

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Executive

Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee: 29 October 2008

Subject: West Dunbartonshire Council - Shared Service Strategy

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report presents a draft of an overarching shared service strategy for West Dunbartonshire Council.

2. Background

- 2.1** Following the Audit of Best Value and Community Planning, one element of the Best Value Improvement Plan was a review of the Council's approach to Efficient Government. Shared Services was one element of this.
- 2.2** SOLACE Enterprises was commissioned to undertake a review of our arrangements. One of the recommendations from this review was that, although there was a range of activity taking place on shared services, it would be helpful to set this in context by means of a clear overarching strategy which would define the Council's approach to shared services

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Developments in shared services are reported on a regular basis through the Efficient Government workstream, and then to the Improvement & Efficiency Executive and to Council. These reports have outlined the wide variety of work which is taking place at national, regional and local levels.
- 3.2** The draft Shared Service Strategy which is appended to this report aims to set this work in context, and provide a framework for the future development of shared service opportunities. The strategy sets out a definition of shared services and general criteria for the investigation, approval & implementation of shared service arrangements.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no immediate personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** Any financial implications would be as a result of the development of individual shared service initiatives.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** There is a risk that, if the Council is not seen to have a coherent approach to the development of shared services, it will be considered that it has not addressed all of the issues identified in the Audit of Best Value and Community Planning.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1** The draft Shared Service Strategy which is attached to this report aims to provide an overarching and consistent framework for the investigation and development of shared services.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1** It is recommended that Committee approves the draft Shared Service Strategy attached as appendix 1.

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Date: 21 October 2008

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Appendix: Draft Shared Service Strategy

Background Papers: SOLACE Report – Efficient Government

Wards Affected: All

<i>Draft</i>

West Dunbartonshire Council

Shared Service Strategy

October 2008

1. Introduction

West Dunbartonshire Council has made a commitment to introducing an overarching Shared Service Strategy which will set the context for the identification and development of shared service opportunities.

Until this point, West Dunbartonshire Council has undertaken shared service developments both as a participant in national & regional initiatives, and as an individual local authority. These include:

- at a national level, e procurement and e planning
- at a regional level, the criminal justice partnership
- at a local level, services for older people and those with learning disabilities, addictions and mental health issues, maintenance arrangements for traffic signals and bus shelters, homeless services, a health improvement officer and a biodiversity officer.

A detailed list of all such arrangements is available.

Although these initiatives have been generally successful, the Council is keen to ensure that future opportunities are taken forward in a planned and consistent manner. The aim of this strategy is to establish the parameters which will ensure this happens.

The strategy is structured under the following headings:

- The Council's commitment to investigating opportunities
- Definition of 'shared services'
- The criteria which we will use to take a shared service proposal through the investigative stage and to enter into any agreement
- Decision making
- Commitments to consultation with stakeholders
- Commitments to sustainability, equalities and health
- Arrangements for monitoring outcomes
- Partnership Agreements

2. Statement of Commitment

West Dunbartonshire Council is committed to ensuring Best Value, Continuous Improvement and Customer Focus in all of its activity. An important element of this is the ongoing review of how we deliver services.

West Dunbartonshire Council will ensure that partnership or shared service delivery is a key option to be considered as part of the regular structured reviews of services. Additionally, we will ensure that we respond positively to any external or internal expressions of interest in this approach.

3. Definition of Shared Services

We are aware that in many cases there are a wide range of service delivery options. While we would aim to include assessment of all possibilities in any review, we believe it will be helpful to provide a clear definition of what we consider a 'Shared Service'.

The following definition will be used:

A shared service is any service which we share, or have provided for us, or which we provide for others, if the organisation with whom we share is one or more local authorities, or one or more public sector agencies, e.g. a Health Board. We consider the service to be shared even if it is provided to us by another local authority or public service agency to which we pay a fee.

Except as noted below the service is not a shared service if we buy the service in from a private organisation, be it a private company or a voluntary organisation.

However we will consider the service to be shared if we are acting along with one or more local authorities or one or more public sector agencies to buy in a service from a private company/voluntary organisation and we are sharing the cost between the participating local authorities or public sector agencies.

4. Criteria to be used

Commitment of resources to the investigation and development of shared service opportunities must be based on an initial assessment of the service quality, benefits to customers and resource and/or financial benefits which are anticipated. This initial assessment, will be prepared for the Corporate Management Team, (CMT), or, in the case of smaller scale service specific proposals, for the relevant Director. The assessment will require to demonstrate quantifiable benefits. The benefits will be considered against the costs of the full development of the shared service.

If the initial assessment is agreed for further development, a firm proposal to proceed with a shared service arrangement will require clear costings, risk assessment and a full analysis of the service benefits and benefits to customers which would result, (including the results of consultation where appropriate).

Additional Benefits

In addition to service quality, benefits to customers and financial / resource benefits, the analysis should consider other benefits which may accrue from shared services. These may include opportunities for sharing best practice, or workforce and personal development options.

5. Decisions on Shared Service Approaches

Proposals to proceed with a shared service arrangement will require Director or CMT approval in the case of operational issues, and committee approval where there are strategic implications, procurement requirements, or implications for current policy.

6. Consultation with Stakeholders

West Dunbartonshire Council has a strong commitment to community engagement and consultation with other stakeholders. The development of shared service approaches will include consultation with the relevant stakeholders as appropriate.

The ongoing provision of the shared service arrangements will also be subject to consultation as appropriate. Details of these requirements will be set out in Partnership Agreements with shared service providers.

7. Sustainability, Equalities and Health

The Council has a commitment to ensuring that any major revision to policy or services undergoes an Integrated Impact Assessment, to establish that there are no unplanned or adverse implications in terms of sustainability, equalities or health. Where there is a potential for such impacts, proposals for shared service arrangements should be subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment.

8. Arrangements for Monitoring Shared Service Arrangements

Details of financial and service performance monitoring arrangements will be contained in a Partnership Agreement. This will be established at the outset and reviewed on an annual basis. Monitoring of shared service arrangements will be undertaken at the appropriate level. Where there are purely operational issues, monitoring will be undertaken by the appropriate Director and the CMT. Where strategic issues are involved, performance will be reported to the appropriate Council committee.

9. Partnership Agreements

Clarity of responsibilities and accountability must be at the core of any shared service arrangement. Every shared service arrangement will be subject to a full Partnership Agreement. A checklist of the issues which should be covered by a Partnership Agreement is available as a separate document. Partnership Agreements must also include details of the arrangements for the end of shared services.