

SCRUTINY REPORT FOR PUBLICATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14 OF THE JOINT SCRUTINY PANEL (SHARED SERVICES) - CHESTERFIELD BOROUGH, BOLSOVER DISTRICT AND NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING: JOINT BOARD
DATE: 1 Sep 2014

This report will be presented by Councillor Andy Slack – Chesterfield Borough Council.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Joint Board on the work of the Joint Scrutiny Panel (SharedServices) for 2013/14

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In August 2008 the three Councils of North East Derbyshire, Chesterfield and Bolsover agreed to the establishment of a joint scrutiny panel to scrutinise the three shared services of Building Control, Internal Audit and Procurement.
- 2.2 The panel is made up of three elected members from each of the Councils who scrutinise the delivery of the Shared Services. Prior to 2008 there was no formal overview or scrutiny involvement in this area and it was hoped that this approach of working in partnership would be more effective and achieve better results. A copy of the panels terms of reference are attached at **Appendix A** for information.

3 WORK UNDERTAKEN THIS YEAR

- 3.1 The Panel has met on three occasions and considered the annual reports and service plans for each of the three main shared services. The Panel has also received and monitored quarterly financial and performance information.

- 3.2 The Panel has received several updates on the Shared Procurement Service. There had been some significant changes to the delivery of Procurement following the departure of key staff within the Unit. The Committee noted the new arrangements that were being explored including available procurement arrangements with the Chesterfield Royal Hospital at Calow and enhanced partnership working with Bolsover District council, Chesterfield Borough and Derbyshire County Council. However, members felt that there was a need to monitor how the new arrangements performed over the coming months.
- 3.3 As part of its consideration of the Corporate Plans of the three Councils the Panel had identified insurance arrangements as an area that they wished to scrutinise. As a result of this insurance officers from the three Councils attended the Joint Scrutiny Panel to discuss the possibility of a partnership approach to insurance. A research exercise had been carried out by the three districts and the results were then discussed at the Joint Scrutiny Panel. The conclusion drawn from the discussion was that the insurance needs of the different councils varied too much for a unified approach to insurance, although consideration of the issue had provided a good learning experience which may also be useful to parish councils. The Panel felt that it could potentially be beneficial if two or three parish councils had insurance from one company to help with a less expensive quote. With this in mind a presentation on this case study was given at North East Derbyshire District/Parish Liaison Committee.
- 3.4 It was agreed that the item would be kept on the agenda for next year and that a question be asked regarding whether any savings had been made on insurance in the past year.
- 3.5 The Panel had also kept an overview of the operation of the BCN Consultancy (Building Control). This had included an update of the findings of the options appraisal undertaken on the service. As a result of this the Panel had made a recommendation to the Joint Board that they wished to see the service remain in house. The Overview and Scrutiny Manager advised the Panel of the outcome of their comments to the joint board on the options appraisal of BCN and updated on the current position. The latest budget monitoring statement showed that the budget was starting to stabilise but options including a Derbyshire wide model and a

review of the staffing levels within the service were being considered..

- 3.6 Members asked if there had been any increase in business as a result of the current financial climate as more people were having extensions built rather than moving house. They also asked whether further details could be provided from the Joint Board held on 12th May regarding progress on the proposals and an update on the list of potential improvements to be made in the service contained in the Options Appraisal report.

4 FUTURE WORK

- 4.1 For the future members expressed their wish to be more proactive as they were concerned that their input into decision making by the joint board on the shared services was not working as well as they wanted. It was felt that the panel always had to react to issues rather than being proactively engaged at the start of the process. They therefore had requested the joint board to support them in this role by providing information in a timely manner for them to consider. Members discussed the powers and terms of reference of the panel and felt that the culture needed to change so the panel could add more value. There was also the issue that there was no call in possible from the Joint Board. These two issues combined limit opportunity for effective overview and scrutiny.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 That the annual report be received and comments invited.

6 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The Joint Scrutiny Panel (Shared Services) is required by its Terms of Reference to report back annually on its work to the Joint Board.

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Joint Board Decision

Officer Recommendation supported/not supported/modified as below:

Signed Leader (or reserve) Bolsover District Council

Signed Leader (or reserve) Chesterfield Borough
Council

Signed Leader (or reserve) North East Derbyshire
District Council

Date