

Service Delivery Review Report Provision of Legal Services to Warwick District Council

1. Background

- 1.1 In 2009, Warwickshire County Council and Warwick District Council (WDC) entered into a 3 year agreement for the provision of legal services to WDC. The agreement commenced on 1st March 2010 for an initial three year period to 31 March 2013.
- 1.2 The arrangement involved the transfer of 5 members of WDC legal staff (equivalent to 4.54 FTE) to be employed by Warwickshire County Council. Those staff remain employed by Warwickshire County Council and are fully integrated into the legal business - Warwickshire Legal Service (WLS). At the time of transfer one member of WDC staff decided not to transfer. This post has not been replaced and represents a saving in terms of overall staffing costs. One member of staff has recently been promoted to senior solicitor and team leader and now has responsibility for the environment legal team.
- 1.3 The legal coverage under the agreement is wide – WLS provides legal advice, support and representation in the following key areas;
- public, administrative and procedural law (including vires)
 - licensing matters
 - planning and environment law
 - highways related matters
 - housing law including possessions and disrepair
 - criminal prosecutions
 - contract/ procurement/project work
 - conveyancing/ land transactions
 - company / commercial transactions
 - employment law
- 1.4 The service is provided by a range of different fee earning staff ranging from paralegals and legal assistants to senior solicitors and service managers. WDC is charged for work undertaken at an hourly rate depending on the experience and seniority of the fee earner providing the advice. The current hourly charge out rates (and those of previous years) are set out in **Appendix 1** to this report.

2. Purpose of service review

- 2.1 The agreement between WLS and WDC runs to 31 March 2013. This review report has been prepared by WLS and is intended to provide sufficient information to WDC to enable a decision to be made about the future delivery of the legal service.
- 2.2 The report also aligns with WLS' own internal service review programme which is aimed at ensuring the provision of a cost effective and high quality legal service to all customers and the continued development and improvement of legal business practices. In particular the WLS review process involves a series of individual client service reviews which seek to improve the service that is delivered across WLS' broad customer base.
- 2.3 This report covers service provision, costs and service improvement opportunities based on WLS' experience of delivering the service over the past 30 months. It does not cover the legal basis for continuing with the service. This advice is being prepared separately.

3. Methodology

- 3.1 The methodology for completion of the service review has been as follows;
- Initial meeting with Ian Marriott, Service Manager with overall responsibility for provision of the services to WDC
 - Collation and analysis of case management data on volume and work type in relation to the service delivered
 - Review of customer feedback from SLA meetings
 - Review of customer feedback from Service Manager questionnaires
 - Survey of all WLS fee earners involved in providing the service
 - Workshop involving WLS fee earners involved in providing the service
 - Review of all data collated through the above methods
 - Review of original rationale for shared legal service as set out in the Business Case (December 2009)
 - Compilation of draft report
 - Review and verification of report by Service Manager responsible for provision of the services

4. The Case Management Data

- 4.1 WDC's overall expenditure since the start of the agreement in March 2010 is set out in [Appendix 2](#). The 2010/11 figures include an extra month's costs as the agreement commenced in March 2010. [Appendix 2](#) also sets out the split between WLS charges and disbursements (ie those costs paid to external suppliers such as barristers/ experts etc.). [Appendix 3](#) further breaks down the WLS yearly charges according to areas of legal work.
- 4.2 [Appendix 4](#) provides further detail around disbursements costs incurred from 2011/12 onwards and the areas of legal work giving rise to disbursements. (The figures do not include the cost of legal services obtained directly by WDC officers, eg. Counsel's advice on the Core Strategy) Disbursement costs have fluctuated across the three years from £64,280 in 2010/11, dipping to £36,890 in 2011/12 and peaking in 2012/13 at £100,249 to date. Individual cases will have a significant impact on these figures (such as the Warwick Castle prosecution in 2012/13) and it should be borne in mind that these figures do not reflect any legal costs recovered as part of the court proceedings. Costs recovered are shown separately in Appendix 2.
- 4.3 The largest spend area across all 3 years is Counsel's fees;
- 2010/11 - £51,051 out of a total spend of £64,280 = 79%
 - 2011/12 - £23,334 out of a total spend of £36,890 = 63%
 - 2012/13 (to date) - £62,303 out of a total spend of £100,249 = 62%
- Legal areas giving rise to disbursements tend to be centred around enforcement activity such as housing / prosecutions where use of Counsel is often unavoidable. Agents fees, experts and court fees account for most of the remainder.
- 4.4 The above figures include the disbursements incurred during 2011/12 and 2012/13 in respect of the Warwick Castle prosecution for which a separate legal budget was maintained. Total disbursements incurred in connection with this prosecution can be offset by the £145,000 costs (relating to both legal and officer costs) which WLS managed to recover on behalf of WDC following the successful conclusion of the case.

- 4.5 The hourly charge out rates for work undertaken have reduced since the agreement commenced in March 2010 (see Appendix 1). In 2011/12 WLS was able to reduce the hourly rates by £1 across all fee earners. Based on an actual WLS spend of £508,697 in 2011/12, this reduction represented over 145¹ additional hours legal work for the same price.
- 4.6 During 2011/12 WDC accessed legal advice and support from over 35 different fee earners across a range of levels including service manager, senior solicitor, solicitor, legal executive, legal assistant and paralegal support. The advice spanned a wide range of legal disciplines including housing, planning, property, contracts, freedom of information and employment. A more detailed breakdown of fees incurred based on work area is included in Appendix 3.
- 4.7 Appendix 3 indicates that the largest spend areas tend to be;
- Property
 - Housing
 - Planning
 - Civil litigation (non housing)
 - Contracts
 - Corporate governance / democratic process
- This is common across all years since the start of the agreement and is to be expected given the functions of a District Council.
- 4.8 Since the start of the agreement WLS has played an integral part in the delivery of a wide range of flagship projects and the provision of strategic legal advice in a number of key areas. WLS feels that it has added value to these projects through its ability to provide an experienced and robust legal support role which has contributed to the successful achievement of a number of WDC's key corporate business objectives or to the management of risk where legal threats have been encountered. These have included;
- Racing Club Warwick
 - Precinct retail outlets
 - Leamington golf course development
 - Waterloo Housing JVC project
 - Information Commissioner referrals
 - Member code of conduct investigations
 - Refuse and street cleaning procurement

5. WDC Customer Feedback

- 5.1 WLS seeks customer feedback from WDC in the following ways
- at the conclusion of each case – feedback is requested about how each individual case has been handled;
 - survey of each senior manager including the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive
 - at quarterly service level agreement meetings with the Deputy Chief Executive, Andy Jones
 - at quarterly review meetings with WDC service heads

¹ Figure calculated using solicitor rates on basis that majority of work is undertaken at that level

- 5.2 A summary of the feedback received in relation to specific cases is contained at [Appendix 5](#). Customer feedback through this method is consistently high with close to 100% average satisfaction ratings.
- 5.3 Survey results from 18 senior managers within WDC including the Chief Executive and the Deputy Chief Executive have been analysed. The table at [Appendix 6](#) sets out the results. Overall the service appears to be rated highly (average score of 2 where 1 is very good and 5 is poor), with the following coming out as the most important features for clients (ie 'very important' where the scale ranged from 'very important' to 'not important at all');
- cost
 - accessibility
 - problem solving
 - professional approach
 - speed of response
- 5.4 WDC and WLS are aware that the Development Services team has during 2012 sought improvements in the level of engagement and the speed of the service available to them. This has resulted in the signing of protocols for the delivery of enforcement and planning agreements as well as expanding support to include clearing committee reports within a target of two working days and attendance at Chairman's Briefings. However, it is recognised that this is an area where further development and improvements are desired to assist the team in meeting the challenges it faces.
- 5.5 Following the commencement of the agreement, WDC commissioned an internal audit report on the shared service arrangement. WLS has not seen a copy of the report, however it is understood that the main concern at that time was around the timeliness and accuracy of the billing reports that are submitted to WDC on a monthly basis. Section 8 of this report contains further details about the billing arrangements in place and the improvements that have been made since then. Feedback from the finance team indicates that the improvements have successfully addressed their concerns.

6. WLS Feedback

- 6.1 As part of the review process WLS has undertaken a survey of all fee earners who are involved in the provision of legal advice and support to WDC. This was followed up by a workshop to explore the themes emerging.
- 6.2 The results of the feedback are set out in summary below;
- 97% of WLS staff believe that WLS provides a good or excellent service.
 - Conversely to the customer feedback, WLS staff feel that they are accessible and responsive
 - 70% of WLS staff think the WDC work is being carried out at the right level. 20% think that greater use of standardisation could result in some work being carried out at a more junior level
 - Contrary to the customer feedback, 90% of WLS staff feel that further client training could help reduce legal involvement and therefore spend. Areas identified were information requests, housing possessions, standard section 106 agreements and file management

- A number of staff feel that there may be scope for some capped fee arrangements in areas such as housing repossessions, training, debt recovery, ASB injunctions but managers feel that such arrangements can have dis-benefits and require careful consideration
- 63% of staff feel that work undertaken by Counsel is appropriate and could not have been undertaken in-house by WLS. The remaining 37% feel that there is scope for some work undertaken by Counsel to be brought in-house
- 88% of staff are aware of the WDC designated officers however only 22% feel that greater enforcement of these arrangements would reduce the WDC spend

7. Review against original Business Case

- 7.1 As part of the review process, the original business case reported to the WDC Executive in December 2009 has been considered with a view to determining whether the aims and objectives as set out in the business case have been delivered and the evidence for that.
- 7.2 As set out in the business case,
'The proposal is designed to provide increased resilience and capacity to both Councils through the in-house delivery by WCC of a comprehensive range of legal services and specialist legal advice as required. The scope and quality of those services will avoid the need in future for external legal advice to be sought by the District Council other than in exceptional cases. The proposals overall envisage other efficiencies for both organisations in the longer term working within the spirit of a genuine partnership.'
- 7.3 WLS' view is that the resilience and capacity of the overall service provided to both Councils has been enhanced through the shared service arrangement. WLS has been able to provide WDC with support in areas such as commercial property, procurement and major projects which would otherwise have been sourced from external legal firms, most likely at least double the hourly charge out rate. Conversely the skills of the transferring WDC staff have been deployed on county council related matters to ensure delivery of a comprehensive legal service
- 7.4 Equally, with the exception of the use of Counsel where required, WLS has delivered the service 'in-house' and has only resorted to the use of external legal advice in one of two exceptional cases where this was justified by the nature and scale of the project.
- 7.5 In terms of cost, the business case envisaged that maintaining the status quo for 2010/11 (ie in-house legal team plus external legal support) would have cost £564,000 against the shared service model spend for 2010/11 of approximately £502,000, dependent upon volume and complexity of cases handled during the year. No predictions were made for subsequent years. Actual expenditure for 2010/11 was £537,577. This is lower than the in-house model but slightly higher than the cost envisaged under the shared service model. Actual expenditure in 2010/11 includes WLS legal spend of £473,297 plus disbursements of £64,280. It is not clear however whether the business case figures also included legal disbursements. If they did not, the shared service model will have achieved greater savings than envisaged in the business plan.

In-house cost 2010/11	Shared legal cost 2010/11	Actual legal spend 2010/11	Savings against in-house anticipated cost
£564,000	£502,000	£537,577	£26,423

7.6 In addition to the overarching aims set out at paragraph 7.2 above, the 2009 business case also set out a number of specific outcomes that the shared service was seeking to achieve. These have been reviewed and the WLS view against each outcome is set out in Appendix 7.

8. Billing

8.1 During 2010/11 WLS billing arrangements were not felt to be adequate in that they did not provide sufficient costs information to WDC to enable legal bills to be verified and paid. WLS received feedback to that effect from WDC finance staff.

8.2 In response to this, steps were taken by WLS to improve the quality of the billing information and to ensure that information now provided to WDC is timely, accurate and to the level of detail required by WDC.

8.3 These steps significantly improved the billing process and their introduction saw a significant reduction in the number of billing related queries raised by WDC finance staff. WLS perception is that WDC staff are now satisfied with the arrangements for legal billing and the level of detail that they receive.

8.4 In addition, WLS maintains a close working relationship with the WDC finance team to ensure that where there are any billing related queries, these are resolved promptly and effectively.

9. Proposals for future service delivery

9.1 The WLS perception is that the shared service arrangement is working well and to the benefit of both parties. The relationship has matured over the three year period to the extent that WDC staff would appear to value and trust the legal advice they receive. The feedback mechanisms that have been put in place provide an opportunity for WDC to provide direct views on the quality of the service they receive and this is supplemented by contact with service managers through SLA meetings.

9.2 However WLS is not complacent and should the arrangement be extended, WLS would want to work closely with WDC to further improve customer feedback and the overall quality of the service provided, whilst maintaining legal spend within acceptable levels for WDC.

9.3 In particular WLS would wish to;

- (i) Help to manage the WDC legal spend through;
 - Providing more self help 'tools' and training in order to reduce demand and therefore cost
 - Transferring responsibility for certain agreed legal matters back to WDC (eg housing possession matters which are due to transfer during 2012/13)
 - Reviewing the allocation of matters within WLS to ensure that work is being undertaken at the right levels

- Reviewing the extent to which Counsel is used in specific areas and seeking to negotiate preferential rates
 - Continuing to provide constructive yet sometimes critical feedback to WDC to enable it to effect improvements and potentially reduce legal input and costs. WLS feels that the maturity of our relationship and the mutual trust between us has enabled this to happen and be accepted as a positive and helpful approach.
- (ii) Address issues emerging from both customer and WLS feedback mechanisms such as;
- Considering whether appropriate training packages could be delivered with a view to building capacity within WDC (such as the freedom of information training which has already been delivered)
 - Seeking ways to address issues around the availability of the service and the perception that operating from Warwick makes the service feel more remote (eg use of surgeries / integrated training sessions)
 - Building on the customer liaison arrangements and ensuring that SLA meetings are regular and worthwhile for both parties
 - Implementing a range of business improvement processes to provide greater consistency and responsiveness – eg electronic work flows/ automated processes for standard legal matters
 - Considering whether certain functions could be delivered more cost effectively by transferring them back to WDC staff

In addition, WLS is actively supporting one of its fee earners in achieving higher rights of audience. This would enable more work currently undertaken by Counsel to be conducted 'in-house' at much reduced hourly rates.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 WLS places significant value in the relationship that has developed with WDC over the three year period and would want to see that relationship continue for the future. The arrangement would appear to be beneficial to WDC in terms of cost effectiveness and also quality, breadth and experience of service provided. In addition it provides scope for WLS staff to widen their experience base which is beneficial for the resilience and capacity of the service as well as individual career development purposes.
- 10.2 WLS hourly charges were reduced for 2011/12 and since that time, have remained static. This effectively means that WLS has absorbed other external price increases which have impacted on management of the overall legal business. Should WDC decide that the shared service should continue, WLS would wish to enter into negotiation with WDC over the pricing model from 2013/14 onwards.

WLS Hourly Rates

Post	Hourly charge out rate (£) 2010/11	Hourly charge out rate (£) 2011/12	Hourly charge out rate (£) 2012/13
Head of Law and Governance	93	92	92
Legal Services Manager	80	79	79
Team Leader / Senior Solicitor	70	69	69
Solicitor	60	59	59
Legal Executive	53	52	52
Debt Recovery Team Leader	47	N/a	N/a
Senior Legal Assistant	48	47	47
Legal Assistant / Trainee Solicitor	42	41	41
Legal Support Officer	32	31	31

Legal Fees and Disbursements

	WLS fees £	WLS hours	Disbursements £	Total Cost £
2010/11	473,297	8437	64,280	£537,577
2011/12	508,697	8,717	37,015	£545,712
2012/13 (to end August 2013)	234,775	2870	100,424	£335,199

Breakdown of WLS fees based on work areas

Work Type	2010/2011	2011/12	2012/13 to 30/09/12
Civil litigation - Housing	£23,133.99	£41,374.06	£25,896.05
ASB injunctions	-	-	£5254.11
ASB possessions	£7548.00	£23,183.26	£6857.82
Other	£1704.85	£2714.60	£40.31
Rent possessions	£13,881.14	£15,476.20	£13,743.81
Civil litigation - Other	£31,928.39	£55,895.70	£28,766.80
Benefits	£5772.16	£30,163.62	£15,391.51
Other	£16537.23	£23555.96	£13,068.10
Travellers	£9619.00	£2176.12	£307.10
Contracts	£16,682.32	£54,530.12	£23,523.66
Construction	£6049.04	£19,461.32	£5,781.68
Goods and services	£9109.09	£33,144.42	£13,652.67
Other	£853.27	£1924.38	£1,906.30
Partnerships	-	-	£1,200.59
Social care	-	-	£982.42
Corporate governance/Democratic process	£32,628.32	£44,782.03	£22,439.17
Committees/Members bodies	£23,415.94	£24,058.96	£15,914.10
Complaints	£684.54	£2427.57	£11.80
Other	£7781.94	£18,246.57	£6,504.42
Policy and strategy/Guidance	£746.54	£3.93	£8.85
Criminal litigation - Other	N/A	£555.58	£2,868.19
Other	-	£555.58	£2,868.19
Criminal litigation - Prosecutions	£7801.37	£7526.65	£15,227.12
Benefits	-	-	£1,133.42
Other	£7801.37	£7526.65	£11,143.29
Prosecutions S444(1)	-	-	£326.40
Trading standards	-	-	£2,624.01
Employment	£6928.08	£10,079.93	£5,707.89
Disciplinary/Grievance	-	-	£417.45
Other	£157.33	£5163.55	£2,841.62
Tribunal	£6770.75	£4916.38	£2,448.82
FOI/Data protection	£15,055.95	£22,287.31	£3,184.77
FOI/EIR	£15,055.95	£22,287.31	£3,184.77
Highways/Traffic/Parking	£241.89	£409.22	£499.19
Other	£241.89	£409.22	£499.19
Housing	£30,344.79	£27,116.43	£19,208.16
Complaints	-	-	£190.98
Other	£28,925.59	£24,929.36	£17,472.79
Private sector	£1419.20	2187.07	£1,544.39
Judicial review	N/A	N/A	£410.99
Other	-	-	£410.99
Licensing	£3089.52	£3576.28	£2,601.33
Other	£3089.52	£3576.28	£2,601.33

Work Type	2010/2011	2011/12	2012/13 to 30/09/12
Other	£3627.53	£2010.65	£5,391.44
Other	£3627.53	£2010.65	£5,391.44
Planning	£38,135.33	£59,312.23	£19,906.76
Agreements	£6037.83	£17,514.87	£447.70
Development plans	£2414.58	£1087.62	£454.93
Enforcement	£3802.71	£10,027.53	£8,011.43
Other	£25,880.21	£30,682.21	£10,992.70
Property	£113,628.97	£119,603.87	£57,359.11
			£252.50
Agreements	-	£257.17	£9.83
Compulsory purchase	£3214.86	£298.10	£82.80
Easements	£273.37	£18.02	£105.34
Freehold acquisitions	-	£9521.53	£4,078.62
Freehold disposals	£2940.60	£9113.89	£6,893.36
Leasehold acquisitions	£4722.14	£4254.30	£702.73
Leasehold disposals	£16,734.13	£25,153.96	£5,933.29
Licences	£349.70	£2384.12	£84.52
Other	£85394.18	£68604.78	£39,216.12
Miscellaneous	£150,120.22	£59637.11	£1784.09
	£150,120.22	£59637.11	£1784.09
Total	£473,297.31	£508,697.17	£234,774.72

Disbursement Costs (2011/12 and 2012/13 to date)

Disbursement areas and types	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Civil litigation - Housing	£4,474.53	£9,975.00	£4,271.10
Counsel's fees	£1,659.53	£6,813.00	£3,675.00
Court fees	£2,815.00	£3,162.00	£485.00
Other sundry	-	-	£111.10
Civil litigation - Other	-	£341.50	£2,065.00
Courier	-	£70.00	-
Experts/consultants	-	£96.50	-
Court fees	-	£175.00	£710.00
Counsel	-	-	£1,355.00
Travellers	£7,622.50	£650.00	£475.00
Counsel's fees	6697.50	£300	£300.00
Court fees	925	£350	£175.00
Criminal litigation - Prosecutions	£21,377.51	£17,620.50	£51,292.75
Counsel's fees	£21,377.51	£10,173.00	£42,343.67
Agents fees	-	£7,447.50	£8,949.08
Planning	£21,351.16	£6,893.00	£39,860.00
Counsel	£20,702.08	£6,348.00	£13,330.00
Court fees	£350.00	-	-
Misc.	£299.08	£545.00	-
Experts / consultants			£12,100.00
Property	£5,359.88	£1,540.00	£2,414.13
Counsel	£4,021.88	-	£1,600.30
Experts / consultants	-	-	-
Misc.	£490.00	£750.00	£43.83
Land Registry fees	£848.00	£790.00	£770.00
Miscellaneous	£4094.93	£0.00	£46.25
Counsel's fees	3290.00	-	-
Court fees	-	-	-
Land registry fees	-	-	-
Licencing	£646.25	-	-
Misc.	£158.68	-	£46.25
Total	£64,280.51	£37,015.00	£100,424.23

Customer feedback on concluded cases

	2010/11	2011/12 31 forms sent 26 responses	2012/13 7 responses to date
Service provided	Good/ excellent	Good/ excellent	Good/ excellent
Fee earner's understanding of your needs	N/A	96%	100%
Matter dealt with efficiently	N/A	100%	100%
Matter dealt with in a timely manner	N/A	100%	100%
Advice given in a clear, effective and friendly manner	N/A	100%	100%
Were you kept fully informed of all significant developments?	N/A	96%	100%
Level of satisfaction with the outcome of the matter	N/A	100%	100%
Overall satisfaction with the quality and value for money of service provided	N/A	100%	100%

Specific positive comments from customers include;

'We were very pleased with the clear comprehensive and quality advice provided'

'I received the usual excellent service'

'As always, a job well done'

'X as always has been helpful accurate and professional'

Two issues were raised;

- (i) Customer felt the need to have a fee earner's written advice reviewed
- (ii) The memo sent to the customer did not contain the customer's reference

NB – for 2010/11 the feedback data could not be broken down for individual customers. The figures that WLS has for 2010/11 cover legal work undertaken for all customers and have therefore not been included in the above table.

Customer feedback from SLA questionnaires

Most important feature of service

Responses varied, however the following came out as most important to individual customers

- Cost
- Accessibility
- Problem solving
- Professional approach
- Speed of response

Overall rating of current service

Average score across all responses; 2 (where 1 is very good and 5 is poor). The majority of responses were 1. There were five ratings of 3 and one of 5.

Things you would change about the current service

Few comments were generated in relation to this question. However suggestions included;

- Better access to legal advice for quick questions
- To operate full time from Riverside House – service appears rather remote
- Improved relationships with managers
- Improved frequency of SLA meetings
- Improved consistency – fee earner to listen to the brief and advise accordingly
- Improved drafting accuracy from more junior fee earners
- Improved speed of response – one respondent thought it had been poor and two that it could be improved although recent improvements in response times were noted
- Greater understanding of client service areas and what the issues are
- To offer solution focused advice
- Briefing sessions / training on issues such as bringing cases to court, witness statements and procedural matters
- More transparency and understanding of costs involved- also consider fixed fees for repetitive work
- More contact with Legal Services managers to check satisfaction with service and fee earners allocated to matter.

How can we best work with you to enable any changes

Very few responses were received to this question. The main thrust was to maintain open dialogue, communicate regularly and to be more customer focussed and commercial in outlook.

Do you foresee any changes / new initiatives etc. which will impact on the support required

Feedback included:

- Project work
- Abatement notice appeals
- Right to Buy
- Possession cases for rent arrears
- CPO
- Planning – increased number of major applications and improved speed of decision making
- Contract / partnership working
- Asset based project
- Local plan progression to EIP

Are there any areas where more training could reduce legal input?

Knowledge sharing was identified as a positive to be maintained. Possible training identified in relation to property related matters. Suggestion also for standard template for instructions on property matters. One respondent felt the cost of training had proved prohibitive

Appendix 7

Business Plan Outcomes

Outcome envisaged in business case	Outcomes achieved
Enhanced service quality – wider breadth of legal advice immediately available	WLS provides a comprehensive legal service covering areas such as commercial property, employment and procurement / major projects which would otherwise have been sourced from external private sector firms
Greater flexibility for service delivery	Larger legal team / breadth of experience across WLS fee earners allows legal managers to allocate work effectively based on expertise and experience. Some work could be done however on ensuring work is undertaken at the right levels
Improved resilience	Larger legal team means wider access to legal specialists and a service which can withstand the peaks and the troughs in work. WLS has been

	able to respond to additional demands for legal support and outsourcing to external firms has been limited to complex matters. Support for one member of WLS staff to attain higher rights of audience will only improve resilience
Less reliance on external providers and agency staff	There has been limited recourse to external legal providers other than Counsel in cases where this was justified. WDC legal advice and support is largely provided by permanent members of WLS staff and the employment of agency staff is now a WLS risk
Potential for costs savings for WDC	Achieved for 2010/11 as indicated above. Further work would be required to assess whether savings had been achieved in subsequent years. It is possible that the shared service and breadth of advice available has in fact increased demand and increased overall cost. However the reduced charge out rates for WLS means that more hours legal work is being delivered per £ spent
Increased knowledge and skills to create a critical mass able to support other external partners	WLS has a broad public sector customer base and has during 2011/12 attracted new public sector customers
Enhanced ability for the amalgamated legal service to trade with other external bodies and increase external income	As above
Enhanced opportunities to invest in and improve the service to better support both Councils	Since 2011, WLS has invested heavily in its electronic case management system which has led to a national award. The WLS internal service review will identify a number of business improvement activities aimed at enhancing the overall quality of the service
Reduced duplication in areas such as FoI, RIPA, governance, prosecutions and advocacy	There is some evidence that training sessions on FoI and closer liaison around governance related issues has helped to reduce duplication. However this is an areas where further work could be undertaken
Enhanced career development opportunities for staff	A former member of WDC staff has recently been promoted to a senior solicitor / team leader post. Other former members of WDC staff continue to have access to a broad range of legal work and training opportunities
Improved recruitment and retention	This is difficult to assess however we know that our lawyers are well respected by other organisations and that those lawyers who have left WLS have tended to move on as a result of a promotion