

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ONESOURCE JOINT COMMITTEE

30 April 2021 (10.00 - 11.56 am)

Present:

COUNCILLORS

Havering Robert Benham, Roger Ramsey and Damian White

Newham Zulfiqar Ali, Rokshana Fiaz and Terence Paul

All decisions were taken with no votes against.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 7 February 2020, 5 March 2020, 29 May 2020, 26 June 2020 and 15 January 2021 were agreed as a correct record and would be signed at a later date.

4 ONESOURCE STRATEGY UPDATE 2020-21

Whilst some projects had been delayed by the pandemic, oneSource had experienced a good year in supporting the boroughs. Attraction and retention of talent had improved and staff turnover had been very low. Some 5.6m items of PPE had been bought for both Councils via a joint procurement exercise and remote working had been enabled. Oracle Fusion had been introduced and the departure of Bexley from oneSource had been managed. There had also been a 30% reduction in the use of agency staff and the legal department had attained accreditation for excellence in law.

Challenges included that the on-boarding process and IT support was too slow and the split leadership team across the two boroughs was often having to work long hours. Work would focus on restructures needed in all departments, the centralisation of service requests and the move towards the configuration of offices to support hybrid working etc. It was clarified that agency fees for staff switching from temporary to permanent status were unlikely to be very high.

The ongoing impact of the pandemic was not yet known but it was expected this would cause a slower pace of work over the next six months. It was hoped to further reduce spending on agency staff in legal and procurement although this was already low elsewhere in oneSource. It was accepted that issues such as the issuing of laptops to new staff and getting references back were taking too long to complete. The onboarding process as a whole was being reviewed and changes were expected in the next 1-2 months. HR and health & safety policies would be rewritten in order to reflect the move to hybrid working.

It was agreed that Simon Pollock would send the Joint Committee e-mail updates on pandemic-related and other strategy changes outside of the main Committee meetings.

Councillor White was concerned that the Committee had not reviewed the three-year plan for 14 months and felt that oneSource was too distant from Havering's Cabinet. More detail was needed re what elements of services were proposed to improved. Councillor White felt there was a lack of detail and direction in the report.

It was agreed that the oneSource management team would arrange a series of workshops with Havering's Cabinet in order to update them on current work. This would also be offered to the Newham Cabinet.

It was felt that future meetings of the Joint Committee could include a review of strategy and budgets in a particular area. ICT was suggested as a good area for this. An extended note on a particular area could also be supplied to the Committee between meetings. This could perhaps start with the enforcement service as courts were reopening. An update on debt management processes could also be brought. It was hoped that the next meeting could be held in person.

The Joint Committee noted the update.

5 ONESOURCE KPI FRAMEWORK AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES 2021-22

Whilst all external Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) would continue to be recorded, it was hoped to amalgamate all KPIs into four key measures. KPIs would be tailored to Havering, Newham and oneSource to provide dashboards from which detail could be derived. Higher level dashboards with detailed appendices would be reported to the Joint Committee each quarter. It was suggested the direction of travel against benchmarks could be shown and that the example dashboard should be made clearer. Reasons for failures to meet targets and action planned in response would be given.

The report was noted and KPI framework and performance measures for 2021-22 were agreed subject to the comments shown above.

6 ONESOURCE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS Q4 2020-21 AND END-OF-YEAR REPORT

Overall oneSource performance had kept up well during lockdown. Some increases in productivity had been seen due to e.g. staff spending less time commuting. It was noted that many senior managers had worked very long hours for the first 3-4 months of the pandemic and this had meant there being less resource for the oversight of oneSource.

Whilst differences between performance levels in each borough could be small, these could be sufficient to push an indicator into the next category on the report. It was accepted that the reporting of the time taken for the granting of planning agreements should be changed as a small number of cases could skew the average figure significantly. Figures would be compiled for both major and minor applications. Consideration would also be given to how the data more generally was presented.

There would be some savings in the capital programme due to the reduced cost of borrowing but these were unlikely to be significant as around half of planned projects had not yet started. An update on the indicator on the time taken to obtain a care order would be given at the next meeting. A report on the standards of office accommodation could also be brought to a future meeting. Information on this would however be needed prior to the OFSTED inspection at Havering in May.

The Joint Committee noted the report.

7 ONESOURCE JOINT COMMITTEE AND DELEGATION AGREEMENT

The Deputy Director, Legal and Governance had reviewed the Agreement and noted that references to Bexley needed to be removed. There were however no further improvements needed to the current Agreement.

It was noted that a review had established that the Agreement remained fit for purpose in defining the relationship between the two Councils and the operation of the service for the benefit of the two Councils.

Thanks were given to the Deputy Director for his work and best wishes expressed for his forthcoming departure from the organisation.

8 ONESOURCE DRAFT 2020/2021 OUTTURN REPORT

The Committee was advised that oneSource currently had a £14.8m adverse variance. The pandemic had led to a significant economic impact on oneSource and there remained income risks. The level of financial impact differed between Havering and Newham and between shared and non-shared services.

In order to achieve a balanced budget, existing planned savings would have to be achieved as well as further savings. It was accepted that this would be challenging to achieve. It was suggested that an action plan to address the overspend over the next year should be brought to the Committee.

It was hoped to restart debt recovery and enforcement which would increase income. It was unclear how the pause in rent reviews had affected local businesses. It was agreed that Simon Pollock would draft a letter from the two leaders to the relevant minister regarding the delay in assessments being received from the Valuations Office.

Savings and changes could be achieved in some areas purely by oneSource action but others would require a review of the position in the wider economy. Restructures were in progress but it was also hoped to use other methods to make savings such as increasing income. The introduction of Fusion would also help with the achieving of savings and integration across oneSource. Virtual working was also achieving savings and office rationalisation in both Havering and Newham was at an advanced stage. It was noted however that the property strategy was not owned by oneSource.

It was suggested that an assessment could be undertaken of what areas oneSource controlled and what were dependent on decisions taken by each Council. This could be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.

Procurement savings and how they were treated at both Councils were currently being worked through. Following an improvement in the pandemic situation, oneSource management was now working more closely with the individual Councils. Shared budget issues would be controlled through the Joint Committee. A base timeline for project savings could be shared with the Joint Committee.

The Committee noted the report.

9 **ONESOURCE BUDGET 2021/2022**

It was agreed that the position with postage costs should be reviewed. New areas for savings within oneSource would be discussed with the Committee. It was suggested that accountable directors could be named for each savings project.

10 **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was agreed that the meeting scheduled for 22 April 2022 would need to be rescheduled due to the proximity of the Council elections. The other dates for meetings of the Joint Committee were agreed as follows:

30 July 2021
15 October 2021
21 January 2022

Chairman