

**RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
REPORT TO  
POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

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Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008  
 title: Shared Services in Lancashire  
 submitted by: Chief Executive  
 principal author: Jeff Fenton . Corporate Services Manager

**1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To report the progress of developing a shared services agenda across Lancashire.

**2 RELEVANCE TO THE COUNCIL'S AMBITIONS AND PRIORITIES:**

- 2.1 The development of a Shared Services agenda (i.e. collaborative working) by the Lancashire councils is expected to lead to improvements in the cost and/or quality of public services. As such it is key to the achievement of the Council's Core Values of Striving to Achieve Service Excellence. It will also contribute to our underlying aim to be a well-managed Council.

**3 BACKGROUND TO THE SHARED SERVICES AGENDA**

- 3.1 The Comprehensive Spending Review of autumn 2007 announced the merger of the various regional support bodies for local government (the NW Centre of Excellence, NWiN and NWeGG) into single Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs). These will receive funding to deliver agreed regional strategies, for ensuring the delivery of the targets set out in CSR 07 and the various Public Service Agreements (PSAs) which have been agreed with central Government (Department for Communities and Local Government or DCLG).
- 3.2 In the North West £7m funding has been made available, of which 60% (£4.2m) has been devolved to the 5 sub-regions on the basis of agreed business plans to support the objectives set out in the regional strategy. The RIEP will then expect the sub-regions to develop their own strategies to support the delivery of their business plans. The funding levels have recently been confirmed as follows:

<b>Sub-region</b>	<b>RIEP funding (£000's)</b>
Lancashire	1,100
AGMA	1,150
Cheshire	680
Merseyside	470
Cumbria	800
<b>Total (Sub-regions)</b>	<b>4,200 (60%)</b>
Retention centrally by NW Region	2,800 (40%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,000</b>

- 3.3 Lancashire Chief Executives have set out an approach that has come to be known as “*Team Lancashire*” which aims to meet these requirements and which will enable the effective co-ordination of existing work around enhanced two-tier working and shared services and other issues.
- 3.4 The shared services agenda has emerged directly from the vision articulated in the work in progress document *Transforming Local Government in Lancashire*. Members will recall this was produced jointly by a working group of policy officers from the County Council and district councils in response to the call of the Local Government White Paper which stated that:
- “the status quo is not an option in two-tier areas if councils are to achieve the outcomes for place shaping service delivery that communities expect and deliver substantial efficiency improvements.”*
- 3.5 The document was endorsed by all the Lancashire councils and submitted to DCLG in January 2007. In summary the overall objective is to improve the way in which local government across Lancashire works together to deliver better outcomes for the people who live here. The various areas of joint work for all the 15 councils in Lancashire can be looked at in two dimensions as given below.

#### **4 SHARED AGENDAS**

- 4.1 This encompasses a number of areas of work which have some form of spatial, or place related aspect. In most cases structures are in place to deliver this work. These areas include, but are not limited to:
- Economic Development and the Sub National Review
  - Children and Young People
  - Adult Social Care and Wellbeing
  - Locality Planning which will inevitably encompass public realm issues
  - Asset Management, (utilisation of assets and community ownership responding to the Quirk review
  - Leadership and capacity building
- 4.2 This list is not exhaustive, there is a considerable range of work which falls under this broad heading which is still in the process of being captured. This will map the landscape of countywide work to understand the role and purpose of the various groups and how each of them contributes to the achievement of the overall vision. Completing this work will allow the creation of an effective forward plan for Leaders which allows proper consideration of the key issues facing Lancashire.

#### **5 SHARED SERVICES**

- 5.1 This dimension covers the area of work traditionally described as shared services (i.e., back offices and specialist skills) including work on collaborative procurement. This area of work will be the principal driver in terms of delivering the efficiencies identified in the submission to the RIEP.
- 5.2 The work done by the Policy Officers Group in identifying potential areas for collaboration within the *Transforming Local Government in Lancashire* document provides an initial focus for the creation of project teams with a brief to deliver proposals for step change

within a defined timescale. Specific suggestions as areas where it might be possible to deliver relatively rapid progress are in the areas of procurement activity, Customer Contact and Asset Management. In all these cases there is already considerable enthusiasm to make progress, which is likely to make progress easier.

## **6 RESOURCES**

6.1 Collectively Lancashire Chief Executives have identified the following resources to support the delivery of this work:

- Lancashire County Council . Secretariat support for Lancashire Leaders and for Chief Executives meetings as now.
- Rossendale Borough Council . Executive Director seconded for 2 days per week.
- Chorley Borough Council . Policy Officer 1 . 2 days per week
- Pennine Lancashire Procurement and Consultation Programme . Capacity to deliver commissioned work
- The post supporting the Lancashire Leadership Programme based at South Ribble BC, although this will be subject to a bid for continued funding beyond the end of the current financial year.
- The £54,000 awarded by NWCE for specific work related to Shared Services, discussed below.
- Input from individual Chief Executives to support specific projects and the development of the overall approach to delivering this way of working.

6.2 Currently South Ribble Borough Council are the accountable body for the funding allocated for capacity and skills development. Pendle Borough Council are the accountable body for the resources already allocated by NWCE for shared services and have indicated a willingness to fulfil this role for any future resources allocated.

## **7 SHORT TERM ACTIONS**

7.1 In order to ensure that the work for which NWCE have awarded funding can be completed within the required timescale the group of Chief Executives responsible for the development of this overall approach have commissioned the following work:

- An audit of shared services activity across Lancashire which has been sent to individual Chief Executives to ensure completion. This work was carried out utilising the in house resources already identified above.
- The appointment of management consultants to develop a Shared Services Strategy/Development Plan to cover the period of CSR07. This is the first stage in a procurement process for such support which will be carried out using Pendle BC's Contract Procedure Rules as the accountable body for the relevant funding.

7.2 Both the above pieces of work are nearing completion and the consultants report will be brought to Lancashire Leaders in May 2008.

## 8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 To date the findings of the audit show that much good work is going on across Lancashire to improve what local government does on behalf of local people. Shared services are already happening in a number of areas although generally these could be said to be opportunistic rather than strategically planned. Cluster working with geographical neighbours features strongly in the current landscape, eg. East (Pennine) Lancashire and the Fylde Coast where joint Cabinet meetings are also being adopted.

A summary of the current collaborations is attached at Annex 1.

- 8.2 The need to respond to the impetus provided by the new Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships presents the opportunity to work in a more co-operative way ensuring that resources can be secured to support the delivery of both the efficiency savings that will be required over the CSR07 period and the improved quality of service and outcome which local people want to see. It is expected that these arrangements will also put Lancashire in a strong position relative to other sub regions in the North West.

## 9 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 Resources: (a) Financial . Participation in the Shared Services work does not commit the Council to any financial requirement. Rather the Council reserves the right to pick and choose which of the various collaborations it wishes to take part in. Depending on which of these it chooses will determine the extent to which financial savings may be realised. (b) Staff . There may be implications on RVBC staff if services are delivered in partnership or outsourced in the future.
- 9.2 Technical, Environmental and Legal: none.
- 9.3 Political: none.
- 9.4 Reputation: Active collaboration in the Shared Services partnership will demonstrate this Council's commitment to embracing the Governments modernisation agenda for local government.

## 10 RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 The Committee is asked to note the ongoing work by Team Lancashire to further develop Shared Services across Lancashire, and await a further report later in the year following receipt of the consultants findings.



pp. CHIEF EXECUTIVE

For further information please contact Jeff Fenton, Corporate Services Manager tel. 01200 414593.

ANNEXES: 1. Summary showing total number of collaborations per council.

SHARED SERVICES IN LANCASHIRE (March 2008)**Partnering instances**

	Lancashire County Council	Blackburn with Darwen	Burnley Borough Council	Hyndburn Borough Council	Pendle Borough Council	Ribble Valley Borough Council	Rossendale Borough Council	Blackpool Borough Council	Fylde Borough Council	Wyre Borough Council	Preston City Council	Chorley Borough Council	South Ribble Borough Council	West Lancashire District Council
Lancashire County Council		4	4	4	5	7	7	3	3	5	3	5	4	5
Blackburn with Darwen	4		3	3	3	3	5	2	1	1	1	2	1	1
Burnley Borough Council	4	3		6	7	5	7	2	3	2	2	3	2	2
Hyndburn Borough Council	4	3	6		8	7	7	1	2	2	2	3	2	2
Pendle Borough Council	5	3	7	8		8	7	1	2	3	2	3	2	2
<b>Ribble Valley Borough Council</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
Rossendale Borough Council	7	5	7	7	7	7		1	2	2	2	4	2	2
Blackpool Borough Council	3	2	2	1	1	1	1		8	4	4	3	2	3
Fylde Borough Council	3	1	3	2	2	3	2	8		14	7	4	4	4
Wyre Borough Council	5	1	2	2	3	4	2	4	14		5	4	3	4
Preston City Council	3	1	2	2	2	3	2	4	7	5		7	11	6
Chorley Borough Council	5	2	3	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	7		8	5
South Ribble Borough Council	4	1	2	2	2	3	2	2	4	3	11	8		5
West Lancashire District Council	5	1	2	2	2	3	2	3	4	4	6	5	5	
Lancaster City Council	4	1	2	2	3	4	2	1	3	4	3	3	3	3

Number of collaborations

1-2
3-4
5-7
8+

Please note: Figures subject to final verification during April/May 2008.