

Introduction

The Scottish Government has built on the previous Executive's plans to use shared services as the key to making "efficiency savings" in the public sector. The "Efficient Government Initiative" was designed to deliver public sector savings of £500m by 2007-8 and £1 billion by 2009-10. The new Government initially committed itself to the same savings but the current economic crisis has seen shared services once again championed as the panacea for public services. This is despite the evidence that at best shared services provide savings only in the long term. The likely return of a Conservative UK government means that shared services will be an even more likely route to privatisation in local government.

Shared Services in Scotland

In June 2008 John Swinney approved £2.1 million for 5 shared services projects. Further details on these projects are in the September 2008 edition of Revitalise. <http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/revitalise/revitalisebull3.pdf>. Shared services are expected to grow across the UK. A report from Datamonitor indicates that the market for shared service projects will grow from £23.7billion to £38.1billion by 2012. Private sector companies see the public sector as the key areas of business growth in the near future.

The call for increased use of shared services continues despite the evidence of the difficulties experienced by the public sector with shared services initiatives. The Western Australian programme ended up two years late and millions of dollars over budget. Research indicates that initial costs of shared services programmes are underestimated and their introduction is in fact costly and complicated. The targets promised at the start are rarely met and savings mainly come from job losses. The job losses in regional areas of Western Australia are also affecting the viability of some communities. In the USA, where the private sector traditionally has a wider role in public services, shared services are also running into difficulties.

The government has published guidance on the impact of EU procurement rules on shared services in the public sector. This confirms that the general exemptions from competition are extremely narrow and makes it clear that the safest way for bodies to cooperate is via agreement between councils. EU competition rules mean that contracts could lead to private sector companies taking over services. UNISON has previously highlighted our concerns that shared services will lead to increased privatisation of service delivery.

The current financial crisis has seen many calls for both cuts in public spending and for greater privatisation of public services. Shared Services are again being touted as the best way forward. The Conservatives view the role of local government as a commissioning body rather than a services provider and view shared services particularly with IT as a way to facilitate these changes. The quarterly Revitalise bulletin will continue to update members on key shared services issues. Latest issue Spring 2009 <http://www.unison-scotland.org.uk/revitalise/revitalise8spring09.pdf>.

In 2007 UNISON surveyed branches about their employer's plans for shared services. Only ten branches replied giving us a limited picture of shared services in Scotland's public sector. UNISON has now used Freedom of Information legislation to ask local authorities directly to provide details of their current and future plans in this area. This paper will cover the responses in detail and will be supported by a shorter P and I Team briefing for branches. On request branches can be provided with a full copy of the response provided by their authority.

Local Authorities

This report lays out details from each authority's response in alphabetical order. Not all authorities have used the same definition of shared services for example Aberdeenshire claims to have no shared services or plans while involved in various forums with other councils that have been included in other responses. Many have included details of all their partnership working. Community Health Care Partnerships (CHCP) were also included in some responses but these are not included in this paper as this is a statutory requirement.

Aberdeen City

North East of Scotland Joint Public Sector Group

The North East Scotland Joint Public Sector Group (NESJPSG) formed in 2000. It comprises the Chief Executives (or equivalent) of Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Councils, NHS Grampian, Scottish Enterprise Grampian, Grampian Police and Grampian Fire & Rescue "to consider high level matters of great strategic significance to the geographical area for which they jointly have responsibility." No consultants have been contracted to undertake any work in this area.

Community Safety Partnership

The Council provides funding to a number of partner agencies to provide services, e.g. funding to the police which covers the salaries of an Inspector, Sergeant and PC forming their ASB Unit, a City Centre Police Inspector and 2 partnership analysts; funding to SACRO for Mediation and Reparation services, funding to Action for Children for Aberdeen Families Project which provides intensive support and supervision of 'troubled and troublesome' families; Safer Community Trust for Neighbourhood Watch support; Fire Service to deliver activity to reduce wilful fires. There are no consultants involved.

Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Forum

ACSEF (Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future) is a voluntary partnership between Aberdeen City and Shire Councils and Scottish Enterprise as well as representation from a variety of companies from the private sector. The partnership is represented by a Board of 15 members. The council leaders of Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Council are on the Board. Further details available online at:

<http://www.acsef.co.uk/uploads/reports/11/ACSEF%20action%20plan%20FINAL%20A4%20layout.pdf>

ACSEF has no consultants employed to advise on the operation of the "shared service" although a PR company has been contracted to promote the work of ACSEF and encourage more private sector companies to work with ACSEF to ultimately secure private sector funding.

Aberdeenshire

Despite being involved in many of the schemes listed by Aberdeen City Aberdeenshire claims to have no shared services plans

Angus

Tayside Procurement Consortium

The Tayside Procurement Consortium came out of the Efficient Government Initiative to develop joint procurement, including electronic procurement (e-procurement) across the Tayside councils of Angus, Dundee and Perth and Kinross

Currently the TPC is working with Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen Councils as the North East Hub. The TPC will now form part of the "Scotland Excel" arrangements for procurement of commodities commonly procured by all local authorities in Scotland.

Argyll and Bute

The council was awarded £150,000 to carry out a shared services diagnostic project in 2008. In October 2008 a plan to work with Highland, Dumfries and Galloway and Moray looking at property, customer management, rules based eligibility and assessment, procurement and managing contracts, workforce deployment admin and records management and managing change was drawn up. *They have yet to respond to my request for information as to where the project is now .See Dumfries and Galloway for more detail.*

Clackmannanshire

Stirling manages trading standards services for Clackmannanshire. There is also a joint project office with Stirling for *Woodland In and Around Town* 'til 2011

Shared services with Stirling and Falkirk :

- Shared usage of a jointly procured waste site at Polmaiseie
- Joint accident investigation unit
- Joint transport coordination unit
- Joint winter maintenance arrangements

Proposed schemes

Housing statutory right to repair: looking at a reciprocal agreement with Stirling. As yet no consultants have been employed. There are also early stage discussions about library and support services in schools and early stages of discussions with Stirling re joint recruitment campaign for adoption and fostering. Again no consultants have been contracted.

Dumfries and Galloway

Dumfries and Galloway are at the design stage of the national shared services diagnostic project. This is scheduled to run until August 2009. They are working closely with Argyll and Bute, Highland and Moray. The areas they are investigating are Customer Contact, Finance, Human Resources, Property, Delivering Excellence, Professionalising Support and Income Generation. They also propose to look at Procurement and Property at a later date. Serco Consulting have been appointed to provide programme support. The Programme Board now includes a representative from the joint trade unions. The rep is from UNISON.

Dundee

Dundee responded with a list of all their partnership working activities.

Initiative	Brief Narrative
Tayside Procurement Consortium	Partnership between Angus, Perth and Kinross and Dundee Councils to deliver an effective procurement service.
Kingspark Special School	Special school which educates pupils from Dundee and Angus Councils, with involvement of NHS Tayside.
Dundee Energy Recycling Ltd	PFI waste-to-energy project which deals annually with 100,000 tonnes of domestic waste from Dundee and Angus Councils.
Scientific Services	Provision of scientific services to Dundee City Council and other local authorities.
Community Alarm Service	Provision of 'out of hours' community alarm service for a number of local authorities.
Payroll Service	Dundee City Council provides a payroll service to Tayside Police, Tayside Fire and Rescue, Dundee College, Tayside Valuation Joint Board and Tay Road Bridge Joint Board.
Insurance and Risk Management	Dundee City Council provides an insurance and risk management service to the organisations listed under Payroll Service above.
Street Lighting Partnership	Partnership between Dundee City Council, Perth and Kinross Council and Tayside Contracts to deliver an integrated street lighting service.
Waste Disposal	Dundee City Council has an arrangement with Fife Council to use their landfill site for disposal of non-combustible waste
Angus and Dundee Convention Bureau	Jointly funded service between Dundee and Angus Councils to promote conference visits.
Business Gateway	Contract for provision of business support managed by Dundee City Council on behalf of Angus and Perth and Kinross Councils.
TayScreen Partnership	Promotes the area of Tayside and Fife for television and film activity.
Discover Opportunities Centre	Delivers employability services from Dundee City Council, Job Centre Plus, Careers Scotland and NHS Tayside
Document Archive Store	Dundee City Council operates an archive store on behalf of a number of organisations including NHS Fife, NHS Tayside, Tayside Police and Tayside Fire and Rescue.
Education Leadership Conference	Joint initiative between Angus and Dundee Councils to enhance leadership capacity among middle and senior managers.
Integrated Children's Services	Partnership between Council departments, NHS Tayside, Tayside Police, voluntary organisations and private sector to promote joint working on services for children and young people. Includes some co-location of services.
Children and Young People Protection Committee	Planning of child protection services. Includes representatives from Dundee City Council, Tayside

Initiative	Brief Narrative
	Police, NHS Tayside, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and the Voluntary sector.
Drug and Alcohol Action Team	Partnership to tackle drug and alcohol issues including Dundee City Council, Tayside Police, NHS Tayside and the voluntary sector.
Active Sports Programme	Partnership working to increase participation in sport and increase levels of physical activity within hard-to-reach groups, including Education and Leisure departments and NHS Tayside
Arts and Culture Partnership	Creative network of arts professionals working within schools to support arts and culture
Property Maintenance	Early discussions have taken place between Dundee City Council and NHS Tayside, Tayside Police and the University of Abertay regarding shared services around property maintenance, including ideas such as a joint "out-of-hours emergency" repairs service. This will be pursued during 2009.
Environmental Health and Trading Standards	Close working already exists between Dundee City Council and Angus and Perth and Kinross Councils via an agreement signed in 2004
'Scambusters' Scheme	Dundee City Council and North Lanarkshire co-host this national scheme investigating rogue traders. Dundee provides a base for operations north of the Tay
Primary Authority Partnership	Dundee City Council is currently working with Tesco Stores Ltd to form a Primary Authority Partnership (PA). The PA scheme has statutory backing under the auspices of the UK government's better regulation agenda.
Sharing of Financial Processes	Dundee City Council shares and collaborates on a range of financial processes with the Valuation Joint Board, Tay Bridge Joint Board and NHS Tayside Police Joint Board
Social Work	Dundee City Council are working with Angus and Perth and Kinross Councils on sharing staff development activity across related areas.
Data Sharing Partnership	Dundee City Council is working with NHS Tayside and Tayside Police in the delivery of the e-care agenda including Single Shared Assessment and Child Protection Messaging.
Tayside Criminal Justice Authority	Dundee City Council share a range of operational services across boundary areas where there are economies of scale with Tayside Police, NHS Tayside and Angus and Perth and Kinross Councils.
Jointly Commissioned Advocacy Service	Dundee City Council and NHS Tayside jointly commission an advocacy service for all service users on a city-wide basis.
Joint Community Equipment Centre	Dundee City Council and NHS Tayside operate a joint community equipment centre under single management along with an integrated Independent Living Centre.
Information Technology	Dundee City Council works with local employment and training partners on the Dundee Employability

Initiative	Brief Narrative
	Information System. The Local Authority also works with Tayside Police in respect of community safety information. There is also involvement with local Housing Associations regarding the Common Housing Register.
National Entitlement Card	Dundee City Council manages the national entitlement smartcard project on behalf of all Scottish local authorities for the joint procurement and issuing of smartcards to local government customers. For example for services such as travel concessions ,Young Scot, libraries etc.

East Ayrshire

The plan for a pan-Ayrshire ICT based project was rejected by the National Shared Services Board. East Ayrshire is though still participating in the review and continues to look at opportunities for further shared services. There is a Pan-Ayrshire Group involving the Leaders and Chief Executives of North, South and East Ayrshire councils, representatives from NHS Ayrshire and Arran, Strathclyde Police and Strathclyde Fire and Rescue to look at future joint delivery of services. Since 2008 a number of other areas of shared services/working have been developed:

- Minor works framework contract
- A70/A71 roads Joint Working
- Public Sector Property Group
- Ayrshire Joint Planning Steering Group
- Regional Safety Board
- Food safety week
- Review of Public Health Legislation
- National Assistance Act – funerals
- Ayrshire Economic Strategy Group

Initiatives being considered for future development are

- Decriminalising parking
- Real-time bus information
- Transport co-ordination initiative
- Park and Ride

No consultants have been employed.

East Dunbartonshire

Previous work has been carried out by East Dunbartonshire Council (EDC) with other Councils on the national Shared Services agenda. The major part of this took the form of a consortium of 5 Councils consisting of Falkirk, Stirling, Clackmannanshire and Perth & Kinross Councils as well as EDC, examining and developing the case for shared back office services. The business case for this project, however, was not compelling and was not supported by the Improvement Service. The Consultants engaged to support the consortium in this work were HEDRA.

The Council (along with all other Scottish Councils) is engaged in the Diagnostic Pathfinder Project. The outcomes from this work largely relate to improvements in internal working, customer service and efficiency. KPMG Consulting was engaged to provide some technical support. The Council is participating in discussions with a consortium of 8 Clyde Valley Councils (**East and West**

Dunbartonshire, North and South Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire, Glasgow and Inverclyde) reviewing the potential for shared services. This review is being led by Sir John Arbuthnott, A report on the findings of the review should be ready by the end of October 2009.

East Lothian (ELC)

East Lothian, Midlothian and West Lothian Councils had a contract with The City of Edinburgh Council for the servicing and maintenance of equipment in Craft Design and Technology (CDT) and Science Departments and Piano Tuning. In East Lothian, the CDT and Science Service was provided to all Secondary Schools and the Piano Tuning was for Secondary and Primary Schools.

The City of Edinburgh Council hosts ELC's Joint Equipment Store, which provides aids and equipment for people with disabilities. They also host ELC's emergency social work service, which provides out of hours support to people needing social work assistance.

East Renfrewshire

East Renfrewshire is participating in Clyde Valley Partnership study to review the potential for the delivery of shared services across the councils. As well as this the council sent details of its change programme with the aim "simplifying and standardising the way we work, with a view to seeking further opportunities to share services as we move forward".

They worked with Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Councils in 2008 to undertake the national diagnostic analysis (Value Chain Analysis) and are in regular discussions with the two councils, and others across Scotland, to assess scope for joint working.

The council sent an extensive list of shared services and partnership working arrangements some of which are copied below.

Community Care and Health

- Greater Glasgow Independent Living Equipment Service (GGILES) - partnership arrangement between East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, East Dunbartonshire and West Dunbartonshire Councils and Greater Glasgow & Clyde NHS for the provision of disability equipment for people living at home. GGILES greatly improves efficiency of service delivery by rationalising the previously separately managed equipment provision services across the area into one single central store. GGILES enables on-line ordering and real-time stock control. Improvements through shared services are found in stock-control, delivery and rates of recycling of equipment.
- Drug Treatment and Testing Order Team – service provided across East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde. The service is managed by East Renfrewshire CHCP with a co-located multi-disciplinary team with social work, addiction, nursing and GP members.
- Forensic Community Mental Health Team – provided across East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde. Managed by East Renfrewshire CHCP this service is based in an NHS facility with co-located social work and forensic community psychiatric nursing staff.
- Further examples from Criminal Justice across East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde include the Pathways Partnership Project (managed by Renfrewshire Council) for assessing and managing sexual

offenders and the Prison Throughcare Service (managed by Inverclyde Council).

- East Renfrewshire and Renfrewshire also share services in relation to the Arrest Referral Scheme, Community Alternatives Unit, and Court Social Work Services.
- REN 96 – swimming development club and programme for skilled swimmers, jointly funded with Renfrewshire Council. Both councils provide space in pools, and support participants to achieve a standard higher than could be reached by one authority alone.
- “Facing Dementia Together” project joint with Alzheimers Scotland and Renfrewshire Council.

Community Safety

- Civil Contingencies – joint service with Inverclyde and Renfrewshire, hosted by Renfrewshire Council.
- Provision of Community Warden safety service and ‘Campus Cops’ scheme joint with Strathclyde Police.
- CCTV monitoring station –hosting this service for Strathclyde Police and a dedicated police CCTV response team in place at defined peak periods.
- Safety Camera Partnership – Police and all Scottish councils
- Strathclyde Police "G" Division Community Police - work with the Council on a variety of projects including school talks, covert fly-tipping projects etc. There is also close liaison with Giffnock and Barrhead shift operations for assistance and guidance on issues of intelligence-gathering for trading standards and issues of litter, fly-tipping etc.

Environment (inc. Housing)

- E-planning
- Dams to Darnley Mill Country Park development – in partnership with Glasgow City Council, Scottish Water, Scottish Natural Heritage and other partners. Also have in place a litter and graffiti removal agreement and provide materials to assist in maintaining good presentation in the park.
- Carts River Valley Project jointly with Glasgow
- Archaeological Services
- GSO/M77 (Connect)
- RAUC/Susiephone/Symology – Roads service link with utility companies
- Planning & Building Control Services undertake the following joint work with other councils on:
 - Local Plans
 - Structure Plans
 - Archaeology
 - Natural Heritage
 - Access
 - Green Network Partnership
 - Whitelee Wind Farm and Access Project
- Braidbar and Greenlaw developments – involving a range of partners to develop new sites
- Glasgow Scientific Services provides analytical services. One of eleven partner authorities, with Glasgow City Council being the lead authority.
- Glasgow City Council Calibration and Test Centre – there is an agreement in place with Glasgow City Council for the provision of testing and calibration services.
- Glasgow & Clyde Valley Development Plan (formerly Structure Plan)

- Partnerships with other councils to develop a Biodiversity Strategy
- Provide grounds maintenance services for Strathclyde Fire & Rescue at Clarkston and Barrhead Fire Stations
- Provide grounds maintenance and technical advice for PPP schools managed by BAM (Williamwood HS; Woodfarm HS; Means Castle HS and Carlibar Primary).
- 3 Council partnership on Waste Strategy and Cleaning Operations, includes sharing of best practice and potential joint future working with Inverclyde and Renfrewshire Councils.
- Glasgow and Clyde Valley Future Options Group - 7 authorities working towards procurement of tertiary waste treatment process at Polmadie, Glasgow.
- SEPA - Duty of Care and fly tipping national enforcement and assistance to Council in advice, joint covert operations and dissuading of flytipping through intervention on council's behalf
- Virgin Media Group, BT and Scottish Power - provision of graffiti removal materials and permit ERC Graffiti Squad to remove defacement from their utility boxes. (Scottish Power also provide funding).
- Scotrail - liaison with Council on issues of litter and flytipping on railway property and to resolve public complaints lodged via Council's Cleansing Service
- Voluntary Groups – working with groups on request to provide litter picking materials, support and uplift for disposal (on occasions also provide support resource)
- Private Sector Waste Management Companies – use of specialist contractors for paper, glass/cans, waste disposal, garden waste, Civic Amenity Sites and the waste transfer station.
- Local Businesses and Chamber of Commerce - participation in Keep Scotland Beautiful's 'Tidy Business Standards' aimed at enhancing shop fronts and promoting increased environmental awareness.
- Care and Repair including Small Housing Repair Service - East Renfrewshire Council, Renfrewshire Council and Bridgewater Housing Association
- Energy Savings Trust Strategic Delivery Partnership - Energy Savings Trust, The Energy Saving Scotland Advice Centre, East Renfrewshire Council (Environment Department, Property & Technical Services, and Education Department)
- Membership of Energy Action Scotland - Advice and Assistance
- Save & Reward Scheme - Scottish Gas, East Renfrewshire Council (Cert Funding)
- Common Housing Register
- Rent Deposit Scheme
- Housing Needs and Demand Assessment - Work across the Glasgow and Clyde Valley. Includes joint funding for post and research.
- Housing Needs assessment with participation from Renfrewshire and Glasgow
- Recent research on housing needs of gypsy travellers with Glasgow and Clyde Valley authorities
- A8 nationals research jointly with Glasgow and other neighbouring authorities
- Joint work between Housing and CHCP on adaptations
- Joint work with West Lothian on developing Tenant Led Assessments
- City Building Glasgow – Kitchens, bathrooms and rewiring

Enterprise, Employment & Lifelong Learning

- Clyde Valley joint venture on learning and development.
- Shared recruitment portal – myjobscotland
- [Business Support programmes](#)
- [Supplier Development Programme](#)
- [West of Scotland Loan Fund](#) - [partnership with N&S Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, the 3 Ayrshires, E&W Dunbartonshire, Glasgow, Argyll & Bute](#)
- [Metro West Business Skills Subsidy – Glasgow, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire, N&S Lanarkshire, E&W Dunbartonshire, N, S and East Ayrshire](#)
- [Business Gateway – formal SLA partnership with Renfrewshire and Inverclyde for delivery of all local business gateway activities](#)
- [Employability – developing partnership activity with Renfrewshire](#)
- [LEADER – developing partnership activity with Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire and East Ayrshire Councils](#)
- Instrumental Music Service provides percussion tuition to tutors and pupils in Orkney via a live link using video conferencing facilities.
- ERC Catering Service provide REHIS training to bodies outside ERC such as pre-5 partners

Procurement

- Are an active partner in Scotland Excel ABC with the 12 ex-Strathclyde councils.
- Are involved in Procurement Scotland and use the Public Contracts Scotland Procurement Notices Portal.
- Are involved in cross-council procurement projects in Category C Commodities.
- Co-operative procurement of library resources e.g. 60% savings on Oxford University Press online reference resources, as part of a national deal for Scottish libraries, facilitated by the Scottish Library and Information Service.
- Shared services delivered by NHS and jointly commissioned by more than one Council, e.g. audiology service, Speech and Language Therapy
- Procurement of vehicles, vehicle hire, vehicle parts and tyres in conjunction with Scotland Excel.
- Procurement of fuel in conjunction with OGC (Office of Government Commerce).
- Roads and Transportation service are involved in the following west of Scotland joint procurement initiatives:
 - Winter Weather Forecasting
 - Salt Procurement
 - Jet Patching
 - Blacktop Material
 - Electricity
 - GSO/M77 contract

Other

- Non-Domestic Rates Administration - in December 2005 entered into a partnership arrangement with Renfrewshire Council for the administration of Non Domestic Rates, producing financial savings and economies of scale.
- Office of Fair Trading - carry out credit licence checks for them.

- Counter fraud activity – joint-working between the Council and DWP. A number of recent cases have also required cross-border working with neighbouring councils.
- Annual Report and Accounts – have incorporated the Police, Fire, SPT, Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board and Strathclyde Concessionary Transport Scheme as associates to the annual accounts.
- Other partnership work is also ongoing with a range of partners, including:
 - Roads and Lighting Faults (RALF)
 - Transport Scotland
 - Scottish Water
 - SEPA
 - Scottish Natural Heritage
 - Historic Scotland
 - Illegal Money Lending Unit -a national resource that the council would refer illegal money lending activities to.
 - Health & Safety Executive - Seek advice from and liaison with the Health & Safety Executive on health & safety issues.
 - Scambusters - a national resource aimed at removing rogue traders trading across local authority boundaries.
 - Consumer Direct - ERC refers consumers to them and they refer more serious cases to the Council.
 - Scottish Government Animal Health Office - a memorandum of understanding is in place regarding animal welfare issues
 - Care Commission - A memorandum of understanding is in place with the Care Commission regarding premises that they register e.g. care homes

IT user groups.

- Scottish Covalent (performance management IT system) Users Group
- SEEMIS – 27 councils across Scotland use the services of the SEEMIS group to provide education management software and MIS services which are used by the Education Department and schools. There are also opportunities through SEEMIS to share expertise and data for benchmarking purposes.
- Northgate Council Tax and Benefits User Group with another 3 authorities and the IT supplier to develop the product and liaise with DWP.
- Tribal Asset Management – link with North Ayrshire Council to ensure software meets Scottish legislative requirements.
- CATO User Group re: billing software
- GGP User Group – all Scottish councils using GGP GIS to share best practice
- GLOW – development of a national digital network, which offers opportunities for teaching staff and pupils to share resources, materials and experiences.

Edinburgh

City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) are involved in a wide range of partnership working examples include:

- The Community Equipment Service is a partnership between the CEC, NHS Lothian, East and Midlothian Councils to provide equipment that allows people, with illness or disabilities, to remain living at home.
- The Joint partnership out-of-hours social work service with health was first established in 1991. It is shared between Edinburgh, Midlothian and East

Lothian Councils and managed by CEC and jointly financed. It costs £1,000,000 to run.

- Since 1996 Revenues & Benefits has managed the billing and collection service for non domestic rates for Midlothian Council. IT and management is recharged to Midlothian.
- West Lothian and Midlothian Councils currently share a Taxi Exam Centre. East Lothian Council has recently expressed an interest in joining them.
- CEC is taking a lead role in establishing a hub Pathfinder for the South East of Scotland - promoting a multi agency approach to joined up services in local communities. This will bring together local authorities, NHS Boards, other community planning partners and ultimately the private sector to provide purpose-built premises for delivering better local services.
- John Swinney announced a commitment to provide £1.4 million to fund a consultancy exercise to look at shared services in South East Scotland. KPMG provided support
- Social work: Feasibility between Lothian authorities on sharing social services. Logica provided support.

Falkirk

- Forth Valley GIS (LTD): A joint company established by Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire Council. This provides GIS services to the 3 partner Councils as well as a number of other Councils and public bodies in Scotland. (**GIS: geographical information system**, captures, stores, analyzes, manages, and presents data that is linked to location.)
- Forth Valley Purchasing Consortium: Joint purchasing framework for Stirling, Clackmannanshire, Central Scotland Police and Central Scotland Fire and Rescue Service and for some contracts - other Councils.
- eCare project :Partnership between 3 Councils and NHS Forth Valley to progress eCare.
- Payroll and Pension Services: For a variety of Central Scotland public agencies.
- The council is also participating in the Pension Scheme Pathfinder Project. This is being developed under the auspices of the Improvement Services in conjunction with Audit Scotland. The overall objective of the project is to establish if there are any opportunities to rationalise and improve the management of the Local Government Pension Scheme in Scotland.
- Payroll and HR: Payroll and HR are looking at the possibility of establishing an internal shared service centre that could improve processing efficiencies.
- Winter Maintenance: Work between Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils to provide a shared out of hours winter maintenance service.

Fife

Fife Diagnostic Project has identified 4 areas to further explore:

- Procurement: working with City of Edinburgh, Scottish Borders and KPMG
- Flexible working “supported” by BT

- Delivery models: looking at trusts, Limited Liability Vehicles and the role of private and third sector providers
- Customer management: supported by Price Waterhouse Cooper
- Fife is also looking at increased partnership working.
- Together with the Scottish Ambulance service they are looking at joint fuel sights and having repairs done by Fife Constabulary.
- Using a staff bank shared with NHS Fife Catering to provide cover for holiday and sickness absence.
- Taxi contract: Fife wide all partners having standard rates within the contract
- Driver training and assessment Service accreditation being sought by council

Glasgow

Glasgow already has in place a Customer Care Centre, Shared Services Centre (back office) and ACCESS LLP (IT and Property services) that support direct council services and the Arms Length Organisations. Glasgow is also participating with the other Clyde Valley Authorities exploring joint working on direct service delivery. See East Dunbartonshire and East Renfrewshire for more detail.

Highland

Highlands Corporate Improvement Programme (CIP) is intended to run from 2009 to 2012. The programme is currently focusing on internal shared services, process improvement and use of technology. The council view this as “creating beneficial foundations to enable further external sharing in the future”. They are working with Moray, Dumfries and Galloway and Argyll and Bute, sharing best practice as they develop the programme. Highland is involved in NOSLA (See Aberdeen section) and

- Providing external audit services to Western Isles and Shetland
- Administering community insurance schemes for Aberdeenshire, Moray, Angus, Argyll and Bute, Orkney and Western Isles Councils
- Direct Debit and Council Tax benefit promotions with Moray and Scottish Water
- Highland Housing Alliance: a private limited company co-owned by the council and local Registered Social Landlords and Trusts to promote housing developments

Inverclyde

Inverclyde is one of the councils in the Clyde Valley Partnership. They are also investigating a pan-Renfrewshire Civil Contingencies Service

Their “Modernisation and Efficiency” programme is progressing. The plans include

- an integrated HR/payroll system (plans to work with Perth and Kinross could not be agreed)
- e-planning
- Corporate asset management system
- A Corporate Electronic Documents and Records Management System
- E procurement
- Using new technology to facilitate more mobile and flexible working.

Midlothian

- City of Edinburgh Council administers billing and collection of non-domestic rates
- Orchard and Shipman provide private sector housing leasing service for temporary accommodation
- Current shared procurement with Lothian local authorities and third sector organisations is being wound down in favour of Scotland Excel
- SEEMIS: Education management system The shared IT service is used by 25 Local Authorities
- E-planning project to deliver on line planning processes across Scotland now partially operational expected to expand throughout 2009.
- Rest Centre Software: local authorities and Lothian and Borders police plus Scottish Government have set up an IT admin system for the registration and analysis of rest centre residents. This has two years funding from April 2009
- City of Edinburgh and East Lothian working to shared contract for Residual Waste Management. So far a Mandate, Brief and approach have been agreed and they are now working on a joint business case
- All 3 Lothian authorities plus Scottish Borders are working on a review for potential joint service in social work. They are looking at professional fostering, 24/7 adult social care, strategic commissioning and workforce development to examine the potential for joint services
- There is also a Person Centred Planning Innovation fund project with East Lothian and a project board has been set up to review potential for shared services across adult and children's services including criminal justice

Moray

Moray Council is working with Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute, Highland, Orkney and Western Isles to undertake a feasibility study into shared services for revenues and benefits (NOSLA). HEDRA were employed to provide a feasibility study which was completed in December 2008. The findings of the report are now under consideration.

North Ayrshire

North Ayrshire is exploring many different areas for shared services and partnership working. Shared Services in place and planned include:

- North Ayrshire Council works with NHS Ayrshire and Arran and Strathclyde Police on Child Protection.
- North Ayrshire Council is working with Registered Social Landlords to develop a Common Housing Register, due to be launched spring 2009.
- Human Resources has been involved in 4 joint working projects working in partnership with South and East Ayrshire Councils. All are for joint provision of services supplied by a single external provider. These services are for:
 - a) Occupational Health and Counselling Services
 - b) Media Advertising by the 3 Councils
 - c) Provision of First Aid Training
 - d) Provision of Pre-retirement Training (NHS Ayrshire and Arran is also a partner)
- Within Education, there are four areas of shared services: Technician Support Service for schools - 3 Ayrshire Councils Fit Ayrshire Babies - 3

Ayrshire Councils Childcare and Recreation Information Service (CARIS) - 3 Ayrshire Councils Ayrshire Archives - 3 Ayrshire Councils SEEMIS - Management Information System provided to 28 Councils

- Legal & Protective Services operate shared services with East Ayrshire and South Ayrshire Council on Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Building Standards.
- The Brooksby Medical Resource Centre at Largs, due to open April 2009, is a shared service with the NHS.
- North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire and East Ayrshire Councils have a contract in place for fresh bread and a collaborative contract with other surrounding authorities for the purchase of road materials via Scotland Excel.
- North Ayrshire Council Human Resources is a partner in the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Group which is looking at opportunities for joint working on learning and development. At the moment there are no plans arising from this partnership group.
- South and East Ayrshire Councils to establish the Ayrshire Joint Planning Service. The formation of this was agreed at the Council Meeting on 10 September 2008. This will replace the previous arrangements for the Ayrshire Joint Structure Plan, no longer a requirement under the revised Planning regime.

No consultancy companies have been involved in any of these projects or in considering shared services.

North Lanarkshire

- eCare: Lanarkshire Data Sharing Partnership - delivering a range of shared services including shared assessments for care and child protection messaging. Partners NLC, SLC, NHS Lanarkshire, Strathclyde Police and SCRA
- "Supplier Development Programme Partners: NLC, South Lanarkshire Council, Glasgow City Council, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire North Ayrshire, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde, Angus Council, Perth & Kinross Council, Fife Council
- Community Enterprise in Strathclyde
- Glasgow City Council Pathfinder project NLC, SLC, Renfrewshire, Glasgow, East Dunbartonshire
- North Lanarkshire's Working: Contact Centre delivering services on behalf of partners to support residents back to work. NLC, NHS Lanarkshire, Motherwell, Coatbridge and Cumbernauld colleges, Routes to Work Ltd, North Lanarkshire Volunteer Centre.

Orkney

Orkney Council and NHS are working together on capital projects. Their aim is to set up a Community Interest Company- Orkney Infrastructure CIC jointly owned by both bodies. Shared support services plans include continuation of joint learning and development, communications and procurement posts. Efficient government funding means that further areas are now being explored. They aim to set up Orkney Public Services Limited by June 2009 and Information Systems, HR and Finance functions progressively transferring from October 2009. Staff will be **seconded** to the new organisation.

Perth and Kinross

The following arrangements are in place with other Councils

- Tayside Contracts – shared provision of services (including school meals, roads maintenance) with Dundee City and Angus Councils
- Tayside Procurement Consortium – shared procurement function and related projects with Dundee City and Angus Councils
- National Recruitment Portal – shared internet recruitment portal with majority of other Scottish Councils, co-ordinated by the Improvement Service
- There is a project currently being developed to share the publication of Public Information Notices with other Councils on a national web portal

There are currently no consultancy companies contracted to undertake work relating to Shared Services

Renfrewshire

- Renfrewshire Council has provided the Non Domestic Rates service on behalf of East Renfrewshire Council since December 2005.
- The council is in the process of working on a Construction Procurement Strategy with Inverclyde, East Dunbartonshire, West Dunbartonshire and East Renfrewshire Councils, but this has not yet been formally approved.
- Following on from the national diagnostic exercise supported by the Improvement Service, a number of areas are being considered for service improvement. These are:
 - Customer Management
 - Information Management
 - Property Asset Management
 - Transport
 - Procurement
 - Mobile and Remote Working

Currently business cases and proposals are at an early stage and the focus is on internal standardisation and service improvement rather than shared services. However, it may be that some shared services proposals affecting one or more of these areas will be developed in future. External support has been received from Price Waterhouse Cooper and from Assiso.

In November 2008, through their individual Boards, Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and East Renfrewshire Councils approved arrangements to establish a fully integrated Joint Civil Contingencies Service for the area. On 1 April 2009, officers from the three councils will combine under a single lead authority, Renfrewshire.

The consultants were Hexagon Research and Consulting in association with Paul Lowenberg Management Consultants

Scottish Borders

Borders have provided extensive details on current internal and external sharing initiatives and collaborative projects.

Property & Facilities Management

- Joint framework for the hiring of external maintenance contractors. NHS Borders will also use this in the future
- SBC using NHS Borders DSO for some maintenance work

- SBC looking to undertake cleaning of Health Centres in the Borders for NHS
- SBC looking to provide catering to remotely located NHS Borders facilities
- SBC and NHS are looking to share a Carbon Management Project Manager to implement their respective Carbon Management Plans
- SBC looking to provide a site for a new health centre at Lauder in return for new changing facilities and car parking to service neighbouring recreational facilities
- Property & Facilities Management and Social Work are engaged in a project to relocate the Child Protection Unit which will include Social Work, Police, Children's Reporter and NHS Borders
- Property & Facilities Management and BIU working with the Scottish Government to provide a Joint Drop In Centre at Peebles to enable civil servants to work remotely

Passenger Transport Unit (PTU)

- SBC is a member of the Borders Community Transport Network which includes voluntary transport providers (Gala Wheels, Red Cross, WRVS), NHS Borders and Scottish Ambulance Service
- Borders Community Transport Network will work together to develop the Borders Passenger Transport Review
- PTU delivers services on behalf of Borders College and meet on a regular basis to review transport provision and integrate transport where possible

Social Work

- SBC Social Work and NHS Borders planning to co-locate at an extended health centre at Jedburgh
- SBC Social Work and Midlothian Council are developing a joint Workforce Planning & Development Programme, which will deliver joint training opportunities, joint VQ assessment centre and economies of scale for the purchase of various training courses and materials

Business Improvement Unit (BIU)

- Currently working with Edinburgh and Fife on the South East Scotland Procurement Shared Services
- A joint equalities and diversity post has been created between BIU and Health
- Community Safety (including Anti-Social Behaviour Unit and Warden Services) co-locating with Police with the possibility of Fire and Health being involved in future

Emergency Planning

- Joint risk assessment and information sharing with key public bodies as identified in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Working with public utility providers to share information for emergency planning purposes
- Working with Police Strategic Co-ordination Groups to provide strategic direction and collaboration within emergency planning
- SBC is part of the Lothian and Borders structure which collaborates on plan development, training, exercising, mutual aid and generic operating procedures
- Lothian and Borders group are currently working to adopt common practices across 5 local authorities for the management of emergency rest centres

Corporate Resources

- Collaborative working with Dumfries & Galloway on all aspects of IT (including South of Scotland Broadband Project)
- IT working with SE Scotland LA's on IT application sharing

Planning

- Strategic Development Plan for Edinburgh and South East Scotland (joint working with Edinburgh, Lothians, Fife and Borders)

Technical Services

- Developing an integrated waste facility between Edinburgh, Lothian's and Borders
- Waverley Project - deliver a new railway to Midlothian and the Borders
- Working with Tweed Management to co-ordinate and manage sustainable flood management in the Tweed Catchment Area
- SBC Contracts working in partnership with CEMEX UK to manage and maintain the road network
- Working with partners to reduce the cost of coated and dry-road stone including fuller use of both partners plant and vehicle assets

South Ayrshire

South Ayrshire responded to state that it does not have any shared services plans. The sections on North and East Ayrshire give an overview of some of the partnership working in Ayrshire which indicates that this may change in the future.

South Lanarkshire

South Lanarkshire sees itself as a leader of the shared services agenda. The National Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Infrastructure and

Clyde Valley Learning and Development programmes are two examples of their lead role. Other areas included in their response are:

Social Care Emergency Cover

The council will become a stand alone organisation in this respect leaving the shared service offered by Glasgow after an audit of the service. They are however involved with the GGiles application for independent living equipment service.

Joint Procurement

Special Interest /User groups for commodities for both category A and B goods and services, accessing contracts via Excel and importantly those offered nationally by the Office of Government Commerce.

Transport

Members of the Strathclyde Passenger Transport grouping. SPT is responsible for managing the provision of Entitlement Cards for Free and Concessionary Transport for older people. They run this on behalf of the former Strathclyde authorities.

Community Services

- Use the national CATS call centre
- share an animal welfare officer with some of the surrounding Councils
- CATS shares intelligence and undertake joint project work to deal with trading issues (across Council boundaries)
- Land Services share intelligence and undertake joint project work to deal with tipping
- Children games – joint board to implement

Shared ICT infrastructure

The Council provides a shared payroll application hosted within the council data centre at Caird Street Hamilton. There are three customers Strathclyde Fire and Rescue, the Leisure Trust and the Lanarkshire Joint Valuation Board. The council is currently at the almost final stages of an agreement with South Ayrshire Council to provide an integrated HR/Payroll service to their users. They hope to host the technology with the others as remote users.

They have pursued a programme to host other organisations “computers” within the data centre in return for an income. Currently we host the National Infrastructure for Scotland, the University of the West of Scotland, Scottish Government ISIS and are about to embark on an agreement with West Lothian for the provision of Disaster Recovery services. Discussions are well advanced to host the SEEMIS hardware within the data centre. SEEMIS is the curriculum solution for 24 councils and South Lanarkshire are the lead. Private companies are also exploring the offering where they have no Scottish presence for data centres.

The Council has not employed consultants in relation to shared services.

Shetland

The council replied that there is no overall Shared Service Plan or Scheme, and no consultancies have been engaged to, or are planned to, undertake this work.

However, the Council then followed the response with more information indicating it has in place Service Level Agreements with local Trusts and the NHS Shetland Board in relation to certain services, particularly the provision of ICT

services. The Council has a number of shared service policies with the NHS Shetland Board and voluntary organisations, particularly in relation to social care and community work services, including Community Health and Care, Children and Young People's Services, Child Protection, Community Planning and Community Safety.

Stirling

The council indicated that there is an informal arrangement at the moment with Clackmannanshire Council on Trading Standards but there are no other plans to extend shared services working. There is more detail of work in this area in the information provided by Clackmannanshire.

West Dunbartonshire

The response was based on the recorded information collected in the middle of 2007. The new Shared Service Strategy, (agreed October 2008) is not yet available in detail. The Shared Service strategy includes commitment to consultation with stakeholders. The response emphasised that the implementation of the new strategy will involve consultation and that this consultation must include relevant staff and trade unions.

Work has been taking place on the initial identification of opportunities for streamlining services. This is part of a national diagnostics initiative co-ordinated through the Improvement Service. Shared Services, (primarily between an individual Council's different departments), are one option which may result from this - but there may be other approaches. There have been no decisions as yet in West Dunbartonshire on any plans for Shared Services as part of this work.

There are also some early developments being co-ordinated by the Clyde Valley Community Planning Partnership. West Dunbartonshire Council is participating in the Clyde Valley partnership.

West Dunbartonshire Council has no contracts with any consultancy companies to undertake any work in this area.

Details from the new 2008 strategy include

“West Dunbartonshire Council has made a commitment to introducing an overarching Shared Service Strategy which will set the context for the identification and development of shared service opportunities.

Until this point, West Dunbartonshire Council has undertaken shared service developments both as a participant in national & regional initiatives, and as an individual local authority. These include:

- at a national level, e procurement and e planning
- at a regional level, the criminal justice partnership
- at a local level, services for older people and those with learning disabilities, addictions and mental health issues, maintenance arrangements for traffic signals and bus shelters, homeless services, a health improvement officer and a biodiversity officer.”

Western Isles

Western Isles Council has been developing a shared services strategy with NHS Western Isles. They have categorised proposals with a traffic light system. Those

that are considered “Green” i.e. where sharing is possible and further work should take place to explore these options.

SERVICE	STATUS	COMMENTS	PRIORITY
Procurement advice and support (including e-procurement)	GREEN	Potential for sharing technical support locally. Should be considered as NHSWI prepares Procurement Strategy	1
Buying goods and services	GREEN	Potential for sharing technical support locally. Should be considered as NHSWI prepares Procurement Strategy	1
Patient/Client Travel	GREEN	Clear potential benefits from sharing booking of travel & possibly accommodation	1
Mail management	GREEN	Scope for sharing processing & distribution of mail	2
Reprographics	GREEN	Scope for sharing printing & reprographics services	2
Janitor/Caretaking/Portering/Council Officers	GREEN	Potential for sharing services. Should be investigated	2
Local transport (including taxis)	GREEN	Movement of staff / visitors / Members and some patients / clients in and around Stornoway	2
Service Access Points	GREEN	Potential scope for sharing services once Comhairle SAPs are in place	3
Debt Recovery	GREEN	Worth further exploration, but NHS has limited debts	3
Trust Funds / Endowments	GREEN	Potential for sharing administration, but not a significant service.	3

Conclusion

Local Authorities are involved in a wide range of shared activities and are working with a range of organisations to develop closer more joined up working. Recent development in Information and Communications Technology have opened a wide range of different ways of working.

UNISON fully supports partnership working and efficient delivery of public services. What we are concerned about though is the current blinkered way that many are looking at this issue. Technology offers many opportunities but there are risks if the wrong routes are chosen.

- Loss of jobs particularly from rural areas moving to centre
- Loss of local control and democratic accountability
- Tensions between local and national initiatives
- Local suppliers may be excluded from opportunities/Not enough competition to prevent large companies gaining control
- Savings figures not robust and costs underestimated

Key Concerns:

- Privatisation via sharing with private provider of services
- Privatisation via EU procurement rules forcing the shared service provider to go to open bidding
- Staff moving to new employer, Change of employer, changes in terms and conditions, relocation, job losses.

Shared Services are likely to be a key bargaining issue for the foreseeable future. Branches are encouraged to ensure that they are fully aware of the plans in their local authority and to organise appropriately. Please contact Kay Sillars if you would like a copy of your authority's full response.

For further details contact:

Dave Watson – d.watson@unison.co.uk

Kay Sillars – k.sillars@unison.co.uk