

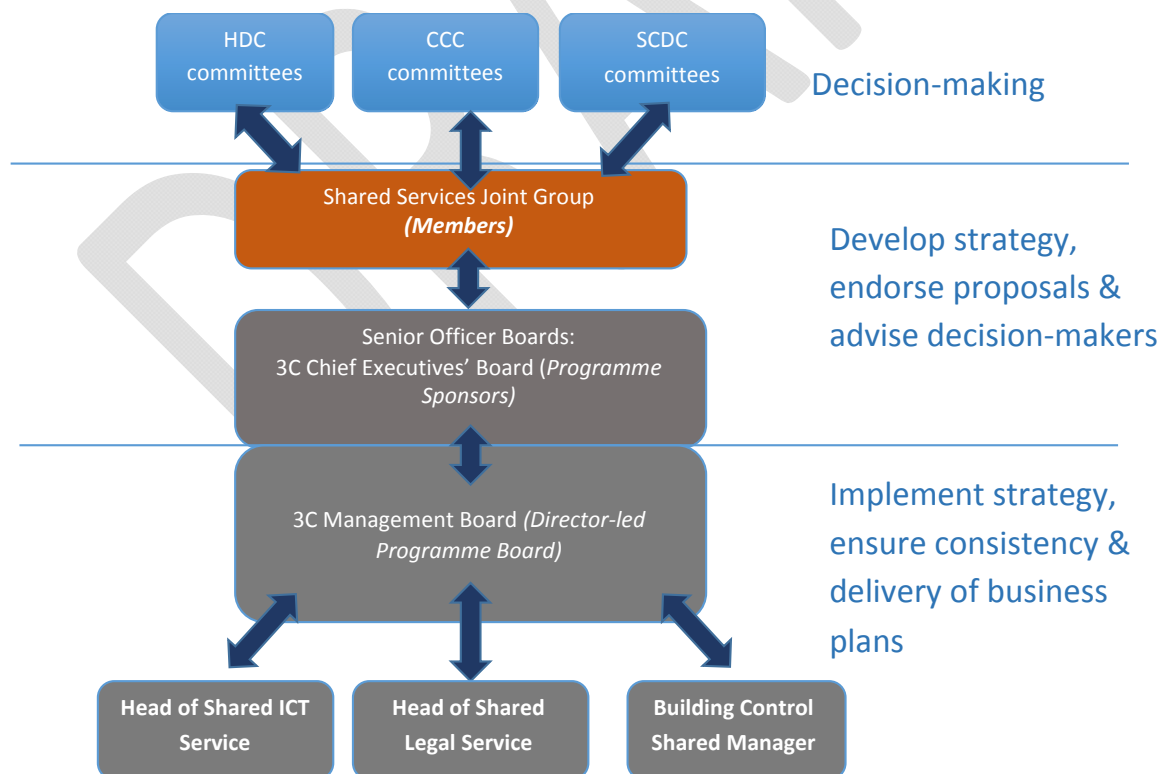
Shared Services Joint Group Terms of Reference

South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC), Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) and Cambridge City Council (CCC), have formally agreed to establish a partnership in order to take forward a number of shared services in a phased manner.

The aim of the shared services is to protect key services and build resilience whilst retaining local control and sovereignty for the three councils.

The three councils will therefore remain as separate entities and maintain their own decision-making routes. The partnership will therefore be developed on an equitable basis, recognising that each authority has strengths in particular services but that each also faces specific challenges.

The governance structure as outlined in the Partnership Agreement and the diagram below, will include a Member Joint Group, a senior officer Partnership Board and a Management Board led by Corporate Directors.



Guiding Principles of shared working

The Councils will:

- Work in a way that encourages mutual respect, openness and trust
- Commit to the successful achievement of the shared services
- Operate in a transparent and clearly accountable manner
- Share investment costs and benefits gained, proportionate to their budget contribution
- Work constructively together to manage key strategic risks
- Adopt the necessary internal changes to enable them to work effectively with the new Shared Service organisation
- Undertake to resolve any conflicts through appropriate governance arrangements with a view to maintaining strong relationships
- Be governed by the Partnership Agreement that forms the basis of clear, binding, contractual arrangements between partner councils
- Develop a framework for service charging, service levels and customer compliance

1. Parties

Cambridge City Council
Huntingdonshire District Council
South Cambridgeshire District Council

2. Status

The Shared Services Joint Group has been established by Cambridge City Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council. It is a Joint Group of the three Councils, established under section 102(4), Local Government Act, 1972.

3. Membership

Three elected members (the Leaders of each partner Council or their nominated substitute). The Leaders may, by mutual agreement, invite other members to attend the Joint Group.

4. Functions of the Joint Group

- 4.1 The Joint Group is established to provide strategic direction and leadership to the shared services in line with the agreed principles of operation and the approved business plans and budgets. It will also consider proposals for future shared services, in line with each council's corporate frameworks before making recommendations to each partner Council.
- 4.2 In addition, it will provide advice, oversight and challenge with regards to the shared services' performance against the approved business plans and budgets.
- 4.2 The Joint Group is an informal body and does not have any delegated powers or discharge of functions and powers. It is an advisory body to the three Councils only and will endeavour to reach a consensus on the issues that it advises upon.

4.3 The Joint Group, operating in a consensual manner, will review and recommend the proposed budget and business plan for each shared service on an annual basis and make recommendations to each partner Council as appropriate.

4.4 The Joint Group will consider quarterly performance reports, financial reports and risks against the approved budget and business plan for each shared service, with reports or recommendations submitted to each partner Council as appropriate.

4.6 Each partner Council's respective Overview and Scrutiny functions will continue to have responsibility for scrutinising their own Council's role in the shared services' arrangement. The Joint Group could recommend to a particular Council that its Overview and Scrutiny function considers particular issues that may occur in respect of a specific shared service.

5. Professional and administrative support

5.1 Committee management and administrative support to the Joint Group will be provided by the council to which the current Chairman belongs.

5.2 Other professional support will be provided to the Joint Group on an ad hoc basis as agreed between the three Councils.

6. Standing Orders

6.1 The Joint Group will be governed by the Standing Orders set out in Annex A attached to these Terms of Reference.

7. Costs

7.1 The three Councils will each bear its own costs in relation to the operation of the Joint Group.

7.2 However, should the Chairman continue into a second year as Chairman, the costs for the administration of the Joint Group are to be borne by all three councils equally, until there is a change of Chairman.

Shared Services Joint Group

Standing Orders

1. Membership

- 1.1 The Joint Group will have a membership of three, comprising the Leader of each partner Council.

2. Alternate or substitute members

- 2.1 Each Leader will be entitled to appoint an alternative or substitute member who may act in all aspects as a member of the Joint Group in their absence.

3. Term of office

- 3.1 The term of office of members from the three Councils shall end:
- if rescinded by the appointing Council; or
 - if the member ceases to be a member of the appointing Council.

4. Appointment of Chairman

- 4.1 The Joint Group will appoint a Chairman at its first meeting and thereafter annually at the first meeting following the Annual Meetings of the three Councils.
- 4.2 The principle of rotating the role of Chairman between the three partner Councils on an annual basis will be followed, unless the Joint Group unanimously votes to re-elect the current Chairman for a further term of office.

5. Quorum

- 5.1 The quorum for meetings of the Joint Group will be three members.
- 5.2 If there is no quorum at the published start time for the meeting, a period of ten minutes will be allowed, or longer, at the Chairman's, discretion. If there remains no quorum at the expiry of this period, the meeting will be declared null and void.
- 5.3 If there is no quorum at any stage during a meeting, the Chairman will adjourn the meeting for a period of ten minutes, or longer, at their discretion. If there remains no quorum at the expiry of this period, the meeting will be closed and the remaining items will be declared null and void.

6. Member conduct

6.1 Joint Advisory Board members shall be bound by the Code of Conduct of their nominating authority.

7. Notice of and summons to meetings

7.1 Notice will be given to the public of the time and place of any meeting of the Joint Group in accordance with the Access to Information rules of the current administering authority.

7.2 At least five clear working days before a meeting, a copy of the agenda and associated papers will be sent to every member of the Joint Group. The agenda will give the date, time and place of each meeting and specify the business to be transacted, and will be accompanied by such details as are available.

8. Meeting frequency

8.1 The Joint Group may set its own timetable for meetings but will initially meet quarterly.

9. Participation at Joint Group meetings by elected Members of partner Councils

9.1 At the discretion of the Chairman, other elected members of the three partner Councils may be entitled to speak and participate at meetings of the Joint Group.

10. Questions by elected Members of partner Councils

10.1 At the discretion of the Chairman, elected Members of partner district Councils may ask questions relating to the business of the Shared Services Joint Group. This standard protocol is to be observed:

- (a) notice of the question should be given to the Democratic Services team at the current administering authority by 10am the day before the meeting;
- (b) questioners will not be permitted to raise the competence or performance of a member, officer or representative of any partner on the Joint Assembly, nor any matter involving exempt information (normally considered as 'confidential');
- (c) questioners cannot make any abusive or defamatory comments;
- (d) if any clarification of what the questioner has said is required, the Chairman will have the discretion to allow other members to ask questions;
- (f) no more than 20 minutes at the beginning of each meeting will be permitted for questions
- (g) individual questioners will be permitted to speak for a maximum of three minutes;
- (h) in the event of questions considered by the Chairman as duplicating one another, it may be necessary for a spokesperson to be nominated to put forward the question on behalf of other questioners. If a spokesperson cannot be nominated or agreed, the questioner of the first such question received will be entitled to put forward their question.

11. Minutes

11.1 The Chairman will sign the minutes of the proceedings at the next suitable meeting. The Chairman will move that the minutes of the previous meeting be signed as a correct record. The only part of the minutes that can be discussed is their accuracy.

12. Exclusion of the public and press

12.1 Members of the public and press may be excluded from meetings in accordance with the Access to Information rules of the current administering authority, with regard to the consideration of exempt or confidential information.

13. Recording of proceedings

13.1 The recording in any format of meetings of the Joint Group is permitted, except:

- where the Chairman, or person presiding the meeting, rules that filming is being undertaken in such a way that is disruptive or distracting to the good order and conduct of the meeting;
- where the public have been excluded from the meeting in accordance with the Access to Information rules of the current administering authority during the consideration of exempt or confidential information.

14. Disturbance by public

14.1 If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Chairman, or person presiding the meeting, will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the Chairman will order their removal from the meeting room.

14.2 If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Chairman, or person presiding the meeting, may call for that part to be cleared.

14.3 If there is a general disturbance making orderly business impossible, the Chairman, or person presiding the meeting, may adjourn the meeting for as long as he or she thinks is necessary.

15. Interpretation of Standing Orders

15.1 The ruling of the Chairman of the Joint Group as to the application of these Standing Orders shall be final.

16. Suspension of Standing Orders

16.1 Any of these Standing Orders may, as far as is lawful, be suspended by motion passed unanimously by those entitled to vote.