



**MINUTES OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF  
THE LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM AND BRENT  
Held on Thursday 16 February 2017 at 6.42 pm**

**PRESENT:**

Councillors McLennan (Chair), Bonavia (Vice-Chair) Butt and Dromey

**1. Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**2. Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interests received from Members.

**3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 October 2016, be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

**4. Report to the ICT Shared Service Joint Committee (February Update)**

Prod Sarigianis (Head of Digital Services, Brent Council) introduced the report, which provided the Joint Committee with key updates on the Shared IT Service that had taken place since the last meeting of the Joint Committee.

He drew the Committee's attention to the migration of all of Lewisham's IT services to the new infrastructure, which had included a roll out of new thin clients to replace desktop computers and an upgrade to the Council's servers, which was due to be completed by April 2017. He noted that work to fully implement failover arrangements and increased resilience between the two datacentres for Lewisham had now been prioritised after the initial critical issue on core business systems at the start of the project. The Committee heard that a live dashboard had also been developed, which enabled any member of staff at either Council to view real time IT performance statistics and that the [URL](#) had been included in the agenda pack. Mr Sarigianis also explained that a service improvement plan was being developed after meetings with Heads of Service and that there had been a successful negotiation with Xerox to merge printing contracts, which had secured a saving of 20% on annual printing costs for both Councils. He also specified that both the telephony support and Cap Gemini contracts for hosting OneOracle were due to end for both Council's in mid-2018 and noted the procurement steps being taken (paragraphs 3.13 and 3.14 of the report) and also that there was a pressing need to re-procure network equipment (such as firewalls, security software, web filters etc) with permission to award a contract likely to be sought by both Council's Cabinets in April 2017.

Mr Sarigianis continued by providing an update on the potential for the London Borough of Southwark to also join the Shared IT Service. He outlined that discussions with Southwark remained ongoing and that a number of steps were being taken and developed to ensure that all of the requisite logistics were in place for this possibility (specified in paragraph 3.10 of the report). He noted that work was continuing to finalise the budget for 2017/2018 and that this work had factored in the prospect of Southwark joining the service in November 2017. The Committee heard that due diligence planning was underway for these considerations and that a detailed financial report was envisaged to be presented at each Councils three respective Cabinets in June 2017.

A question was raised on what key concerns had arisen from the data in the performance pack. Prod Sarigianis responded that the '*Calls Resolved with Service Level Agreements (SLAs)*' sections had been the most concerning, however the data had not necessarily been a wholly accurate reflection of performance. It was noted that a lot of the service calls logged had been assigned the wrong priority status. He explained that higher priority calls drew negative data if they had not been addressed quickly, which could skew the data if calls were categorised incorrectly from the outset. Mr Sarigianis noted that further training of staff to categorise service calls correctly should assist in addressing this. He also noted that a data outage in Lewisham in January had disrupted some of the data collected, meaning it had been unavailable to be included in this service pack.

Questions also arose on the possible reasons behind the difference between both Councils net promoter score (Brent's range was between 60 and 70 during the period November to January; Lewisham's range was 32 to 37 in the same timeframe). Prod Sarigianis explained that the KPIs were measured between -100 /+100 and that typically, above 20 would be considered a good score and above 40, an excellent score. Therefore it was emphasised that Lewisham's net promoter score was still very positive. Duncan Dewhurst (Head of Technology and Change, Lewisham Council) suggested some potential reasons for Lewisham's score being lower; such as performance issues; the power outage in January; and staff at Brent being more used to the IT system than staff in Lewisham. Prod Sarigianis added that it was also possible that scores were being affected by negative feedback from users when service calls had not been dealt with immediately. He stated that it was important to improve communication to staff about there being different priorities for different types of call. In particular, it needed to be stressed that lower priority calls were not going to be addressed at the same rate as high priority calls. Kevin Sheehan (Executive Director of Customer Services, Lewisham Council) suggested that work on addressing and overseeing this gradual culture change at Lewisham would be very important.

A Member of the Committee questioned whether there had been enough opportunities for staff at Lewisham to gain a greater understanding of the new infrastructure and whether this had had an impact on any residual cultural issues. Duncan Dewhurst responded that work such as 'genius bars' (informal drop in sessions with IT staff) had been held as a means of addressing this, which had also outlined the greater flexibility on home working. It was acknowledged that further staff training would be important, as would developing 'champions' in different departments and service areas to ensure that colleagues were being encouraged to utilise new IT capabilities. Kevin Sheehan agreed and said there was a need to empower people to be able to confidently use the new technology. He stated that it

would be important to strike a balance between ensuring staff were naturally curious about what the capability of the new infrastructure meant for their work but also that staff were required to make use of the technology now that it had been rolled out.

A question was raised on whether there were any identifiable usage differences caused by different support structures for office based staff and staff in jobs, which tended to be more mobile, such as social workers. Duncan Dewhurst responded that there were different cultures within different departments and that it was crucial to ensure that social workers had the confidence to use the new systems, particularly on the adult social work side. Prod Sarigianis added that it was generally felt that there was not the same confidence across departments at Lewisham yet, which linked back to Brent staff being more accustomed to the IT systems in place. Peter Gadsdon mentioned that there was also an increased culture of flexible home working at Brent which took time to develop. The Committee agreed that many of these issues would likely be sorted over time and that close collaboration and shared learning between the two Boroughs would continue to assist this process.

A Member of the Committee raised the potential for integration of applications between the two Councils and how any differences were to be resolved. Prod Sarigianis responded that it was important to find a balance in every case rather than integrating all applications for the sake of it. Duncan Dewhurst agreed and outlined that there were areas and different systems that each Council had expertise in which provided an opportunity to align, but this would not be the case for every application. Peter Gadsdon added that it was important to also look at the layers of support staff for each application to help inform which applications made sense to integrate and which did not. There was a further discussion on the different types of application being used in different areas for each Council and also the systems that Southwark currently used and the potential to integrate any of these if Southwark were to join the shared service.

Discussions moved to staffing logistics if Southwark were to join the shared service. Prod Sarigianis stated that it would be important to have senior staff rotate and move between all three centres, as with current arrangements between Lewisham and Brent. He also noted that staff capacity issues would need to be addressed well in advance. Members questioned whether there were any provisions in place for staff recruitment at short notice. Prod Sarigianis stated that it was likely that Southwark would fund some interim staff until permanent recruitment rounds took place and also noted that Brent had developed a large pool of contacts for interim staff to call upon where necessary which could assist this process.

A Member of the Committee also raised questions on the problems with the iCasework application and whether the Councils were planning on jointly commissioning a new application for this element of the Shared Service. Peter Gadsdon stated that there was yet to be a conversation about joining this up and that there would be a need to view this within the complete customer platform. He stated that, as things stood, it was likely that iCasework would stay in place in its current guise before being developed further using a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) tool. He hoped that Brent would make a decision on which CRM to use in April 2017. Mr Gadsdon continued that Brent had monitored the good work of the London Borough of Croydon in this area, as its systems incorporated a

customer portal where the public who had raised queries could now track the progress more accessibly. The Committee agreed that an outward facing tracking element of casework would be very useful.

The Committee's final discussions focused on ensuring that outstanding projects for Lewisham and Brent were fast-tracked before June 2017, to allow the maximum amount of time continue to planning arrangements for the London Borough of Southwark potentially joining the Shared IT Service. It was also noted that the Committee could organise an extraordinary meeting, as per the provisions in the Committee's terms of reference, if there were any important issues arising before June 2017.

**RESOLVED that:**

- (i) The actions being taken in Section 3 – 'Key Updates' be noted;
- (ii) The contents of the Performance Pack, as outlined in Section 4 and Appendix 1, be noted; and
- (iii) The current budget position for the ICT Shared Service, as set out in Section 5, be noted.

**5. Any Other Urgent Business**

There was no other urgent business to be transacted.

The meeting was declared closed at 7.33 pm

COUNCILLOR MARGARET MCLENNAN  
Chair