

Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: 3C Legal, ICT and Building Control Shared Services Annual Reports 2021/22

Meeting/Date: Cabinet – 19th July 2022

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Corporate and Shared Services, Councillor Martin Hassall

Report by: Corporate Director (People) - Oliver Morley

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

The attached Annual Reports refer to the progress that has been made over the last year by the 3C ICT, Legal and Building Control shared services against the 2021/22 Business Plans in terms of their financial and service performance. They also cover customer satisfaction and work to deliver on development projects.

Shared Services are overseen by a Management Board (containing the lead directors from each authority). The governance structure also features a Chief Executives' Board and an overarching group comprising the Executive Councillors with overall responsibility for shared services from each of the Councils.

The original Shared Services Agreement was introduced in 2015. Since then significant progress has been made to transform the services' structures and governance and on the services' performances and financial positions. All three services are now operating on a Business As Usual basis. For these reasons, South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City Councils have decided that this year they will not submit separate Shared Services Annual Reports to Members and, instead, reference to the services will be incorporated into those councils' annual reporting arrangements. It is suggested that for the same reasons and because it will be more efficient, Huntingdonshire District Council should adopt the same practice starting next year.

Recommendation(s):

It is

RECOMMENDED

- 1) that the 3C Shared Services Annual Reports attached as Appendices are endorsed; and
- 2) that in future reporting on the 3C ICT, Legal and Building Control shared services is incorporated into the Council's annual reporting arrangements.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To receive the Annual Reports of the services currently delivered in partnership with Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridge City Council and Huntingdonshire District Council commenced sharing Legal, Building Control and ICT Services in October 2015 (known as 3C Shared Services). The shared services are based upon a “lead authority model” where an agreed lead Council is responsible for the operational delivery of the service. The 3C Shared Services Annual Reports attached as Appendices hereto, set out the context for the operation of each of the shared services with a summary of performance against the business plan.

- 2.2 The achievement of the following outcomes is regarded as the primary objective of sharing services:

- Protection of services which support the delivery of the wider policy objectives of each Council;
- The creation of services that are genuinely shared between the relevant councils with those councils sharing the risks and benefits whilst having in place a robust model to control the operation and direction of the service;
- Savings through reduced managements costs and economies of scale;
- Increased resilience and retention of staff;
- Minimise the bureaucracy involved in operating the shared service;
- Opportunities to generate additional income, where appropriate;
- Procurement and purchasing efficiencies, and
- Sharing of specialist roles which individually, are not viable in the long-term.

- 2.3 The Council aims to be a good partner to facilitate effective strategic relationships and collaboration and to drive service integration where this improves shared outcomes. There is a continued commitment, as part of this, to the effective delivery of shared services and to ensure that governance arrangements are effective and service levels are agreed and effectively monitored. This includes a documented understanding of the quality standards, performance levels or benefits from the integrated services.

- 2.4 This report provides Members with the opportunity to consider the extent to which the agreed outcomes have been delivered and the performance of the range of services that are being administered on a shared basis.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 The Annual Reports are provided for information. Members are invited to consider and note the content of these reports but may request further information or clarification if helpful in that deliberation.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

- 4.1 The Panel discussed the 3C Legal, ICT and Building Control Shared Services Annual Report at its meeting on 6th July 2022.
- 4.2 Having praised the position that ICT are now in, Councillor Corney enquired on the progress of the Building Control Service to be in a similar position. The Panel heard that the Building Control Service have a good reputation and furthermore that their performance and profitability has remained strong despite the fluctuations of the industry. The officer noted the specific issue raised and will investigate outside of the meeting.
- 4.3 The speed of response and customer satisfaction levels attained by the Legal Service were questioned by Councillor Gray. The Panel heard that indicators were reflective of the feedback received and it was noted that this may not be a fair reflection over time. The Panel were assured that regular meetings were held to identify and resolve any issues arising within the service. Councillor Gray's concerns that by continuing with these indicators the Council were not being honest with themselves or the public were noted along with his suggestion that these be revised with a more critical eye.
- 4.4 Following an enquiry from Councillor Martin on the work processes within ICT, the Panel were reassured that all processes and server security were robustly tested and that the Council were confident that there was an extremely low risk of any risk arising in this area. Councillor Martin further enquired on the timeline of moving to be completely remote, the Panel heard that whilst there were some expected challenges, emergency contingency planning was already in place. The officer noted the query and will advise the Panel of more detail in due course.
- 4.5 Councillor Pickering enquired on the timescales involved in the employment of a Cyber Security team and whether security measures were in place in the absence of this. The Panel were assured that this is something which the Council takes very seriously and that the Cyber Security roles, which were currently in the advertisement stage, would enhance the current robust security measures.
- 4.6 Having welcomed the report the Panel encouraged the Cabinet to endorse the recommendations contained within the report.

5. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 5.1 The Head of each shared service is responsible for the overall operation of that service. Any feedback on the Annual Reports will be fed into them to inform the delivery of the service and how it operates.
- 5.2 In future years information on the performance of the shared services will be incorporated into the Council's overall reporting arrangements.

6. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

6.1 The recommendations relate to the corporate objective 'to become more business-like and efficient in the way we deliver services'.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 Significant consultation with staff and Staff Council took place during the establishment of the Shared Services.

8. IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no significant implications.

9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

9.1 To enable Members to consider how the shared services have delivered against the business plans for the year ended March 2022. The Annual Reports provide service specific details on the operation and performance of the shared services. The recommendation relating to standardisation of future reporting is made for consistency and efficiency reasons.

9.3 It is **RECOMMENDED**

1) that the 3C Shared Services Annual Reports attached as Appendices are endorsed; and

2) that in future reporting on the 3C ICT, Legal and Building Control shared services is incorporated into the Council's annual reporting arrangements.

10. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix A – 3C Legal Shared Services Annual Report 2021/22.

Appendix B – 3C ICT Shared Services Annual Report 2021/22.

Appendix C – 3C Building Control Shared Services Annual Report 2021/22.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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