

ITEM NO:

TITLE	Shared Services Overview and Scrutiny Review
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – 22 November 2016
WARD	None Specific
DIRECTOR	Andrew Moulton, Head of Governance and Improvement Services

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

In the face of increasing financial and demographic pressures the Council must look at new ways of working and new ways of delivering public facing and back office services. Effective shared services can deliver benefits relating to reduced costs, greater resilience, improved service quality and greater value for money for residents and service users.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is requested to:

- 1) confirm that the proposed Overview and Scrutiny review of Shared Services be put on hold pending the outcome of the 21st Century Council work programme;
- 2) request a briefing on the 21st Century Council Shared Services work strand in order to inform its future work programme.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

At its meeting in September 2015, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee supported a request from Councillor Bray for the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to look at shared services. Councillor Bray's proposed outcome was the development of best practice guidance to aid the future development of shared services.

A Task and Finish Group was established and met in March 2016. The Task and Finish Group agreed terms of reference (attached) and a draft work programme. However, it was subsequently confirmed that Shared Services was one of the components of the 21st Century Council programme which is now underway.

At its meeting on 31 May 2016 the Committee considered its work programme for 2016/17. The Committee confirmed the principle that Overview and Scrutiny reviews should not duplicate other ongoing reviews within the Council. Consequently, the Task and Finish Group has not progressed its work programme and now seeks confirmation from the Committee that the review be put on hold pending the outcome of the 21st Century Council work strand. It is suggested that the Committee receive a briefing on the 21st Century Council work on Shared Services and use that information to determine when and how the Shared Services Task and Finish Group is to proceed.

Background

At its meeting on 7 September 2015 the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee considered a scrutiny review request from Councillor Prue Bray. The request related to the services which the Council currently delivers, or is in the process of moving to deliver, with other local authorities as shared services.

Councillor Bray set out the following reasons for carrying out the review:

“With the financial constraints placed upon the Council there is a drive to deliver services as efficiently as possible. One model of service delivery which has been increasingly adopted by the Council as part of this is joint service delivery with other councils.

A number of different services are now delivered jointly but the agreements under which they have been set up vary, as does the effectiveness of the service. It would seem sensible to review which arrangements have been most successful and which have been least successful, in order that any new agreements for shared services can be as good as possible, providing residents with a good quality service as efficiently as possible.

As part of any review, it would be sensible to look at the outcomes from the shared arrangements to see whether they are as they were expected to be when they were set up – better or worse - in order to better set expectations in the future. Aspects that need to be looked at are: financial impact, service quality and resilience.

I would like the principal outcome of the review to be some best practice guidance as to how to set up a good quality shared service. An additional outcome could be some actions to be taken to improve one or more existing shared service arrangements”.

Current Shared Services

To date the following Shared Services have been established by the Council:

- Adopt Berkshire – shared between WBC, Bracknell Forest, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) and West Berkshire.
- Audit and Investigation – shared between WBC and RBWM.
- Building Control Solutions – shared between WBC and RBWM.
- Building and Maintenance – shared between WBC and the RBWM.
- Environmental Health, Licensing and Trading Standards – shared between WBC and West Berkshire District Council.
- Digital Solutions – shared between WBC and Bracknell Forest BC.
- Shared Legal Solutions – shared between WBC and the RBWM.

Task and Finish Group

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee supported the establishment of a Task and Finish Group to carry out the review. The Group comprised Councillors Bray, Chopping, Halsall, Patman and Younis. The Group met in March 2016 and agreed terms of reference and a draft work programme.

It was subsequently confirmed that the 21st Century Council programme included a work strand on Shared Services. The Committee confirmed, at its meeting on 31 May 2016, that Overview and Scrutiny reviews should not duplicate other reviews being carried out in other parts of the Council. As a result, the Task and Finish Group has not progressed its work programme and the Committee is requested to consider when and how the Task and Finish Group should proceed.

It is suggested that a briefing on the 21st Century Council Shared Services work strand will enable the Committee to understand the current situation and make an informed decision about the future of the Task and Finish Group.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	NA		
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	NA		
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	NA		

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

Proposals to improve current shared services or to develop new shared services may result in additional financial savings to the Council.

Cross-Council Implications

The review of existing shared service development will help to identify best practice which will benefit service areas looking at the potential for a shared service approach.

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Date 11 November 2016	Version No. 1

SHARED SERVICES TASK AND FINISH GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose of Review: To consider the process for developing shared services, whether or not proposed outcomes have been achieved and recommendations for future improvements and opportunities.

1. To consider the range of shared services currently delivered by WBC.
2. To consider the process followed in developing each of the shared service solutions, including option appraisal and project management.
3. To consider the decision making process relating to the shared services approved to date including the levels of political/democratic input.
4. To consider the proposed outcomes for each of the existing shared services (i.e. in terms of financial savings, improved service delivery, service resilience and improved customer satisfaction) and the actual outcomes delivered.
5. To consider how shared services are monitored, how Members are updated on performance and the arrangements for effective Governance.
6. To consider the potential for future savings and service improvements from shared services.

Key Objectives:

1. To understand the range of shared services currently delivered by WBC.
2. To understand the way in which each shared service was developed, including set up costs and timescales.
3. To understand the process for managing, monitoring and reporting on the performance of the shared services.
4. To understand the decision making process relating to shared services and the ongoing Governance arrangements.
5. To consider the lessons learnt to date and to define success factors for future shared services.
6. To make recommendations for the future development of shared services, their management and Governance arrangements.

Scope of the Work:

1. To gain an understanding of the pros and cons of shared services and the current arrangements at WBC
2. To gain an understanding of the views of partner organisations, management, front line staff and service users in relation to the impact of shared services
3. To gain an understanding of best practice in local government, other public services and the private sector
4. To gain an understanding of the potential for further shared services involving WBC and one or more partner organisations
5. To gain an understanding of the potential future benefits of shared services in terms of financial savings, service improvements and customer outcomes

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