

MINUTES OF THE SHARED SERVICES JOINT STEERING GROUP – 15 FEBRUARY 2010

PRESENT: Councillor James McInnes, West Devon (In the Chair)
Councillor Margaret Garton, West Devon
Councillor Robin Musgrave, West Devon
Councillor John Tucker, South Hams
Councillor Bill Hitchins, South Hams
Councillor Keith Baldry, South Hams
David Incoll, Chief Executive
Lesley Halton, Director
Nick Payne, Director
Alan Robinson, Director
Jan Montague, Head of HR

APOLOGIES: Councillor Cathie Pannell, South Hams
Mark Seymour, Director

1. MINUTES OF THE SHARED SERVICES JSG HELD 11 JANUARY 2010

The minutes were agreed as drawn.

2. ISSUES ARISING FROM MEMBER WORKSHOP – 12 FEBRUARY 2010

The JSG agreed that the Workshop had gone well. The comments made by Members were circulated; 35 Members had attended but only 8 had commented. JMT took the lack of written comments as Members being supportive of the direction being taken as the majority of Members' questions during the workshop had been positive.

The JSG noted the comments circulated.

3. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AGREED BY EXECUTIVE AND S&R COMMITTEE – NOVEMBER 2009

ACTION – Two new Heads of Service Designate roles be created (for a period of 4 months), namely: Head of Strategic Planning & Economy; Head of Housing & Community Delivery – and that those appointed work with the Joint Management Team to produce Business Plans for the next 3-5 years

Formal discussion of these two appointments would take place at the next meeting on 18 March 2010. Due to the current workloads in each Authority on the LDF it had been agreed that the officers currently dealing with these issues would remain doing so in each Authority until the work had been completed. There would then be a deeper integration after September.

Alan and Lesley were currently looking at roles within Economy and were having discussions with external providers as there may be opportunities for joint working at a strategic level, eg, with Devon Renaissance. A full report would be brought to the next meeting on 18 March 2010. JMT were very mindful of the sensitive staff issues relating to this area of work.

ACTION - The Internal Audit service currently operated for West Devon Borough Council by PricewaterhouseCoopers be provided by South Hams District Council as a shared service

The JSG noted that the new arrangements would commence on 1 April 2010.

ACTION - In principle, a shared Legal Service be agreed

Consultation would take place with the two Heads of Service later in the week. Members had discussed the possibility of contacting Teignbridge again to see if they would now be interested in a shared Legal Service. It was noted that work was currently being progressed on a single Standards Committee and it may be best to await the outcome of this before making contact. In the meantime it was agreed that a two way Legal Service should be pursued. Discussions had also taken place with Dartmoor National Panel on a shared Legal Service although they do not have much capacity at present.

It was agreed that Councillor McInnes would contact Councillor Connett at Teignbridge after the General Election.

ACTION - Integration of Waste and Street Scene Services be progressed and a route map to achieve a single Head of Service be prepared

Business Plan to be presented to JMT on 15 March and JSG on 18 March 2010.

ACTION - Responsibility of PR/Communications be moved to the Chief Executive

A full report would be brought to the next meeting on 18 March 2010.

ACTION - The Performance and Improvement Service be integrated in Housing and Community Delivery, except for data performance which will be transferred to the Finance Service at both Councils

The JSG noted the action and were pleased to note the enthusiasm of the team.

ACTION - Property Services

The JSG noted the resolution from South Hams' Executive on 7.1.10. Issues were currently being looked at in both Councils and a report would go to the South Hams' Executive, which West Devon would feed into re facilities management, management of employment estates, etc. The preference was to have a temporary Head of Service to prepare a business plan, including a review of services.

ACTION - Other Areas – ICT, Finance, Development Control, Landscape & Leisure

ICT – A report would be brought to the next meeting on 18 March 2010. Discussions to take place with HR regarding the appointment of a Lead Head. It was noted that at the Workshop, Members, especially from South Hams, were keen for an external challenge of the ICT service. It was agreed that it was important to benchmark the service against similar size Authorities and ensure that the capabilities of the systems and how they could be used to gain maximum benefit was utilised.

Finance – A report would be brought to the next meeting on 18 March 2010.

Development Management – The JSG noted that both Councils were currently undertaking Reviews - Peer Review at West Devon and Systems Thinking at South Hams. JMT suggested asking Dan Bates to look at developing a short Business Plan to see if there was an opportunity to share services when the reviews were complete. It was noted that a lot of the service was spatially delivered but there were strong possibilities to share the administration. Members agreed that this should be progressed.

Lesley and Alan to produce draft Terms of Reference to be circulated to the JSG and two Chairs of Development Control Committees for comments.

Landscape & Leisure – It was noted that there were some areas of activity that did not easily fit within a service and it was proposed to designate a Head of Service to look at all areas of activity and see how they could be delivered in future. It was also suggested that some activities may be eligible for funding from other sources. The JSG supported the approach.

4. BUSINESS PLANS – STRATEGIC PLANNING & ECONOMY AND HOUSING & COMMUNITY DELIVERY

It had been hoped that more progress would have been made on the Business Plans and the full Plans would now be brought to the next meeting on 18 March 2010. The JSG recognised the progress that had been made, especially with the Improvement team, and noted the work that was being undertaken.

5. SHARED SERVICES – SAVINGS TO DATE/BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The JSG noted that savings to date and budget implication information would be provided for each meeting. Currently looking to make £150,000 of savings.

6. APPOINTMENT OF PROJECT CHAMPIONS

Members were asked if they wished to appoint Project Champions as part of groups to look at the services being discussed. The JSG noted the usefulness of having Project Champions on the Revenue & Benefits Sponsoring Group and in principle agreed to appoint them; to be discussed further at the next meeting on 18 March 2010.

7. INTEGRATED DEVON – UPDATE

The JSG noted that the Devon Local Government Steering Group (DLGSG) had been cancelled on Friday 19 February and it would be necessary to revisit some of the services suggested by the DLGSG for sharing after the general election.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Thursday 18 March 2010 – 2 pm – Smyth Room, Follaton House, Totnes (1 pm – Members' pre-meeting and lunch – Leader's Office)

Friday 23 April 2010 – 2 pm – Kilworthy Park, Tavistock (1 pm – Members' pre-meeting and lunch)

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Notes of Shared Services JSG – It was agreed that when the notes had been finalised, Leaders should circulate them to their groups. An update would also be provided to Members and staff on current work on shared services.

Member Meetings – Reports on shared services to go to Executive at South Hams on 4 March and S&R Committee at West Devon on 23 March.

Shared Services – David advised that the report on shared services was due later in the week and both Media teams would be ready to issue press statements.

(Meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and finished at 3.20 pm)

(Notes taken by Nicola Pavey)