

**Report for:****Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date of Meeting: 20 April 2021**Subject:** Shared Services Scrutiny Review Report**Responsible Officer:** Alex Dewsnap, Director of Strategy & Partnerships**Scrutiny Lead Member area:** Resources:
Councillor Kantilal Rabadia
Councillor Honey Jamie**Exempt:** No**Wards affected:** All**Enclosures:** Shared Services Scrutiny Review Report

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report presents the findings and recommendations from the Shared Services Scrutiny Review. The review started work in late 2019 but had to conclude early in March 2020, as the Covid-19 pandemic diverted resources and continues to stretch organisational capacity.

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- a) Consider and endorse the report from the Shared Services Scrutiny Review
- b) Forward the review's report and recommendations to Cabinet, for consideration and response.
- c) In line with Rule 25.1.1 of the Committee Procedure Rules in the Constitution, suspend Rule 36.5, to allow the Executive a longer timeframe within which to respond, in recognition of current stretch in organisational capacity. A revised deadline of September 2021 by which to respond is provided.

Section 2 – Report

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned a review of shared services in its work programme for 2019/20 and agreed the review's scope in September 2019 outlining the following aim and objectives for the review:

The purpose of this review is to better understand and influence how shared services can be part of the Council's future commissioning decisions, to deliver better outcomes for residents as well as making efficiencies for the Council.

The objectives of the review as set out in the scope are:

1. To understand what a shared service is and the protocol the Council follows to enter into a shared service; how this can be improved in terms of the criteria including financial, risk management, quality of service and efficiency.
2. To understand the history of Harrow's shared services and the lessons learnt, especially with regards to efficiency savings for the Council.
3. Use the intel and lessons learnt to guide future shared service ventures.
4. To research and understand best practice, lessons learnt on sharing services and how these can be adopted and implemented at Harrow Council.

The review group held a challenge panel in March 2020, shortly after which scrutiny work was paused for a couple of months in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

When scrutiny re-started, its priorities and work programme was refreshed to reflect the new and emerging priorities for Harrow. It is against this backdrop that this report is delayed and incomplete as council resources and capacity continue to be diverted to respond to the pandemic and mitigating its adverse impact. It is important to note that although the report is published in April 2021, the review work concluded in March 2020 and conclusions/recommendations are framed accordingly.

The review makes the following recommendations:

- Recommendation 1: that every decision that the council takes around future shared service arrangements should be supported by robust feasibility studies, options appraisals and business case, which have been considered by CSB and had the opportunity to be critically and constructively challenged by members.
- Recommendation 2: that the council develops a checklist of considerations that any future shared services agreement process must take account in order to be confident that the shared service is beneficial to Harrow Council and that any risks identified can be mitigated. This can build on the checklist suggested by the review group.
- Recommendation 3: that the outstanding information identified by the Review Group following the Challenge Panel is followed up by O&S as and when appropriate, and as scrutiny work programme and resources allow.

Ward Councillors' comments

Not applicable as report relates to all wards.

Financial Implications

There are no financial issues associated with this report.

Performance Issues

There are no performance issues associated with this report.

Environmental Impact

There is no environmental impact associated with this report.

Risk Management Implications

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been undertaken for this report as it summarises the activities of scrutiny and does not propose any direct changes to service delivery.

Council Priorities

All – as shared service arrangements can be applied to most service areas of the council.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not required for this report.

Mandatory Checks

Ward Councillors notified: No, as it impacts on all wards

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Nahreen Matlib, Senior Policy Officer, 07874 891499,
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Background Papers: None