



MINUTES OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE LONDON BOROUGHS OF BRENT, LEWISHAM AND SOUTHWARK

Held as an online meeting on Tuesday 28 November 2023 at 6:00pm

PRESENT (online): Councillor Amanda De Ryk (London Borough of Lewisham - Chair), Councillor Stephanie Cryan (London Borough of Southwark), and Councillors Shama Tatler & Fleur Donnelly Jackson (London Borough of Brent).

1. **Appointment of Chair**

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 10 of the Joint Committee's Terms of Reference, Councillor Amanda De Ryk (as representative of the hosting Authority – London Borough of Lewisham) be appointed as Chair for the duration of the meeting.

2. **Apologies for Absence and Clarification of Alternate Members**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle MBE (London Borough of Southwark) and Councillor Brenda Dacres (London Borough of Lewisham).

3. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

4. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting of the Joint Committee of the London Boroughs of Brent, Lewisham and Southwark held on Tuesday 11 July 2023 be approved as a correct record.

5. **Provision for Public Participation**

No deputations or request to speak were submitted by members of the public.

6. **Shared Technology Service Update Report for the London Boroughs of Brent, Lewisham and Southwark**

Fabio Negro (Managing Director of Shared Service) introduced the report to the Joint Committee providing an update on key performance areas in relation to the Shared Technology Service (STS).

Members noted the summary of key performance management indicators for the service across all three Council's, which had been included within Appendix A of the update report along with the changes made to the format of the report which, following feedback, had been remodelled to provide a more streamlined outline of performance and opportunities available to the STS.

In terms of detailed service performance, the Joint Committee were advised of the following:

- Whilst good progress continued to be made against targets in relation to STS operational queues, performance had been affected during October as a result of a shortfall in workforce resources with 10% of staff having been unavailable for various reasons. STS were also currently focussing activity to close aged tickets with the target for end of year being that all tickets prior to 2023 would be closed with details also provided in section 4.6 of the report on the trend with logged tickets.
- In the period of June through to October 2023, there had been eleven Priority 1 incidents related to STS infrastructure, six of which were resolved within SLA with 7 application/supplier related P1 incidents and a comparison also provided over the previous 12 months. Members also noted the update provided in relation to the number of Priority 2, 3 & 4 calls logged along with the main categories as detailed within section 4.9 – 4.11 of the report.
- The shared service had logged 69,075 tickets between 1st June and 31st October 2023 for all council application teams as well as the shared service (an average of 13,815 tickets per month) which compared with 41,100 in the previous reporting period March 2023 to May 2023 (an average of 13,700 tickets per month). These tickets consisted of both incidents and service requests, with a detailed breakdown provided in section 4.15 of the report.
- The details provided on the Top 10 risks identified for STS and the relevant mitigations in place to address them, as detailed within section 6 of the report.
- The details provided on the STS related audits which had been undertaken across all three authorities during 2022-23 along with progress on delivery of the recommended actions identified and audit plan for 2023-24, as detailed within section 7 of the report.
- The outline provided on the 6-month overview of the STS Technology Roadmap, as detailed within section 8 of the report including updates in relation to completion of the Compute and Storage Infrastructure replacement, implementation of the Asset Management System (AMS) policy and processes across Brent & Lewisham, with this to be completed within Southwark by November 23. Members were also advised of the work being undertaken to develop the next generation laptops, with STS having approved a project to migrate the laptop management to the Office 365 Intune environment, including use of Autopilot to support deployment of laptops more efficiently and starting to move laptops to Windows 11. Work had also been completed to upgrade the Wi-Fi network in Tooley Street, Southwark and Laurence House, Lewisham with positive feedback received around the user experience. In addition to a business case having been put forward to the partner councils to upgrade the network links at remote sites providing connectivity to datacentres in Brent and Croydon, members were also advised of the work being undertaken to replace the current Microsoft Direct Access remote working system including deployment of a new connectivity solution in Southwark.

- In terms of mobile services, members were advised that a new mobile contract had been entered into with O2 and migration to the new service shortly due to commence across Brent and Lewisham. Members were advised that Southwark were already operating with O2, meaning that all three partner boroughs would now be operating under the same supplier delivering significant savings.
- Updates were also provided in relation to a range of other key projects, as detailed in section 9 of the report with members advised of the successful completion of the transfer of staff from Lewisham Homes and completion of the Private Cloud Project, with all servers due to migrate from the old on-premise environment to a private cloud solution providing a more robust and performance rich infrastructure. Details were also provided on completion of the User Access Team pilot for managing starters, movers and leavers device distribution and recovery, with the service now moving back to support teams within each partner authority following the introduction of a number of processes and controls.

At this stage, comments were then invited from Members on the Service Performance update with the following issues raised:

- Further details were sought on the work being undertaken to develop the next generation of future laptops and type of model and functionality that would be available, especially for those regularly attending meetings. In response officers outlined the processes undertaken in terms of the refresh cycle, which included a review of worker profiles in order to assess what would be required and assessment of the lessons learnt from the Office 365 roll out. As part of the process, Fabio Negro advised that the profile assessment was due to be completed by March 2024 with a view to roll out in the new financial year with the Joint Committee advised that the process in Lewisham was scheduled to commence in January 2024.
- In seeking further details on the shortfall in STS workforce resources, Fabio Negro advised members that the issues experienced had included a variety of reasons including long term sickness and the need to complete recruitment to different posts, which were in the process of being resolved.
- Members welcomed the update provided in relation to feedback on user experience, which had included workshops with other Councils around areas where STS would like to see improvements, identifying the challenges and opportunities and working together to find solutions. These had been beneficial in assisting to focus the Service Improvement work being undertaken by STS.

Fabio Negro then moved on to provide an update on the progress being made by the Service Improvement Team on research into the use of future technologies, including how Artificial Intelligence (AI) could be used to enhance efficiency and user experience, with details on current market options, and how it may be possible to apply these across STS set in a paper attached as Appendix B to the main report.

In terms of specific updates, members noted the potential benefits of AI outlined within the report, which it was felt included better automation, the ability to identify and understand common technology faults and signpost for support accordingly leading to improvements in user experience. The potential for AI to also assist in the ticket management process had also been identified including the evaluation of patterns, problem-solving and triage designed to reduce wait times. Whilst noting the opportunities and benefits identified it had been recognised that further work was required to develop the research and consider how best the opportunities identified could be built into plans for future service improvement with the right balance needing to be achieved against cost and exercise.

Comments were then invited from members on the Artificial Intelligence update with the following issues raised:

- Whilst recognising the opportunities provided by AI, members were also keen to ensure that an element of human contact was maintained especially in relation to the starters, movers and leavers process with further details sought in relation to the co-ordination required between Human Resource (HR) and any use of AI in the process and how this would be managed. In outlining that the proposals presented were still at an early stage of development, Fabio Negro advised that initial consideration had been focussed around the data collection and analytical aspects of the process, with an assurance provided around the retention of human checks at specific stages within the process and further areas being subject to review as the research developed.
- Members concern to ensure that any use of AI was designed to maintain data privacy, given the associated risks being identified as the use of AI was developed on a wider basis.
- Members also highlighted the need to focus on best practice, particularly in relation to concerns around the ethics associated with use of AI. In response, Fabio Negro assured members of the work being undertaken around this area being led through the London Office of Technology & Innovation (LOTI) with a number of resource pools and networks already available to harness and share best practice and address lessons learnt. As part of the ongoing work in relation to this area, members also highlighted a need to ensure the necessary governance arrangements were established relating to the use of AI for different automated processes with reference made to work in this area also being led by the British Computer Society, which Fabio Negro advised he would follow up outside of the meeting.
- Whilst welcoming the paper, the potential reputational damage associated with the use of AI was also recognised with details also sought on any examples of other local authorities using AI successfully. In response, Fabio Negro advised that whilst still in the early stages there were already a small number of pilots being undertaken which STS would continue to monitor progress on. Members advised they would be keen to continue monitoring the work being undertaken on the pilots, including those being run internally with Brent.

Fabio Negro then moved on to provide an update on the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) with the Joint Committee having noted the amendments made during 2023, as detailed within Appendix C of the report.

The Joint Committee also received an update on development of the STS Strategy (SICTS) which members noted had previously been presented to the Joint Committee in January 2020. The development process undertaken had involved a review of the original strategy (covering 2019-22) and how the service had performed against delivery of the initial outcomes, which Fabio Negro felt had demonstrated the growing strength in the partnership and demonstrable improvements since 2019. Details of the review had been included within Appendix D of the report.

Members also noted the work underway to develop a new strategy covering 2023-2025, which was currently in draft format and, following consultation, would be presented to a future meeting of the Joint Committee early in 2024.

As no further matters were raised, the Joint Committee completed their consideration of the update report. The Chair thanked Fabio Negro for the updates provided and it was **RESOLVED** to:

- (1) Note the update provided and actions being taken in relation to the ongoing performance and delivery of the Shared Technology Service, as detailed within the Service Improvement Pack (attached as Appendix A of the report).
- (2) To note the Artificial Intelligence opportunities identified to date in relation to STS as detailed within Appendix B of the report.
- (3) To note the changes to the STS Inter Authority Agreement as detailed within Appendix C of the report.
- (4) To note the SICTS 2019-2022 Strategy Review as detailed within Appendix D of the report.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the Joint Committee had been scheduled for Tuesday 19 March 2024 at 6pm – this would be an online meeting to be chaired by London Borough of Brent.

8. Exclusion of Press and Public

At this stage in proceedings the Chair advised that she intended to move into closed session for the remainder of the meeting in order to consider what would (moving forward) be a separate report for the Joint Committee providing updates on the Cyber Security status, threats, and mitigations in relation to the Shared Technology Services (STS).

Given the commercially sensitive nature of the details contained within the update, the Joint Committee were advised that the report would need to be considered in closed session which would require the Joint Committee to pass a formal resolution excluding the press and public for consideration of the item.

It was therefore **AGREED** that that under Section 100A (4) of the Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting for consideration of the following item on the grounds that it would involve the disclosure

of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person, including the authority holding that information) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended).

The live webcast was ended at this stage of the meeting to enable the Joint Committee to move into private session.

9. Shared Technology Service Cyber Security Update Report

Fabio Negro then introduced the update report in relation to Cyber Security status, threats, and mitigations for the Shared Technology Service (STS). In considering the report members noted:

- The development of a new STS Cyber Security Strategy for 2021-2024, which detailed the approach to Cyber Security within STS and outlined plans to further develop capabilities within the following main areas: Defend, Deter, Develop and React and was scheduled to be formally approved by the Joint Committee towards the start of 2024.
- The outline of events impacting on STS along with an update on current threats and mitigating actions in relation to the following key areas of activity as detailed within section 7 of the report:
 - DEFEND – which had involved STS developing the means to defend against evolving cyber threats, respond effectively to incidents, and ensure networks, data and systems were protected and resilient.
 - DETER – which had involved STS detecting, understanding, investigating, and disrupting hostile activities against the service.
 - DEVELOP – which had involved STS developing a coordinated and tailored approach to risks and threats encountered and mitigating against potential vulnerabilities.
 - REACT – which had involved STS in developing sufficient controls to respond to any attacks including the organisational channels and processes required to make efficient decisions further protect data and limit any scope of attack.
- The outline of future plans being developed in relation to the STS Cyber Security Strategy, as detailed within section 8 of the report.

As no further matters were raised, the Joint Committee completed their consideration of the update report. The Chair thanked Fabio Negro for the updates provided and it was **RESOLVED** to note the update and actions being taken as detailed in the report.

10. Other Urgent Business

None.

The meeting closed at 7:04 pm

COUNCILLOR AMANDA DE RYK
Chair