

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF  
THE LONDON BOROUGHS OF LEWISHAM AND BRENT  
Held on Thursday 26 October 2017 at 6.38 pm**

**PRESENT:**

Councillors Bonavia (Chair; London Borough of Lewisham), McLennan (Vice-Chair; London Borough of Brent) and Butt (London Borough of Brent)

**Also Present:** Councillor Colley (London Borough of Southwark)

**1. Apologies for Absence**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Dromey (London Borough of Lewisham).

**2. Declarations of Interests**

There were no interests declared by Members.

**3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting on 20 June 2017 be approved as an accurate record.

**4. Report to the ICT Shared Service Joint Committee October 2017**

Prod Sarigianis (Head of Digital Services, Brent Council) introduced the report which provided the Joint Committee with an overview of the work of the ICT shared service since the last meeting of the Committee. Members heard that much of the focus had been on the completion of the due diligence work for the expansion of the service to include the London Borough of Southwark. Mr Sarigianis confirmed that the expansion was planned to take place on 1 November 2017 and that a consultation had begun with both Capita and Southwark staff with regard to the Transfer of Undertakings (TUPE) in order to join the shared service.

Mr Sarigianis continued and noted a range of additional updates which included: work being undertaken with the London Borough of Croydon to host a datacentre for the upcoming tri-borough arrangement; that a shared service tender for telephony for all three Councils had successfully taken place with contracts being awarded by both Brent and Lewisham's Cabinets respectively; that Brent had awarded a contract for a partner to help to develop the Microsoft Dynamics 5.0 Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool for the Council and discussions remained ongoing on the possibility of upgrading Lewisham and Southwark to the same system; and that a 'change freeze' period was planned for October and November 2017 which meant that no non-critical project work would be started as

part of the on-boarding with Southwark. He also drew Members' attention to specific elements in the performance pack and noted the improvements for both boroughs' statistics on call resolution and customer satisfaction. He explained that, as detailed within the report, there had been some service availability issues in Lewisham in September but it was expected that the completed migration to VMWare would improve stability and that the availability issues which related to Brent had been caused by planned upgrade work rather than any specific problems.

A member of the Joint Committee questioned how long the expected migration to VMWare (as part of the Microsoft Hyper-V project) was due to take and whether this was likely to have any wider-reaching impact on the shared service. Prod Sarigianis responded that the migration had begun two months prior to the meeting and that it was hoped that this would be completed before the end of November 2017.

Kevin Sheehan (Executive Director for Customer Services, Lewisham Council) questioned whether there were any risks attached to the aforementioned datacentre move to Croydon. Prod Sarigianis stated that the shared service had commissioned a consultant to review Croydon's infrastructure and had found several weaknesses but that an agreement was in place to ensure that these were addressed and improved prior to the move. Members heard that a contingency plan would remain in place for the datacentre in Brent to be able to deliver all IT services in the event of any potential outages in Croydon. Mr Sarigianis also mentioned the savings which had been identified for the shared service as part of the agreement with Croydon, and that it was expected to be a positive development for all sides.

Questions also arose on CRM issues which had taken place at Lewisham, which particularly related to Members' casework, and how these were proposed to be addressed. Prod Sarigianis acknowledged that this had been an issue and that lessons were being learnt through a holistic review of the shared service's change management process. He highlighted that a new 'change board' had been established to provide additional rigour and oversight of the approval process and test plans. Members stressed that there was an urgency to resolve this type of issue because it impacted on Members' ability to resolve their residents' problems.

Members also asked how the shared service would be expected to best manage both the pressures and expectations from the incorporation of the London Borough of Southwark. Prod Sarigianis stated that there had been lessons learnt from the transition experience with Lewisham. He noted that the resources available would be substantial, with a team of 24 staff members based at Southwark's Council building for the first two months of the transition. He said that these resources had been carefully arranged to ensure that both Lewisham and Brent would not be affected during the process. He also outlined that the incorporation of Southwark was not expected to be as difficult as the transition with Lewisham because there was not the same level of immediate attention required on replacing the entire desktop infrastructure. Councillor Colley (London Borough of Southwark), who was present at the meeting, added that Southwark had undertaken a lot of work to brief both staff and Members in order to manage expectations about the upcoming changes through their internal 'change champions'.

A final question was asked on what was expected for the future direction of the shared service. Prod Sarigianis said that in the medium term it was hoped for closer

integration of the applications teams across each of the boroughs in order to not only realise savings, but also increase resilience and capacity. He also highlighted the positive possibilities which could arise from joint contracts being entered into and Members also heard about the work planned to improve the CRM tool in order to develop services further. In the long-term, Mr Sarigianis specified that 17 London Boroughs used Microsoft Dynamics, albeit on different versions, and that this provided a potential opportunity to consider the expansion of the shared service further to incorporate other Councils at some point in the future.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The actions being taken in section three of the report, key updates, be noted;
- (ii) The contents of the Performance Pack, as outlined in section four of the report and attached as appendix one, be noted; and
- (iii) The current budget position for the ICT Shared Services, as set out in section five of the report, be noted.

5. **Service Overview - The Shared ICT Service for Brent and Lewisham: April 2016 to October 2017**

Peter Gadsdon (Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships, Brent Council) introduced the report as a formal overview of the progress of the Brent and Lewisham ICT Shared Service since its establishment in April 2016. He outlined that, with the current two-borough arrangement coming to an end, it was notable how much the shared service had achieved since its inception.

Members requested additional information on the joint budget forecast for the expanded shared service and questioned whether service arrangements for Brent and Lewisham had continued to run to budget. Prod Sarigianis stated that the financial forecasts were yet to be finalised at the time of the meeting but it was expected that there would be significant savings in a variety of different areas. He specifically noted that the joint procurement of contracts across the three authorities would be a key area of saving and highlighted an example whereby the telephony contract had secured a 30 per cent saving for both Brent and Lewisham. Members also heard that the shared service deliverables had all run to budget, and the only issues that had tended to arise were from expenditure intricacies within certain contracts which had not been initially realised or forecast.

Questions also arose on what assurance could be given regarding the management resilience for each of the three Council's going forward. Prod Sarigianis responded and outlined that it was planned for a number of new management posts for both the technical and business aspects of the service to be introduced. He also detailed that there would also be additional managerial posts introduced for some of the service's application support and technical teams. It was hoped that the creation of these to these new posts would not only increase resilience but expand the overall staff skillset and that recruitment was due to be underway by the first quarter of 2018. Members stated that it would be useful to have a report on progress of recruitment to these posts at the first meeting of the new tri-borough committee arrangement.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The contents of section three of the report, detail, which summarised the work of the ICT Shared Service, be noted;
- (ii) The content of section five of the report, legal implications, outlining the changes to the governance arrangements required to establish the expanded shared service, be noted;
- (iii) A report be presented at the first meeting of the new tri-borough (Brent, Lewisham and Southwark) Joint Committee which provided an update on recruitment to the newly created senior management posts within the ICT service; and
- (iv) The first meeting of the new tri-borough Joint Committee be arranged to take place at the London Borough of Southwark at a suitable date in February or March 2018.

## 6. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There was no other urgent business to transact.

The Chair thanked all of those in attendance and stated that he looked forward to the new tri-borough Joint Committee meeting for the first time at a date to be established in the near future.

The meeting was then declared closed at 7.15 pm

COUNCILLOR KEVIN BONAVIA  
Chair