

Scrutiny Report



Performance Scrutiny Committee - Partnerships

Part 1

Date: 1st December 2021

Subject Shared Resource Service Monitoring Update

Author Scrutiny Adviser

The following people have been invited to attend for this item:

Invitee:	Designation:
Matt Lewis	Chief Officer Shared Resource Service
Kath Beavan-Seymour	Assistant Director Shared Resource Service
Mike Doverman	User Support Manager Shared Resource Service
Rhys Cornwall	Strategic Director – Transformation and Corporate Centre
Mark Bleazard	Digital Services Manager
Dominic Gibbons	Digital Projects Manager

Section A – Committee Guidance and Recommendations

1 Recommendations to the Committee

The Committee is asked to:

1. Consider the update on the Shared Resource Service's arrangements for IT service delivery;
2. Determine if it wishes to make any comments to the Shared Resource Service.
3. Determine the timescale for monitoring this partnership as part of the Committee's work programme for 2022-23.

2 Context

Background

2.1 Following a Scrutiny Review of IT services the Cabinet accepted the Recommendations of the Community Planning & Development Scrutiny Committee on 14 March 2016 to:

- accept the Scrutiny Committee's preferred option of developing a detailed business case for a partnership with the Shared Resource Service

- agree in principle the preferred option for Newport City Council to establish a collaborative public sector partnership with the SRS and to provide update reports to the Cabinet
- delegate authority to the Head of People & Business Change and Statutory Officers to develop a final business case for the preferred option, to establish a collaborative public sector partnership with the SRS
- delegate authority to the Head of People & Business Change and Statutory Officers to implement the preferred option to establish a collaborative public sector partnership with the SRS, subject to the arrangement being financially viable and operating to at least the financial requirements stated in the Part 2 report. The arrangement will also be subject to not falling below the expected benefits as detailed within the Business Case
(A link to the Cabinet Report held on 14 March 2016 and Minute is included in Background Papers in Section 8 of this report.)

Following further development of the business case, Newport's IT Service formally joined the Shared Resource Service on 1 April 2017. The Shared Resource Service (SRS) is a collaborative ICT provision in South East Wales that comprises Gwent Police Authority, Monmouthshire County Council, Torfaen County Borough Council and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

Previous Consideration of this item

- 2.2 At its meeting on 25 April 2018, this Committee considered an Update on the Shared Resource Service's service delivery at the end of the first year and made the following conclusions:

The Committee **agreed** that:

- Overall clearly there was more work to be done, but that while the explanations and reasons provided by Officers verbally had not been included and evidenced in the report, the additional verbal information provided at the meeting in answer to Members' questions and supplementary to the report had reassured the Committee and provided confidence.
- The Performance data needed to include more detail, comparable data and clear actions on outstanding objectives in future reports.
- While it had concerns over the missed dates it accepted the reasons provided by Officers. The Investment Objective deadlines need to be reviewed and updated for inclusion in the next report to Committee, particularly for those investment objectives which had not been met within the original timescales and which had passed.
- The Committee to receive a more detailed updated monitoring report upon the SRS in 12months, to be included in the Committee's draft Annual Forward Work Programme.
- There should be wider evaluation of engagement through other mechanisms, due to concerns regarding the very low response rate to customer satisfaction.
- The Committee wanted it to be noted that there had been a lack of appetite for other Local Authorities to engage in the Shared Resource Service (SRS) since the Welsh Government Green Paper: *Strengthening Local Government* had been published and this was a risk to the SRS moving forward.
(A link to the Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships held on 25 April 2018 Report and Minute is included in the Background Papers in Section 8 of this report.)

- 2.3 At its meeting on 3 April 2019, this Committee considered an Update on the Shared Resource Service's service delivery at the end of the second year and made the following conclusions:

1. The Head of People and Business Change will provide an updated report to the Committee for information.

2. The Committee recommended that the Investment Objectives were made clearer and their relevance to other Investment Objectives is highlighted.
3. The Committee recommended that the SRS included Education Digital Leaders either on their different boards or as an agenda item, the aim of this is to improve the service for schools and education providers.
4. The Committee requested a timeline to be provided for SRS developing the Education Infrastructure.
5. The Committee requested that SRS provide an action plan for how they aim to achieve each of the Investment Objective and present back to the Committee in 6 months' time. The Committee were concerned that the finances of SRS were not reported adequately back to Members and that this be included all updates to the Committee.

(A link to the Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships held on 3 April 2019 Report and Minute is included in the Background Papers in Section 8 of this report.)

- 2.4 The SRS has provided a number of updates to Scrutiny since Newport City Council joined the partnership in April 2017. Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the development of a new work programme this has not been scheduled until now.

3 Information Submitted to the Committee

- 3.1 The following are attached for the Committee's Consideration:

Appendix A - Submission of Evidence to Scrutiny - Shared Resource Service (SRS) Update

4. Suggested Areas of Focus

- 4.1 **Role of the Committee**

The role of the Committee in considering the report is to:

- Assess the update upon the SRS's progress to date particularly on delivering the Investment Objectives
- Assess and make comment on:
 - Whether there are any barriers to delivering the investment objectives that have been embedded into business as usual.
- In drawing its conclusions, the Committee should assess:
 - What was the overall conclusion on the information contained within the reports?
 - Is the Committee satisfied that it has had all of the relevant information to base a conclusion on the delivery of the Investment Objectives by the SRS?
 - Do any areas require a more in-depth review by the Committee?
 - Does the Committee wish to make any Comments to the SRS?
 - What are the requirements for ongoing monitoring of SRS on the Committee's work programme?

Suggested Lines of Enquiry

- 4.2 In evaluating the SRS's progress in delivering the Investment Objectives included in **Appendix A**, the Committee may wish to consider:

<p>Investment Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the overall view of the SRS's progress in delivering the Investment Objectives at this stage? • What is planned to progress investment objectives that are outstanding at this stage? • What barriers are there to delivering the investment objectives? • For those objectives not met within timescales, what mitigations are in place to enable the SRS to complete them and within what timescales? <p>Partnership Arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effectively the Shared Resource Service partnership arrangement is working? • Are any other methods are being used to evaluate effectiveness of the arrangements e.g. Regulatory Reports or Reviews?

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act

- 4.3 The Committee's consideration of the Shared Resource Service Monitoring Update should consider how the Partnership is maximising its contribution to the five ways of working. The following are examples of the types of questions to consider:

5 Ways of Working	Types of Questions to consider:
<p>Long-term</p> <p>The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.</p>	What long term trends will impact upon the future delivery of the Investment Objectives?
	How will changes in long term needs impact upon the delivery of the Investment Objectives in the future?
<p>Prevention</p> <p>Prevent problems occurring or getting worse.</p>	What issues are facing the Partnership's service users at the moment?
	How is the Partnership addressing these issues to prevent a future problem?
<p>Integration</p> <p>Considering how public bodies' wellbeing objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.</p>	How does the Partnership's performance upon the delivery of the Investment Objectives impact upon the services of other public bodies and their objectives?

5 Ways of Working	Types of Questions to consider:
<p style="text-align: center;">Collaboration</p> <p>Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the organisation itself).</p>	Who has the Partnership been working with to deliver the Investment Objectives?
	How is the Partnership using knowledge / information / good practice of others to inform / influence delivery of the Investment Objectives?
	How effectively the Shared Resource Service partnership arrangement is working?
	Are there examples of good practice of collaborative working?
<p style="text-align: center;">Involvement</p> <p>The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.</p>	How has the Partnership sought the views of those who are impacted by the delivery of the Improvement Objectives?
	How are service user experiences being used to assess performance?

Section B – Supporting Information

5 Supporting Information

Guidance for Local Authority Scrutiny Committees on the scrutiny of Public Services Boards issued by Welsh Government in August 2017:

- 5.1 The Characteristics of Effective Partnership Scrutiny set out in the Guidance for Local Authority Scrutiny Committees on the scrutiny of Public Services Boards issued by Welsh Government in August 2017 can equally be applied to the scrutiny of other Partnerships and states that:

“Research into the practice of collaborative or joint scrutiny in England and Wales identifies that arrangements are effective when they demonstrate the following characteristics:

Characteristics of effective partnership scrutiny:

- Scrutiny regards itself as a form of ‘critical friendship with positive intent’ in which scrutiny practitioners act as advocates for the success of joint working.
- Collaborative performance is evaluated from the citizen’s perspective.
- Strong efforts are made to understand the complexity of partnership arrangements and to facilitate learning about the culture and assumptions of different organizations.
- Scrutiny creates positive expectations by focussing on issues regarded as useful to the partnership or where there is consensus that ‘things need to change’.
- Scrutiny demonstrates intellectual independence and investigative rigour in all of its activities.
- Scrutiny demonstrates a positive impact by developing clear, timely, evidence-based recommendations aimed at enhancing collaborative performance.
- Scrutiny critically evaluates its own performance utilising partnership perspectives.

(For Members' information, a link to the full Welsh Government Guidance is included in Section 8 of this report in the Background Papers.)

6 Links to Council Policies and Priorities

- Newport City Council's Corporate Plan and Wellbeing Objectives:

Well-being Objectives	Promote economic growth and regeneration whilst protecting the environment	Improve skills, educational outcomes & employment opportunities	Enable people to be healthy, independent & resilient	Build cohesive & sustainable communities
Corporate Plan Commitments	Thriving City	Aspirational People		Resilient Communities
Supporting Function	Modernised Council			

7 Impact Assessment:

- Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**
- Equality Act 2010**
- Socio-economic Duty**
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

The council has a number of legislative responsibilities to assess the impact of any strategic decision, proposal or policy on people that may experience disadvantage or inequality.

7.1 Summary of impact – Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act

The SRS operates in accordance with the five ways of working which are also reflected in the content of the report. There is a strong emphasis on collaboration as the SRS recognises the need to work with partners to deliver services and improve local well-being.

7.2 Summary of impact – Equality Act 2010

The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. This is an information report, therefore it is not necessary to carry out an Equality Impact assessment in the production of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

8. Background Papers

- Cabinet [14 March 2016 Report \(Item 13 refers\) and Minutes.](#)
- Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships – [3 April 2019 Report \(Item 5 refers\) and Minutes](#)
- Performance Scrutiny Committee – Partnerships - [25 April 2018 Report \(Item 5 refers\) and Minutes](#)
- [Guidance for Local Authority Scrutiny Committees on the scrutiny of Public Services Boards](#) (Issued by Welsh Government August 2017)
- [The Essentials - Wellbeing of Future Generation Act \(Wales\)](#)
- [Corporate Plan 2017-22](#)
- [The Essentials - Wellbeing of Future Generation Act \(Wales\)](#)
- [Corporate Plan](#)
- [Socio-economic Duty Guidance](#)

- [Public Sector Equality Duty](#)
- [Welsh Language Measure 2015](#)

Report Completed: 1 December 2021