

# RESOURCES SCRUTINY PANEL

3<sup>rd</sup> July 2014

## LEGAL SERVICES REVIEW

Report of the Director of Resources

STRATEGIC AIM:	<b>All</b>
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### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present to Members a review paper on the activity of the shared legal services arrangement with Peterborough City Council over its first three years of operation.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the Panel receives and comments on the contents of the report set out at Appendix A**

### 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 May 2014 marked the three year anniversary of the shared legal service between Peterborough City Council (PCC) and Rutland County Council (RCC). Although PCC had been assisting with legal services for some time prior to May 2011, both Councils formally adopted the shared service at that time.
- 3.2 At the time, the Council retained direct employment of its most senior lawyer, the former Head of Corporate Services, and the employment of all other lawyers transferred to Peterborough City Council to operate under the shared service hosted by PCC and principally based at Peterborough.
- 3.3 The business model of the service relies on an overall agreed target use of legal services by the Council, agreed each year under a Service Level Agreement (SLA) led by the principal Heads of Service and the relevant Senior Lawyer(s). This is the same for both Councils.
- 3.4 As well as their being a Resources SLA, RCC manages the spend and quality through the Head of Corporate Governance, and liaising with the Head of Legal Services and Practice Manager, whose role it is to monitor and provide performance information amongst other things.
- 3.5 The Memorandum of Understanding set out the arrangements for the shared service, which included a review at 3 and 5 years. May 2014 marked that three year review point.

- 3.6 Meetings were held between the Director of Resources, Head of Corporate Governance and the Head of Legal Services, now Director of Governance at PCC, following which a report was presented to the Strategic Management Team.
- 3.7 The review process has highlighted the change in personnel involved in the administration and workings of the shared service arrangements, as well as the changes in the nature and levels of work and any current issues in performance and cost.
- 3.8 As a result, it was decided that the break clause in the memorandum of understanding associated with the three year review be reconsidered in May 2015. This will allow time for changes within both authorities to bed in and to consider other options opening up for both councils around the wider shared service agenda.
- 3.9 The report at **Appendix A** comprises the review of services presented as at the end of the third year and Members are requested to consider and comment on its content.

#### 4. RISK MANAGEMENT

RISK	IMPACT	COMMENTS
<b>Time</b>	<b>Low</b>	This report has been produced at the request of the Scrutiny Panel.
<b>Viability</b>	<b>Low</b>	Not relevant
<b>Finance</b>	<b>Medium</b>	Cost and risk management is a key element of the shared legal service.
<b>Profile</b>	<b>High</b>	Early and effective use of legal services is an essential element of good governance, managing and understanding risk and in achieving the Authority's desired outcomes from initiatives, policy delivery and the effective provision of services
<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	<b>Low</b>	Not relevant

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A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.