

ACCESS Joint Committee

Date: 11 June 2019

Report by: Officer Working Group

Subject:	ACCESS Support Unit & Secretariat
Purpose of the Report:	To provide an update on the provision of Secretariat services to the Joint Committee
Recommendations:	The Joint Committee (JC) are asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• note the content of the report; and• agree a 12 month extension to the provision of Secretariat services by Kent County Council until the end of July 2020.
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1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the provision of Secretariat Services to the Joint Committee (JC) and recommend the continuation of the existing approach for a 12 month period.

2. Background

- 2.1. Following the adoption of an Inter Authority Agreement by eleven central, eastern and southern councils on 12 July 2017, the first formal meeting of the ACCESS JC took place on 31 July 2017.
- 2.2. Secretariat services to the JC have been provided by colleagues at Kent County Council. This had been determined by the Shadow Joint Committee and the arrangement was initially intended to be for a period of two years from July 2017.
- 2.3. At its meeting on 11 June 2018, the JC agreed that Essex County Council be the Host Authority for the ACCESS Support Unit (ASU) and Host Authority generally following the full establishment of the ASU.
- 2.4. The aim has been that the Secretariat function is ultimately included within the ASU.

3. The Inter Authority Agreement

- 3.1. Clause 9 of the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) states the following:
 - 9.1. *On the Commencement Date Kent County Council will act as Host Authority on behalf of the Joint Committee and will designate one of its officers to be Secretary to the Joint Committee.*
 - 9.2. *The role of Host Authority may be undertaken by any Council as agreed by the Joint Committee from time to time with the agreement of the Council concerned.*

4. Discussions since the last JC meeting

- 4.1. Officers at Kent and Essex have reviewed the situation. Whilst it is felt that the aim of consolidating the Secretariat within the ASU Host Authority remains appropriate there are sound reasons to continue with Kent's provision for a further 12 months. These include:
 - whilst key steps have been taken to establish the ASU, these are not yet complete;
 - although the Pension Fund Governance Team at Essex (who would ultimately provide the ASU with JC Secretariat support) have commenced shadowing colleagues at Kent, a key member of staff is currently on maternity leave; and
 - the recognition of the detailed and comprehensive knowledge of ACCESS and the JC's workings built up by colleagues at Kent in general, and the current Secretary / Clerk in particular.
- 4.2. As a consequence Essex have asked Kent whether it would be possible to continue with the existing arrangement for a further 12 months. Kent have confirmed they are open to this suggestion, and that the intention is that the current Secretary / Clerk would continue to act as Secretary / Clerk to the Committee. This approach would enable both continuity and transition planning.

5. Recommendation

Joint Committee are asked to:

- 5.1. note the content of the report; and
- 5.2. agree a 12 month extension to the provision of Secretariat services by Kent County Council until the end of July 2020.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1. No overall change is expected to the total budget agreed at the March 2019 JC meeting.