

**JOINT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE held at UTTLESFORD DISTRICT
COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 6.30pm on 23
MARCH 2011**

Present: Councillor A J Ketteridge – Chairman.
Councillors S Carter and M Danvers (Harlow Members); Councillors
Councillor R P Chambers and P Wilcock (Uttlesford Members).

Officers in attendance: John Mitchell (Chief Executive, Uttlesford District
Council), Graham Branchett (Strategic Director, Harlow Council),
Simon Martin (Divisional Head: Customer Support and Revenue
Services UDC), Maggie Cox (Democratic Services Officer) and Adrian
Webb (Director of Corporate Services UDC).

Also Present: Steve Knights and Juliet Gurney – Steria Ltd.

JPC15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Johnson (Harlow) and
Malcolm Morley (Chief Executive, Harlow Council).

JPC16 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2011 were agreed and signed
by the Chairman as a correct record.

JPC17 BUSINESS ARISING

Minute 10 – Statement made by staff

John Mitchell read a response to the statement submitted by Harlow staff at the
last meeting. Councillor Wilcock thanked the staff for taking the trouble to
produce such a considered document. Councillor Carter was concerned that the
staff did not feel that they had been consulted but recognised that the absence
of senior staff may not have helped. A number of assumptions had been made
particularly in relation to universal credit. He felt that this might be premature as
the timetable for the introduction of the new system had not yet been
formalised.

Councillor Danvers expressed concern regarding possible changes to the TUPE
regulations. John Mitchell reported that there had been a recent announcement
by the Secretary of State which appeared to make the assumption that TUPE
would continue. This however required clarification and it was agreed that this
would be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Minute 13 – Improvement East Bid

Adrian Webb informed the meeting that the milestones had been agreed for the
phased release of £200k before March 2012. The 1st milestone had been the

appointment of a project manager and an application was being made for the release of funds.

JPC18 **INTRODUCTION OF PROJECT MANAGER**

Adrian Webb advised Members that following the tender process Steria Ltd had been appointed as the Project Manager. Steve Knights of Steria Ltd outlined the nature of the work carried out by the consultancy and his own personal experience in the Revenue and Benefits field. He introduced his colleague Juliet Gurney, who would be part of the team and had experience of procurement of IT systems. Members then asked a number of questions.

Councillor Wilcock asked about the replacement of the ICT systems and sought assurance that thought would be given to pricing and ongoing revenue costs. Steve Knights explained that there were really only 3 major systems in the market and it would almost certainly be one of these that was purchased. From his experience he still expected the process to be competitive.

Councillor Danvers asked for details of the project timetable. Steve Knights explained that the project would be in 2 phases. The first was for clear deliverables; the review of the feasibility study, to redefine the budget, the structure of the shared service, establishing the performance framework and the procurement of the ICT systems. There would then be a break in the project when Harlow DC would decide whether it wished to continue. It would then move on to the implementation phase which would include, deciding on the preferred processes, staff issues - consultation and amalgamation, accommodation and ICT. The timetable for delivery was March 2013. It was hoped that the business case would be presented to cabinet and then full council at both authorities during June.

In answer to a question, Steve Knights confirmed that he had seen the agreed milestones and thought that they were well defined and of a reasonable timescale.

Councillor Carter asked whether the project manager thought that the biggest challenge would be the move towards universal credit. Steve Knights agreed that this would need to be borne in mind during the project but the revenues field had a long history of dealing with changing regulations. The main challenge as he saw it was keeping everyone involved with the project, staff and members, engaged and pulling in the same direction. He agreed that consultation with staff was essential in order to understand the issues that exist and the reasons behind the decisions.

JPC19 **FREQUENCY AND LOCATION OF MEETINGS**

The schedule of meetings for 2011 was agreed. Although meetings were scheduled for every month it was agreed that the Leaders of each authority would liaise and cancel a meeting if there was insufficient business.

The meeting ended at 7.05 pmPage 2