

# All Systems



Issue 3

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SHARED SERVICES PROGRAMME

## We're all aboard for the Shared Service!



**GO Programme Board Member (HR/Payroll) Sara Mullen celebrates an important milestone**

I am very pleased to tell you that all the GO partner councils have given their go-ahead for us to proceed with one single Shared Service rather than creating two additional Centres of Excellence for Finance/ Procurement and HR/ Payroll. The Employing Authority for this Shared Service will be Cotswold District Council.

As Pat Pratley, the Senior Responsible Owner for GO, explained in the previous newsletter, job roles generally include some transactional elements and some advisory elements, and it became clear that splitting the roles - as envisaged under the

Centres of Excellence (COE) operating model - could have led to duplication and a less seamless service for customers.

A Shared Service will overcome that risk because it encompasses all transactional and advisory services in one entity and avoids splitting those roles. It also means that we no longer have to spend money (and time) setting up two Centres of Excellence, each with an Employing Authority.

Moving to a Shared Service will increase the GO programme's anticipated savings from just under £400,000 per year to a total of about £650,000 per year.

Cotswold District Council will be the Shared Services Employing Authority, having satisfied the criteria set out by the Strategic Partnership Management Board (SPMB)

Over the last 18 months or so, each of the partners has been exercising very careful management of vacancies in HR, payroll,

finance and procurement to minimise any potential job losses.

By now all permanent and temporary staff involved in these work areas will have attended special briefings which gave more detail regarding the Shared Service; I hope they found this useful. I would recommend browsing the FAQ section at [www.gosharedservices.org.uk](http://www.gosharedservices.org.uk) which was put together as a result of those briefings.

We are also engaging with staff representatives and Trade Unions to ensure that they are fully informed about the Shared Service.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for your patience and professionalism; it will be some time before we can provide further information regarding the staffing situation but I can assure everyone that this is one of our top priorities and as soon as we have any further information then you will be informed.

### Milestones

#### March 2011

Hardware purchased and installed to prepare for installation of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.

#### April 2011

Solution Design for ERP system signed off. Work on building system begins. GO website goes live.

#### June-July 2011

Cabinets / Councils agree Shared Service arrangements—Lead Authority is Cotswold District Council.

#### Oct 2011

User Acceptance Testing (West Oxfordshire and Forest of Dean Councils)

#### Nov 2011

West Oxfordshire and Forest of Dean Councils go live

#### Jan—March 2011

TUPE consultation.

#### Feb 2012

User Acceptance Testing (Cheltenham and Cotswold Councils and Cheltenham Borough Homes)

#### April 2012

TUPE transfers completed to enable Shared Services to operate.

Cheltenham and Cotswold Councils, and Cheltenham Borough Homes go live

#### October 2012

Savings begin to be delivered.



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# Testing Times...



*Chris Cox, project manager for the GO programme, provides an update on recent activities.*

One of the innovative features of the GO Programme is that all of the organisations involved will be sharing the same Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. To distinguish between the different organisations, each will be created within the system as a separate client. As it will be GO Shared Services providing the finance, procurement, HR and payroll functions to each of the organisations, a lot of time has been spent agreeing a standard set of business processes and workflows. It has been acknowledged, however, that there will be some features which will be unique to each client.

With this in mind, the process leads have recently completed the first phase of Integration System Testing (IST) for the so-called gold client, which contains all of the common process and structures from all the partner organisations. This "gold" client model is currently being copied, forming the clients for Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire. By the end of this month, the process leads will have completed the second phase of IST and tested all of the unique features for those two councils.

During September, the Support & Hosting Centre of Excellence will be conducting Business Continuity Tests to ensure the resilience of the system, and the ability of GO Shared Services to continue working in the event of any unforeseen circumstances.

In October the super-users from Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire will be completing User Acceptance Testing (UAT), checking that the system is ready to go live. Provided all of that testing is successfully completed, Forest of Dean and West Oxfordshire will go live in November 2011. A similar testing process will then follow for the other GO organisations at the start of the next calendar year.

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## GO FAQs - What Exactly is the 'Employing Authority' for GO Shared Services?

Each GO partner council has agreed, through its formal decision making processes, to delegate authority to Cotswold District Council – as the **Employing Authority for GO Shared Services**.

This does not mean that, for the purposes of running and operating the shared services, Cotswold District Council will have any greater say, power or influence than any other partner. GO Shared Services will be overseen by a board comprising Chief Execs, Directors and Members from each council. However, the law requires that when councils decide to delegate functions - which they historically deliver themselves - to another body (public or private) then those functions must be delegated in a lawful manner. In the case of GO Shared Services that delegation will be by way of a 'Section 101' legal agreement.

Put simply, 'Section 101' is shorthand for the section of the 1972 Local Government Act which the partner councils are using to transfer responsibility for certain functions (which they currently perform themselves) to another local authority.

The term may be familiar to you already. Last year, a Section 101 agreement was used to delegate the support and hosting arrangements for the ICT-related services, which are responsible for the new ERP system, to Cheltenham Borough Council. This arrangement remains unaffected by the decisions which have now been taken to establish GO Shared Services.

To create GO Shared Services, functions within the scope of the programme - i.e. finance, payroll, human resources and procurement - need to be delegated **from** West Oxfordshire, Cheltenham and Forest of Dean **to** Cotswold District Council. The partner councils have agreed this should happen on 1 April 2012.

All the partner councils have agreed that the Section 101 agreement includes the provision for staff to be protected by TUPE - Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment). Therefore, from 1 April 2012, staff not currently employed by Cotswold District Council will TUPE to Cotswold District Council. For Cotswold District Council staff there will be no change.

**To sum up, on 1 April 2012 - by virtue of a Section 101 agreement and the TUPE of staff - Cotswold District Council will become the 'Employing Authority.'**