly to be located within revised structures.

(The prime recommendation remained as detailed under Minute 5 above.)

7. SINGLE BUSINESS CASE – CUSTOMER SERVICES

Amanda de Warr, Head of Customer Services, introduced this Case, advising that, at this stage, it only covered shared management arrangements. Further Service Review would be necessary, in approximately 12 to 18 months' time, once the Customer Services Team had gone further through the Transformation process.

Ms de Warr mentioned the County Council's involvement and implications for funding currently provided by the County towards the Worcestershire Hub arrangement.

It was proposed that Redditch would be the host authority, given the size of the current staff group and higher volume of customers, which was due in part to Redditch BC still holding Housing stock. On this point Members considered that figures should be recast to omit the Housing Revenue Account element, which was relevant to Redditch only. Officers agreed to take this on board.

Ms de Warr advised that Team comments to date had been in support of the new structure, even where staff were directly impacted by the proposals.

It was **AGREED** that

financial reporting in relation to this Business Case be reviewed, in view of the RBC Housing Service implications mentioned by Board Members.

(The prime recommendation remained as detailed under Minute 5 above.)

8. SINGLE BUSINESS CASE – ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

This case was presented by Guy Revans, Head of Environmental Services, who reminded Board Members of the evolution of the reviews of Environmental Services to date. He advised that these next proposals built on what had previously been put in place.

It was proposed that Bromsgrove would host the service. This proposal was based essentially on the higher level of commercial services currently offered by Bromsgrove DC: Trade Waste, Garden Waste, Cesspools etc.

Members queried whether ultimately this Shared Service proposal might assist better integrated refuse collection rounds, for example with Redditch based vehicles covering areas of Bromsgrove District and vice versa. Officers agreed that, subject to further Member decision, this might be feasible as would even further realignments with other neighbouring Districts.

(The recommendation remained as detailed under Minute 5 above, without addition.)

9. SINGLE BUSINESS CASE – FINANCIAL SERVICES

Teresa Kristunas, Head of Finance and Resources, introduced this Case, and reminded the Board of the updated structure chart which had been circulated since issue of the main report pack for the meeting.

Mrs Kristunas mentioned that the proposals included provision of an ongoing temporary staffing resource, to assist corporate Transformation processes. Clearly this would be removed later, triggering further savings in due course.

(Recommendations were as detailed under Minute 5 above, taking into account the proposed revised Structure.)

**10. SINGLE BUSINESS CASE
– LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

The Legal and Democratic Services Business Case was presented by Head of Service, Claire Felton, who explained the proposal in more detail and explained the differentials in levels of likely savings to each authority. These were due to:

- a) different levels of legal advice offered to each authority, mainly due to the implications of Redditch's housing stock; and also
- b) different levels of Overview and Scrutiny activity currently undertaken at each Council.

Bromsgrove had been selected to host the service owing to relationships with the Bromsgrove District Housing Trust and Worcestershire Regulatory Services which were also hosted by Bromsgrove District Council.

Mrs Felton emphasised that, although Bromsgrove would be the host authority, Redditch Members would still receive an equally high quality service from Legal & Democratic Services and that a staffing presence would be maintained at both authorities' premises.

(Recommendations were as detailed under Minute 5 above, without addition.)

(Prior to consideration of this Case, Mr Skinner, RBC Democratic Services Manager, withdrew from the meeting in view of his personal interest in the proposals.)

11. SINGLE BUSINESS CASE – PLANNING & REGENERATION

John Staniland, Director of Planning, Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services, presented this Case, highlighting the areas which had already been covered under other recent reviews (Local Land Charges, Building Control and Economic Development) and what this proposal now covered. Proposed staffing levels in the current proposal included a degree of support for Local Land Charges, under the recently agreed proposal for that service. Staff at both Councils had acknowledged the issues relating to this review and had expressed support for these proposals.

Mr Staniland drew attention to the current uncertain national planning policy climate and how this might ultimately impact on the development of both Councils' Core Strategies. For this reason, he explained that there was no recommendation at this stage for a Planning Policy Shared Service.

A further issue was the position of the Town Centre Regeneration function. This currently involved a single RBC Officer post, had been well received in Redditch and covered issues of Regeneration and also Town Centre events. It might therefore later be considered for relocation under the now established North Worcestershire Economic Development Team, if at some stage that proved acceptable to the partner Councils.

(Recommendations were as detailed under Minute 5 above, without addition.)

(Cllr Hall expressed his apologies and left the meeting at 7.33 pm.)

**12. SINGLE BUSINESS CASE
– SECRETARIAT & DIRECTORATE SUPPORT SERVICES**

Mr Dicks, presented this Case, advising that, at this stage, the proposal only went so far down the existing structure in order to provide a platform for subsequent Transformation review.

Because of essential differences in the services provided to each authority, some costs were indicated as purely RBC costs.

The proposal indicated Redditch Borough Council as host authority, but with new supervisory arrangements for Bromsgrove District Council to ensure appropriate levels of high quality service to both Councils, and to their Civic Heads / lead Members.

(Recommendations were as detailed under Minute 5 above, without addition.)

(Prior to consideration of this Case, Ms Mole, Transformation Programme Manager, withdrew from the meeting in view of her personal interest in the proposals.)

13. CAR PARKING – BUSINESS CASE

The Board considered a report covering shared service restructuring proposals in relation to Car Park Services. The report included proposals for the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement in Bromsgrove District. The service was to be hosted by Wychavon District Council. This case impacted more on Bromsgrove than Redditch, where Civil Parking Enforcement had already operated for some time.

Guy Revans, Head of Environmental Services, introduced the item.

Further to Redditch Borough Council's experience, Bromsgrove Members were interested in the practical implementation of the scheme and Mr Revans advised that:

- a) Parking Enforcement Officers used 'partnership' logos, not Wychavon District Council logos, to identify themselves.
- b) An initial introductory period allowed time to inform residents about the new arrangements.
- c) An initial 'amnesty' allowed residents time to get used to the implications of parking outside of the scheme and the penalties which would apply.
- d) as identified by Board Members, there was a need for sensitive treatment re penalties and their impact on income to the Council.
- e) Some existing traffic orders might need to be reviewed as to whether they are now fit for purpose.

Officers advised that there would be no additional IT costs, as use of the existing Wychavon IT systems came as part of the management agreement.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) Option 2 (to “extend Wychavon District Council’s Service to include Bromsgrove District Council”) be chosen as the preferred option for the future delivery of the shared Parking Service;**
- 2) Bromsgrove District Council should introduce Civil (Decriminalised) Parking Enforcement in partnership with Wychavon District Council;**
- 3) authority be delegated to the Head of Environmental Services to exercise the Council’s civil parking enforcement powers within the District of Bromsgrove, when civil parking enforcement within the District comes into effect;**
- 4) the Council enter into a Deed of Arrangements with the Parking and Traffic Regulations Outside London Adjudication Joint Committee for the functions in relation to adjudicators under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004;**
- 5) authority be delegated to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services to sign any necessary agreements or other documents to enable the introduction of civil parking enforcement within the District; and**
- 6) up to £75,000 be made available within Bromsgrove District Council’s budgets to meet the set up costs of Civil Parking Enforcement.**

14. EMERGENCY PLANNING – BUSINESS CASE

The Board considered a report covering shared service restructuring proposals in relation to the Emergency Planning Services.

Officers' recommendation was for an integrated service covering all three North Worcestershire Districts' areas, which Officers considered provided the best opportunity to meet statutory requirements; to provide the partner authorities with a greater voice; and to reduce costs.

John Staniland presented this Case, explaining that the proposed implementation date of 1st April 2012 coincided with the renewal date of the existing Service Agreement with Worcestershire County Council.

In response to Members' queries, Officers advised that they did not feel anything significant would be lost by moving away from the current County-wide arrangement. Whereas in the three Districts, Emergency Planning formed only a small part of existing Officers' roles, the proposed combination would allow for proper focus and priority to be accorded under a dedicated Officer arrangement.

In the case of any actual emergency, the same practical inter-agency arrangements would apply as at present and existing Emergency Plans would still be relevant.

RECOMMENDED that

the proposal in respect of a shared Emergency Planning service be approved as detailed in the Business Case under Option 3 (for a North Worcestershire Shared Service).

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was **AGREED** that

the next meeting be held on Thursday 29th September 2011 in the Conference Room at Bromsgrove District Council, starting at 5.30 pm.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm
and closed at 7.55 pm.