



NOTES OF AN INFORMAL MEETING OF SHARED SERVICES REVIEW GROUP – 20 MAY 2011

Present

Councillors

Martin Wright
Chris Barnfather

Officers

Jayne Francis-Ward – Assistant Chief Executive (Nominated Officer for this review)
Keith Ford – Senior Governance Officer

The formal committee meeting had been declared inquorate and therefore Members met on an informal basis. Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Liz Yates and Councillor Joyce Bosnjak (who had replaced Councillor John Clarke on the Committee).

The following issues were raised during discussion of the draft Scoping Document:-

- Nottinghamshire County Council's limited involvement in shared services currently was acknowledged. Agreements between other local authorities such as Nottingham City Council / Leicestershire County Council and Ashfield / Mansfield / Bolsover were highlighted;
- two potential areas for sharing services had been included within the service review proposals developed for the Budget in February 2011 - one in relation to sharing the Chief Executive and one in relation to sharing Legal Services. With regard to the latter, Ms Francis-Ward had set up East Midlands Law Share a number of years ago, whereby the relevant public bodies involved could seek specialist legal advice from a pool of private solicitors and also share experience and resources. This had proven to be very successful and was recognised by the Department for Communities and Local Government as best practice. Members agreed that the Review should receive a briefing on this issue as part of its evidence gathering;
- the Council was also currently involved in East Midlands Property Alliance, which concerned seeking advice on properties. Members also felt that a briefing on this issue should be arranged;

- other potential areas for shared services included Human Resources, finance and procurement. The Local Government Group's new guidance for Councils about this issue also suggested other possibilities such as sharing the posts of Section 151 Finance Officer, Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer. It was highlighted that the County Council currently shared its Monitoring Officer with Nottinghamshire Police Authority and provided payroll services for the Police Authority, the Fire Authority and foundation schools;
- as part of the review, district councils could be asked about any potential areas of shared services they would be interested in pursuing. Members recognised that other public bodies could view the exploration of this as a potential erosion of their autonomy;
- it was also suggested that the County Council's Chief Executive and the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Public Protection be requested to attend a meeting to share their views on potential areas of development;
- the difference between shared services and income generation was discussed, along with their potential implications in terms of reducing or protecting Council jobs respectively.

Jayne Francis-Ward agreed to draft the Scoping Document in light of the above discussions and circulate it to all Members of the Review Group for comments. It was suggested that the group next meet on 6 July 2011 at 2pm.

The meeting closed at 1.55 pm