

APPENDIX 2

Designing and implementing a shared electoral service: an AEA issues paper

The Association of Electoral Administrators has produced an issues paper with regard to designing and implementing a shared electoral service. The issues paper sets out a number of key issues which authorities should address in designing such a service. These have been set out below and each issue considered in terms of how it is addressed by the business case.

Key Issue	Business Case
Outcomes – achieving a clear and shared description of the service	The outcome is to deliver a shared multidisciplinary democratic and elections team. The team will work across both sites delivering high quality and value for money service, whilst working to deliver a service that is efficient and effective and based on constant improvement.
Appointment of the Electoral Registration Officer(s) ERO and Returning Officer	Sue Smith has been appointed as ERO and RO for both councils.
Structural and Funding Issues	A multidisciplinary shared democratic and elections team is set out in the business case. Both services are adequately funded at present and this funding will transfer to the shared team.
The creation of a Service Level Agreement (SLA)	Service level agreements are not in place at either council. The new team will produce SLAs.
Staffing and HR issues	Staffing and HR issues are included within the business case.
Internal communications and dependencies	E-mail and telephone systems have already been integrated. It is intended that staff phone numbers will follow them to where they are working.
Offices for the purpose of meeting statutory requirements	Offices will continue to be Bodcote House for all elections and events occurring in the Cherwell area and Springfields for all elections and events occurring in South Northamptonshire area.
Geography, transport and communications infrastructure, and demographics	The two areas have similar demographics with large rural areas. Whilst elections and canvas will be planned, managed and procured at a shared level, elections and canvassing will be delivered locally by the lead democratic and elections

Key Issue	Business Case
	officer, supported by the team based at each site.
Different Electoral cycles and boundaries	SNC holds all out elections and CDC elects by thirds.
Buildings and equipment	There will be a permanent democratic and elections presence at both Bodicote and Springfields. Polling Station equipment will be maintained as two separate stocks at this time, as will IT scanning equipment.
Provision of back office services	Back office services (e.g. registration processing will be based at Bodicote House.
IT software, hardware and telephony	The Business case provides for a shared elections IT system. The existing scanning hardware at both authorities can be used for the shared system. It is intended that the SNC published elections number will be migrated to the CDC Customer Service centre with second tier response provided by a Bodicote based shared elections service.
Existing contractual arrangements	No existing IT contracts are long term but are renewed by annual licence. SNC is in the final year of a three year telephone registration contract , CDC has extended their contract by one year, so both will be out of contract for 2012. Neither council has print or transport contracts, using spot purchases. Therefore there are no prohibitive contract arrangements,
Relationship with Town/Parish councils in each area	There will be named contacts within the shared team for town and parish councils in each area. It is intended that these officers will establish good working relationships with town and parish councils and also act as the primary contact for democratic queries.
Key partners and stakeholders across the shared service area	Councillors – staff will be working across both sites on a weekly basis, on going relationships established through democratic work. Town and Parish Councillors – as above. Suppliers – relationship established by team with responsibility for procurement.

Key Issue	Business Case
	<p>Agents – relationships maintained on behalf of RO by lead Democratic and Elections Officer for each area.</p> <p>Officers – relationships maintained and established by team members through dual site working.</p>
Implementation	<p>Elections and Electoral Registration will be delivered through a shared strategic project board co-ordinated by a Democratic and Elections Team Leader, consisting of relevant members of the shared management team (RO, Legal, Finance, Director) and key service deliverers (Elections team, Customer Services, HR, Communications, Training and IT).</p> <p>There will be a number of sub groups as required, each with a member of the elections team in a co-ordinating role.</p>