

JOINT REGULATORY COMMITTEE
21 OCTOBER 2014

10.30am Committee Rooms B&C

PRESENT Cllrs Judy Saunders (LBM), Nick Draper (LBM), Pamela Fleming (LBRUT), Rita Palmer (LBRUT)

Also present:

Jon Freer, Assistant Director, Development and Street Scene, (LBRUT & RSP Board Member), Paul Foster, Head of Regulatory Services Partnership (LBM), Paul Chadwick, Director of Environment, (LBRUT), Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration, (LBM), John Hill, Head of Public Protection, (LBM & RSP Board Member)), Hilary Gullen, Democratic Services Officer (LBM)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

None

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

None

3 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (CHRIS LEE AND PAUL CHADWICK) (Agenda Item 3)

Cllr Saunders was appointed chair for the committee.
All present introduced themselves.

4 BACKGROUND TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REGULATORY SERVICES PARTNERSHIP (JOHN HILL AND JON FREER) (Agenda Item 4)

Chris Lee and Paul Chadwick gave information about the background to the establishment of the Regulatory Services Partnership. Chris Lee explained how collaboration can protect important services while making savings. There had been a Memorandum of Understanding signed by interested boroughs, agreeing to look at opportunities in all service areas, looking at how to deliver savings while keeping services resilient. Chris remarked that it was an immature market, with good opportunity for successful collaboration.

Paul Chadwick gave more information on the four years it had taken to develop and then establish the partnership and today for the Committee to hold the first meeting. He set out how the ambition had been to have five borough collaboration. However, it was realised that with five boroughs,

officer and political alignment was going to be difficult in the short term. After discussion and development of a business case only Richmond and Merton to choose to pursue the partnership.

There are three aims in the collaboration:

The first was to achieve early savings

The second will be to drive out further efficiencies by looking at current practices

The third to make the service more resilient

Paul also said there would be interesting opportunities regarding event management with the Rugby World Cup taking place in Twickenham in 2015, as well as the continued opportunities provided by the annual staging of Wimbledon tennis championship.

5 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS (JOHN HILL AND JON FREER) (Agenda Item 5)

John Hill spoke about significant dates so far, including the original five borough partnership and the cabinet approval. John also spoke about meeting the financial challenge, and delivering the service in a new and improved way. The shared service is currently in its third month is already proving to be successful with opportunities already emerging for more efficient and resilient ways of working.

John explained that in June 2013 the decision was taken that Merton would be the host authority, Merton having a good track record of delivering a shared service eg HR and Legal shared services both of which involve Merton and Richmond. However, this collaboration was different in that it is for front line services. John also pointed out that other boroughs would be very interested in seeing how the collaboration worked, as it was a new initiative in London. A project manager was appointed in the autumn of 2013 to work with the Shared Services Management Board to implement phase one of the project which involved the development of a new management structure and to focus on savings and changes in working practices.

In April 2014 Paul Foster was appointed as the Head of The Regulatory Services Partnership, and over the summer a series of interviews was held to create the management structure. This has led to the number of managers reducing from 12 to 7. The initial assessment is that the new management structure is working well.

The management board would benefit from the members' input into direction of travel before phase 2 in the delivery of the shared service. There will be more impact on frontline staff in phase 2.

Jon Freer spoke of how the shared services should be managed and how the management board and members might work together, on whether there are

efficiencies to be had and how to go forward. The collaborative agreement dated 1st August set up the structure for this.

It was thought that other boroughs might join at a later date, but ‘bedding’ in time was needed to establish the services first.

The chair requested the terms of reference be brought to the next meeting, and advice on regulations. Members need to know what is going on to develop a strong partnership. Also required is advice on the budget and whether this is separated by council or joined.

Jon Freer went on to talk about coming together in different ways, and what to deliver. Trading Standards and Environmental Health services were delivered with little income, so it would be possible to look at what the statutory minimum standards are for delivery and what can be bought over and above this. In response to a question about maintaining the standard of services, Chris Lee responded that the partnership would need to satisfy members that they are maintained. There would be opportunities to share and spread best practice. Both boroughs had common ground, wanting the same outcomes, but these were delivered in different ways. It would be important to maintain, achieve and deliver excellence. There might be choices for members in the approach that is adopted, and change might be uncomfortable, but would result in improved efficiency and effectiveness. The services were ‘people’ services so efficiencies would be made through use of information technology and training.

In response to a question from a member, Paul Chadwick explained that Croydon had withdrawn from the collaboration for political reasons. John Hill confirmed that the withdrawal of LB Croydon was not in any way connected with concerns regarding the RSP.

6 PLANNING SERVICE DELIVERY FOR 2015/16 (PAUL FOSTER) (Agenda Item 6)

Paul Foster explained that regulatory services were key public protection services, which the public were not usually aware of until something went wrong. The period from August 2014 to March 2015 will be “business as usual” with the original service plan commitments being delivered. 2015/16 will be Phase 2 of the project when we sit down with stakeholders to agree the new service priorities and how we go about delivering these. Foremost amongst these discussions will be determining what the core service plan should be and what might be considered chargeable “add-ons”. Licensing is a statutory reactive function, that each authority is required to perform regardless of whether a shared service is in place or not. The partnership will continue to be audited by third party organisations like the Food Standards Agency (FSA) which critically examines local authority food safety procedures. The FSA also coordinates the national Food Hygiene Rating System which provides the public with internet based food safety assessments of their local

restaurants and food businesses. The scheme has been very popular with the public and has raised standards of hygiene in food premises. This model needs to be evaluated to see if it can be applied in other areas of the service. The service is keen to explore new ways of working like the use of hand-held technology to shorten the business process and increase productivity. We are also keen to explore whether any of our business advice services which are currently provided free, could be chargeable. It might also be possible to target regulatory activities into a particular geographical area to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities. We also need to be aware of new legislative developments and how they will impact on the service. i.e. financial / organisational.

7 FORWARD PLAN FOR THE JOINT COMMITTEE (JOHN HILL AND JON FREER) (Agenda Item 7)

It was agreed that the following would be brought to the next meeting:

- Terms of Reference
- Information on current services
- Areas of potential change and service improvement
- Budget and income generation
- Service plans
- Legislation
- Performance Management
- Residents' involvement
- Best practice
- Update on implementation

It was agreed that members' would be included in the circulation list for the newsletter that currently went to staff.

The date of the next meeting will be Tuesday, 9th December, 10am in committee rooms B&C at the Civic Centre, Morden.

Provisional dates for future meetings:
23rd February 2015 at 2pm – LBM
9th June 2015 - LBM