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Friday, 10 February 2017

2020 PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the 2020 Partnership Joint Committee held in the Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Coleford on Friday, 10 February 2017 at 10.00 am.

Present

Chairman Councillor Patrick Molyneux

Vice Chairman Councillor Lynden Stowe

Councillors Wendy Flynn, Christopher Hancock, James Mills, Brian Robinson and Roger Whyborn

Officers

David Neudegg, Managing Director
Ralph Young, 2020 Programme Director
Bill Oddy, Shared Public Protection Project Manager
Frank Wilson, Chair of the Client Officer Group
Julie Jones, 2020 Partnership Clerk
Tony Bees, 2020 Partnership Clerk

1. APOLOGIES

These minutes are not a verbatim record, but comprise the main points that members made. They are recorded in agenda item order for clarity.

For these meetings the following acronyms will always be used.

PJC – Partnership Joint Committee

GOSS – GO Shared Services

CBC – Cheltenham Borough Council

CDC – Cotswold District Council

FODDC – Forest of Dean District Council

WODC – West Oxfordshire District Council

Cllr Moyneux, chairman of the committee, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Colin Dingwall.

2. URGENT BUSINESS

The chairman identified no items of urgent business.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2016 were confirmed and signed as an accurate record.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Managing Director commented that senior officers at the meeting might have an interest in item 7 if the committee wished to discuss individuals. Should that occur the relevant officers would leave the meeting for that item, which the committee would consider under exempt business.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

6. MEMBER QUESTIONS

No member questions had been received, but Cllrs Hogan and Leppington from the Forest of Dean District Council and present at the meeting said that

they had not been aware of the item and asked that all councillors at FODDC receive agenda items notification in the future.

The chairman replied that he would ensure that this would happen in the future.

7. COMPANY GROUP STRUCTURES AND ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Upon invitation the Managing Director presented report PJC.13, putting the report in context. He had met individually with officers and councillors over the previous three months to discuss future opportunities to do things differently where relevant, so the report was a reflection of the general thinking coming from those meetings. The partnership intended the company boards to be established and meeting by April 2017, so the appointment of directors and legal documentation was underway. The structures contained in the report only covered executive roles, as it was too early to add any detail below. He announced that the partnership would advertise in the following week for independent non-executive directors, thus beginning the process that the council leaders would end by appointing before the end of March. The report outlined the initial roles of the company boards, which would in future consider any changes should they be necessary. The report recommended the adoption of a redundancy and voluntary early retirement (VER) approach scheme as outlined in paragraph 5.6 that might ease the process between now and the autumn, supporting individuals while applying a consistent business case across the partnership. Previously there had been an informal understanding that two years was a reasonable payback time for redundancy, but the report proposed clearer guidance. The proposal would only affect CDC, FODDC and WODDC, because all relevant employees, including GOSS staff were employed by those councils.

The chairman viewed this report as a transition stage towards the ultimate operation of the Teckal companies.

Cllr Robinson asked that if there were to be a common redundancy policy, would it not adversely affect staff from partners with different terms and conditions of employment.

The Managing Director replied that he was aware of the FODDC conditions, which would not have an effect, because all instances would need to provide a sound business case and FODDC ones may still achieve payback within two years. The partnership could consider specific cases that did not meet the policy but these would need approval from the Joint Committee. In any event, the arrangements would only be used for the period leading up to the operational start of the companies.

Cllr Whyborn said that he was comfortable with the transitional arrangements, although he was concerned that it was not good practice to have the same person fulfilling operations director and finance director roles, as proposed for the support services company. The move might lead to a conflict of interest, so the legal team needed to be happy that this was not the case. Moreover there was a useful creative tension in good companies between the finance and operations director, which would be lost. He proposed an amendment to add to recommendation b) the words '**subject to risk reviews of the options**'

The chairman understood and believed that in an ideal world starting from scratch the two roles might be distinct. However, the partnership was working from its current position and it was important to implement a structure in a lean way, avoiding additional senior level roles. He cited the work at FODDC in reducing the number of senior managers and wished to keep that going. He thought that the partnership had within it people with the skills sets and knowledge to set up the companies, but going forward he agreed that the companies should regularly scrutinise and amend their structures where necessary.

Cllr Stowe agreed that it was important to maintain lean structures and agreed that the partnership already contained people with the right skills and experience, gained from setting up Ubico and GOSS. There was therefore no immediate need to look elsewhere for expertise, but it was important to note that the structures were not set in stone, the strength of the partnership being its evolving nature.

Cllr Robinson agreed, although he said that if the companies began trading, the organisation would need to have a better understanding of the creative tensions mentioned and be able to adjust.

The Managing Director confirmed that the legal team had given the opinion that the issue presented no legal conflict of interest, although he agreed that the organisation needed to constantly ask if it was doing the right thing. Any potential conflicts may increase when major contracts were due for renewal. The organisation would need to address ethical policy and follow best practice.

Answering a question from Cllr Hogan from Forest of Dean District Council regarding sub-regional areas and the Forest of Dean being an 'outlier', he explained that the organisation would need to adapt to working in two different county areas, which senior managers had indicated they felt was advantageous, citing health boards as an example. He acknowledged that there had always been a challenge with the geographical distance covered by the partnership, so the key issue of how councils communicated to address an issue that would never completely disappear.

Cllr Mills agreed that cross-border work could be beneficial. He had found that Gloucestershire was further along than Oxfordshire in one area, which he had

found useful to mention in meetings. He was confident in the evolving nature of the organisation that looked for continual improvement.

Cllr Whyborn commented that he was keen to keep the organisation lean. He envisaged the first of the risk reviews mentioned in his amendment occurring before the companies took over functions from the councils. He acknowledged that the committee could not bind its successors.

He agreed with recommendation d) regarding payback time, although he saw a risk at senior officer level if flexible retirement were spread over a long period of time, unless a good succession plan was in place.

He proposed a further friendly amendment to recommendation d) to add the following words ***'as set out in paragraph 5.6 of the report and appropriate delegation in each case'***.

The chairman believed that the amendment added clarity.

Cllr Flynn recognised that new ways of working could represent challenges, pointing to the risk of losing staff, as at paragraph 5.4 and the HR implications as at paragraph 7.1. She asked that if there were a capability issue regarding any of the appointments, was it possible to look externally.

The chairman thought that as a principle the organisation would always look for the best person for each position.

The Managing Director added that while there was ring-fencing for the posts, there was not a right for any individual to be given a job. He commented that there would be cost implications for appointing externally, which would be made clear to the council leaders, without prejudgement, before they appointed. The situation would be different if the organisation ended up with a vacancy.

The chairman asked if councillors at other venues had any questions.

RESOLVED – to

- a) *note the contents and conclusions of the report.*
- b) *approve the draft structure for the companies as set out within the report for consultation with staff, subject to risk reviews of the options.*
- c) *authorise the HR Manager to finalise Job Descriptions and Person Specifications and invite internal applications for the roles.*
- d) *approve a partnership policy for early/flexible retirement and voluntary redundancy for those staff at risk of redundancy as set out in paragraph 5.6 of the report and appropriate delegation in each case.*
- e) *delegate to the Managing Director in consultation with the relevant Council Leaders the appointment of candidates, and agreement of the final company structures.*

- f) to receive a report on the financial implications of the transition to the company structure at the conclusion of the process.

8. 2017/18 BUDGETS AND SERVICE PLANS

Upon invitation the chair of the Client Officer Group (the COG chair) presented report PJC.14, in the absence of the Group Manager for GO Shared Services. He highlighted the key changes and pressures, particularly relating to inflation and pension costs. He emphasised that they related to the joint committee rather than individual partner councils. There had been minor amendments to costs made as a result of the activity based costing exercise, which had been discussed with all client officers.

Cllr Robinson asked why the pension collection for the FODDC had increased more than the other councils, and if the activity based costing exercise was based simply on transactions or challenges.

The COG chair explained that there had been an increase in the Gloucestershire actuarial rate and that CDC's contribution rate was lower due to premiums for its own ill health insurance scheme. WODC was a member of a different local government pension scheme.

He explained that GOSS had done some work, looking at where it had been at the beginning of the initiative. Changes, albeit modest ones, had happened and the exercise had been on the whole transaction based, but some time based assessments, identifying where relative costs were. Those at CBC had been higher than anticipated (eg debtors and procurement) and officers would undertake more work.

He continued his presentation of appendix A, where scrutiny committees had noticed a lower level of performance within the customer service function. This had been due in part to new ERS work and waste management changes. He reported that there had been significant improvement through the second quarter, which was continuing (agenda page 39, paragraph 9). He said that the organisation had recognised that it had not got things right initially, but had made changes, which were taking effect.

RESOLVED –

- a) *That the Joint Committee approves the Medium Term Financial Strategy for the 2020 Partnership as set out at Appendix A;*
- b) *That the Joint Committee notes that a detailed budget for 2017/18 will be presented at the next meeting;*
- c) *That the Joint Committee notes the progress on approving the Service Level Agreements for 2017/18 and authorises the Managing Director to agree the final versions with the respective Client Officers at each*

authority, any issues to be reported back to the Joint Committee on an exceptions basis.

- d) That the Joint Committee notes the Client Officer Group Minutes of 9th December which provide assurance over service performance for Quarter 2 of 2016/17.

9. PUBLIC PROTECTION - END OF PROJECT REPORT

Upon invitation the Shared Public Protection Project Manager (the Manager) presented report PJC.15. (power point presentation attached to the minutes).

The chairman thanked the manager and his team for excellent work, commenting that it was good to see that the project had been delivered on time, under budget and to its business case. He thought that the Environmental and Regulatory Service (ERS) project represented a solid base going forward.

Cllr Robinson commented that it was excellent to see technology used in an effective way, even out 'in the field'. He then asked how the partnership was engaging with councillors, who were often the focal point for issues being raised. He also asked if the 14 per cent of customers not happy with the service mentioned specific areas needing improvement.

The Manager replied that officers regularly spoke to the chairmen of Licensing Committees and looked at how best to engage with Cabinet portfolio holders. Employees also monitored local situations using the local knowledge of councillors, but were aware that individual officers were not always available, because some worked across partner councils.

The Managing Director added that the matter had been raised at all three partner councils, commenting that the biggest saving had been achieved by phone calls being directed to the single point of Customer Service(CS), which he conceded did have an impact on direct dial to individual officers when councillors were treated the same as residents. However, because councillors were representatives and advocates for people in their wards, the service had just introduced a change, so that councillors could contact the duty officer immediately, when they identified themselves as councillors. The new model needed to be monitored, and he asked for continued councillor feedback to ensure that it worked or to identify any changes required.

The chairman commented that the new way of contacting ERS was a cultural change that needed to ensure that daily business was done effectively, while finding a mechanism to engage more with councillors.

Cllr Hogan said that it was essential for officers to inform ward members when an issue had been resolved and to engage with town and parish councils. The Managing Director agreed, explaining that after speaking to councillors in the partnership he intended to hold community sessions and send information to parish and town councils.

Cllr Leppington asked how confident the Manager was in the CS staff's level of training in handling the 61 per cent of ERS calls they handled.

The Manager explained that the matter was ongoing and that CS staff were dealing with basic information and sending out forms. They were working to scripts that were adjusted as the service evolved and passed on to ERS staff issues they could not resolve.

The Managing Director added that the partnership was continually learning and was aware that the more that was expected of CS staff the greater the need for upskilling. He again asked councillors to continue to feed back.

The Manager suggested that to get a good idea of how the CS team operated councillors could, as he had, spend 30 minutes observing how skilfully they handled calls. Answering the second question he said that officers had looked at location, service and functions to determine where ERS was underperforming and would share the results of the exercise with Cllr Robinson, as he did not have the detail to hand.

Cllr Stowe congratulated the whole ERS team on its excellent outcomes, highlighting the reduction in office accommodation required. He hoped that a press statement would be issued early to publicise the success.

The chairman agreed that the project had been a great example of proof of concept, which needed to be built on in other areas moving forward.

Cllr Hancock echoed committee members' praise and was pleased to see early niggles worked on so that the 'nut was cracked' and that the project would save £800,000 and be more effective.

The committee noted the report.

10. PROGRAMME STATUS REPORT

Upon invitation the 2020 Programme Director presented report PJC.16, highlighting the programme's overall 'green' status. He confirmed that the companies did now exist and the domain names had been secured. The organisation was now at the stage of developing with Innecto what the total rewards package would be. So far over 270 staff had attended the course 'engage with change' and the team was rolling out its leadership development programme. ICT was continuing to upgrade to ensure that platforms were

secure, and the programme was still on budget and on profile to deliver savings.

Cllr Stowe said that he had received feedback regarding email addresses and officer 'identity'. Both needed to reflect that officers were working for a specific council for specific cases.

The Managing Director replied that officers were working on the best way of ensuring that in letters and emails the council name was prominent. He would circulate mock-ups when ready.

Cllr Robinson agreed that it was important for officers not to say where they were from in terms of their 'home' council, but for residents and parish councils to understand that officers were working for their particular 'area' in individual cases.

The Managing Director commented that it was a culture point, which was being addressed.

Cllr Hancock said that in the past the committee had debated the legal requirement to be physically in the same place to be able to make decisions and asked if the matter could be raised through the Local Government Association. He thought that the committee needed to be able to be flexible.

The chairman replied that the organisation had already made representations to central government.

Cllr Stowe believed that sometimes committee members and officers needed to be in the same place, citing presentations as an example.

The Programme Director advised that the companies legal documentation had been drafted to allow the company boards to take decisions at both physical and virtual meetings therefore the issue may be resolved once the companies are operational.

Concluding the item the chairman expressed his pleasure that the programme was 'in green'.

The committee noted the report.

The meeting ended at 11.25 am

Minutes prepared by Tony Bees

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Environmental & Regulatory Services

Project Report

Minute Item 9



Background

33 Months
Apr 2014 - Dec 2016



£1.107M
Project costs



20 members
Project Team

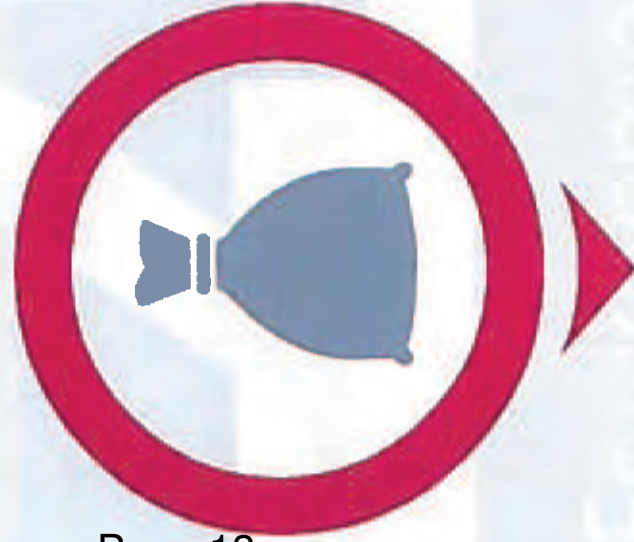


35.5%
Achieved efficiency
savings



Our Vision & Approach

To create a shared Environmental & Regulatory Services Group which has the resilience, shared expertise and economy of scale to provide a broader and more effective service, whilst also maintaining local front-line responsiveness, accountability and decision making



Cost



Quality & Outcomes



Time

Outcomes and Benefits (Financial)

36%
Efficiency

£13,237 >
business
case.

Outcomes and Benefits (Financial)

36%
Efficiency

£13,237 >
business
case.



£3,828,065
over 5 years.

Outcomes and Benefits (Financial)

36%
Efficiency

**£13,237 >
business
case.**



**£3,828,065
over 5 years.**

**Project Spend
£1.1M vs Budget
£1.425M**

**23% LESS
THAN
PREDICTED**



Outcomes & Benefits (Non Cashable)

48%

Reduction in
office

accommodation

**8 Tonnes of
Paper gone!**

Outcomes & Benefits (Non Cashable)

48%

Reduction in
office

accommodation

**8 Tonnes of
Paper gone!**



Common email
Combined Outlook
Video Conferencing
Remote Working
Mobile Working

partnership

2020

Environmental & Regulatory Services

Outcomes & Benefits (Non Cashable)

48%

Reduction in
office

accommodation

**8 Tonnes of
Paper gone!**



Common email
Combined Outlook
Video Conferencing
Remote Working
Mobile Working

22



**HIGH RISK INCIDENTS
MANAGED WITHIN 1
WORKING DAY**

partnershi

2020

Environmental & Regulatory Services



Outcomes & Benefits (Customers)

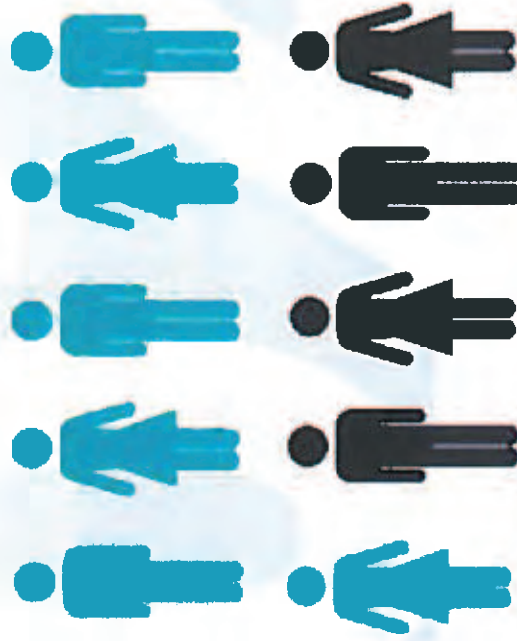
86%

Customers are
satisfied with
the way they
contact the
council

Outcomes & Benefits (Customers)

86%

Customers are
satisfied with
the way they
contact the
council

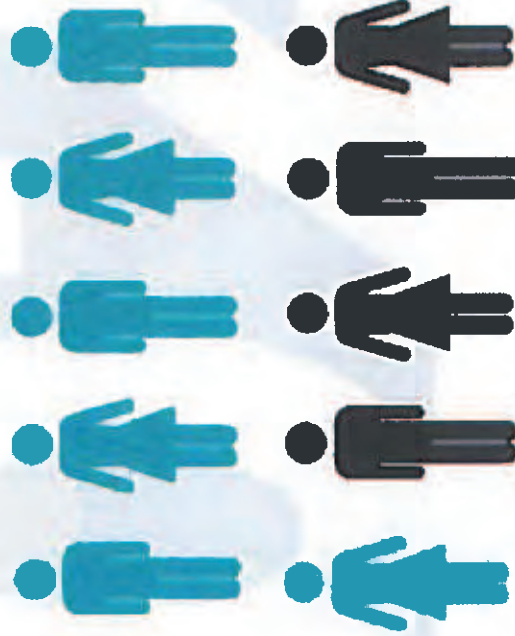


61% phone contact
resolved by customer
services

Outcomes & Benefits (Customers)

86%

Customers are
satisfied with
the way they
contact the
council



61% phone contact
resolved by customer
services



Customer
satisfaction

93%

QUALITY OF ADVICE

81%

TIME FRAME



Fast track
member
contact

Our People



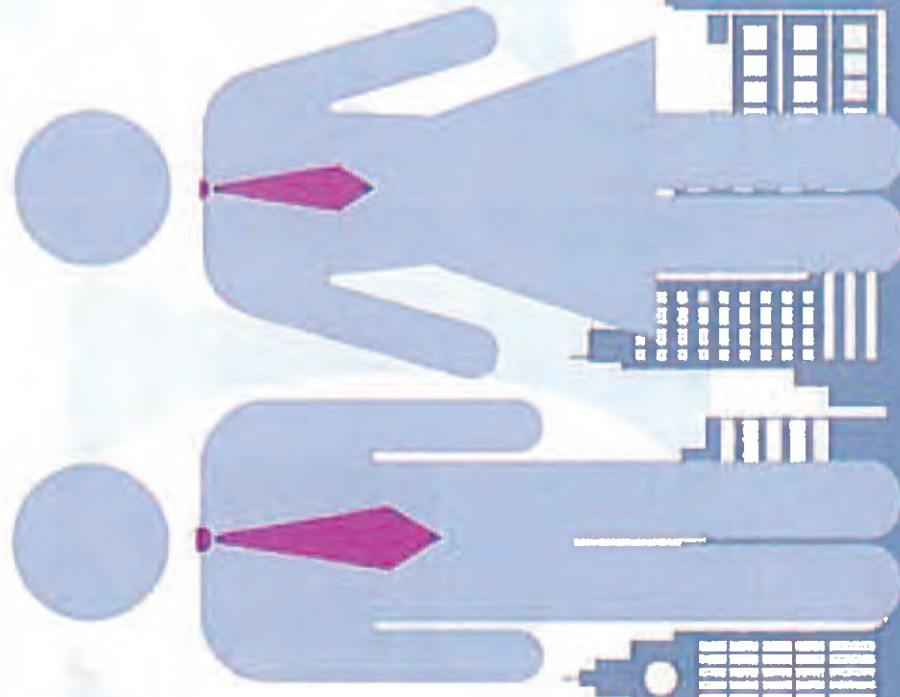
84.6% Satisfied
with
transformation



Group resource
framework



Technical
Pool



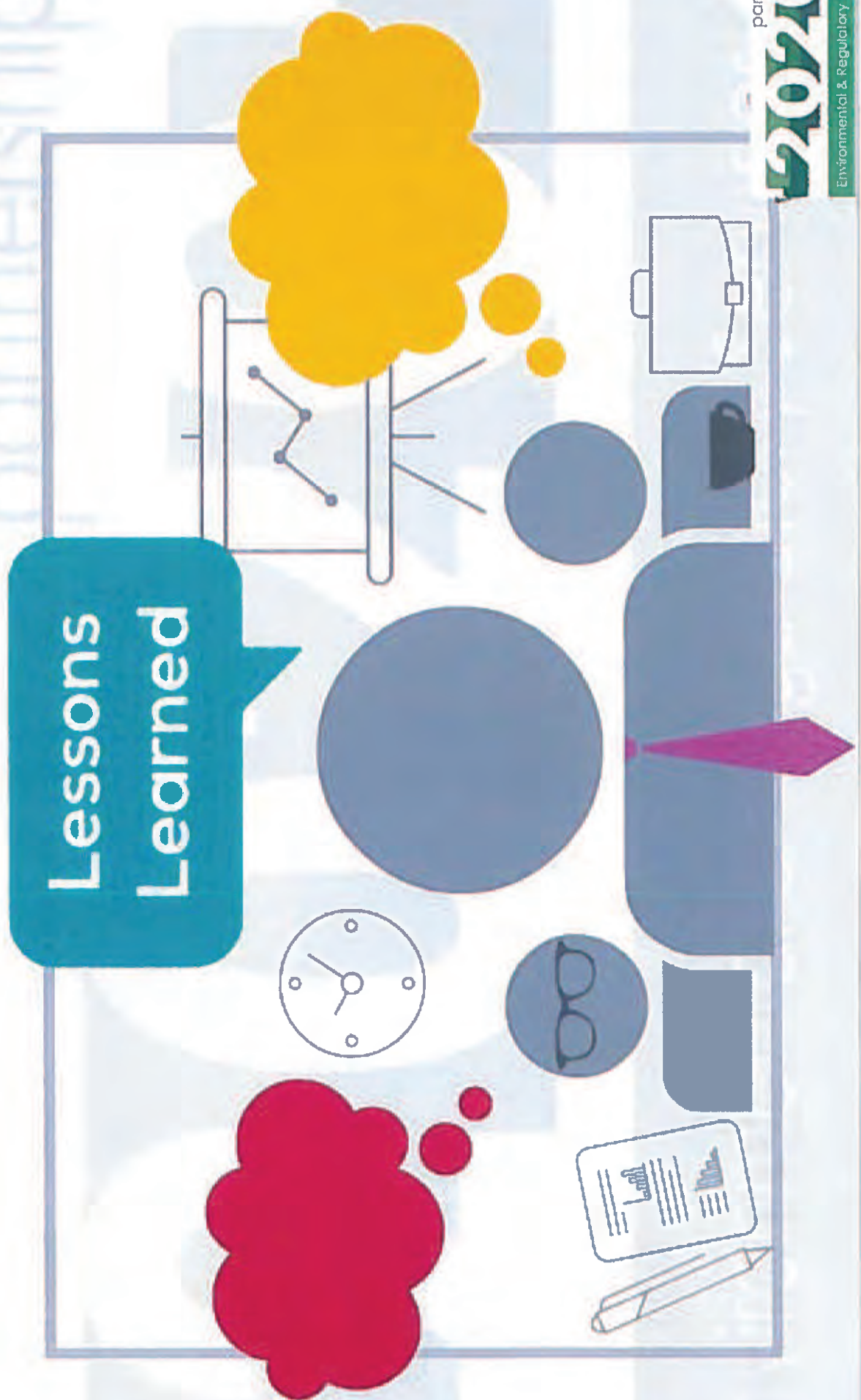
92% improved
work life
balance



Resource
allocation
Model



Duty Officer
& Manger



Lessons Learned



Customer Services

Managing email
Duty Officer &
Manager
High % at first point
of contact
Approach to key
stakeholder

Lessons Learned



Customer Services

Managing email
Duty Officer &
Manager
High % at first point
of contact
Approach to key
stakeholder



Human Resources

Greater risk
tolerance
Generic J/D P/S
Information Hub
Union relations

Lessons Learned



Customer Services

Managing email
Duty Officer &
Manager
High % at first point
of contact
Approach to key
stakeholder



Human Resources

Greater risk
tolerance
Generic J/D P/S
Information Hub
Union relations



IT

Dedicated IT team
Unified Outlook
Limited UNIFORM
knowledge
extended build
time

Lessons Learned



Customer Services

Managing email
Duty Officer &
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High % at first point
of contact
Approach to key
stakeholder



Human Resources

Greater risk
tolerance
Generic J/D P/S
Information Hub
Union relations



IT

Dedicated IT team
Unified Outlook
Limited UNIFORM
knowledge
extended build
time



Governance

Weekly progress
meetings
Agile approach
Dedicated project
resources
Include diverse
profession

Summary

35.5%

85% Customers Satisfied

**Delivered
under budget**

84.6% ERS

Staff

Motivated

Delivered on Time



