



Shared Services Joint Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Shared Services Joint Committee held at The Forum, Moat Lane, Towcester, NN12 6AD on Wednesday 18 January 2023 at 2.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Jonathan Nunn (Co-Chair, in the Chair)
Councillor Jason Smithers (Co-Chair)
Councillor Adam Brown
Councillor Lloyd Bunday
Councillor Helen Harrison

Substitute Members:

Councillor Phil Larratt

Present Virtually:

Carl Dorney, Library Services Manager (WNC)

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Malcolm Longley
Anna Earnshaw, Chief Executive (WNC)

Officers:

Rob Bridge, Chief Executive (NNC)
Janice Gotts, Executive Director - Finance (NNC)
Catherine Whitehead, Director of Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer) (WNC)
Sarah Reed, Executive Director - Corporate Services (WNC)
Guy Holloway, Assistant Chief Executive (NNC)
Zakia Loughead, Assistant Director - Safeguarding, Wellbeing and Provider Services
Richard Woods, Democratic Services Officer (WNC)

38. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

39. **Notification of requests to address the meeting**

Peter Gout, Chairman of Friends of Thrapston Library and Sue Botterill, of Friends of Abington Library, addressed the Committee in response to the Library Support Services Variation Notice and expressed concern surrounding whether the disaggregation proposed would lead to the possible duplication of services, and therefore increased costs and loss of value for money for the taxpayer.

40. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26 October 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

41. **Chair's Announcements**

There were no announcements from the Chair.

42. **Hosted/Lead Disaggregation**

IAA Agreement Disaggregation: Progress against the Blueprint timeline

The Committee considered a report from the Assistant Chief Executive (NNC) which provided an overview of the disaggregation programme of activity against the original proposed blueprint, progression to date, and to set out the benefits identified.

In introducing the report, the Assistant Chief Executive (NNC) highlighted that a good level of progress of the disaggregation of services could be demonstrated, with a number of planned disaggregation's occurring on schedule. However, it was noted that when the disaggregation programme was defined, the scale of the wider demands on resources was not known. As a result, this led to some services seeking variations to the original agreed blueprint, which has enabled both councils to appropriately manage and prioritise service delivery, as well as transformation activity.

A discussion took place in relation to Collaborative Agreements prompted by questions from the Committee.

Members of the Committee emphasised the need for clear timelines to be in place, along with a clear breakdown of roles and responsibilities in relation to future disaggregation decisions.

The Leader of North Northamptonshire proposed that the delegation to the Monitoring Officers which appears in the reports in relation to signing off disaggregation's should be to the Leaders not the Monitoring Officers. The Monitoring Officer for West Northants explained that the delegation was to complete the documentation but suggested that a delegation for the Leaders to sign off the disaggregation could be included in future reports and the Monitoring Officers to give effect to the decision.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report and the progress of disaggregation against the original blueprint be noted.
- (2) That the final sign off of future disaggregation decisions be delegated to the Leaders of both Councils.

Approved Mental Health Professionals Disaggregation (AMHP) Change Request

The Committee considered a report from the Executive Directors – Adults, Communities and Wellbeing (NNC and WNC) which sought approval for the reprofiling of the Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP) Service disaggregation timelines and adjustment to the Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) blueprint, to delay disaggregation of the service until it is safe and legal to do so, and to report on progress and timescales with the AMHP service in March 2024.

The Assistant Director - Safeguarding, Wellbeing and Provider Services (NNC) explained that during the project to disaggregate the AMHP service, significant risks were identified in that there continued to be an ongoing national shortage of suitably qualified personnel for the AMHP service, therefore the Service would be placed at a high risk of failure if it was disaggregated prior to the appropriately trained staff being in place. The risk to residents was therefore significant (including potentially fatal) should the service not be adequately resourced prior to disaggregation.

In response to questions from the Committee as to whether it was feasible to manage staffing gaps by training internal staff, The Assistant Director – Safeguarding, Wellbeing and Provider Services (NNC) advised that the process to become an Approved Mental Health Professional was an elongated process, which required any candidate to be a Registered Social Worker, Mental Health or Learning Disability Nurse, or Occupational Therapist with at least two years' experience, however the Service would continue to explore ways to 'home grow' its own staff and work with NHFT to explore the training of Nurses to the role.

Resolved

- (1) That the request to reprofile the hosted Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP) Service disaggregation timelines and adjust the Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) Blueprint accordingly be approved.
- (2) That the disaggregation of the AMHP service be delayed until it is safe and legal to do so.
- (3) That a report on progress and timescales of the disaggregation of the AMHP service be received by March 2024.

Assistive Technology Disaggregation – Change Request

The Assistant Director - Safeguarding, Wellbeing and Provider Services (NNC) presented a report which sought approval for the reprofiling of the timeline of the Assistive Technology disaggregation from February 2023 to March 2024, to enable additional time to disaggregate the service in a safe and legal manner and therefore reducing the potential disruption to vulnerable customers of both Councils.

In introducing the report, The Assistant Director - Safeguarding, Wellbeing and Provider Services (NNC) advised that in order to complete the disaggregation, NNC would need to tender for a new equipment procurement framework, the timeline for which would be a minimum 12 months and this work had not commenced. If the service were to disaggregate in February 2023 in accordance with the current blueprint, then NNC would be unable provide a safe and legal service.

Resolved

- (1) That the request to reprofile the disaggregation timeline for the Assistive Technology service be approved.
- (2) That the necessary amendments to the blueprint to reflect the new disaggregation timeline of March 2024 be approved.

Visual Impairment Disaggregation – Change Request

The Committee considered a report from the Executive Directors – Adults, Communities and Wellbeing (NNC and WNC) which sought approval for the reprofiling of the hosted Visual Impairment Service disaggregation timelines and adjustment to the Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) blueprint, to delay disaggregation of the service until it is safe and legal to do so, and to report on progress and timescales with the VI service in March 2024.

The Assistant Director - Safeguarding, Wellbeing and Provider Services (NNC) explained that during the project to disaggregate the Visual Impairment service, significant risks were identified in that there continued to be an ongoing national shortage of suitably qualified personnel for the Visual Impairment Service, therefore the service would be placed at a high risk of failure if it was disaggregated prior to the appropriately trained staff being in place. The risk to residents was therefore significant (including potentially fatal) should the service not be adequately resourced prior to disaggregation

Resolved

- (1) That the request to reprofile the hosted Visual Impairment Service disaggregation timelines and adjust the Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) Blueprint accordingly be approved.
- (2) That the disaggregation of the Visual Impairment service be delayed until it is safe and legal to do so.
- (3) That a report on progress and timescales of the disaggregation of the Visual Impairment service be received by March 2024.

Library Support Services – Variation Notice

The Committee considered a report from the Library Services Manager (WNC) which sought approval to proceed with the disaggregation of the Library Services Business

Support service which was currently hosted by West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and provided to North Northamptonshire Council (NNC).

In introducing the report, the Library Services Manager (WNC) explained that following the deferral of the IAA Variation Notice for the disaggregation of the Libraries Support Services at the September 2022 meeting of the Shared Services Joint Committee, a fourth option which sought to continue the current hosting arrangement with WNC as the providing authority and NNC as the receiving authority.

The Library Services Manager added that the position regarding disaggregation would be reviewed in September 2023, with a view to disaggregating the service by March 2024.

In commenting on the report, the Committee agreed that in disaggregating the service, the Councils should seek to maximise public consultation and participation in the disaggregation process wherever this is practicable.

Resolved

- (1) That the recommendation to retain Library Support Service as a hosted service within WNC and provided to NNC be approved.
- (2) That it be agreed to review the disaggregation position in September 2023 with a view to disaggregating by April 2024.

43. Inter Authority Agreements

The Executive Director – Corporate Services (WNC) submitted a report which provided an update on the draft Q2 2022-23 performance report for services delivered via the Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) arrangements between North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) and West Northamptonshire Council (WNC).

In introducing the report, the Executive Director – Corporate Services (WNC) advised that in terms of services provided by North Northamptonshire Council to West Northamptonshire Council, of the 37 measures reported to date for Q2, 36 had met or exceeded target, with 1 missing target, which was Minerals and Waste Planning. In addition, there were a further 12 measures that recorded no activity or were not due to be reported during quarter 2.

Regarding services provided by West Northamptonshire Council to North Northamptonshire Council, the Executive Director advised that of the 26 measures reported for Q2, all 26 had met or exceeded target. In addition, there were a further 10 measures that recorded no activity or were not due to be reported during Q2.

Resolved

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.

44. **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 2.43 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____