

**MINUTES OF THE STAFFORDSHIRE CONNECTS PARTNERSHIP  
JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2010  
AT COUNTY BUILDINGS, STAFFORD**

Present:

**Cannock Chase District Council**

Ms. K. Webb

**Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council**

Mr. K. Turner

**South Staffordshire District Council**

Mrs. F. Cartwright  
Cllr B.R. Edwards (Chairman)

**Staffordshire County Council**

Mr. A. Edwards  
Mr. S. Kristel  
Mrs. F. Sawford  
Cllr M. Winnington

**Stoke-on-Trent City Council**

Cllr R. Irving  
Mr. S. Sankey

**Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association**

Mr. H. Brunt

**East Staffordshire Borough Council**

Mr. S. Khan

**Lichfield District Council**

Cllr. C. Greatorex  
Ms. R. Wilson

**Stafford Borough Council**

Cllr M.M. Heenan

**Staffordshire Moorlands District Council**

Cllr T.D. Hall  
Mr. A.P. Stokes

**Tamworth Borough Council**

Mrs. A. Goodwin

**Also in Attendance:**

Mrs. L. Adams-Collett – Business Manager (Core Team)  
Mrs. J. Guy – Administrative Assistant (Core Team)  
Mr. A. Street – Director

**Apologies:** Mrs. J. Byrne (East Staffordshire Borough Council); Cllr K. Clarke (Stoke-on-Trent City Council); Cllr. C. Collis (Cannock Chase District Council); Mrs. V. Evans (Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association); Cllr Mrs. H. Morris (Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council); Cllr Mrs. M. Oates (Tamworth Borough Council); Cllr B. Peters (East Staffordshire Borough Council); Cllr R. Reade (Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority).

**PART ONE**

**Minutes of the Staffordshire Connects Partnership  
Joint Committee Meeting held on 8 October 2010**

66. **RESOLVED** – That, subject to the inclusion of Cllr. B. Edwards' name in the list of attendances, the minutes of the meeting of the Staffordshire Connects Partnership Joint Committee held on 8 October 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**Minutes of the Staffordshire Connects Partnership  
Strategic Advisory Board Meeting held on 24 September 2010**

(Schedule 1)

67. **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Staffordshire Connects Partnership Strategic Advisory Board meeting held on 24 September 2010 be noted.

**Core Team – Budget Monitoring**

(Schedule 2)

68. The Joint Committee considered a report of the County Council's Director of Finance regarding the Core Team Budget position for 2010/11 (Quarter 3).

Forecast expenditure was expected to be £48,600 less than budget. The major variances highlighted in the report were as follows:-

(i) Staffing Costs – The Executive Director post had been vacant for the first three months of the current financial year.

(ii) Travel and Subsistence Costs – The Executive Director post had been vacant for the first three months of the current financial year and budget provision made for subsistence and conference fees was not now anticipated to be required.

(iii) Supplies and Services – The transfer of the management of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to Staffordshire County Council was anticipated to give a total saving of £23,000 in internal and external audit fees of which £13,000 was from the Core Team Budget. However, this saving had been off-set by additional expenditure incurred in the replacement of PCs within the Core and CRM Teams.

Members noted that the balance in the general reserve as at 31 March 2011 was as follows:-

| <b>Staffordshire Connects General Reserve</b> | <b>£</b> |
|---|----------|
| Opening Balance as at 1 April 2010            | 254,260  |
| Committed Spend                               | 86,700   |
| Core Team – Forecast Underspend 2010/11       | 16,130   |
| CRM Team – Forecast Underspend 2010/11        | 31,800   |
| Forecast Balance at 31 March 2011             | 304,460  |

69. **RESOLVED** – That the report be received and noted.

### **CRM Team Budget Monitoring**

(Schedule 3)

70. **Report** - The Joint Committee considered a report of the County Council's Director of Finance regarding the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Team Budget position for 2010/11 (Quarter 3).

Forecast expenditure was expected to be £48,600 less than budget. The major variances highlighted in the report were:-

(i) Staffing Costs – the Technical Manager post had been vacant for the first four months of the year.

(ii) Supplies and Services – The transfer of the management of the CRM to the County Council was anticipated to give total savings of £23,000 in internal and external audit fees of which £10,000 was from within the CRM budget.

71. **RESOLVED** – That the report be received and noted.

### **Core Team Budget 2011/2012**

(schedule 4)

72. **Report** – The Joint Committee considered a report of the County Council's Director of Finance regarding the proposed 2011/12 Core Team Budget.

The proposed budget for 2011/12 was £178,000 which represented a reduction of 10.1% over the 2010/11 level. The proposed contributions for partners were:-

| <b>Authority</b>                         | <b>2011/12 Contribution</b> |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Stoke-on-Trent City Council              | £17,800                     |
| Staffordshire County Council             | £17,800                     |
| Lichfield District Council               | £17,800                     |
| Tamworth Borough Council                 | £17,800                     |
| Stafford Borough Council                 | £17,800                     |
| Staffordshire Moorlands District Council | £17,800                     |
| Cannock Chase District Council           | £17,800                     |
| East Staffordshire Borough Council       | £17,800                     |
| Newcastle –under-Lyme Borough Council    | £17,800                     |
| South Staffordshire District Council     | £17,800                     |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                             | <b>£178,000</b>             |

73. **RESOLVED** – That the report be received and noted.

### CRM Team Budget

(Schedule 5)

74. **Report** - The Joint Committee considered a report of the County Council's Director of Finance regarding the proposed 2011/12 Customer Relationship Management Team Budget.

The proposed budget for 2011/12 was £594,000 which represented a reduction of 2.7% over the 2010/11 level. The proposed contributions from partners were:-

| Authority                                | 2011/12 Contribution |
|--|----------------------|
| Stoke-on-Trent City Council              | £98,610              |
| Staffordshire County Council             | £95,230              |
| Lichfield District Council               | £50,020              |
| Tamworth Borough Council                 | £50,020              |
| Stafford Borough Council                 | £50,020              |
| Staffordshire Moorlands District Council | £50,020              |
| Cannock Chase District Council           | £50,020              |
| East Staffordshire Borough Council       | £50,020              |
| Newcastle –under-Lyme Borough Council    | £50,020              |
| South Staffordshire District Council     | £50,020              |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                             | <b>£594,000</b>      |

75. **RESOLVED** – That the report be received and noted.

### Review of Partnership Work Plan

(Schedule 6)

76. **Report** - The Joint Committee considered a report of the Director which set out proposals for revising the Partnership Work Programme.

The Leaders' and Chief Executives' Group had recently reviewed scoping exercises for nine separate Work Stream areas ie (1) Youth, Sport, Leisure, Public Health; (2) Integrated Services for Customers – Development Control; Environmental Health; Trading Standards and Revenues and Benefits; (3) Customer Access; (4) Integrated Management; (5) Asset Management; (6) Waste Disposal/Collection; (7) Streetscene – Grounds Maintenance; (8) Support Services and; (9) Bonfire of Partnerships, following their review they had requested the support of Staffordshire Connects in progressing Work Streams 2 and 3.

Bids to the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) for funding had secured grant aid in respect of three specific projects within Work Stream (ii) above ie (i) Staffordshire One Place; (ii) Property Rationalisation and Facilities Management; (iii) Procurement. Consequently a Project Chairman, Manager and designated responsible officers from Lichfield and South Staffordshire District Councils (the Lead Authorities) had been appointed. Staffordshire Connects had been asked to assume the role of Project Supplier.

In addition, it was envisaged that Staffordshire Connects' expertise could provide a general information and communications hub for joint partner working within Work Stream (2) by:- (i) assisting in the shared intelligence gathering envisaged by the outline high level method of operating; (ii) providing the collaborative working and information sharing platform which would be required by the various solutions envisaged for in-house services ranging from co-operative working via forums to full integration and; (iii) assisting in taking the Lichfield One Place project forward by liaising with the contractor who would be providing the "light touch" web-based solution aimed at encouraging collaborative working by different public sector agencies in the field of family protection (this product could be developed further for other collaborative working and a proposal had been submitted by the contractor to the Leaders' and Chief Executives' Group in this respect).

Given the current size of the Core Team (2.6 FTE posts) it was considered necessary to revise the Partnership's current work programme in order to release sufficient capacity to make progress with both Work Stream (1) and (2). Accordingly, with regard to Work Stream (2), it was proposed that the existing shared services work areas should be retained and a link made to Work Stream (8). The Connects Public Protection project should also be retained because of its direct link to this Work Stream. In addition, whilst not included in Staffordshire One Place the Adult Social Care and Health; Life Events and; E-payment Projects should be retained because of their relevance to Work Stream (2).

With regard to the Partnership's projects which linked to Work Stream (3), it was proposed that Customer Knowledge and telephony and mobile working should be retained. However, it was considered that the Streetscene Project, which was now a separate Work Stream for the Chief Executives' and Leaders' Group should be discontinued owing to the potential for conflicts to arise between the two projects. However, the Partnership could assist again at a later stage, if required. Other items included in the current work plan which would be retained pending feedback from designated Lead Partners included, Better Regulation and Business Matters. Both projects had not yet gone live.

Those projects emanating from Work Streams (2) and (3) also taken up by Staffordshire Connects, would initially be subject to a twin track reporting and approval process. SAB Project Executives would continue to report to the Joint Committee and to seek approvals, as necessary. However, they would also report to the Chief Executive of the Lead Authority/Chief Executives' and Leaders' Group where areas of overlap existed between the Connects and Work Stream projects. In the event that Staffordshire Connects emerged as the chosen vehicle for a county-wide transformation programme then the relationship between the Joint Committee and the Group could be re-examined.

Not all Leaders' and Chief Executives' Work Stream areas (Customer Access in particular) had yet identified funding to take forward early stage project work. Therefore, it was proposed that, as a contingency against further RIEP funding, not becoming available in the short term, further

consideration be given to the use of Partnership reserves as a flexible solution where new projects were needed to commence quickly.

With regard to governance arrangements, owing to the increased number of projects within the transformation programme as a whole, the involvement of managers below that of Chief Executive were required at an operational rather than a strategic level. The SAB were considered the most appropriate body to assume this role. However, given the constraints on senior officer time it was proposed that the SAB role should be restricted to overall transformation programme management and some project board involvement.

Below SAB Officer level, county-wide transformation projects required management and co-ordination on a more frequent basis. Officers below Director level within Partner authorities were therefore required for this role. In addition, there was a requirement for individual project managers to be identified, owing to the unavailability of RIEP funding beyond March 2011.

Members noted that following their previous meeting the work on project prioritisation and business cases were underway and a report would be submitted to their next meeting in March 2011. However, where the Leaders' and Chief Executives' Group had agreed to commence a project in advance of this meeting it was proposed that the prioritisation inherent in such a decision be accepted by the Partnership. Furthermore, future proposals to the Committee on methods of setting priorities and constructing business cases were to be designed to harmonise with the Leaders' and Chief Executives' equivalents.

During his presentation of the report, the Director drew members' attention to the schematic diagram attached at Appendix C which explained how relevant initiatives being undertaken at individual authorities were translated across to Partnership level for the purposes of joint working/collaboration. He highlighted that the progress of transformation projects was not currently monitored by the Partnership at a frequent, detailed level. Therefore, the SAB may wish to consider how this was taken forward in the future. At a project implementation level, he referred to the opportunities which existed for Partners to identify Project Managers from their existing staffing establishments.

With regard to the Partnership's role in assisting the Leaders' and Chief Executives' Group in respect of Work Stream 3 – Customer Access, the Director spoke of the potential for further projects to arise and the opportunities for the Partnership to augment the work already being undertaken. The projects within Work Stream 2 had already been mapped over to tie in with much of the work of the Partnership. There might also be opportunities within this Work Stream for an expanding role for Staffordshire Connects in helping to deliver these projects across all partners.

In the discussion which ensued, the member representative from Lichfield District Council referred to Appendix C and questioned whether it would be necessary for the Partnership to meet on a regular basis in respect of projects emanating from the Chief Executives' and Leaders' Group where

two authorities were already successfully collaborating. In reply, the Director confirmed that it would not be appropriate for the Partnership to be involved at a detailed level in such cases.

The Chairman referred to the work of the Chief Executives' and Leaders' Group in understanding the scope of the transformation work currently being undertaken at authorities and the importance of joint working/avoiding duplication for the benefit of Staffordshire residents. The member representative of Lichfield District Council added that the Joint Committee provided an effective forum for co-ordinating work and minimising unnecessary duplication. Continuing he said that the Joint Committee may benefit from a knowledge sharing session in respect of a project where two authorities had collaborated successfully in order to disseminate good practice.

The member representative of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council spoke of the need to ensure project delivery in the short to medium term at a price which was both affordable and gave value for money. The member representative of the County Council agreed with this view and asked whether there was any RIEP money still to be allocated. In reply, the Director undertook to contact RIEP and report back, as necessary.

**77. RESOLVED** – (i) That the report be received and noted.

(ii) That the proposed revisions to the Staffordshire Connects Work Plan, as summarised in Section 4 of the report, be approved.

(iii) That the supplier role for the Partnership in the Staffordshire One Place project (Work Stream 2) be approved.

(iv) That the governance mechanism as set out in the report, be approved.

(v) That the further call on Partnership Reserves of £85,000 be approved and that the Director for Strategic Advisory Board, be authorised to use these funds as a contingency where resources from external sources cannot be secured.

(vi) That the proposed role for the Strategic Advisory Board in mapping an increased number of work plan projects as a result of engagement with those projects approved by the Leaders' and Chief Executives' Group, be approved.

(vii) That the proposed role for the Partnership in facilitating the implementation of an information and communications platform for collaborative working, be approved.

(viii) That the progress in taking forward the actions agreed at their meeting on 17 October 2010 especially in respect of project prioritisation, be noted.

### **Risk Log**

(schedule 7)

**78. Report** – The Joint Committee received a schedule detailing 9 risks which had been identified in pursuing the current work programme, together with the measures aimed at mitigating these risks.

**79. RESOLVED** - That the report be received and noted.

## **Future CRM Scope and Strategy Discussion Paper**

(schedule 8)

**80. Report** - The Joint Committee considered a report of the Director regarding the scope and future strategy for a partnership wide Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

The existing CRM managed service contract was due to end in 2013. Therefore, the Partnership therefore needed to give consideration as to how the CRM would develop beyond 2013. It was recognised that some partners needed to procure a replacement system at an early stage and so a phased implementation over an extended period with individual partners moving at their own pace, was required if a county-wide CRM was to continue.

The Oracle LG45 CRM system was no longer a market leader and Oracle themselves promoted an alternative product. The number of local authorities using the LG45 product was declining and considerable time and resources were being spent in developing the system which only brought its specification up to that of other products available.

Irrespective of what the existing arrangements had or had not delivered, the concept of continuing with a single county-wide CRM system potentially provided significant benefits to Partners. However, three options had been identified for a way forward ie:-

(i) To continue with the Oracle LG45 system post 2013 by extending contracts. This would avoid the initial set up costs and disruption of a new system and enabled the original aspirations of the project to be fully realised. However, set against this was the inevitability that a number of authorities would proceed to purchase alternative systems which would restrict functionality;

(ii) The procurement of a new commercial 'off the shelf' system and implementation at partner authorities on a phased basis. However, this option risked losing some of the development opportunities in the current system.

(iii) Individual authorities work collaboratively with other authorities to extend their existing system. Whilst this option was seen as the most cost effective option it required technical issues such as scalability, security and network provisions to be addressed.

Owing to at least one partner authority intending to procure a replacement CRM system in the next financial year, a fairly short timescale was proposed for further evaluation of the above options. It was intended that by the end of February 2011 a statement of requirements should be prepared which could form the basis of an invitation to tender, if required. In addition a series of intelligence gathering consultation workshops were proposed in early 2011 in order to (i) obtain a clear picture of each partner's customer access strategy; (ii) define areas of commonality and highlight significant differences in each authority's strategy in the short, medium and long terms; (iii) express any particular CRM preferences or predispositions or strategic decisions at odds with a county wide CRM; (iv) evaluate the CRM strategic options open to the Partnership and recommend a strategic

way forward; (v) set out an initial position on requirements; (vi) give consideration to funding options.; (vii) conduct a soft market test exercise with reference site visits as necessary and; (viii) draft a statement of requirements and business case for approval by the Joint Committee.

Depending upon the outcomes of these workshops, it was anticipated that a formal procurement process would commence early in the next financial year.

In presenting the report the Director emphasised that a key objective of the initiative was for the chosen CRM system to be significantly cheaper to maintain on an annual basis than the existing Oracle LG45. Also, it was anticipated that savings could also be achieved from joint procurement of a replacement system, subject to the results of the evaluation.

The Member representative of East Staffordshire Borough Council then commented that the principle of joint working from a service delivery perspective was to be welcomed. He cited, as an example, his Authority's refuse collection arrangements with Tamworth Borough Council which had delivered approximately £1m of revenue savings. This would not have been possible without CRM compatibility between the two authorities.

In reply to a question from the County Council's Member representative, the Strategic Director confirmed that whilst discussions had already been held with health partners and Staffordshire Police regarding the possibility of them joining the CRM procurement project, the Fire and Rescue Authority had not yet been approached. Continuing he said that the joint CRM system had been an overwhelming success and provided the means by which joint service delivery between partners had been possible. The Member representative from East Staffordshire Borough Council referred to the timetable set out in the report and commented that discussions with outside bodies should not stop progress from being made in reaching the various target dates set out in the report.

**81 RESOLVED** - (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That the approach and timetable set out in the report for the development of partners' CRM system beyond 2013 be endorsed.

### **Resourcing the CRM Work Plan**

(Schedule 9)

**82. Report** - The Joint Committee considered a report of the Director regarding a proposed call on Partnership CRM budget reserves in order to provide a specialist resource for accelerating the progress of projects in the current CRM Work Plan.

The emphasis within the current Work Plan was beginning to shift way from configuring new services use of the CRM to developing customer self service and deploying various integration capabilities. As the CRM team looked to advise partners on CRM adoption an additional need for specialist LG45 expertise and experience with other local authority systems was required. Also, many solutions were already available within the current Oracle LG45 but, owing to the limited staff

resources, had only been implemented by a relatively few partners. In addition, specialised development work was required to integrate Geographical Information Systems with the CRM and the capacity to undertake this wasn't currently available from within the current team.

It was therefore proposed to spend up to £17,500 from CRM reserves to provide an additional resource within the CRM team.

In reply to a question from the Member representative of East Staffordshire Borough Council, the Director confirmed that although Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council had contributed to the GIS project work and were keen for further progress to be made, the Technical Manager had identified an additional requirement over and above the contribution from the Borough Council.

83. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That approval be granted to the use of up to £17,500 from CRM budget reserves for the provision of an additional technical resource to progress the initiative, as set out above.

### **Life Events**

(schedule 10)

84. **Report** – The Joint Committee considered a report by South Staffordshire District Council's Director of Revenue and Customer Services regarding the progress which had been made in the Life Events project.

This project had been triggered by the Government's 'Tell us Once' initiative which aimed to transform the ways in which people could tell both central and local government about changes in their circumstances. A key aim was that people should have to give notification of a birth or death once and then that information would be disseminated to all relevant agencies which needed to know.

Members were provided with a schedule of dates by which it was hoped to have achieved various project milestones together with a list of actions aimed at mitigating the effects of various risks which had been identified.

During her presentation of the report, the Director said that project champions had now been identified at each partner authority, who would sit on the Project Board. A Communications Plan had been prepared and circulated to partners so as to ensure knowledge of how the initiative was to work in practice. In addition, a Project Manager had recently been appointed together with a Business Process Improvement Facilitator to assist with the practical application of the project.

A meeting of the project Board was to be held on 20 December 2010 at which the Project Manager would be introduced to the Champions. Visits to each Partner Authority would be made and

business improvement workshops held in early in 2011 in order to gain an understanding of the back office systems already in place.

The anticipated go-live date for Life Events had been put back until June 2011 owing to delays in the 'Tell us Once' initiative at a national level. However, the Director highlighted the practical and financial benefits of this initiative once operational. With regard to funding, confirmation of grant aid from the West Midlands Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership for £35,000 had been received and the further forecast spend of £36,400 would be met from Partnership reserves.

In reply to a question from the Member representative from East Staffordshire Borough Council regarding the anticipated savings to be expected from Life Events, the Director said that following a cost benefit analysis by Central Government total savings of approximately £2bn, nationally, had been identified of which approximately £176m would be in local government, nationally. However, further details of the costs and cashable savings would be available following an analysis by the Project management consultants. The Chairman commented that customer experience would be greatly enhanced once the project had gone live. The County Council's member representative also commented on the importance of publicising the initiative both internally within partner authorities and externally at this stage.

Members agreed that this project was beneficial both in terms of improving the quality and cost effectiveness of service delivery at partner authorities.

85. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That the Joint Committee re-affirms their support for the Live Events and Tell us Once initiatives.

### **Staffordshire Cares – Customer Access**

(schedule 11)

86. **Report** – The Joint Committee considered a report by East Staffordshire Borough Council's Assistant Head of Central Services regarding the progress which had been made to date in the Customer Access Initiative.

This project aimed to ensure that partners delivered various customer access arrangements which provided appropriate and improved channels of access to information and advice enabling people to live independently. Underpinning the initiative was a statement of principles for shared access to 'Staffordshire Cares' services which aimed to maximise potential benefits by making boundaries transparent providing a multi-agency approach which was as joined up as possible.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council had formally confirmed that they wished to join the initiative. In addition, East Staffordshire Borough and Lichfield District Councils had created project teams. Whilst the West Midlands Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) had

pledged grant funding (subject to conditions) of £100,000, written confirmation was still awaited. However, RIEP were now represented on the Project Board.

There was a need for the Project Board to identify additional resources to enable transformation and service redesign activities to commence.

Members were provided with a schedule of dates by which it was hoped to have achieved various project milestones together with a list of actions aimed at mitigating the effects of various risks which had been identified.

During his presentation of the report by the Assistant Head informed Members that the RIEP had requested additional confirmation from Chief Executives that they were fully supportive of the project before final confirmation of grant funding was given. A letter had therefore been circulated to the four authorities involved seeking the endorsement which had been requested. However, he stressed that this had not restricted progress with the project. Baseline information had been collated by project leads and an exchange of information on business processes had occurred across the two tiers of Authority. In addition work was progressing on identifying the funding required for completion of the project including the possibility of secondment from within partner authorities existing staffing establishments. The RIEP had also offered the use of project management resource from within their establishment.

In reply to a request from the Member representative of East Staffordshire Borough Council, the Assistant Head undertook to pass on the contact details of the relevant officer at the RIEP to the Partnership's Director so that further requests for support could be made in respect of other projects, at the appropriate time.

87. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That the Joint Committee re-affirms their support for the Customer Access project.

### **Customer Knowledge**

(schedule 12)

88. **Report** – The Joint Committee considered a report of Tamworth Borough Council's Assistant Chief Executive regarding the progress which had been made to date in the Customer knowledge project.

This project had a single albeit far reaching objective of bringing together the many sources of customer insight and information to influence targets, service design and delivery and to achieve enhanced community outcomes.

Members were provided with a schedule of dates by which it was hoped to have achieved various project milestones together with a list of actions aimed at mitigating the effects of various risks which had been identified.

The Assistant Chief Executive said that whilst progress on this project had initially been slow owing to issues regarding the purchase of data and its use, good progress had been made since their last

meeting. A specification had now been produced and was ready to be published. Three partners had confirmed their intention to participate in this project. However, certain authorities were unable to commit at this stage owing to uncertainties regarding the contract value and their ability to identify the necessary funding.

Continuing, the Assistant Chief Executive said that she hoped to be able to demonstrate how the customer knowledge project had provided efficiencies at some partner authorities, at their next meeting.

89. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That the Joint Committee re-affirms their support for the Customer Knowledge project.

### **Public Protection**

(schedule 13)

90. **Report** - The Joint Committee considered a report of Lichfield District Council's Strategic Director – Organisational Development regarding the progress which had been made to date in the Public Protection project.

East Staffordshire Borough and Lichfield District Councils had been working on developing the use of the Oracle Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system as their back office system for Environmental Health purposes, including the booking of appointments, recording assessments and producing reports on eg food standards and safety.

As part of this project, work had also been undertaken to understand how details about businesses were captured within the CRM and changes made using the National Land and Property Gazetteer and local intelligence to ensure that the most up-to-date information was available to businesses.

Discussions had been held with County Trading Standards who said that they would value having access to this dataset.

A further component to this project which was being led jointly by South Staffordshire District Council and the County Council was investigating the advantages of sharing inspection activity. This work was valuable in demonstrating the importance of sharing and updating data and the lead officers involved from the two authorities had attended meetings of the Public Protection Project Board to share knowledge.

At their previous meeting, Members endorsed the appointment of a Project Manager to progress work on this initiative at a cost of £10,000. An Appointments Panel had now been established by the Project Board and would make an appointment by the end of December 2010. In addition, the Strategic Director informed members of the work which was currently underway to evaluate a potential contractor for configuring the CRM to enable County Trading Standards to hold customer information and history on the system. This built on the work already undertaken by Lichfield District and East Staffordshire Borough Councils.

Continuing the Strategic Director commented on the likelihood of significant efficiency savings being made by County Trading Standards from their use of the CRM rather than having to purchase a new back office system. She then expressed the hope that there would be further progress to report at their next meeting.

91. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That a further report be brought to their next meeting setting out the progress which had been made in this project.

### **ePayments**

92. **Report** – The Joint Committee received an oral report from the Partnership Solicitor regarding the progress which had been made to date in the ePayments project.

Members were informed that an Invitation to Tender had been issued in respect of the broadband and telephony contract which was based on terms and conditions contained in a framework Agreement. This Agreement had been drafted so that other partners could join the contract at a later date if they so wished. However a short delay had occurred in the process owing to the need to check the financial standing of the prospective bidders.

93. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That a further report be brought to their next meeting setting out the progress which had been made in this project.

### **Shared Services**

94. **Report** – The Joint Committee received an oral report from the Director regarding the progress which had been made to date in the Shared Services project.

Members were informed that the Chief Executives' Work Strand 2 which focused on Integrated Services overlapped with much of the work currently envisaged in the Shared Services project. It was therefore considered appropriate to combine these two initiatives. Grant aid of £275,000 had been secured from the West Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership and the process of appointing a Project Manager was currently underway.

95. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That a further report be brought to their next meeting setting out the progress which had been made in this project.

### **Notices to Resign**

(schedule 14)

96. **Report** – The Joint Committee received an oral report from the Director and copy letters from Tamworth and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Councils regarding notice to terminate their

participation in the Oracle Customer Relationship Management (CRM) contract between Capula Limited and the County Council. Under the terms of the contract, partners were required to give two years notice to expire on the anniversary of the date of the Agreement ie 14 November 2012.

Tamworth Borough Council's Assistant Chief Executive commented that her Authority's decision to withdraw from the contract had arisen wholly from budgetary pressures rather than the unsuitability of the system. However, the Borough Council's Cabinet had requested to be kept updated on developments with regard to the CRM so that they may reconsider their decision, at a future date, if necessary. The Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that the Borough Council would continue to actively support the Partnership, notwithstanding their decision regarding the CRM.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council's Interim Chief Executive commented that his Authority's decision had been reached for similar reasons but they would keep the matter under review during the notice period.

The Strategic Director said that whilst he was disappointed to learn that both Authorities had given notice to terminate their involvement in the contract, he was confident that the benefits of a county-wide CRM, following completion of the development work which was now underway, would become clear and that they would choose to rejoin at a later date. A county-wide CRM system had the potential to deliver significant cashable savings which would be difficult to achieve without Tamworth and Newcastle-under-Lyme Boroughs' continued involvement.

The County Council's Member representative expressed his view that there was a need for the CRM to produce further tangible benefits for partners over the next 12 months. The Member representative from East Staffordshire Borough Council suggested that they received a presentation detailing the benefits which a Partnership project involving the CRM had already delivered.

97. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That a further report be brought to their next meeting setting out the progress which had been made in this project.

(c) That Members receive a presentation at a future meeting on the benefits which a Partnership project involving the CRM had already delivered.

### **The Development of Broadband Connectivity**

98. **Report** – The Joint Committee received an oral report on the development of broadband connectivity in Staffordshire.

Broadband was increasingly seen an essential tool for successful businesses in the Country. Following major investment in new infrastructure by the two leading suppliers (British Telecom and Virgin Media), a new generation product was now being offered enabling significantly faster communication. Two thirds of the Country had been targeted by the suppliers for upgrade ie where this was considered to be commercially viable. However, the remaining third would require investment from the public sector.

Broadband Delivery UK had been established by central government with a budget of £830m to provide funding for upgrading the Broadband network in that part of the Country where it was not commercially viable. It was therefore proposed that the Partnership should establish a task and finish group to investigate the opportunities of bidding for funding from Broadband Delivery UK and other sources to enable the upgrade of the entire Broadband network in Staffordshire.

The Strategic Director commented on the scale of the challenge in respect of achieving full broadband coverage in the County. However he said that the early consideration of the issues involved by the Partnership would hopefully help to ensure success of any future bid.

99. **RESOLVED** – (i) That the report be received and noted.

(ii) That further reports be brought to future meetings, as necessary, setting out the progress which had been made in this project.

#### **Date of Next Meeting**

100. **RESOLVED** – That a further meeting of the Joint Committee be held on 18 March 2011 at 10.00 am at Marmion House, Tamworth.

**CHAIRMAN**

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Documents referred to in these minutes as Schedules are not appended, but will be attached to the signed copy of the Minutes of the meeting. Copies, or specific information contained in them, may be available on request.