

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Officer (Regeneration and Regulatory)

Council: 20 December 2023

Subject: Inverclyde Council and West Dunbartonshire Council Shared Services Joint Committee.

1. Purpose

1.1 To consider the future of shared services arrangements between Inverclyde Council and West Dunbartonshire Council and to endorse the decision of the Shared Services Joint Committee taken on 23 November 2023 to wind up the joint committee and to pursue a different model of joint working.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that Council:

- i) Endorse the decision of the Shared Services Committee held on 23 November 2023 to:-
 - (a) approve the winding up of the Joint Committee;
 - (b) to note the continuation of shared Internal Audit services between West Dunbartonshire and Inverclyde Councils in the short to medium term, subject to a service level agreement;
 - (c) to note that wider discussions will continue with neighbouring Councils on possible options to create a more sustainable delivery model for Internal Audit services over the longer term.

3. Background

3.1 A shared service model was developed between East Dunbartonshire Council, West Dunbartonshire Council and Inverclyde Council in 2017 to share Roads and Transportation services. Over time, the remit was expanded to include Waste, Fleet, Grounds and Internal Audit.

3.2 East Dunbartonshire Council did not pursue participation in the shared service arrangements and formally withdrew from the Shared Services Committee in January 2022.

3.3 An independent evaluation of Shared Services was jointly commissioned in October 2022 by West Dunbartonshire Council and Inverclyde Council to consider the future of the shared service model.

3.4 The evaluation highlighted a number of positives, as well as a number of negatives, however concluded that the current model was unsustainable.

3.5 In relation to the delivery of Internal Audit services specifically, the evaluation highlighted that there are a number of different considerations and there are a number of examples in other Scottish local authorities where a shared service arrangement is understood to work well and recommended that consideration be given to moving to a Lead Authority Model.

3.6 At its meeting on 18 April 2023, the Joint Committee agreed to discontinue the joint approach in the Roads, Waste, Fleet, and Grounds areas of operation, whilst seeking a further report in respect of the Internal Audit service.

4. Main Issues

4.1 The Report to the Shared Services Joint Committee (Appended as Appendix 1) concluded that, for the reasons narrated therein) the Shared Services Committee ought to be wound up, interim arrangements be put in place for the delivery of Audit Services and a long term approach investigated between Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire Councils, possibly with further participating authorities.

4.2 This report endorses that approach and seeks to ratify the decisions of the Joint Committee.

4.3 At the point of writing this report it is understood that Inverclyde Council will consider a similar report at its meeting on 7th December 2023.

4.4 As the dissolution of committees is a matter reserved to Council this report requires to be considered in addition to approval of the Shared Services Joint Committee Minute which accompanies the report.

5 People Implications

5.1 There are no immediate People Implications from the report. The Shared Services Manager Post will continue regardless of the governance arrangements, which will now be addressed through a Service Level Agreement between the authorities..

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report..

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 The current legal agreements will need updated/amended after approval from the Joint Committee/Councils.

7.2 A service level agreement will need to be put in place for the continued shared service arrangement for Internal Audit Services between both Councils.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment

8.1 No EIA is necessary for a change in governance arrangements of this

nature.

9. Consultation

9.1 The Chief Officer: Resources was consulted on the preparation of this report.

10 Strategic Assessment

10.1 At its meeting on 26 October 2022, the Council agreed that one of its main strategic priorities for the Strategic Plan 2022 - 2027 is: Our Council is Inclusive and Adaptable. This report addresses this priority.

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Date: December 2023

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Appendix 1 - Report to the Shared Services Joint Committee taken on 23 November 2023.

Background Papers: Report to the Shared Services Joint Committee taken on 23 November 2023.

Wards Affected: All