

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE PAPER 'E'

Revenue and Benefits Shared Service for East Herts and Stevenage Business case

CMT would like to thank Unison for their comments on the Business case for Revenue and Benefits Shared Services. It was agreed at CMT on 31 May 2011 that the Business case be presented to Executive on 15 June 2011.

CMT note Unison support for shared services partnerships between Councils.

CMT will respond to the points raised in the Unison paper in the order raised.

Section 6: Accommodation – The model for the Business case is built around a home working and flexible working model, which is currently working well for EHC staff. The model has flexibility to be revised should this way of working not be achieved.

Savings have been made in the MTFP against the investment in Capita kit.

6.5 Technology – Economies of scale materialise through the maintenance of one instead of two separate systems at different locations. There is also a saving from migrating a Unix platform to a Windows platform, as IT officers have greater Windows knowledge than Unix. Because of this R&B will be able to reduce the remote support charge from Capita.

The plan includes migrating SBC's EDM onto the system used by EHC, so again there are savings in maintaining only one instead of two systems. This will also make it easier for R&B staff as they will only have to use one system.

6.6 TUPE – There is no indication that any non R&B staff fall into this category.

6.7 Structure and Jobs

The structure has been designed to ensure that the Revenues, Benefits and Fraud functions are supported in focussing on their key functions, with the ancillary tasks and specialism provided with greater resilience. The Customer support team and outside officers are generic across both Benefits and Revenues. The Fraud service is a discrete function.

There is no indication that Revenues staff are more at risk of redundancy than any other post.

6.7.7 Job Descriptions

One of the key objectives for the new shared service is greater resilience and this is more easily achieved by staff who have a flexible approach to their roles and responsibilities. It also creates greater opportunity to gain experience and enrichment. Grades are not based on the number of staff one has responsibility for, and there has to be a balance between many contributory factors.

Grade 7 posts are accessible for all staff. Training, Statistics, statutory returns, quality assurance etc are just some of the functions that cross all service areas.

7 & 8 Anticipated Benefits & Finance

Unison raise a number of points regarding recharge figures, which have previously been explained to Unison.

Changes to Stevenage's diminishing overheads are listed separately from their retained costs.

The contingency fund of £25,000 from each Council is considered sufficient at this time.

Pension back funding will be dealt with as part of the agreement between each LA.

The ongoing partnership expenditure of £91k is not an extra cost which reduces savings. It is as explained previously to Unison, costs which the partnership will incur but will be recharge to each

Council specifically, rather than shared. This includes for example summons costs, costs associated with prosecution of fraud cases etc.

10. Equalities

The EHC EIA has been sent to Unison. The SBC EIA accompanies their Exec report.

Conclusions and recommendations by Unison

Points raised by Unison will be considered and discussed as part of the Formal consultation with Unison and staff.

The ICT resource needed by EHC will be considered by senior management as part of the review of internal services.

6 June 2011