

ACCESS Joint Committee

Date: 17 July 2020

Report by: Officer Working Group

Subject:	Joint Committee 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 2021.
Enquiries to:	Name – Kevin McDonald E-mail – kevin.mcdonald@accesspool.co.uk

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. Since the formation of the formal Joint Committee (JC) in July 2017, Secretariat services to the JC have been provided by colleagues at Kent County Council. This arrangement was initially intended to be for a period of two years from that date.
- 2.2. At its meeting on 11 June 2018, the JC agreed that Essex County Council be the Host Authority for the ACCESS Support Unit (ASU).
- 2.3. At its meeting on 11 June 2019, the JC agreed a 12-month extension to the provision of Secretariat services by Kent County Council until the end of July 2020.

3. The Inter Authority Agreement

- 3.1. Clause 9 of the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA), signed in 2017, 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.*
- 3.2. Progress on the ongoing review of the 2017 IAA is covered in a separate item on this agenda. The proposed draft wording relevant to this matter, that would apply under the revised 2020 IAA, once adopted by each Administering Authority, is set out below:
 - 9.1. *The role of the Host Authority may be undertaken by any Council as agreed between the Joint Committee and the Council concerned from time to time. Unless otherwise agreed, the Host Authority will designate an officer to be the Secretary to the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee will operate under the normal committee governance arrangements of whichever Council employs the Secretary, subject to any specific processes or requirements outlined in this Agreement.*

4. Review of Secretariat

- 4.1. Officers at Kent and the ASU have reviewed the situation. Whilst consolidating the Secretariat within the ASU Host Authority has merit, there are sound reasons to continue with Kent's provision for a further 12 months.

These include:

- 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; and

- whilst the Pension Fund Compliance Team at Essex (who would ultimately provide the ASU with JC Secretariat support) have shadowed some of the work undertaken by colleagues at Kent, a combination of a key member of staff taking maternity leave allied to the revised working arrangements during the COVID-19 lockdown has had a significant impact on handover.

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.

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 2021.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1. No overall change is expected to the total budget agreed at the December 2020 JC meeting.