

CABINET

17 January 2012

Title: Legal Services - Review of Shared Head of Service and Future Proposals	
Report of the Leader of the Council	
Open	For Decision
Wards Affected: None	Key Decision: No
Report Author: Tasnim Shawkat, Divisional Director for Legal and Democratic Services	Contact Details: Tel: 020 8227 2114 E-mail: tasnim.shawkat@lbbd.gov.uk
Accountable Divisional Director: Tasnim Shawkat, Divisional Director for Legal and Democratic Services	
Accountable Director: Stella Manzie, Chief Executive	
Summary: <p>On 25 January 2011 the Cabinet agreed a pilot under which Barking and Dagenham would second from Thurrock, for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012, their Head of Legal and Democratic Services to jointly fulfil the role as head of service and Monitoring Officer for both authorities on a shared basis.</p> <p>The Cabinet also agreed that the situation should be reviewed after six to nine months by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Corporate Management Team, managers in Legal Services and Thurrock colleagues, and reported back to the Cabinet by the end of 2011 in order that a final decision can be taken on future arrangements.</p> <p>We are now in a position to report to Cabinet, proposals for future arrangement and further opportunities for the sharing of Legal Services. These proposals are aimed at reducing management costs and building resilient teams of lawyers, which can continue to improve the quality and responsiveness of legal advice and representation for the Councils involved in the shared arrangements.</p> <p>This report will also be presented to Thurrock Cabinet for decision. Therefore it includes information regarding Thurrock Legal Services.</p>	
Recommendation(s) <p>The Cabinet is recommended to agree:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) A 12 month extension of the secondment agreement between LBBd and Thurrock which enables the sharing of the Divisional Director of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer;(ii) That the current shared arrangements are progressed to Phase Two, as set out in the report, which will see joined up legal teams between LBBd and Thurrock.	

- (iii) That the Assembly be recommended to confirm the extension of the appointment of Tasnim Shawkat, Divisional Director Legal and Democratic Services, as this Council's Monitoring Officer.

Reason(s)

To ensure that the Council has an effective and efficient legal service, to develop further joint working and to assist in achieving efficiencies and budget savings.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 On 25 January 2011 the Cabinet agreed a pilot, under which Barking and Dagenham would second from Thurrock, for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012, on a part-time basis their Head of Legal and Democratic Services to jointly fulfil the role as head of service and Monitoring Officer for both authorities on a shared basis. The Cabinet also noted that the arrangement would not involve any formal merger of services but would allow any opportunities for sharing of services to be explored.
- 1.2 At the same time the Cabinet also decided that a restructure of the Legal Practice at Barking and Dagenham would be implemented which, in particular, would see a reduction in the number of managers in order to make savings in the order of 20%, as had already been agreed as part of the budget considerations for 2011/12.
- 1.3 The Cabinet agreed that the shared arrangement would be reviewed after six to nine months by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Corporate Management Team, managers in Legal Services and Thurrock colleagues, and reported back to the Cabinet by the end of 2011 in order that a final decision can be taken on future arrangements.
- 1.4 On 18 February 2011 Thurrock Council's Cabinet resolved to:
- (a) Support a proposal that LBBDD second from Thurrock the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officers for a period from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012, on a part time basis to jointly fulfil the roles of Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer on a shared basis.
 - (b) Authorise the Chief Executive to finalise the arrangements with LBBDD.
 - (c) Note that the arrangements would not involve a formal merger of the services but would allow any opportunities for sharing of services to be explored in the short and medium term. In the longer term if both authorities are content for this to progress to full merger then a further report will be brought to the Cabinet.
- 1.5 On 23 February 2011 the Assembly made the final decision in terms of appointing Tasnim Shawkat as the Council's Monitoring Officer at LBBDD. Tasnim Shawkat officially started her secondment with this Council on 1 April 2011, although she had been working informally with LBBDD since October 2010. The restructure agreed by the Cabinet was undertaken and savings of about £470,000 were delivered for 2011/12.

- 1.6 The structure for Legal Services that Cabinet considered in January envisaged a reduction of Group Managers in the Legal Services from six down to two. However, during the course of the consultation process the then Interim Chief Executive agreed to retain three managers (at least while the team is in transition and until the arrangements are reviewed again).. Therefore this structure was implemented, and revised total savings for the Legal Practice of £470,000 were agreed to be delivered. More recently, the Chief Executive's Organisational Review has proposed a reduction of Group Managers in certain services for 2012/13. This proposed for Legal Services a reduction from three Group Managers down to two, giving a total saving of £80,000 but with £40,000 being reinvested for a junior solicitor post.
- 1.7 Some sharing of work has already taken place between LBBB and Thurrock Councils' Legal Services. Currently the Business Support Manager is also being shared between the two authorities on an informal basis. The safeguarding teams in both LBBB and Thurrock have met and have started to work together.
- 1.8 Through the East London Solutions discussions have taken place with London Borough of Newham about sharing advocates dealing with safeguarding work. Also discussions have progressed with London Borough of Waltham Forest and London Borough of Havering for more significant sharing in terms of sharing the lead in particular areas of work and creating joint teams.

2. Proposal and Issues

- 2.1 As can be seen from above some informal ad hoc sharing is already taking place between Thurrock and LBBB and this could be more systematic and formalised in the near future. Progress has been made in consulting with other East London Boroughs and there are tangible opportunities for working together. In order to implement further sharing between Thurrock and LBBB and other neighbouring authorities it is proposed that the secondment agreement with Thurrock Council to share the Head/ Divisional Director of Legal and Democratic Services is extended for another year taking us to April 2013.
- 2.2 On 25 January 2011 when the Cabinet considered the report proposing the sharing arrangement and the restructure it was suggested that the proposal to reduce capacity could impact on the ability to fully meet the Council's needs in relation to high level legal advice. This has been closely monitored and, in reality, the Council has continued to receive the best possible legal advice and the two services in Thurrock and LBBB have been able to assist each other at peak times.
- 2.3 Another issue that was identified at the time was that the sharing of a head of service (including the Monitoring Officer role) would mean that Members and client departments will not have full time access. Again access has not been an issue due to the way the arrangements have been put in place in that the Monitoring Officer is available to both authorities full time during the week albeit she is present physically only 50% of the time in each authority.
- 2.4 It is proposed that the arrangements for shared working between LBBB and Thurrock be implemented in three phases so that there is full flexibility to be decided at each stage whether both authorities are benefitting from the arrangements, whether staff, officers and Members are supportive of the arrangements and

whether the technology required for efficient seamless service delivery can be implemented and any risks addressed. It is proposed that only in phase three the option for full merger is considered.

Phase One

- 2.5 Phase one started with the sharing of the Divisional Director of Legal and Democratic Services in April 2011 and developed through sharing of the Business Support Manager in September 2011.
- 2.6 Since the start of the pilot in April 2011 LBBB Legal and Democratic Services management team have achieved the following:

Staffing and Structure

- Implemented the new structure in Legal Services including deletion of senior management posts and recruitment to more junior vacant posts
- Delivered approximately £470k savings from Legal Services for 2011/12 with further savings of £40k proposed for 2012/13
- Reviewed the structure in Democratic Services and proposed savings of £107k for 2012/13
- Reshaped the staffing structures in Electoral Services within existing budgets to compensate for the retirement of an existing post holder and to address increasing workloads
- Replaced a number of agency staff with permanent staff
- Recruited three of four apprentices and introduced training placements for volunteers, which help the service and contribute to the development of job skills for local people

Reducing the demand and cost of legal services

- Continued to reduce external legal cost by minimising use of external firms of solicitors except on major projects
- Reduced use of counsel by undertaking advocacy work in-house through in-house advocates so that we do not have to instruct external Counsel as much. This model has been singled out by the Stratford Family Court to other authorities as an example of good practice
- Introduced streamlined processes to produce efficiency, minimise costs and deliver value for money
- Increased legal training for staff within Directorates especially with front-line services such as Children and Customer Services with a view to training clients with routine legal work that can be done within Directorates thereby reducing reliance on lower level legal support and concentrating resources where demand is greatest

Implemented better budget and business management

- The service is on target to achieve a break even or better financial position at year end
- Putting in place Service Level Agreements with the four Directorates and quarterly review meetings

- Offered legal advice and support to schools in the 2012/13 Traded Services Brochure
- Making provision for business support to the legal practice, which enables the production of management information on cost and quality as well as progressing the implementation of Lexcel quality standards
- Improved overall processes in Legal and Democratic Services, with an emphasis on responsiveness to clients and the quality of legal and administrative advice
- Created admin capacity and improved the quality of admin support through the recruitment of three apprentices in Legal Services and a further apprentice will be recruited to support Members

Improving support to Members

- Analysing past Member Development programme and refocusing future Member Development with more emphasis on Peer Mentoring, in-house training and moving away from one off external courses for individual Members
- Sharing the post of Member Development Officer with HR so as to achieve greater efficiencies and make best use of the resource to the benefit of Members and officers with a focus on training officers to better support Members
- Working with Elevate to improve Member IT
- Ensuring the restructure of Democratic Services enhances the support to Members and increasing staffing in Member support for non-executive Members

Supported the improvement of corporate processes

- Assisted in more efficient co-ordination of Cabinet reports and earlier legal input into corporate reports in relation to legal issues
- Rolled out a new more user-friendly report template
- Supported the Chief Executive's priorities in relation to delivering the Borough's Olympic legacy by seconding a member of staff from Democratic Services for 18 months to the corporate Olympics Unit

2.7 In Thurrock similar achievements around structure, budgets, SLAs, business processes, improved administrative and Constitutional processes were achieved in 2009/10. Therefore the achievements in Thurrock in 2011/12 have related to outcomes such as:

- Shortlisted for two awards – Young Solicitor of the Year 2011 and LGC 2011 Legal Award for partnership with ELSP, Essex Legal Services Partnership (now PLP Public Law Partnership)
- Property and Planning Team have generated income of £101k for Legal Services and £460k for clients
- The Contract and Procurement Team has worked on large scale projects which have generated significant savings for the Council and has played a key role in redefining the relationship with the Councils Strategic Partner.
- The Safeguarding and Children Legal Team has been recognised for best practice in care proceedings in a National conference.
- The Litigation Team have undertaken extensive training for housing and other clients in order to up skill the clients and reduce the demand for legal services. They have also worked on significantly improving the practice and procedures

under RIPA (Regulation and Investigatory Powers Act 2000) as well as improving the Whistleblowing procedures.

In addition to the above since the sharing arrangements for the Divisional Director started in April 2011 the managers in Thurrock Legal Services have stepped up and taken on some of the management and Monitoring Officer tasks.

- 2.8 Like most other services Legal and Democratic Services are facing challenging times. The services will need to continue to deliver high quality services to Members and officers with reducing resources. LBBB Legal Services will need to continue to work to improve all of our clients' experience of the legal support provided. For example a more commercial and pragmatic approach to contract and property legal work will be needed given the challenging work programme of the Council and the resources of the legal teams may need to be reviewed. Another example would be improved support for clients in litigation (criminal and civil) where the workload is currently not high in LBBB but may increase in the future. Also both authorities face similar challenges in terms of the regeneration agenda. Joint working should assist in these respects.
- 2.9 The particular challenges for legal services in both authorities are to maintain the quality and responsiveness of the service against a demanding legislative timetable with new legislation such as The Localism Act, which will include a new standards regime, The Education Act and new health reforms in the Social Care Bill, which will come into force in the New Year, ensuring corporately the Council is prepared for such change. The Electoral Services will have the challenge of introducing individual electoral registration, a Government requirement to have in place for 2014/15.
- 2.10 Legal and Democratic Services working with Members and officer in LBBB will undertake a comprehensive review of the Constitution based on the learning from Thurrock's review of their Constitution in 2010. This will also include a review of the governance arrangements and reviewing the way we do business as Members and officers in a more efficient, transparent and cost effective way.
- 2.11 Before going into phase two of the shared arrangement LBBB will have made provision for the delivery of the savings as identified in the Chief Executive's proposals, including the reduction of management posts in Legal and Democratic Services.
- 2.12 Also in Thurrock a mini restructure will have been undertaken due to the departure of a manager and that post being reconfigured. This reconfiguration aims to reduce a manager and build capacity at a lower level increasing value for money and efficiency. This restructure is being undertaken in anticipation of the shared arrangements proposed for phase two and this reduction in management will have less impact because of the proposed joint working.

Phase Two

- 2.13 The continued sharing of the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer role will generate savings to the Legal Services budget of the salary costs of the Head of Legal Services. The combined savings will be in the region of £100k across the two authorities (£55k LBBB and £45k Thurrock) excluding on costs.

- 2.14 It is proposed that in phase two the shared arrangements are progressed and implemented from 1 April 2012 and formal consultation with staff commences in January 2012. It should be noted that informal consultation has already taken place with the managers in legal services in LBBB and Thurrock. The unions will be involved in such consultation.
- 2.15 In phase two it is proposed that legal teams in LBBB and Thurrock are joined up and work together and led by one team manager whether that manager is based in LBBB or Thurrock. It is not proposed that staff are relocated but their team manager may not be based where the team is based. Staff travel will be minimised, however, the team managers will need to travel between the two authorities each week.
- 2.16 One of the benefits of this model is that it expands the span of control of the team managers providing greater efficiencies. This also means that whilst staff will remain based at their current location providing visible support to clients on the majority of cases there will be capacity to better manage peaks and troughs and even them out. We will ensure that clients in both authorities are made aware when their work is passed to the other authority and provide contact details.
- 2.17 The implementation of this arrangement will be staggered with the safeguarding team trialling this first, given that the discussions between the two team are advanced. Next we will look at the planning, housing and litigation teams and finally the contract and procurement teams.
- 2.18 The main benefits of the proposal are that we create bigger and more resilient teams in specialist areas managed by a team manager who has expertise in that particular area.
- 2.19 For example in LBBB there is a team of 4 posts which cover, housing, planning, licensing, criminal litigation. In Thurrock one team covers housing, civil litigation and criminal litigation. Under this proposal there could be a combined team of housing and regeneration, planning and licensing, criminal litigation, civil litigation. The above is illustrated in the table below.

Example of teams under the current arrangements

Areas of work	LBBB – workload and staff	Thurrock – workload and staff
Planning	.5	2 (4 from 1 April 2012)
Licensing	.25	.5
Housing	2.5	2.25
Criminal litigation	1	2 (incl 1 locum advocate)
Civil litigation	1	1
TOTAL		5.25 + 7.75 = 13

An example of potential combined teams

Areas of work	LBBB / Thurrock – combined teams
Planning Licensing	4
Housing	4.5
Criminal and Civil Litigation	3
TOTAL	11.5

2.20 It should be noted that the above is an example using a selection of areas of work. Managers and staff in legal services will be consulted in the configuration of teams and the proposed structure. The teams are likely to be as follows:

- Contract and Procurement
- Housing and regeneration
- Litigation (civil and criminal)
- Planning and licensing
- Property and construction
- Safeguarding children, adult and education

In the new structure going forward there will be two Group Managers in LBBB and one manager (Deputy Head) at that level in Thurrock and they will all be designated Deputy Monitoring Officers. The three managers at this level will provide senior level expertise in Procurement and Contracts, Safeguarding and Education, Governance and Litigation respectively.

2.21 As mentioned above significant restructure and savings have already been delivered in both authorities. In addition to that some posts held by agency and contract staff have either been deleted or are being held as vacant in preparation for the shared arrangements. During this period only essential posts will be filled permanently if vacancies arise. Otherwise each vacancy will be assessed and a decision will be made as to whether the work can be absorbed by the newly configured teams or whether a joint appointment should be made or whether another authority such as Havering or Waltham Forest can provide the service.

2.22 Therefore staff who are currently or are proposed to be in the structure in 2012/13 can be assured that there will not be any redundancies as a result of implementing phase two of the shared arrangements.

2.23 It is proposed that some funding from the savings made through the shared arrangement is retained in the budget to allow for temporary staff to be used as and when necessary to reduce external spend during peak times, to cover absences or on major project work. The funding is most likely to be used in areas such as procurement consultancy and to make provision for in house advocates. This provision will enable significant savings on external legal spend.

2.24 In addition to building resilient teams we will focus on realising other benefits such as:

- use of joint training and mentoring to further reduce costs, generate income, aid staff retention and build capacity in depth
- use larger market presence to secure more advantageous terms and discounts for any essential resource spend
- build reputation for resilience and expertise and where possible develop and begin to generate income streams from traded public sector legal services
- undertake proactive work such as standardising contracts, providing training for clients and thereby continue to reduce demand for legal services
- analyse work processes and tasks to eliminate needless duplication of effort and work – such as shared legal briefing notes and creating common legal precedents

- improved case management systems to produce accurate management information
- implementing and maintaining quality standards such as Lexcel
- improved ICT provision to enable staff to work across the two authorities
- more efficient use of admin for example through digital dictation

2.25 One of the issues will of course be time and cost of travelling between two authorities. Firstly we will have to find efficient ways of scheduling meetings and secondly we will need to monitor and assess the time and cost on a regular basis.

2.26 The next issue or challenge will be whether we will be able to use technology and ICT to bring about significant efficiencies. There are potential opportunities through for example Sharepoint. These will need to be tested out during phase two.

2.27 It should be noted that it is possible that LBBB and Thurrock may be in a conflict situation in future, for example in adult social care of children safeguarding cases. However, issues of conflict can be dealt with appropriately and a conflict protocol will be applied to such cases.

Phase Three

2.28 If phase two is successful then LBBB and Thurrock can consider a fully merged shared service between LBBB and Thurrock. A progress report on phase two and, if appropriate, proposals for phase three will be brought to Cabinet early 2013.

3. Options Appraisal

3.1 The option of doing nothing would mean that the secondment arrangement would come to an end. LBBB would need to decide whether to recruit a Divisional Director for Legal and Democratic Services at full cost.

3.2 An alternative option would be to fully merge the two services at this stage. Some other authorities have already created merged Legal Services such as Merton and Richmond. However, this is not recommended as significant time, cost and resources will be needed to implement such merger without a proper assessment of the full benefits or the likely savings that can be achieved.

3.2 The option proposed in this report is to start gradually working together and assess the success of joint working, test out the efficiencies that can be gained and most importantly test out whether there will be blockages such as ICT and address any such issues before finally deciding on a fully merged service.

4. Consultation

4.1 Informal consultation has taken place with Legal Services managers. On 22 November 2011 the Group Managers from LBBB visited Thurrock to meet the Deputy Head of Legal Services and the Principal Lawyers. Thurrock managers visited LBBB to meet the Senior Lawyers and also the Group Managers again on 12 December 2011. A meeting/ workshop of all staff is planned for January 2012.

4.2 Stella Manzie, Chief Executive of LBBB and Graham Farrant, Chief Executive of Thurrock met to discuss the proposals on 24 November 2011. Both Chief

Executives have provided their comments on and their support for the proposals in this report.

- 4.3 The Corporate Management Team in LBBB and Directors Board in Thurrock will have considered this report by the time it is considered by Cabinet. Also a draft of the report will have been circulated to the Divisional Directors in LBBB and Heads of Services in Thurrock.
- 4.4 The Leaders of both Councils and the Portfolio Holders will also have seen the final version of the report before Cabinet makes the final decision.
- 4.5 As mentioned in section 2 above staff will be consulted more formally from January 2012 and the Trades Unions in LBBB and Thurrock will be involved in that consultation.

5. Financial Implications

Implications completed by: David Abbott, Principal Accountant / Tracie Evans, Corporate Director of Finance and Resources

Phase 1: Sharing of Divisional Director Post

- 5.1 As mentioned in the body of the report significant savings have already been delivered since the proposals for sharing the Divisional Director / Head of Legal and Democratic Services was agreed by LBBB Cabinet on 25 January and Thurrock Cabinet on 18 February 2011. LBBB Legal Services delivered £470k for 2011/12 with a further £40k savings planned for 2012/13. In Thurrock approximately £245k was delivered from Legal Services in 2011/12.
- 5.2 Some of the savings have been delivered to achieve savings or efficiency targets in their own right but also in anticipation of the proposals for further sharing between LBBB and Thurrock Legal Services as set out in the report. Also the potential negative impact or risk of delivering these savings can be minimised or mitigated through the sharing arrangements proposed in this report.
- 5.3 The continued sharing of the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer role will generate savings to the Legal Services budget of the salary costs of the Head of Legal Services. The combined savings will be in the region of £100k across the two authorities (£55k LBBB and £45k Thurrock) excluding on costs.

Phase 2: Further joint working with Thurrock Council

- 5.4 In Phase Two it is proposed that once the savings for 2012/13 are delivered the legal services budgets in both Councils are sustained at the same level as for the whole of 2012/13 to maintain stability. This is so that an assessment can be made each quarter to firstly ensure that each authority is benefiting from the shared arrangements but also where the pressures are and whether a future pooled budget would resolve the pressures. Clear records will be kept on the relative demands for legal services in each authority.
- 5.5 So far the shared arrangements in Phase One and proposals for Phase Two have not required any financial investment. In Phase Two provision will need to be made

for additional travel costs. This will be made from within the budgets.

- 5.6 However, it should be noted that before going into Phase Three it is likely that some investment will be required in IT and case management systems. Currently the two Legal Services use two different case management systems. We will need to explore if these systems can communicate with each other and if not then we will need to prepare a business case for implementing one system for both authorities and the costs and benefits of such investment.
- 5.7 Finally it is anticipated that the shared arrangements will reduce external legal spend and this will be monitored and data provided to clients on a regular basis. Also it is likely the LBBDD will be able to generate income in the same way Thurrock Legal Services have been able to.

6. Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Tasnim Shawkat, Divisional Director, Legal and Democratic Services

- 6.1 The Local Authorities have the power to provide legal services by virtue of s111 of the Local Government Act 1972. Both authorities must, by virtue of s5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, appoint a Monitoring Officer. Each authority, have power under the 1972 Act to arrange for the discharge of their functions by another authority.
- 6.2 One of the recommendations here is to agree a 12 months extension of the arrangements under which Thurrock Council's Head of Legal Services would jointly fulfil the role of Divisional Director Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer for both authorities on a shared basis. Legally this can be achieved by under section 113 (2) Local Government Act 1972, which has the straight forward effect of deeming the appointment /secondment of an officer from another authority as an officer of the authority being appointed and thereby satisfy the requirement under section 5 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 that an authority appoint "one of its staff" to be Monitoring Officer.
- 6.3 The arrangement does not involve any formal merger of services but would allow any opportunities for sharing of services to be explored and would involve an immediate saving to both authorities by sharing this resource.
- 6.4 General power of competence under Localism Act 2011 allows a local authority to do anything that individuals may do unless there are restrictions applied by other Statute. This power can be used by a local authority to provide back office functions to other bodies. This provision comes into force on April 2012.

7. Other Implications

- 7.1 **Risk Management** The proposal in this report is to progress a phased approach to a potential shared legal services between LBBDD and Thurrock Council. A phased approach minimises or eliminates the potential risks of embarking on an untested fully merged service. The phased approach means that any potential risks can be assessed and addressed before a final decision is made to fully merge the two services. If it is found that there are significant risks and little benefit then the two authorities will be in a position to revert to the original position and have separate

legal services and Monitoring Officers. However, the more likely outcome is that the sharing of the two services will realise real benefits in terms of efficiencies, resilience and reduction of costs while ironing out any teething problems and removing barriers eg ICT and communication issues.

7.2 **Contractual Issues** - There is a secondment agreement in place between LBBB and Thurrock. The agreement will be extended for a further 12 months

7.3 **Staffing Issues** - Staff will be expected to work across the two authorities and it is possible that they may be asked to undertake pieces of work for other authorities in East London such as Havering and Waltham Forest. There will be no significant changes to terms and conditions of staff in either authority. Some staff will see a change in their line manager. Agreement will be sought from the managers that they travel to the other authority and line manage staff in LBBB or Thurrock and vice versa.

Some changes will be necessary in that staff will need to develop their skills as customer service professionals rather than an in-house team of lawyers. They will have to be aware of the differing needs and expectations of the two sets of clients. Staff will need to become better at accurately time recording their chargeable hours ensuring that costs are reflected on the right clients. Staff will need to be more prepared to use alternative means of communicating with clients, making more use of e-mail, phone, teleconference etc

Staff should experience better support and ability to share out peak time workloads. There will be improved cover in the team during annual leave and other absence. Although no redundancies are likely to result from Phase Two of the shared arrangements Unions will be advised of the proposals.

7.4 **Customer Impact** - The customers are internal clients in services in both authorities. They will be informed of these proposals. They may experience services being provided from another authority. The aim of this proposal is to ensure that the clients receive quality services from more resilient teams.

Clients will need to get used to their lawyers not necessarily always being available in person as and when they want to talk to them. Clients will need to become more aware of the cost of the legal services they request. This will lead to more rational decisions about when to seek legal services

Clients should experience speedier response and more proactive support. The clients should also see a reduction in external legal costs. Regular reports will be provided on volume of work undertaken and the costs both internal and external.

7.5 **Safeguarding Children** - The Safeguarding Children Legal Team is really trailblazing the joint / shared working. The team has already started working together and it is anticipated that from January 2012 a more integrated approach will be adopted, with sharing management capacity across the two authorities and sharing advocates.

7.6 **Property / Asset Issues** Not significant. Desk space will need to be made available in each authority for managers as and when they need to visit the other authority.

Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report:

LBBB Cabinet report dated – 25 January 2011
Thurrock Cabinet report dated – 18 February 2011
LBBB Assembly report dated – 25 February 2011

List of appendices:

None