



**MINUTES OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF
THE LONDON BOROUGHS OF BRENT, LEWISHAM AND SOUTHWARK
Held on Tuesday 20 February 2018 at 6.30 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Colley (Chair; London Borough of Southwark) and Councillors Cryan (London Borough of Southwark), Bonavia (London Borough of Lewisham), Dromey (London Borough of Lewisham), McLennan (London Borough of Brent) and Miller (London Borough of Brent)

1. Apologies for Absence and Clarification of Alternate Members

An apology in advance for lateness was received from Councillor McLennan.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

3. Minutes of the final meeting of the Brent and Lewisham Joint Committee

It was **RESOLVED** the minutes of the final meeting of the Joint Committee of the London Boroughs of Lewisham and Brent on 26 October 2017 be approved as an accurate record.

4. Provision for Public Participation

There were no deputations or requests to speak submitted by members of the public.

5. Update report to the Joint Committee of the London Boroughs of Brent, Lewisham and Southwark

Prod Sarigianis (Head of Digital Services, Brent Council) introduced the report and explained that the first transition phase to incorporate the London Borough of Southwark into the shared service had been successful, and that the second transition phase had now begun.

Mr Sarigianis began by providing key performance related updates to the Joint Committee. Members heard that the overall performance of the shared service had been positive, (as shown within the data set out in appendix one to the report) and that it was pleasing that Southwark's performance on call resolution had improved significantly during the first phase. However, he did note that there had been a number of service outages since the last meeting and that officers had reviewed each incident in order to learn lessons and improve the shared service's change management processes. The Committee also heard that the shared service would be engaging with the Society for IT Practitioners in the Public Sector (SOCITM) next year as part of a benchmarking exercise in order to further improve performance and value for money.

(Councillor McLennan joined the meeting at 6.40pm)

Mr Sarigianis also outlined the upcoming key aspects to the second phase of the transition process with Southwark. He explained that work had begun to migrate all services to the shared service's data centres and to decommission the racks currently hosted by Capita. He emphasised the importance for this migration work and offered assurance that the project would be monitored and managed closely. Members heard that the data centre move from Slough to Croydon had been deferred until early March in order to complete ongoing risk mitigation work. He also provided a brief overview of the other ongoing projects which related to the shared service (detail for each project respectively had been provided within paragraphs 3.35 and 3.47 of the report).

Moving onto the shared service's finances, Mr Sarigianis outlined that, contrary to the slight overspend attributed to Lewisham within the report, all three Councils were actually expected to spend to budget in 2017-18. He explained that, since the report had been written, officers had noticed that certain expenses had been included twice in Lewisham's expenditure figure and that this had now been corrected. On the staffing arrangements for the shared service, Mr Sargianis also provided the breakdown of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees (57); the number of interim staff members (41); and number of vacancies (33). He said that the proposed staffing restructure was still subject to consultation with staff and trade unions but was hoped to be completed by June 2018.

Upon opening the discussion up to Members, a member of the Joint Committee referenced the migration of one of the shared service's datacentres from Slough to Croydon. It was questioned how communication with both residents and Councillors could be improved if there was a risk that any of the migration work could lead to service outages. Prod Sarigianis stated that risk management work had continued as part of the review of lessons being learnt from some of the recent service issues, and that communications and additional 'place words' being placed on each Council's website formed part of this. Mark Compton-James (Head of IT & Digital Services, Southwark Council) provided an overview of the process for scheduling migration work at Southwark in order to minimise any possible impact on services. Peter Gadsdon (Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships, Brent Council) also noted that a specific communications post had been created as part of the aforementioned restructure in order to address this type of issue.

Members noted the positive joint working which had aligned the provision of regulatory services across the shared service, and it was questioned which other resources could be similarly joined up in this manner going forward. Prod Sarigianis stated that the contract management function within the shared service had assessed which contracts could potentially be aligned across the three Councils in the future. Members felt that it would be useful to have sight of these proposals at a future Joint Committee meeting. Mark Compton-James added that a Head of Applications had also been recruited at Southwark and tasked with bringing existing structures together across the shared service in order to realise further efficiencies.

Further clarity was requested by Members on the process for the proposed staffing restructure and whether officers were confident all of the roles would be filled in order to avoid any services being affected. Prod Sarigianis explained that he was

due to meet with the trade unions the day after the meeting and said that he had emphasised to staff that whilst there were due to be some job deletions there would also be a lot of opportunities to apply for related jobs as part of the process. He stated that it was unlikely that all posts would be filled by June as the possibility for internal promotions could result in new vacancies arising subsequently. However, he assured Members that interim staff would be retained and recruited where necessary to ensure that services were not affected. In response to an additional question on roles for apprentices, Mr Sarigianis said that there were a number of apprentice opportunities and that talented apprentices often went on to be recruited to permanent roles within the shared service.

Discussions moved to the strategic direction of the tri-borough shared service and it was asked whether any other London Councils were known to be interested in joining the service in the future. Prod Sarigianis stated that it remained an aspiration to expand further in due course, but emphasised that the immediate focus was to ensure the success of the tri-borough arrangement. Kevin Sheehan (Executive Director for Customer Services, Lewisham Council) added that it was important to consolidate the current arrangements, and that it was positive that a lot of lessons had been learnt going forward from the Lewisham transition. Prod Sarigianis noted that he was aware of informal interest from different boroughs through networking, but that it was difficult to pinpoint when any formal future options of this kind might be assessed.

Questions also arose on the reason for the higher call volume from Brent than Lewisham and Southwark, to which Prod Sarigianis responded that this had remained very difficult to establish. Members speculated that the culture of each Council in terms of logging calls might have contributed to the different levels. A Member of the Joint Committee also expressed frustration at certain elements of the process to utilise Hornbill to log calls.

A final point was raised on the 2018 local elections which were upcoming in May and the logistics which were being put in place to provide IT equipment and training to new Members. Prod Sarigianis noted that a project manager had been assigned to assist with the management of this process across the three boroughs. He explained that the designated equipment for Councillors was being considered and it was outlined that Brent Councillors were expected to receive a refresh in their IT equipment after the election. He noted that this was due to many of the current items dating back to 2011 and that therefore an upgrade was overdue.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) That the summary of key actions being taken in relation to the shared service be noted;
- (ii) That the contents of the performance pack attached as appendix one to the report, be noted;
- (iii) That the current budget position for the shared service, be noted; and
- (iv) That Prod Sarigianis provide an additional update on plans to align different services and contracts across the three Councils at the next meeting of the Joint Committee.

6. **Exclusion of Press and Public (if required)**

None.

7. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There was no other urgent business to transact.

8. **Date of the Next Meeting**

Members collectively felt that another Joint Committee meeting should be arranged in advance of the next proposed meeting date (16 October 2018). It was felt that this would allow any new Members on the Joint Committee to gain a timelier understanding of work of the shared service after the Local Elections in May 2018, plus an opportunity for a further update on the second phase of the London Borough of Southwark transition.

It was **RESOLVED** that an additional meeting of the Joint Committee be arranged and convened for an appropriate date in July 2018.

The meeting was declared closed at 7.14 pm

COUNCILLOR FIONA COLLEY
Chair