



**Review of The Strategic Alliance – Interim
Report**

March 2018

**CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TRANSFORMATION
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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Chair's Foreword

As part of our work plan for 2017/18, our Scrutiny Committee decided to review The Strategic Alliance which was formed in 2011. The Committee felt it was time to see how far we had come, what has been achieved and what the future holds.

We quickly found that reviewing the whole of the Alliance structure and processes would be a major task, therefore as a Committee we chose to produce an Interim Report which further refined the scope, defining key areas to be considered for the 2018/19 Work Programme.

The report recommends three areas for consideration and these will be presented to Members for consideration as part of the Scrutiny Conference 2018.

Although we have gathered initial evidence to work with there is more to come, therefore we consider this initial analysis the start of planning and agreeing the work plan for 2018/2019.

May I take this opportunity to thank all who have contributed so far to this Interim Report.

Cllr Rose Bowler

Chair of the Customer Service & Transformation Scrutiny Committee

1. Introduction

As part of the work plan for 2017/18, our Customer Service & Transformation Scrutiny Committee decided to review 'The Strategic Alliance' which was formed in 2011. However, the Committee quickly realised that this is a substantial topic for one review and that an initial piece of analysis was required to further refine the scope, focussing onto specific areas for review within the Strategic Alliance.

In order to do this the Committee gathered as much evidence as possible to guide their consideration. Over several meetings, including with the CEO and the Joint Strategic Director – People, the Committee moved towards identifying the small number of areas discussed in this report as subjects for potential review in the 2018/19 municipal year. The recommendations put forward by Committee aim to guide Members on choosing an area for detailed review. Completion of this Interim Report supports delivery of Target 08 of the Joint Governance Service Plan 2015-19.

2. Recommendations

PERFORM Code	Recommendation	Desired Outcome	Target Date	Lead Officer	Resources	Service Response
CS&TSc17/18 2.1	<p>That the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee consider the following areas of the Strategic Alliance for review:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of the Environmental Health and Licensing Service. • The Differences between the Pay Agreements in the 2 Councils in the Strategic Alliance and JE and the Impact this has on forming joint services. • The Criteria for the Creation of new Shared Services. 	<p>That the Scrutiny Conference be made aware of the proposals and further assess the suitability of the proposed topics.</p> <p>That the Committee take forward at least one of the suggestions as an in-depth review.</p>	<p>Submission to Conference – April 2018</p> <p>Consideration by Committee – May 2018</p>	Scrutiny & Elections Officer	Officer and Member time	All proposed review scopes will be submitted to the Scrutiny Conference 2018 for consideration by Members. The final decisions will be taken by committee at the start of the municipal year following AGM.

PERFORM Code	Recommendation	Desired Outcome	Target Date	Lead Officer	Resources	Service Response
CS&TSc17/18 2.2	That the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee defer consideration of the emerging Transformation Programme whilst receiving regular updates from the Joint Strategic Director - People, on progress.	Further consideration of the emerging programme is built in to the 2018/19 work plan, with the option to progress to a review if required.	May 2018 onwards	Joint Strategic Director – People	Officer time	A presentation is planned to Council on the 25 th April 2018, in addition to follow up meetings with Cabinet planned to further prioritise the programme for 2018/19 and 2019/20. This will then be brought to Scrutiny for further discussion.

PERFORM Code	Recommendation	Desired Outcome	Target Date	Lead Officer	Resources	Service Response
CS&TSc17/18 2.3	That the terms of reference for the Strategic Alliance Joint Committee are submitted to the Strategic Alliance Joint Committee for urgent review and then reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the Committee's remit remains fit for purpose in monitoring and developing the work of the Alliance.	<p>That the Governance structure remains fit for purpose with sufficient monitoring structures of the Alliance arrangements in place and appropriate processes in place for taking forward new aspects of the Alliance.</p> <p>That the powers and scope of the Committee remain adequate to support the delivery of the Strategic Transformation Programme.</p>	May 2018 and annually thereafter as part of the Constitution refresh process	Joint Head of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer	Officer time Printing/publishing costs	This will be formally referred to the SAJC by the lead officers and the future governance needs of the SAJC discussed.

PERFORM Code	Recommendation	Desired Outcome	Target Date	Lead Officer	Resources	Service Response
CS&TSc17/18 2.4	A programme of Member's Briefings covering the Strategic Alliance, our shared services and the achievements to date, either written and/or group presentation, is developed for the 2018/19 municipal year, with a commitment to evaluate the programme following the 2019 elections.	Greater clarification on the work of the Alliance, in particular the delivery of, and improvements to, shared services.	Commence June 2018 onwards	Joint Strategic Director – People	Officer time Printing	A programme will be developed for delivery in 2018/19 and beyond, in conjunction with SAMT and the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

PERFORM Code	Recommendation	Desired Outcome	Target Date	Lead Officer	Resources	Service Response
CS&TSc17/18 2.5	An increased level of publicity as to the effectiveness of the arrangement is achieved via regular press releases; articles on both authority websites and use of the staff weekly briefings.	Greater clarification on the work of the Alliance, in particular the delivery of, and improvements to, shared services. Residents are well-informed as to the work of the Alliance and it's achievements	Commence June 2018 onwards	Communications, Marketing and Design Manager	Officer time Printing/ publicity costs	Subject to agreement by SAMT, a more structured approach to communications would be welcome. This could include a standard item on SAMT to ensure a more co-ordinated approach to communications/marketing from the outset of all new schemes. The new Extranet should provide a clear mechanism for improved information sharing, and a review of how the Strategic Alliance is featured on each Council website could also be delivered. We would also consider a review of the branding for the Strategic Alliance to make it more modern and fresh and ensure it is used consistently whenever we are talking about the Alliance.

3. Scope of the review

The Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a review of The Strategic Alliance as part of the 2017/18 work plan following consideration of a range of topics suggested at the Annual Scrutiny Conference.

The aim of the review was to establish:

- How can the Strategic Alliance be more effective in delivering front line services?

Concerns were raised by members as to how the effectiveness of the Alliance was being monitored and reported internally.

The key issues identified are as follows:

- Which services are combined?
- Who is based where?
- Is it working?
- Is it cost efficient?
- What savings have there been over the last financial year and in previous years?
- What is working and what is not?
- Are there other ways of doing things?

Review Membership

The Committee comprised the following Members:

Councillor R. Bowler (Chair)	Councillor J. Smith (Vice Chair)
Councillor D. McGregor	Councillor P. Bowmer
Councillor P. Cooper	Councillor M. Crane
Councillor E. Stevenson	Councillor R. Turner
Councillor A. Joesbury	Councillor R. Heffer

Support to the Committee was provided by the Joint Head of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer (previously Joint Assistant Director of Governance), the Scrutiny & Elections Officer and the Governance Officer.

4. Method of review

The Committee met on seven occasions to consider the scope of the review, key issues they wanted to discuss and to carry out interviews and evidence gathering. As stated previously, this is a substantial subject area to review and so in order to narrow down areas to focus on a significant amount of evidence has been amassed prior to scoping potential areas of investigation. This is not the normal way of doing a Scrutiny Review but in view of the subject matter of this review it seemed appropriate.

The Committee sought evidence primarily by way of written evidence as listed below. Some verbal evidence was given by the Chief Executive Officer, the Joint Strategic Director – People and the Joint Head of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer (previously Joint Assistant Director of Governance)

Evidence

- Structure charts showing where all the shared services are located and which posts are shared.
- An initial information request to HR & Organisational Development/service managers as to costs and savings, employer arrangements, complaints and alternative methods of delivery. This is Appendix 3.
- A follow-up information request to HR & Organisational Development with a series of further questions posed at the meeting on the 11th December 2017. This was presented in February 2018. This is Appendix 4.
- The results of a survey of all BDC members as to their views on the Strategic Alliance. This is Appendix 5.
- Two presentations on the Transformation Programme. (Available on request)
- A summary report from the Customer Standards and Complaints Officer. This is Appendix 6.

Equality and Diversity

Within the process of completing this review, the Committee has taken into account the impact of equalities.

5. Analysis of evidence and key findings

5.1 Review of Existing Staffing Structures

As part of the evidence gathering process, Members reviewed the existing staffing structures across the three directorates which identified both shared and BDC only posts, alongside the employing authority. This sought to address the following issues identified in the scope:

- Which services are combined?
- Who is based where?

Members are uncertain as to what arrangements are in place in relation to some shared services employees in terms of who employs, where they are based and how they can be contacted.

The information provided showed a variety of service structures were in operation, both shared and sole authority, which involves staff being employed across both Councils.

Members noted that one specific service area was not only a shared service but all staff were employed by one Council (NEDDC) rather than both. Members were keen to know if this made any difference to the way the service operated and engaged with other service areas/Members. A good comparator area could be that of Economic Growth and Housing Strategy where the lead managers and all of Housing Strategy are shared posts employed by NEDDC, but Economic Growth are solely employed by BDC.

As such Members of the Committee propose the following area for consideration as a scrutiny review in 2018/19. The scope suggested is as follows:

Review area: Delivery of Environmental Health and Licensing

The aims of the review are:

- To establish how the service operates across the 2 Councils in relation to members accessing the service.
- To identify the advantages of the arrangement.
- To identify the disadvantages of the arrangement.
- To make recommendations as to improvements in the service which will improve the service received by Members of Bolsover District Council.

The key issues identified are as follows:

- As one of the only hosted, shared services, Members are concerned that BDC colleagues feel alienated from the service and feel discouraged from using the service as those providing the service are not BDC employees.
- How Members can be made to feel more comfortable with a service which is provided by NEDDC employees?

Recommendation:

That the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee consider the following areas of the Strategic Alliance for review:-

- Environmental Health and Licensing.
- The Differences between the Pay Agreements in the 2 Councils in the Strategic Alliance and JE and the Impact this has on forming joint services.
- The Criteria for the Creation of new Shared Services.

5.2 Analysis of Savings through the Strategic Alliance

An information request was submitted to Finance to ascertain the savings achieved across all service areas since the formation of the Strategic Alliance in 2011. The data addresses the following issues within the scope:

- Is it cost efficient?
- What savings have there been over the last financial year and in previous years?

Table 1: Total BDC Savings

Financial Year	Savings Achieved (£)
2011/12	134,680
2012/13	260,057
2013/14	645,497
2014/15	1,005,790
2015/16	892,623
2016/17	738,797
Total	3,677,444

The data shows that significant savings have been made in the years since the Strategic Alliance was set up in 2011.

When specifically looking at savings in relation to the shared management team, a total of £1,890,198 has been achieved from 2011-2017. In addition, as a result of the second management structure which was in place from 2013-2017 a further £546,043 has been generated, resulting in a total saving of just under £2.5m savings for Bolsover in relation to the Management Team alone.

When looking more specifically at service areas, in particular Environmental Health as the only joint service solely hosted by one Authority, the savings generated for BDC total over £600,000 as a result of the Environmental Health Review in 2011/12.

Table 2: Environmental Health Review

Financial Year	Savings Achieved (£)
2011/12	0
2012/13	0
2013/14	17,659
2014/15	230,483
2015/16	187,981
2016/17	177,433
Total	613,556

A further review of the SAMT structure took place during 2017/18. Following the recruitment of two new Joint Strategic Director posts, a key objective for the two new Joint Strategic Directors was to assist with a review of the Joint Assistant Director tier (now referred to as Joint Heads of Service).

During November 2017 a two week pre-consultation period took place enabling early dialogue with the affected employees and their Trade Union representatives. This process helped to identify potential options which were then tabled as part of the formal thirty day consultation period which began on 1 December.

The Joint Chief Executive attended the Strategic Alliance Joint Committee (SAJC) during December in order to update them on progress and to outline the options being considered as part of the consultation. He also fed back the outcome of the consultation exercise and the proposed structure to SAJC at its meeting on 6 February 2018.

The revised structure is designed to provide sufficient capacity to enable the Council to meet both its strategic objectives and service provision obligations. It also aims to ensure relevant services sit within an appropriate directorate in order to enhance and strengthen how services work together. Additionally, the revised structure achieves an efficiency saving of £140,000 by reducing the number of posts at this tier from the original number of ten to eight.

Adding the savings from this review to the previous total creates a total saving to date of £3,817,444.

All of this shows clear evidence that the creation of the Alliance has achieved efficiencies as planned, with further efficiencies achievable.

Recommendation:

An increased level of publicity as to the effectiveness of the arrangement is achieved via regular press releases; articles on both Authority websites and use of the staff weekly briefings.

5.3 Comparison of pay structures and the impact on shared services

As part of the information request to HR & Organisational Development, Members reviewed the pay scales of both authorities, whilst being mindful of the fact that each Authority has a different set of conditions and grading structure as a result of Job Evaluation. Where the Alliance may look to further review services in the future, this presents an issue where a review may suggest a change in the employing Authority and reporting/delivery structures.

Members also looked at comparator data on a range of non-shared posts which emphasised the difference in pay across the authorities; the change in number of employees in shared service areas, and the methodology for shared costs.

As part of the evidence gathering process, a review previously completed by NEDDC was also considered:

- NEDDC Scrutiny Review of Administrative Arrangements and Joint Officers, April 2016

This also drew conclusions related to the differences in pay and terms and conditions. The NEDDC committee found that work had begun on harmonising services. Initially this had concentrated on policies and procedures regularly used. The Committee felt this was useful but needed to be developed further within a reasonable timescale.

The NEDDC Committee raised the differences on pay parity within the arrangements and felt these were unsatisfactory. The Director of Transformation (at the time) advised the Committee that Human Resources were currently working on harmonising how both Councils work. The policies that were used on a more regular basis had been prioritised and would be harmonised first. Other areas would be looked at to ensure everyone was working to the same processes. Work had also commenced on other harmonisation areas.

One of their recommendations was as follows:

- That, where appropriate, harmonisation matters be progressed to deal with issues such as differences on pay parity

Work has taken place subsequent to the completion of the 2016 review on this but is currently on hold as a result of the Strategic Alliance Management Review 2017/18.

As such Members of the Committee propose the following area for consideration as a scrutiny review in 2018/19. The scope suggested is as follows:

Review topic: The Differences between the Pay Agreements in the 2 Councils in the Strategic Alliance and JE and the Impact this has on forming joint services.

The aims of the review are;

- To establish what are the differences in the Pay Agreements of the 2 Councils.
- To establish what impact this has on the formation of joint services in the Strategic Alliance.
- To seek solutions/remedies to any adverse impact
- To see if JE itself as operated in the 2 Councils has any impact on the formation of joint services in the Strategic Alliance.
- To seek solutions/remedies to any adverse impact.

The key issues identified are as follows;

- Members are concerned that as a result of the differences in the Pay Agreements and the JE schemes for the 2 Councils, there are people working in shared services, doing the same job, but being paid differently. Members wish to establish where this is happening and look towards finding a solution.
- General terms and conditions between the 2 Pay Agreements are different and again Members wish to identify where this is the case and what can be done about it.

Members are mindful that ultimately completion of this work may lead to additional costs for both Councils in order to achieve pay parity across the Alliance. This would need to be considered as part of recommendation setting should this review be taken forward in 2018/19.

Recommendation:

That the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee consider the following areas of the Strategic Alliance for review:-

- **Delivery of Environmental Health and Licensing**
- **The Differences between the Pay Agreements in the 2 Councils in the Strategic Alliance and JE and the Impact this has on forming joint services.**
- **The Criteria for the Creation of new Shared Services.**

5.4 Complaints received in relation to Shared Services

The Committee considered a range of complaints data for both shared and non-shared services for a twelve month period. The Committee drew no conclusions from this and no anomalies were highlighted. See Appendix 6 for complaints data used in this instance.

As such, Members have to conclude that the end service user is satisfied with service delivery, despite the change in configuration. This addresses the following issues within the scope:

- Is it working?
- What is working and what is not?

5.5 Strategic Alliance Joint Committee

As part of the creation of the Strategic Alliance a Joint Committee of both Councils was created with the following terms (as per section 3.7 BDC Constitution):

- The Alliance Joint Committee is a joint committee of both North East Derbyshire District Council and Bolsover District Council.
- Membership of the committee comprises of 9 councillors from each Council including the leader and deputy leader of each Council. Each block of 9 sets per Council will be assigned on the political proportionality of that Council.
- The committee shall be quorate if 4 or more Members from each Council are in attendance at the meeting.
- Unless determined otherwise by both Councils the Alliance Joint Committee will not be a decision-making body save where specific delegations have been made to it by the Councils. At present, the Council have delegated to the Alliance Joint Committee the power to form panels for the interview and appointment of Joint Directors.
- Either Leader of the Council will chair the Committee. Chairmanship will normally rotate annually. In the event of the absence of both Leaders the Committee will elect a chairman for that meeting alone by a majority show of hands.
- Voting will be by a simple majority of those present on a show of hands. The chair of the committee will not have a casting vote on any matter. In the event of an equality of votes, the matter will be referred to each Council.
- The frequency and scheduling of meetings will be as determined by the committee.

The frequency and scheduling of meetings is determined by the Committee, and they are able to discharge the following functions:

- To develop a Strategic Transformation Programme for approval by the Councils.
- To monitor the implementation of the Strategic Transformation Programme.
- To develop an Action Plan for the implementation of the Strategic Transformation Programme for approval by the Councils.
- To make recommendations or reports in respect of the Strategic Alliance to either the Executives or full Council meetings of each Council where appropriate.
- To be the primary body for resolving any disputes that may arise over the interpretation of the Strategic Transformation Programme or over any joint arrangements within the Alliance.
- To deal with any matter in relation to the Alliance or joint working arrangements and to take such decisions under any power delegated to it by the Councils including decisions in respect of the appointment and terms and conditions of joint employees of the Councils.
- To appoint such sub-committees, working groups or panels as it considers appropriate to carry out these functions and to decide the terms of reference and membership of such sub-committees, working groups or panels.

The Committee submitted an information request to the Governance team in relation to frequency of meetings and reporting mechanisms. As part of the meeting schedule at both authorities, the Committee is programmed to meet regularly. During 2016/17, seven meetings were scheduled (inc. one special) and four took place (three cancelled). During 2017/18, six were scheduled, four have taken place and two have been cancelled.

Minutes of meetings are reported to the subsequent meeting of the Strategic Alliance Joint Committee and recorded in minute book. They are not reported elsewhere. Members also queried the level of attendance at the Committee but it was noted that there was no real disparity. For the eight meetings that have taken place over the last two years, based on each Council having nine seats, Bolsover has 56/72 possible attendances and NEDDC has 60/72.

More recently meetings have been solely focussed on the restructure of the management team, which has under-utilised the full scope of the Committee. In addition, as the Alliance evolves it is important the terms of reference are regularly reviewed to ensure the committee's remit remains fit for purpose in monitoring and developing the work of the Alliance.

As new areas for transformation are considered members are concerned as to the mechanism that will be used and what monitoring will be in place to evaluate the effectiveness of new arrangements. They also feel a review of the powers and scope of the Committee is essential. It is suggested that the Customer Service & Transformation Scrutiny Committee consider the following review topic, with a view to making recommendations that could ultimately be considered and implemented by both Councils via the Alliance Joint Committee. This topic may also be suitable for a joint review across the two councils:

Review topic: The Criteria for the Creation of new Shared Services

The proposed aims of the review are:

- To establish what criteria have been used in deciding whether to establish the existing shared services.
- To develop a set of criteria for the Councils in the Strategic Alliance to use when considering future shared services.
- To develop a method of monitoring the effectiveness of the criteria developed.

The key issues identified are as follows:

- A need to have a clear set of criteria to identify when it would be in the interest of the Councils to enter a further shared service arrangement. Currently each service is considered on the basis of a business case but uniform criteria are not used.
- To have criteria which could be applied to extending the shared service to other local authorities. In the future there may be a desire to extend the shared services.

Recommendation:

That the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee consider the following areas of the Strategic Alliance for review:-

- **Delivery of Environmental Health and Licensing**
- **The Differences between the Pay Agreements in the 2 Councils in the Strategic Alliance and JE and the Impact this has on forming joint services.**
- **The Criteria for the Creation of new Shared Services.**

That the terms of reference for the Strategic Alliance Joint Committee are submitted to the Strategic Alliance Joint Committee for urgent review and then reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the Committee's remit remains fit for purpose in monitoring and developing the work of the Alliance.

5.6 Effectiveness of Joint Services

As part of an initial information request across service areas, Officers were asked to confirm whether any external views of the quality of the service had been sought. In response Members were informed of the following:

- HR & Organisational Development confirmed that they had achieved Investors in People (Silver Award) in 2015, and that we had successfully met the "Disability Confident" criteria.
- Customer Services have secured and maintained the Customer Service Excellence Award, which operates council-wide.
- Streetscene have achieved the following nominations in the APSE (Association of Public Service Excellence) Awards:
 - Waste Collection – Best Performer 2013; Most Improved Performer 2013 and 2014.
 - Street Cleansing – Best Performer 2014; Most Improved Performer 2014.
 - Transport – Best Performer 2015; Most Improved Performer 2015.
 - Grounds Maintenance – Most Improved Performer 2015.

As both HR & Organisational Development and Streetscene are shared services, the receipt of external recognition of the quality of the service indicates that there has been no adverse effect in the move to operating across both authorities.

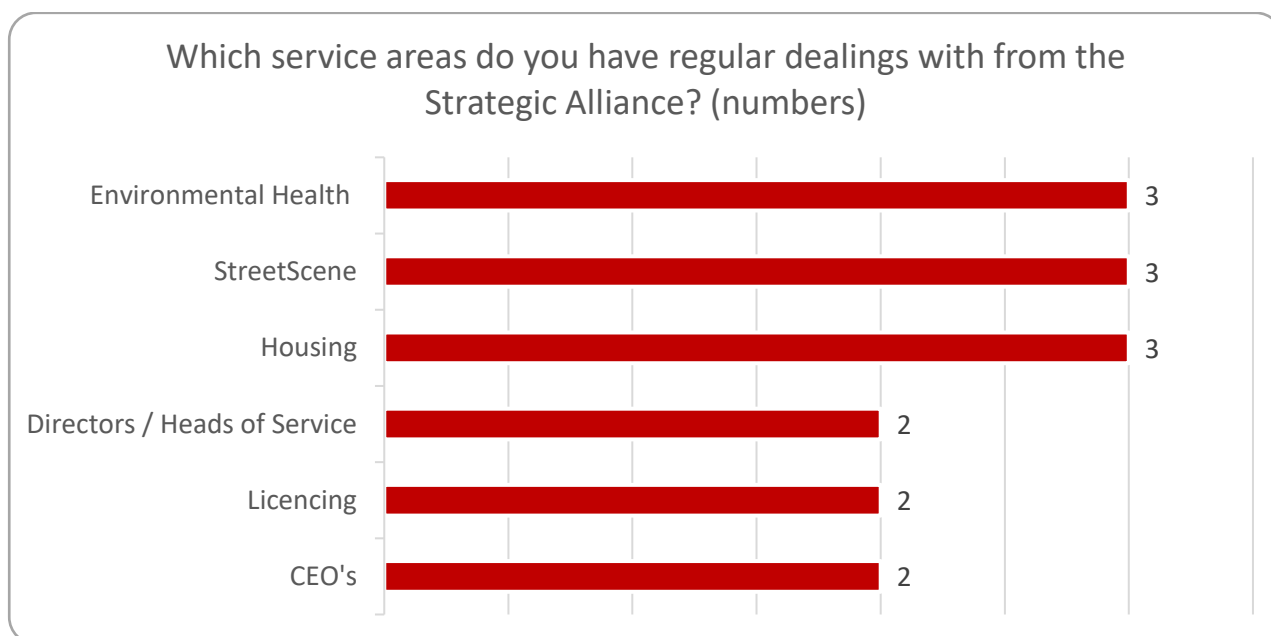
5.7 BDC Member Survey

As part of the review the committee conducted a survey of BDC Members (see Appendix 5). Key findings of the survey showed that:

- Of the 37 Elected Members, 19 Members responded to the survey. This represented a 51% response rate.
- **85% (16)** of respondents were in agreement that the Strategic Alliance (SA) has been successful in delivering **financial savings**.
- **41% (7)** were in agreement that the Strategic Alliance has been successful in delivering **Innovation** in service delivery.
- In contrast, **30% (5)** disagreed that the Strategic Alliance has been successful in delivering improved **information sharing** through co-located services. **24% (4)** were unsure and **24% (4)** neither agreed nor disagreed which gives some indication that there has been no change as a result of the Alliance. In contrast **24% (4)** agreed it had been successful. When combined this indicates that **53% (9)** felt that information sharing could be improved.

A range of responses were received in relation to how successful the Alliance has been to date. A key theme was that Members felt they did not have sufficient knowledge/evidence in order to respond. Lack of communication and information/clarity as to the service areas delivered via the Alliance is apparent, alongside the ongoing efficiencies that are being achieved as a result of service transformation by joint services and it is suggested that this should be considered as another potential area for further review as part of the Interim Report.

59% (10) of Members surveyed reported they did not have regular dealings with Joint Officers. In contrast, **41% (7)** Members did report having regular dealings with officers in shared services including **Environmental Health (x3); Streetscene (x3); Housing (x3); Directors/Heads of service (x2); Licencing (x2); and Chief Executives Dept. (x2).**



Further comments again indicate a lack of understanding as to where services are based, working patterns of joint Officers where there is a need to work across both Authorities. However, there are also comments that show Members feel they do have access when required and are perhaps less concerned as to which authority is the ‘employer’, as they are still receiving an Officer response.

A key issue was face to face access with staff, but as some posts require mobile working this wouldn’t be possible across all areas, as not all staff are office based. A difficulty here could be that as more services become digital and self-service, staff time will be deployed in new ways to meet service demands which does naturally lead to greater use of email and telephone communication – but staff would still be available via these means nonetheless.

11 Members believed that the Strategic Alliance has brought **financial savings/efficiency savings**. Other advantages identified included “**sharing best practice**” and “**partnership working**”. Two Members commented that the Strategic Alliance has brought no advantages. It was also clear that Members felt there needed to be better communication as to the ongoing ‘benefits’ realised as a result of the Strategic Alliance be it financial or more efficient service delivery.

The main disadvantages identified included **communication difficulties; delays in requests for service; lack of availability of officers; and lack of independence/identity of the Council.**

A range of suggestions were put forward for improving the Strategic Alliance. These included:

- ***“Developing a closer working strategy”***
- ***“Raising the profile of the Strategic Alliance”***
- ***More “regular meetings”***
- ***“Better information”***
- ***Information on “who does what” and where services are located.***

Two Members expressed concern over Environmental Health being located at NEDDC and two members suggested breaking up the Alliance.

In conclusion the results of the survey indicate a clear need for better communication with Members as to current working arrangements, key projects and ongoing achievements. As an interim measure prior to the agreement of further areas for review, improved communications is critical. A programme of Member’s Briefings, either written and/or group presentation is recommended, alongside improved publicity as to the effectiveness of the arrangement.

The results of the survey were shared with the Communications, Marketing & Design Manager, who acknowledged that the current approach to publicising good news stories in relation to our successes in service delivery and savings could be greatly improved. There was scope for the team to produce a range of press material, leaflets, and social media campaigns. However, the team currently operates in a reactive manner as services often do not factor internal/external communications for delivery throughout their projects, but only on completion which does not always give sufficient notice to ensure a high impact with staff and residents.

A key improvement would be greater involvement of the team as projects/revised services are developed so clear communications plans can be delivered throughout the process. Further guidance on the use of the brand for the Strategic Alliance would also be useful to ensure consistency of use across both Authorities.

Recommendations:

A programme of Member’s Briefings covering the Strategic Alliance, our shared services and the achievements to date, either written and/or group presentation is developed for the 2018/19 municipal year, with a commitment to evaluate the programme following the 2019 elections.

An increased level of publicity as to the effectiveness of the arrangement is achieved via regular press releases; articles on both authority websites and use of the staff weekly briefings.

5.8 The Transformation Programme

At the September meeting, the Chief Executive Officer provided a presentation to Members in relation to an update on the Council's Transformation Programme.

The presentation covered the background to the Transformation Programme, which was initially launched in January 2014 and revised in September 2015, to deliver a savings target of £600,000 per Council (Bolsover District and North East Derbyshire District Councils) for 2015-2020/21.

The Programme was a list of 36 initiatives or projects – some across the Strategic Alliance and some distinct to Bolsover District Council. The list classified the 36 initiatives into headings of transforming assets, services and workforce.

Reporting of progress towards the £600,000 target was done collectively via the quarterly performance reports.

The current position, as at September, was that £260,000 of savings had been delivered so far with £340,000 remaining to meet the target.

A table in the presentation set out the extent of the challenge to the Council for 2020/21 and showed the budget shortfall for each year and the options identified to address it.

These were:

- National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) Growth Target
- Transformation, Secondments and Joint working
- Vacancy Management
- Assumed Council Tax Increase
- Unidentified savings target / call on reserves

Key Issues Identified

Even with assumptions of NNDR Growth, vacancy management and Council tax increases there was still a significant shortfall from 2018/19.

The 2019/20 figures were based on the assumption that the loss of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) was offset by the existing arrangement for NNDR redistribution. This was a risk because if it reduced then the shortfall would increase. Further, if economic growth slowed, there would be additional pressure.

The existing programme did not specify how the unidentified savings targets would be met.

The Council needed to determine how useable reserves could be maximised.

Actions Identified

The Council needed to:

- Review the existing programme
- Agree the foundations for a future programme
- Develop, deliver and monitor the revised programme

A new programme would need to be based around clear operating principles:

- Business cost reduction
- Service redesign
- Income maximisation

A new programme would also need to be:

- Understood and agreed by Members
- Developed involving staff so it became part of the way the Council does business
- Using Scrutiny to help with developing and delivering the content

Members felt that the Council should consider whether greater risk taking with respect of investments and treasury management would be appropriate. The Joint Assistant Director Finance, Revenues and Benefits advised the meeting that the Council's Treasury Management advisors, Arlingclose Ltd, could provide Members with a presentation on this.

The Chief Executive Officer noted that the Council needed a clear strategy on financial risk taking; although more could be done, full Council approval would be required which would also need to be part of the Council's financial management programme. Committee agreed with the Chief Executive Officer's comments.

A Member felt that the Council needed to look at how it operated as a business and that Cabinet be asked to look at ways for all Scrutiny Members to be involved and understand the path that the Council needed to take in developing the transformation programme.

The Chief Executive Officer suggested that Scrutiny Committees could be involved individually as well as all Members being involved collectively through Council meetings, and that a wider engagement of Members' ideas could be held through workshops.

Subsequent to this presentation members received a further presentation from the Joint Strategic Director – People, on the refresh of The Transformation Programme.

Members were briefed on the process for developing the new programme; the timetable for design and agreement of business cases; and implementation of the new plan.

A range of engagement meetings with staff were planned, and took place during the course of this review, for the Transformation Programme. Members were also encouraged to submit their own ideas using a template circulated.

Recommendation:

That the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee defer consideration of the emerging Transformation Programme whilst receiving regular updates from the Joint Strategic Director – People, on progress.

5.9 Alternative options for service delivery

As part of the initial information request to services (see Appendix 3) Members enquired as to Officers' suggestions for alternative mechanisms for service delivery/efficiencies.

The following ideas were noted:

- Outsourcing
- Creation of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)
- Leisure Trusts
- Each Council having its own set of employees
- Public/Private partnership
- One Council employing all the staff for both Councils.
- Different mixture of shared services.

While Members drew no immediate conclusions from the ideas suggested, all were considered valid options to take account of within the further topics identified for review during 2018/19.

6. Conclusions

The Committee have put together a number of recommendations which will hopefully assist the Council, in looking at the future arrangements for further development of the Strategic Alliance.

Members will need to decide the priority order of the suggested reviews and the mechanism for carrying out the reviews. The Committee recognises that it is unlikely that they will be able to complete three such substantial reviews in one year.

The key issues arising from the review are identified in the further work that is proposed for delivery by the Committee in 2018/19, and the recommendations that be implemented immediately, subject to agreement of Executive, to improve existing communications.

Appendix 1: Stakeholders

Stakeholders engaged during the review included:

All BDC Members
Joint Chief Executive Officer
All Officers of SAMT
Head of HR & Organisational Development
Customer Standards & Complaints Officer

Stakeholders impacted by the recommendations include:

- All BDC Members
- All NEDDC Members
- All Officers of SAMT
- All employees in Strategic Alliance shared services
- All BDC employees not currently within a shared service, and those who are BDC employees working alongside shared employees in a shared service.

Appendix 2: Bibliography

- NEDDC Scrutiny Review of Administrative Arrangements and Joint Officers, April 2016
- BDC Payroll Grading Structure 2016-2018
- NEDDC Salaries Spinal Points 2016-2018
- Minutes of Special Council, Monday 9th January 2012.
- Joint Review of Environmental Health Services, Special Council, Monday 9th January 2012
- BDC Structure Charts, October 2017

Appendix 3: Initial information request to services

The following questions were posed following the 2nd October 2017 Committee meeting:

- Is the Service Shared?
- Are the staff jointly employed by both Councils?
- Year arrangement commenced.
- Are the staff in the service employed by one Council on behalf of both Councils?
- Are some staff in the Service employed by one Council and some by the other so that there are a mixture of employers?
- Is the service based at both Councils?
- What complaints have been received through the complaints system? Figures for period April 2016 to March 2017.
- What are Members' views of the service?
- Have there been any external views of the quality of the service?
- What savings have there been over the last financial year:-
 1. As originally agreed - these are the savings in the first year of the shared arrangement
 2. As additional savings generated? These are the savings for the 2016/17 year for the shared service
 3. Total savings for the period the shared service has existed
- Are there any ways of providing the service differently?
- What would be the estimated cost of separating the service between the 2 Councils? This depends on the structure chosen. Figures given by services should therefore account for replacing the shared officers with provision in Bolsover. Accommodation and equipment would be an additional cost.

Appendix 4: Follow-up information request agreed on 11th December

The following questions were agreed by committee seeking further clarification:

- What is the current number of employees employed by each Council?
- For the shared services only, what is the number of employees employed by BDC in 2011 and what is the number employed in 2017?
- What is the total cost of each service (shared services only)?
- Can we confirm the methodology for the split of costs between the 2 councils for the shared services?
- Can you provide a list of salary scales including NI?
- In relation to other shared services outside of the Strategic Alliance, please provide a list of the arrangements and of the partners?

Appendix 5: BDC Member Survey



Scrutiny Review of the Strategic Alliance Members Survey

The Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny Committee is looking at carrying out a review of the Strategic Alliance. The Committee has gathered together certain information to help scope the review. One part of the information that the Committee needs is the views of elected members.

This short questionnaire is designed to provide this information for the review.

Please respond by 22 February 2018 for this to be taken into account.

I look forward to your response.

*Cllr Rose Bowler
Chairman of the Customer Service and Transformation Scrutiny
Committee.*

Q1 To what extent do you agree the Strategic Alliance has been successful in delivering the following?

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree or disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Financial savings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Innovation in service delivery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improved information sharing through co-located services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q2 If you do not believe it has been successful, please explain why...

Q3 Do you have regular dealings with officers from Strategic Alliance shared services?

Yes..... No.....

If so, which service areas?

Q4 Do you know when you are dealing with officers which Authority they are employed by?

Yes..... No.....

Can you explain how you know?

What difference does it make to you as a Member?

Q5 What advantages do you believe the Strategic Alliance has brought?

Q6 What disadvantages do you believe the Strategic Alliance has brought?

Q7 How could the Strategic Alliance be improved?

**Thank you for completing the questionnaire.
Please return it using the freepost envelope or by passing to the
Scrutiny Officer by 22 February 2018.**

Appendix 6: Analysis of Complaints Data

Scrutiny of Formal Investigation complaints

Definition of a Formal Investigation complaint, as defined by the Joint Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy:

A **complaint** is any expression of dissatisfaction, by one or more members of the public about the organisation's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the organisation, that needs a response.

All expressions of dissatisfaction are investigated as complaints and the outcome is assessed, i.e. whether justified or not, at the end of the investigation.

Complaints by Department

April 2016 to March 2017		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Justified			
							Y*	% of total	P**	% of total
Growth	Partnership Team	0	0	0	0	0		0		
	Economic Growth	0	1	3	0	4	0		0	
	Planning	7	5	0	8	20	0		0	
	Environmental Health	0	2	7	9	18	0		1	0.4
	Legal, Governance & Elections	1	2	3	0	6	0		0	
Operations	Community Services	2	0	0	1	3	0		1	0.4
	Property & Estates	1	1	1	3	6	0		0	
	Finance	0	1	4	2	7	0		0	
	Housing	10	14	11	22	57	7	2.8	5	2.0
	Revenues & Benefits	10	5	4	9	28	2	0.8	4	1.6
	Streetscene Services	6	7	10	18	41	2	0.8	1	0.4
Transformation	Customer Service (& Improvement)	5	5	5	9	24	0		1	0.4
	Human Resources & Payroll	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	
	ICT	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	
	Leisure	1	2	0	25	28	0		9	3.6
	(Customer Service & Improvement)	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	
Total for 2016/17		43	45	48	106	242	11	4.5	22	9.0

Y* Yes – where the Council was at fault and had to apologise and rectify the matter

P** Partially – where the Council may have made an error or contributed to a delay, but the customer had been at fault or did not accept the correct advice given

The Council received 176 formal investigation complaints during 2016/17. As some of these complaints cross cut departments (for instance - a single complaint may cover issues which need to be addressed by Planning, Environmental Health and Streetscene Services) covering a variety of issues, they were recorded against all departments concerned. As such, the numbers do not correspond when viewed in this way.

Of the 176 complaints were received, 11 (4.5%) of the total were justified fully and 22 (9%) partially.

It is understandable that front facing, highly visible and greatly used departments attract the most complaints. These are the ones who have the most transactions with customers and the subject matter is often emotive, wanting to be re-housed, benefits re-instated etc.

Housing	57
Streetscene Services	41
Revenues & Benefits	28
Leisure	28
Customer Service (& Improvement)	24
Planning	20
Environmental Health	18

For instance, Housing had 57 complaints in total over the year. The complaints ranged over a number of the services they provide, i.e. housing applications, allocations, repairs, welfare adaptations and planned works. Also, some complaints were in relation to contractors working on behalf of the department.

Streetscene Services emptied over 2½ million bins but, in 2016/17, received only 41 formal complaints for the whole service covering bin collections, street cleansing and grounds maintenance. Again, some complaints were in relation to contractors working for the department.

The Leisure Department, who historically receive few complaints, did experience a spike in numbers due to the opening of the new leisure facility at The Arc at Clowne. These were predominantly snagging issues which were rectified within the first months of opening and also suggestions for improvement, which were taken on board.

It could be viewed that the fewer complaints received are better, perhaps indicating that customers are wholly satisfied with services. However, both the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the Customer Service Excellence Assessor place value on an organisation having an easy to use, accessible complaints system with an escalation process which is publicised.

Customer Standards & Complaints Officer
24th October 2017



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