

Executive – 12 July 2007

SHARED SERVICE ARRANGEMENTS

Report of the Chief Executive

Statutory Powers: Section 101 Local Government Act 1972
Section 19 Local Government Act 2000 – Discharge of Functions

Financial Implications: A working fund of £50,000 was established in Autumn 2006 and a decision taken to invest £120,000 over 2 years into the Strategic Issues Reserve. To date expenditure has been modest and no additional financial investment is currently required.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

- advise the new Council of the existing situation;
- seek approval to the expansion of the arrangement to include West Devon Borough Council;
- establish a new Shared Services Leadership Group comprising the Leader and one other Member of each Authority.

Recommendations

That the Executive RESOLVES to:

- (i) **agree, with Teignbridge District Council, to the inclusion of West Devon Borough Council within the shared service partnership;**
- (ii) **appoint the Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition (as agreed at Annual Council) onto a Shared Services Leadership Group;**
- (iii) **note the establishment of a new Officer Project Group which will re-visit the previously agreed outcomes of the Cornwell Management Consultants' Report and prepare a new project plan and recommendations as to its implementation, including timetabling and costs.**

Background/The Issues

1. On 19 October 2006, Executive agreed to work exclusively with Teignbridge District Council on shared services in line with a detailed report commissioned from Cornwell Management Consultants. Appropriate budgetary provision to take this work forward was agreed and a Joint Member Steering Group was to be established.
2. Work to advance this has taken place but not at the speed originally envisaged, not least due to the subsequent publication of the Government's White Paper and the need to consider its implications, the local elections and restructuring at Teignbridge.

3. More recently the advantages of extending the partnership, by the inclusion of West Devon Borough Council, have been identified and the appointment of a Shared Chief Executive, albeit on an interim basis, has reinforced the appropriateness of such an approach. Members will also recall that this Council has joined Teignbridge and West Devon in the Devon Building Control Partnership and other smaller sharing arrangements or joint investment has taken place.

Risk Assessment

Risk	Mitigation
That significant progress will not be made and the opportunity to reduce costs and/or improve services will be lost	The establishment of a Shared Services Leadership Group comprising the Leaders and Deputy Leaders of each Authority will provide the drive needed to advance this initiative
Improvements in services and cost savings will not be delivered	A business case will be developed for each service
Ineffective communication with staff and Members	A communication plan will be produced by all three Authorities to address all the communication needs
The Government will decide that the speed of investigating and creating shared services is not adequate	The creation of a new Project Team (Mark Seymour will be the South Hams representative) to revisit the previous position and develop a new project plan has already taken place

Conclusion

4. The three Councils serve a population of 258,000, are rated as Excellent or Good and enjoy a strong Member focus on delivering high quality and efficient services. As Central Government continues to invest less resource in rural authorities it is imperative that real progress is made on the Shared Services agenda. This will offer the best opportunity open to the Council to continue to provide the range and quality of services that meet the needs and reasonable expectations of our residents, businesses and visitors.

David Incoll
Chief Executive

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