

Shared Revenues and Benefits Service Joint Committee

Shared Revenues and Benefits Service Joint Committee 17 January 2025

Present:

Councillor M Brown
Councillor T Hamilton-Cox
Councillor C Jackson
Councillor Rawlinson

Preston City Council
Lancaster City Council
Lancaster City Council
Preston City Council

Also in attendance:

Ms J Wilding	Director of Resources & S151 Officer
Mr L Hurst	Assistant Director (Head of Financial Services)
Mrs C Lancaster	Business Support Manager
Mrs H Johnston	Benefits Manager
Mr A Taylor	Assistant Director (Head of Revenues and Benefits)
Mr Pilkington	Interim Revenues Manager
Mr P Thompson	Chief Officer, Resources & Section 151 Officer
Ms M Cope	Assessment Manager
Mr S Metcalfe	Principal Democratic Support Officer

SRB10 Chair's Announcements

There were none.

SRB11 Notification of Substitute Members (if any)

There were none.

SRB12 Declarations of Interests

There were none.

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SRB13 Minutes

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 22 July 2024 be noted and signed as a correct record.

SRB14 Date of Next Meeting

To be confirmed.

SRB15 Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved – That the public be excluded from this meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there is likely to be disclosure of exempt information which is described in Paragraph 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

SRB16 Shared Service Budget 2025/26 - (Revenues & Benefits) (Paragraph 3)

The Director of Resources (Preston City Council) submitted a report on the Shared Service Agreement between Lancaster City Council and Preston City Council, which required that the Joint Committee approve the annual revenue, capital and staff budgets in respect of the Revenues and Benefits functions.

The Joint Committee would then inform the two Councils of the amounts of their proposed contributions to the Joint Committee's budget.

As part of the debate Members commented that they would like to see the following considered at a future meeting:

- Internal auditors. Look to rotate the use of auditors in order to make budget savings.

- Automation of processes. Look to put in place as soon as possible.

- Report to July's meeting in order to save money/not to reduce jobs.

- City Council representatives supported the use of the Pathway System in order to target recovery.

- For Lancaster CC Quarterly Monitoring reporting. To include improvements such as the improvement of collection.

- Increase of 2.63% of tax base. To provide information to demonstrate the amount of student housing returning to residential.

- To consider future meetings being held in Preston in view of the majority of attendees travelling from Preston and that ongoing actions raised at the meeting be added to the preamble of the minutes.

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Resolved – The Joint Committee is recommended to:

- (i) Approved the revised Shared Service budget for 2024/25 at **Appendix A** and which includes the changes set out in 4.1 to 4.6 of this report.
- (ii) noted the latest budget monitoring position for the Shared Service as detailed in **Appendix B** which includes the budget revisions proposed for approval at 2.1 (i).
- (iii) approved the budget for 2025/26 for the Shared Service as detailed in **Appendix C**.
- (iv) delegated to the S151 Officers of each Council (by agreement), to determine the cost sharing ratio for contributions to and from the overall Shared Service budget.