

15 February 2017

Policy, Finance & Resources Committee

Revenues & Benefits Shared Service Agreement

Report of: *Steve Summers, Group Manager In-House Services*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report recommends the entering into a new sharing agreement for the provision of the Revenues and Benefits Service with Basildon Borough Council including the formal co-location of Brentwood Borough Councils Revenues and Benefits staff within one merged site located within Basildon Council offices.
- 1.2 This allows the services to merge formally through TUPE arrangements, building upon the existing Revenue and Benefits shared service that commenced in April 2015, where Brentwood Borough Council entered into a partnership with Basildon Borough Council which provided a managed service and hosted IT platform for the council's Revenues and Benefits Service, located in Brentwood's Town Hall.
- 1.3 This approval will formalise the partnership between Brentwood Borough Council and Basildon Borough Council – supporting the Councils partnership aspirations to deliver quality front and back office services in partnership.
- 1.4 In order for the proposed collaboration to achieve maximum success, it is recommended that the committee grant approval for the council to enter a new sharing agreement for Revenue and Benefits. This will also set a framework for any future shared service arrangements.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee recommend approval of the Revenues & Benefits Shared Service Agreement to the Ordinary Council on the 1st March 2017 as a related proposal to the Budget.**

3. Introduction and Background

3.1 Brentwood Borough Council entered a Revenues and Benefits Shared Service Agreement with Basildon Borough Council in February 2015, which formally commenced in April 2015.

3.2 The operational scope of the shared arrangement included the following:

- Conversion to a single hosted Revenues & Benefits IT Platform
- Creation of a single joint management structure
- Sharing of specialist and support staff
- Aligning of contracts and joint procurement to the benefit of the shared service
- Retention of local policies

3.3 This arrangement resulted in Brentwood Borough Council entering into a partnership with Basildon Borough Council which provided a managed service and a hosted IT platform for the council's Revenues and Benefits Service. However, key activities such as co-location and TUPE arrangements were excluded from the Shared Services Agreement at that time, whilst the two authority's worked together to deliver a successful Shared Services proof of concept and transferable framework.

3.4 This shared services arrangement has been successfully delivered for nearly two years, with senior stakeholders acknowledging the success of the arrangement between the two council's. This work has been recognised in the form of national recognition for its partnership work in winning the 2016, the 'IRRV Partnership Award for Excellence in Partnership Working 2016'.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

4.1 With the success of the partnership to date, it was considered an appropriate time to develop further this arrangement, by allowing a new shared service agreement to be entered into to allow the following:

- services to be co-located into the Basildon Centre – as the historic arrangement is still currently delivered from Brentwood Borough Councils Town Hall

- further savings and efficiencies to Brentwood Borough Council and Basildon Borough Council through economies of scaled and merged structures, and
- a new shared services agreement to take consideration of lessons learnt to date from the two years share services experience achieved – such as change control mechanisms and defined shared service obligations (of both parties).

4.2 In order to achieve the wider benefits for the Council and local communities, the benefits of the shared services arrangement enable the following:

- Supports the Council's MTFP budget target.
- Provides a sustainable model to preserve service levels.
- Demanding value for money from our Revenues and Benefits service.
- Illustrates Brentwood's reputation and leadership amongst Essex Authorities by being innovative and progressive.
- Effectively compete within the Shared Service market.
- Maximise opportunities for further income generation and cost recovery.
- Develop the Council's commercial competence through gaining buy-ins and resources.
- Provide a model of longevity to deliver an ongoing income stream.
- Drive continuous improvement in the delivery of a cost-effective, efficient service that meet users' needs and expectations.
- Public sector value and experience 'By public sector for public sector'.
- All income generated from such shared service arrangements are paid back to the benefit of the wider public purse.
- Ability to reduce costs through innovation designed for the communities.
- A partnership approach rather than outsourcing.

- Provide a mechanism for Councils to retain their identity. This will include residents being able to use existing Brentwood phone numbers and email addresses.
- Create a model for future partnerships.

4.3 Whilst back office and telephone based employees will be situated at Basildon Council offices, it is important that provision of the Revenues and Benefits face to face service continues to be provided in Brentwood.

4.4 Residents will still use reception in Brentwood's Town Hall for this, just as they do now, preserving accessibility and providing continuity in service.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 To enable the Council to deliver effective and efficient Revenues and Benefits Services for the benefit of the Council and its customers.

6. Consultation

6.1 No formal consultation has been undertaken at this stage, other than meetings with all affected members of staff.

7. References to Corporate Plan

7.1 Delivering an effective and efficient Revenue & Benefit Services will help meet the Modern Council key priority.

8. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: John Chance, Finance Director (Section 1512 Officer)

Tel & Email 01277 312712/ john.chance@brentwood.gov.uk

8.1 The high level financial terms have been agreed for entering into a shared service agreement with Basildon Council to initially cover the Revenues and Benefits Service.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Daniel Toohey, Monitoring Officer

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8.2 Legal Services are available to advise and assist with concluding the terms of the arrangement and to ensure compliance with employment,

legislative and constitutional requirements, including the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

8.3 None

9 Background Papers (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)
Finance and Resources Committee 11th February 2015.

10 Appendices to this report
Appendix A – This appendix is exempt

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