Collaborative Working Research Report: Research Review

March 2020

improvement service

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Section 1: Introduction and context

This review forms part of a wider Improvement Service research study reviewing progress on the development of shared services and collaborative working within Scottish Local Government. It augments a series of qualitative discussions and a mapping survey of current activities underway across Scotland, which will produce an information base on what is currently happening or planned for development across the country.

A very significant volume of literature has now been produced on the issue of shared services and collaborative working. This report summarises the key messages from a 'light touch' review of some of the documents and identifies recurrent or divergent themes that can inform future conversations. It considers some recently published Scottish sources; reflects upon relevant practice from across the wider public sector; and identifies any potential learning from research in a range of other countries.

As considered in more detail later, defining what we mean by 'shared' or 'collaborative' services – and how these approaches may connect to each other – is not straightforward. This terminology matters: it is apparent that how potential developments of this nature are described and introduced effects practice.

For the purposes of this research, the Improvement Service has defined the issues we think are in scope as follows:

'*Any situations where a Council is collaborating/sharing service delivery with at least one other Council, partner or agency. In addition, we believe a shared or collaborative approach should reflect one or all of the following:*

- *Sharing capacity across services and/or agencies*
- *Joint delivery of services across services and/or agencies*
- *Joint investment decisions across services and/or agencies*'

Section 2 details the key findings of the review by the following key themes:

1. Definitions: what do we mean by 'shared services' and 'collaborative working'?
2. The key drivers behind developments.
3. The main concerns and challenges faced in progressing this agenda.
4. The identified pre-conditions and success factors in getting this right.

5. Evidence of impact.
6. Related developments in other countries and sectors.

The purpose of this review – as with all aspects of the IS research - is neither to advocate for these types of approaches in future, nor to highlight their potential weaknesses. Rather the work is intended to ensure that however shared or collaborative services develop in future in Scotland, the conversation is informed by learning and the best intelligence available.

Definitions: What do we mean by 'Shared Services'

Section 2: Thematic Analysis

and 'Collaborative working'?

The literature reviewed highlights the need to clearly differentiate between these two terms, but also to understand the relationship between them. They are both recognised as part of a suite or spectrum of approaches linked to wider public-sector reform. On balance, the review suggests the key starting point is to focus on collaboration (closely linked to partnership working), and then consider whether – based on a clear understanding of agreed outcomes - this presents the pre-conditions to consider shared service options. These in turn can have a variety of forms.

The challenge and importance of these definitions and relationships is common across countries. Clearly understanding and articulating these may be central to addressing some potential or perceived barriers to progress.

Collaborative working

Collaborative working tends to be interchangeable in the literature with the concept of partnership working. In the context of this review, it represents a larger menu of options within which 'shared services' is a subset.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations provides a comprehensive definition, which is largely transferable to the local government context:

'Collaborative working - also known as joint or partnership working - covers a variety of ways that two or more organisations can work together. Options range from informal networks and alliances, through joint delivery of projects to full merger.

Collaborative working can last for a fixed length of time or can form a permanent arrangement. What these options have in common is that they involve some sort of exchange, for mutual advantage, that ultimately benefits end users.

In recent years, interest in collaborative working has been growing, driven by the sector's drive for effectiveness and efficiency, government policy and public opinion.

Working with others can offer opportunities to:

- deliver new, improved or more integrated services
- make efficiency savings through sharing costs

- develop a stronger, more united voice
- share knowledge and information.

Types of collaborative working:

- separate organisations maintain their independence, but work jointly on some activities or functions
- organisations with resources or expertise offer assistance to other organisations, e.g. a large national organisation working with a small local group
- a new organisation to do joint work on some activities or functions
- a group structure where a 'parent' organisation governs a group of 'subsidiary' organisations
- merger to form a new organisation working as one body on all activities.[1]'

Collaborative working as the 'bridge' to shared services

The literature consistently suggests you can work collaboratively without sharing services; but that the reverse is not possible. Understanding the link is important.

A New Zealand review articulates this as follows[2]:

'Strategy or policy alignment across a region may result from collaboration or joint working but does not necessarily result in shared services. Hence the approach of including wider collaboration across local government is used here as a starting point that may ultimately lead to shared services and more formal arrangements'.

The International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD), writing from an Irish perspective, notes (based on reflecting on Scottish experiences):

'...understanding shared services as a network of collaborative working offers a relatively more fluid, flexible and outcome-focused interpretation of the shared services agenda[3]'.

In a separate report, the ICLRD also articulates links as follows:

'For instance, the agenda can also be about improving collaboration among local

1 NCVO website

2 Shared Services for Local Government: Development Solutions for Local Government in New Zealand (June 2011)

3 Shared Services: propositions for local government collaboration – ICLRD (March 2012)

governments to deliver improved services or provide a service that may not be available or be subject to cutbacks. In particular, environmental issues, regional-level planning and economic development by their nature cross administration and/or jurisdictional boundaries, and require imaginative solutions and the sharing of resources, expertise and best practices'[4].

The New Zealand study also suggests that collaborative working may be an important part of the journey to shared services:

'In some cases, there is no provision of service but collaboration of parties to achieve efficiency gains and improved local outcomes. Shared services is closely linked to partnering and collaboration, which is already prevalent in New Zealand councils, so there is benefit in taking a wider view of shared services. This is particularly so given that international experiences demonstrate a strong link between successful shared services models and having a previous history of collaboration before establishing formal arrangements[5]'.

Previous Improvement Service led work[6] has also sought to emphasis these distinctions and links. In 2009, mapping work identified a range of collaboration and sharing activities. Most Scottish authorities participated in the research, which subsequently presented its findings in 4 categories:

Category	Number of activities recorded
Joint provision – including partnership working either within the area or cross Council	103
Simplification of standards in a number of technical areas	62
Specialist services – again within local partnerships and/or with other Councils	150
Training activities	41

In 2016, a further Improvement Service study[7] sought to capture information within the concept of 'Alternative Service Delivery models'. This again highlighted the wider nature of this agenda, and identified 6 categories of activities:

- outsourcing the provision of services to an organisation separate from the council

4 Shared Services across Local Government: sharing international experience – ICLRD (March 2012)

5 Shared Services for Local Government: Development Solutions for Local Government in New Zealand (June 2011)

6 Improvement Service 2009

7 Improvement Service 2016

e.g. private sector/not for profit sector;

- delivery through an arms-length organisation (ALEO)
- partnerships / Shared Service Agreements
- Joint Venture partnerships
- Social Enterprise or Community-led Companies
- community delivered e.g. asset transfer.

Shared services definitions

Within this wider context, 'shared services' are also defined – though again the literature suggests this in itself can mean a range of things.

The National Audit Office suggests 5 key attributes of a shared service[8]

Distinct governance	A distinct organisational structure with a dedicated management team delivers the operational aspects of corporate services for one or more organisations.
Standard processes	Processes are standardised and streamlined.
Economies of scale	Scale is achieved through combining processes previously executed independently.
Customer driven	A culture of service delivery is ingrained within the shared services centre. Resources are committed to key account management, monitoring key performance indicators and the achievement of service-level agreements.
Continuous process improvement	Dedicated project teams manage process change to drive improvements to both.

The Department of Communities and Local Government in the UK describes collaboration as "...the various ways in which councils and other public bodies come together to combine their buying power, to procure and commission goods, works or services jointly or to create shared services[9]'.

8 Quoted from Shared Services in Central Government - Northern Ireland Assembly: Research and Information Service Briefing paper (Colin Pidgeon, September 2012)

9 As above

The English Local Government Group suggests '...shared services can mean many things. While traditionally thought of as back office arrangements – whether transactional, operational or professional – councils and other public services are increasingly looking to shared senior management arrangements and considering joint-venture relationships with other public-sector bodies and the private sector'[10].

A House of Commons briefing suggests 'shared services' refer 'to two or more authorities providing a service to their electorates on a joint basis. Sharing may take place between neighbouring authorities or non-neighbouring authorities. It may take place between different types of authorities (e.g. county and district councils). Shared services may be provided via a joint in-house department or they may be jointly outsourced. Governance of shared services can take place via a joint committee between the participating authorities, or simply through agreements between the executives of the participating authorities'[11].

Finally, an IBM report articulates the importance of definition, and concludes:

'Most authors define shared services as the concentration or consolidation of functions, activities, services, or resources into one stand-alone unit (Bergeron 2003, Fyfe 2006, Irwin 2005, NASCIO 2006, Rahman 2005, Schulman et al. 1999). The one unit then becomes the provider of the functions, activities, services, or resources to several other client units within the organization'[12].

Linked to shared services 2 further definitional issues are referenced in the literature. the IBM report (citing other studies) argues that shared services should not be viewed as necessarily suggesting 'centralisation':

'It should be specified that shared services and centralisation are not the same. Centralisation implies that there is one central authority and one physical location. Shared services, on the other hand, implies that one provider is responsible to multiple units and thus multiple authorities. Furthermore, modern information technology (IT) allows for the provider to operate from multiple physical locations'.[13]

Other sources also note that shared services do not simply imply 'privatisation'. Though this is a concern clearly articulated in other documents, notably by some trades unions. (See further below for UNISON's position).

10 Shared Services and management: a guide for Councils – Local Government Group (March 2011)

11 Local Government: alternative models of service delivery – House of Commons Briefing Paper (May 2019)

12 Success factors for implementing shared services in Government – IBM Centre for the Business of Government (2008)

13 As above

The key drivers behind the developments

The literature reviewed from both UK and wider sources highlights a fairly consistent set of drivers to considering further collaboration, and within this shared service options. However, the balance of these can vary. In almost every case, financial savings linked to the dual pressures of growing/changing service demands and budget cuts and the need for savings was central to developments.

But equally consistent were messages that other factors should be in play. Sources repeatedly suggest that concentrating solely on budget savings and cuts does not win 'hearts and minds', can lead to a short-term focus, and will not realise the wider gains of greater collaboration and sharing.

This is well captured in a quote from a Local Government Group guide[14]'...few of us would suggest that it is about processes or managerial structures. Many would agree that local government is about providing community leadership, shaping places, protecting the vulnerable and enabling individuals, communities and businesses to achieve their potential'.

The recent House of Commons briefing paper confirms this:

'Simply 'bolting together' management structures to achieve short-term cost savings is a tactical solution, not a recipe for long-term success, and may leave the bigger strategic prizes of partnering on the table'[15].

A Local Government Group guide further articulates this from a different perspective. Whilst acknowledging the key driver to save money through avoiding duplication, economies of scale through greater utilisation of fixed assets, and procurement saving through increased scale, it notes:

No-one will thank local authorities for cutting public services rather than achieving savings and efficiencies through sharing. The sector needs to show it is capable of responding to this challenge'[16].

In Ireland, an ICLRD shared propositions paper notes:

'The imperative to restrain spending should instead be an opportunity to reform programs and service delivery. Simple cost-cutting can be effective in hitting near-term deficit reduction targets, but it does not encourage longer-run fiscal stability or allow for reform

14 Local Government Group ibid

15 House of Commons Briefing paper ibid

16 Local Government Group ibid

that will generate more value for money spent.[17]'

A Welsh review notes a similar point:

'the primary reason that Councils have opted to share services has been to reduce costs… there are clear financial benefits to sharing services through consolidating organisational structures, integrating IT, reducing building costs, and improving and reducing staff procurement… but the evidence suggests that shared services can achieve greater service consistency and reduce the Council's dependency on other organisations[18]'

This report continues to articulate the opportunities as follows:

'Shared services should not be viewed merely as a short term means of reducing cost or improving service delivery, but a part of long-term considerations by local authorities as to how they operate as an organisation. If sharing services can make local authorities more efficient, more collaborative and less reliant on central government, this can strengthen local government and its long-term role. Sharing services can also enable councils to specialise in particular services and provide them to other organisations, possibly generating income in the process. And it offers the potential to pool data on how services are used by citizens, to provide a bigger picture of public services in Wales and how they might be best delivered. Shared services provide an opportunity for local authorities to be proactive in shaping their services rather than being defined by national government targets and grants'[19].

Two further potential benefits of shared services are suggested in the Welsh report:

- Consistency - rather than different services or different versions of services being delivered across local authorities, which might lead to service inequalities, sharing services might provide greater consistency across boundaries. This might also lead to better services. Collaboration can allow for better awareness of services that have worked well. Bad practice can be recognised and removed, and best practice can be standardised.
- Reducing dependency - a key incentive for sharing services is that it can reduce local government's dependence on central government or other sources of funding. For example, Denbighshire local authority is contracted by other local authorities in Wales to provide administration of highway penalties. While this creates other dependencies in itself, such as on other local authorities, it provides an opportunity for local government to be more self-sustaining

17 Shared Services: propositions for local government collaboration – ICLRD (March 2012)

18 Considerations for designing and implementing effective shared services – Public Policy Institute for Wales (September 2017)

19 As above

In Canada, a programme of 'Local Service Realignment' set the overall goals as:

- greater accountability to the taxpayer
- protecting priority services and maintaining critical standards
- streamlined service delivery
- capitalising on local expertise and innovation with greater autonomy for local government
- reducing duplication and waste between levels of government. In particular, the process introduced amalgamation and/or cooperation, and transferred powers from provincial government to local government[20].

The LGG guide[21] articulates a similar series of anticipated benefits from 'sharing':

- increased investment, for example, in more advanced IT systems, as partners' resources are pooled
- adoption of best practices across service delivery partnerships
- opportunities to redesign services to better meet the needs of users
- improvements in service performance, for example, improved response times
- opportunities to implement new ways of working and management arrangements
- more interesting, varied, or specialised work for staff – aiding recruitment and retention.

A New Zealand report notes that it '...is widely acknowledged that there is both a political and an economic rationale for local government to be involved in shared services arrangement at a local, regional or national level as applicable.

The economic aspect is achieving efficiency gains and cost savings by effective use of local resources through reduced duplication and maximising the use of expertise. The political rationale arises in the question of efficiencies being gained through structural change, particularly amalgamation. Shared services may be a more appropriate response to achieving the same objectives as amalgamation but without compromising local democracy'[22].

20 Quoted from Considerations for designing and implementing effective shared services – Public Policy Institute for Wales (September 2017)

21 Local Government Group ibid

22 Shared Services for Local Government: Development Solutions for Local Government in New Zealand (June 2011)

The 'Once for Scotland' approach[23] seeks to improve, integrate and co-ordinate the way services are delivered within the Scottish public sector to ensure that everyone gets a consistent standard and quality of service. This will be done through reducing geographical and organisational barriers to the delivery of support services.

The key principle being, where appropriate, services should be managed on a Scotland-wide basis and be delivered in a consistent way, unless a compelling reason exists for variation.

The benefits from working this way are suggested as to:

- transform the way Support Services are currently delivered by integrating services and working across boundaries, whether they are geographical or organisational
- support Scotland's health with a sustainable, consistent and effective service that meets customers' needs
- be fully accountable to customers for the quality and effectiveness of their services
- increase efficiency, reduce costs and ensure continuous improvements are as effective as possible
- ensure governance is in place to set strategic direction, prioritise service improvements and resolve day-to-day issues.

NHS Scotland Shared Services[24] confirms the drive to share services in another public sector setting, indicating three benefits from this approach:

- cost savings and efficiencies
- wider transformation – additional resources and trigger
- resilience and greater collective capacity.

Audit Scotland provide a further external driver/pressure for Councils to consider wider transformational change, which could include shared services.

- 'The majority of our recent Best Value audits have highlighted a dependency on incremental changes to services, increasing charges and reducing employee numbers in order to make savings. But these are neither sufficient nor sustainable solutions set against the scale of the challenge facing councils. Cuts can only be part of the solution. What is required is a more strategic approach, longer-term planning and a greater openness to alternative forms of service delivery'[25]

23 Once for Scotland website

24 NHS Scotland Shared Services website

25 An overview of local government in Scotland 2016 - Audit Scotland

- 'Councils' responses to budget reductions have mainly focused on incremental savings to existing services. In the face of further funding reductions, councils should be evaluating options for more significant changes to delivering key services, beyond health and social care integration[26]'

The main concerns and challenges faced in progressing this agenda

The literature reviewed again indicates a fairly common set of concerns and potential challenges within the UK and beyond. But a critical distinction is that these are almost entirely concerns or criticisms of the narrower concept of 'shared services'. Whilst the review did not significantly focus on criticism of wider collaborative work, it is apparent this is generally considered as simply a logical way of addressing challenges and opportunities. This distinction is important: any unintended overlap in these concerns could hamper much good work.

The Local Government Group in England notes[27]:

'some of the most commonly cited barriers to sharing are cultural or behavioural. These can include political concerns over losing sovereignty and control over council services. Or organisational resistance resulting from self-preservation and protectionism of services and roles amongst officers. Differing starting positions and differing visions for the outcome – for example, whether to 'grow' a service or continue with existing partners – can also hinder development of a partnership, as can the lack of a clear and agreed purpose which is focused on the customer. Many of these cultural issues depend on the maturity of the partnership. They can be overcome where there is strong and effective leadership which builds political support across the organisations and attention to cultural change to bring staff on board'.

The LGG also notes other practical challenges, including:

- Set-up costs – the business case will need to weigh the savings that could be achieved against the cost of setting up and implementing the shared arrangements.
- Poor understanding of business performance and perceived risks to performance and/or reputation. While entering into a sharing arrangement with a high-performing council can help pull a poorer-performing council up to the same standards, the risk assessment will have to examine the possibility of the opposite happening and the damage to reputation.

26 As above

27 Local Government Group ibid

- Technical issues, such as difficulty in integrating different IT systems or getting agreement on which system is best and who should host the infrastructure.
- HR issues involved in bringing teams together or moving staff from one employer to another, including TUPE considerations and reconciling terms and conditions. Also, standardising policies and procedures does not always allow for differences in organisational culture and local variety.
- Lack of comparable data on unit costs which hinders decision-making over which services might be suitable for sharing, or which council among potential partners is the strongest performer. There may also be issues arising from the transparency agenda and the need to publish the comparative costs of separate and shared management structures.

A Welsh report[28] notes that the 'barriers to effective shared service arrangements are often the corollary of the factors that bring about success'. It identifies the most frequently cited barriers as political and public opposition, communication, integration and leadership. It quotes a survey of UK local authorities conducted by Ipsos Mori on behalf of Browne Jacobson (2011) suggesting that political and public opposition is one of the key barriers to delivering shared services in local government.

International research also suggests that opposition to shared services is as likely to come from senior managers as it is elected members. Often, opposition can be summarised under the argument that local services need to be tailored to local need. Such argument speaks not only to issues surrounding service delivery but also local democratic accountability.

A study on councils that adopted shared services in Australia[29] found that there are a series of decisions that were made with varying degrees of success. One mistake one council highlighted was trying to do too much too soon. This is an issue for two main reasons:

- Some councils might disagree on which services should be shared and which services should be maintained locally; and
- Such projects can be too ambitious for the resources and IT systems available.

John Seddon, managing director of the Vanguard Consultancy, and visiting professor until 2011 at Cardiff University's Lean Enterprise Research Centre has long argued that economy from scale in services is a myth[30].

28 Quoted from Public Policy Institute for Wales – ibid

29 Quoted from Public Policy Institute for Wales – ibid

30 Quoted from Shared Services in Central Government - Northern Ireland Assembly: Research and Information Service Briefing paper (Colin Pidgeon, September 2012)

The economies of scale concept is key to the shared service model because the idea is that centralising and standardising processes aggregates work volumes. Increased volumes of transactions are supposed to drive down long-run costs, but, according to another commentator:

'If you think that volume does drive your costs down you have to ruthlessly go for volume, like Michael O'Leary at Ryanair. But, unlike airlines which are high fixed cost outfits, the most expensive bits of local government are mainly made up of people-services which have a preponderance of variable costs. The practical result is that the scope for exploiting any economies of scale before diseconomies kick in are far more limited in services'.

Research in New Zealand[31] references a similar concern about over simplistic private sector comparisons:

'As opposed to the private sector, where shared services generally involve the aggregation of departments, subsidiaries or locations of a single organisation accountable to a central group, shared services in local government involve multiple organisations with separate accountabilities. This poses additional challenges in establishing shared services across councils who will have different priorities, constituencies and operational procedures to consider when establishing shared services'.

Issues with employee relations can be a further challenge in introducing shared services.

An ACAS report[32] explored the growth in outsourcing in the public sector, in business services and in the HR function itself. It argues that outsourcing moves:

'...are cumulatively bringing about radical changes to the structure of employment in the UK, in particular in the form of a sectoral shift from traditional sectors (including manufacturing and the public sector) to business services sectors as service activities are disembedded from their original settings and transferred to companies in other parts of the economy'.

The paper explores the impact of outsourcing (including to shared service centres) on job security; contractual terms and conditions; equality, the experience of work; managing HR across organisational boundaries (and arms- length HR); employee voice; and, trade unions.

The paper finds a:

'...growing disconnect between decision-making and control by 'de facto' employers on the one hand and responsibility and accountability for employees on the other. Furthermore,

31 Shared Services for Local Government: Development Solutions for Local Government in New Zealand (June 2011)

32 Quoted from Shared Services in Central Government - Northern Ireland Assembly: Research and Information Service Briefing paper (Colin Pidgeon, September 2012)

the fluidity that allows businesses to seek the most cost effective means of production is, in many cases, impacting on job security, terms and conditions, autonomy and job satisfaction, levels of engagement and employee voice amongst the workforce'

Further employee concerns are articulated by UNISON[33]. From a trades unions perspective they define 'shared services' as when '...one or more employers set up new organisations to make service delivery cheaper, for example by pooling resources to reduce overheads' But the union then argues '...solutions can turn into problems, promised benefits may not materialise, and often workers providing the services lose out'. In reality, the outcomes can be job losses, cuts in terms of and conditions, and outsourcing. It is also often a mechanism to introduce privatisation.

The LGA[34] report specifically looking at 'shared management' options across local authorities reflects on a number of hurdles to this approach.

It notes that shared management initiatives can break down at any stage – during early discussions, at the point where formal talks are underway, and even once sharing has begun. Moving to shared management involves major structural change and a lot of hard work. Disinterest, lack of commitment or lack of motivation are the greatest barriers to progress.

Furthermore, '...some councils may choose not to pursue shared management as they have already taken out the capacity which could be used as part of sharing, others may have taken a different strategic approach to transformation'.

Other factors that can hinder success are identified as:

- lack of a clear and shared vision of the reasons for shared management
- concerns around the loss of sovereignty of a council
- a fundamental difference in the organisational culture of the councils
- fears of a 'takeover' by one council
- a poor relationship or lack of trust between councillors, leaders or managers.

The report notes that 'politics' can be blamed of lack of success, but then quotes a Council leader as suggesting this as a cover for 'weak or inconsistent political and/or managerial leadership'. Equally, a change in political or managerial leadership of either council may bring instability to an existing partnership, but conversely it can renew the drive for further innovation or the potential for a new partnership.

33 Privatisation and shared services: UNISON member's briefing

34 Stronger Together: shared management in local government – Local Government Association (November 2016)

The identified pre-conditions and success factors in getting this right

There is a substantial amount of literature on getting this right, and this review suggests very significant commonality across countries and varying circumstances. Again, the focus of the research reviewed is largely in supporting 'shared services'; wider studies and guides on good collaborative working are plentiful but are not referenced in this review. That said, many of the generic factors are clearly common to all settings.

A key and consistent feature of this debate are the motivations and origins for change. This links to clarity on the drivers for change considered earlier, and also the degree to which these are bottom up or top down developments. Perhaps inevitably, many of the features in getting it right are in effect the flipside of the barriers considered in the preceding section.

Also of importance is the relationship between local and central governments, and the balance between central government helpfully supporting processes, or being overly prescriptive to the detriment of local democratic principles.

Scottish Government Framework 2007[35]

Although now under review, the Scottish Government Guidance Framework 2007 on shared services suggested a number of key success factors based on a review of both successful and unsuccessful examples:

- strong leadership needs to cascade throughout the organisation, so that shared services are aligned not just with IT and procedural aspects, but also the wider business strategy and organisational model
- strong governance is crucial from the outset to set out how each stakeholder will be involved. The Scottish Government framework supports a theme running throughout this report by stressing the importance of presenting a compelling case for change, involving all employees
- while cost-cutting is important, so is allocating adequate resources, as is choosing the right locations for services and staff so that additional costs do not arise over time
- performance needs to be measured throughout so that progress can be tracked against established baselines, rather than constantly redefined targets and results.

Welsh research[36] consolidates wider international evidence to suggest the requirements

35 SG Guidance Framework

36 Considerations for designing and implementing effective shared services – Public Policy Institute for Wales (September 2017)

for effective shared service development and delivery:

Effective Leadership

This cites the work of Kotter who devised an eight-step approach to implementing change within an organisation, with a particular focus on leaders and leadership. This included:

- create a sense of urgency to instigate change, in a manner that communicates the importance of immediate action
- develop a powerful coalition of leaders: effective people within the organisation itself that can guide, co-ordinate and communicate the organisation's objectives
- a strategic vision from the outset on how the future will be different from the past
- constant and clear communication
- the removal of barriers and inefficiencies
- achievable targets should be set early on
- short term 'wins' should be built upon, in order to continually improve systems and delivery
- change should be anchored in a new organisational culture, so that they replace old habits.

Effective Planning

A crucial aspect of effective leadership in the transition to shared services is effective planning. Sharing services is not a magic bullet. It is a complex option that can work only if the transition is co-ordinated throughout an organisation. This includes quickly developing a clear business case.

Communication

Effective communication is vital - particularly between different parts of an organisation. For example, if those in charge of financial operations do not effectively communicate with those in IT, then important technical details (such as purchase of specific software) can get lost or delayed, leading to significant costs or damage to service.

Accountability

If shared services are to succeed, then shared services need to be accountable, to government and/or to the public. Having suitable legislative frameworks in place to provide a platform for collaboration is vital. In particular, attention must be given to maintaining the role of elected members and their oversight of services.

Timing

Often, an opportunity will present itself, and provide a chance for local government organisations to share services. A 2016 report from the LGA[37] notes that timing can be a crucial factor.

'Serendipity, some might say opportunity, played a part in triggering many of decisions we reviewed to share management: with the availability of a willing partner; a change of political leadership; the availability of transformation funding; or the imminent departure of a Chief Executive"

This is not to suggest that the successful implementation of shared services relies merely on good fortune, but instead that planning, and consideration of context can be very important. Councils need to be careful in timing their decisions wisely, rather than moving too quickly and not achieving the potential benefits of shared service delivery. However, they must also be ready to react and change when opportunities present themselves.

A case study within Irish based ICRLD research[38] of New York State's efforts to develop shared services provides a further set of learning with similar messages. It notes that to progress positively there is a need to recognise:

- the benefits of shared services can be unbalanced – with one partner effectively benefitting more from savings
- strong relationships and leaders are key building blocks
- 'money isn't everything' – stakeholder buy-in is needed from the outset
- the savings are there – but may not be substantial or immediate
- financial incentives and technical assistance support from regional government can be important
- research institutes can help build the evidence base.

This research sat within a wider study of 4 international experiences undertaken by the ICLRD – including the Clyde Valley initiative. Across these, some key success ingredients were identified:

- that shared services must also be about quality improvements
- 'proximity creates opportunity' – at a range of levels
- strong (and ideally long standing) relationships and leadership matters

37 LGA 2016

38 Shared Services across Local Government: sharing international experience – ICLRD (March 2012)

- buy in is key – including early stakeholder engagement.

A New Zealand study of wider international experience[39] again concluded on the key pre-conditions to develop effective shared services:

- leadership throughout the process is critical
- scope and project management involves having a clearly defined project that can demonstrate the benefits to be achieved, and understands the challenges to implementation
- parties to shared services arrangements need to agree on common objectives and share the same strategic vision
- an improvement culture resulting from a history of collaborative activity with one or more of the parties involved that evolves into more formal arrangements.

An IBM report[40] identified the five key success factors for a successful shared services implementation as:

- strong project management skills
- senior-level support
- effective communication
- strong change management
- a phased approach to implementation.

And in a similar vein, the Local Government Association[41] identified 'shared management'

ingredients of success as:

- political leadership
- vision and culture
- managerial leadership
- trust, honesty and openness
- councillor involvement

39 Considerations for designing and implementing effective shared services – Public Policy Institute for Wales (September 2017)

40 Success factors for implementing shared services in Government – IBM Centre for the Business of Government (2008)

41 Stronger Together: shared management in local government – Local Government Association (November 2016)

- staff engagement
- communication
- joint infrastructure projects i.e. IT
- resourcing and pace of change – clear business case with returns detailed
- shared wider learning.

Supporting the implementation of shared services

A number of the sources reviewed also note and reflected upon the types of practical support to developing shared services and improve collaborative working.

The LGA[42] supports its shared services work portfolio through

- a Shared Service Expert Programme which provides councils with funding towards a shared services expert with the particular skill or expertise to provide support and assistance to develop and improve an existing shared service arrangement.
- a shared services match making service to provide assistance to support councils who wish to share services and/or management teams with other councils. The offer includes access to funding for a dedicated shared service expert and/or paid for external mediation advice and support.

Reflections on wider practice also notes that a range of national and regional Government supports can assist the investigation and development of shared services.

The ICLRD[43] report highlights that international public sector efficiency programmes have often included funding that promotes the development of shared services business cases and their subsequent implementation. Such resources overcome barriers and reduce risks by ensuring that robust business cases are developed, and initial set-up costs are subsidised. Associated with these incentive programmes is expertise and good practice material to help with developing good practice shared services arrangements. While incentives are not identified as a critical success factor in the literature review, many projects have acknowledged the catalytic effect of support funding from the state and central government in the UK, Australia and the US.

For example, since 2006, the New York State's Local Government Efficiency Programme has provided technical assistance and research grants to local authorities to undertake feasibility studies and fund costs related to the merging of functional services. According

42 LGA website

43 Shared Services across Local Government: sharing international experience – ICLRD (March 2012)

to local leaders in New York, the financial incentives have been the most useful part of the Local Government Efficiency Program, although the programme's capacity building workshops, online resources and technical assistance out of branch offices have also been helpful. Of the $44.7 million in grants distributed among 295 projects from 2005 to 2010, 32 percent of the funding went to water, sanitation and utility projects, and 30 percent to transportation. The balance funded public safety, education, reorganisation and services.

The UK's Transformation Challenge Award is a further example of how this might be done in practice. In 2014, the UK Government set aside £120 million to be used over the subsequent two years to fund transformative projects within English local authorities. It argued that councils need to redesign their service delivery, explicitly noting that a key method of achieving this was for different local authorities to come together to share not just staff and resources, but also core services. A DLCG report stated that it wanted councils to share 'all or some of their corporate services, workforces, information technology systems and assets'. In 2013- 2014, 145 bids were made by local authorities totalling £66 million. Of those, 31 were successful from 71 local authorities or fire and rescue authorities. As yet, there are no authoritative reports of success or failure of the scheme, or the effect on shared services in local government.

Based on reviewing developments elsewhere, research in Wales[44] considers whether the Welsh Government could play an important role in supporting and enabling the development of shared services. It notes '...financial support is important - in the early stages of implementing shared services and as an insurance to lessen the risk for councils attempting ambitious collaborations'.

Consequently, it suggests that the Welsh Government might help to develop successful shared services in a number of ways, including:

- supporting councils to make sense of complex procurement legislation or contractual issues relating to staffing or resources
- assisting the establishing of networks between councils and instilling a sense of the need for change, and
- minimising the risks in transitioning to shared services by providing income support and/or by playing an active role in the early stages of planning shared services.

Research on regional collaboration in Welsh local government has highlighted the difficulties and drawbacks of an entirely voluntarist approach. It suggests that the Welsh Government needs to achieve a careful balance between mandating shared services and encouraging voluntary arrangements. In some cases, mandating might be the best way of starting a cultural change. However, 'it is often when organisations recognise a problem

44 Considerations for designing and implementing effective shared services – Public Policy Institute for Wales (September 2017)

and actively want to share services to solve it that the best results are achieved. Mandating without engagement will likely achieve little'.

Evidence of impact

Given the range of activity in scope, evidencing impact beyond some individual examples is not practicable. Again, the focus is mainly on evidence from 'shared services'. A clear division in the literature in this area is apparent. A number of sources suggest that hard evidence of impact against promised benefits is often missing, and that this is a significant knowledge gap. This point was also noted in the section on concerns and challenges. But set against this, some reports do provide quite clearly measured analysis of actual gains from certain activities. In general, these are more localised examples.

The LGA[45] commissioned Drummond MacFarlane carried out research on five shared service arrangements:

- Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire county councils – LGSS: established in 2010
- Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA): established in 2007
- Herefordshire Council, Herefordshire Primary Care Trust and Wye Valley NHS Trust – Hoople Ltd: established in 2011
- all the councils in Lincolnshire – Procurement Lincolnshire: established in 2008
- Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire district councils: started process in 2008.

The subsequent report focused on the key themes that emerged from the research, specifically the nature and scale of the benefits delivered in practice by shared service arrangements. The report also outlines an evaluation tool that has been developed to help identify financial and non-financial shared service benefits, and to monitor delivery progress.

The key findings were:

clear financial benefits can be made from sharing services. Savings are achieved through consolidating organisation structures, integrating information technology, reducing accommodation, and improving procurement

- early savings are made by reducing staff – removing duplication and management posts

45 Shared Services: costs spared? An analysis of the financial and non-financial benefits of local authority shared services – Local Government Association (August 2012)

- these initial benefits are typically delivered rapidly with strong top-down leadership
- as shared services mature and evolve, they are able to benefit from wider business transformation – such as better use of IT and assets, improved processes and cultural change programmes
- the set up and integration costs for merging services are modest with less than a two-year payback period for all the shared service arrangements
- baseline financial and performance information is essential to make the case for change and track the benefits of shared service arrangements in terms of efficiencies and service improvements. This was a difficulty with all the shared service arrangements researched and made it hard to make performance comparisons. Despite this, it appears that the shared service arrangements have succeeded in providing the same or better levels of performance at less cost
- good performance against organisations' key performance indicators are complemented by good staff indicators – such as high staff morale, low staff sickness and low turnover rates
- rapid implementation of shared service arrangements helps build momentum for change
- expanding established shared services to provide services for other public sector partners in a locality is a useful way to generate income and ensure efficiencies through greater economies of scale
- savings have also been achieved through integrating IT systems, rationalising buildings and accommodation and improving procurement practice.

Reported savings were:

	Start date	Baseline cost (£m)	Total of year 1 and 2 savings		One-off set up costs	Cumulative savings *1 - March 2012
			Staff	Other		
Devon and Somerset FRA	April 2007	£67.2m	£734,000	£637,000	£966,000	£5.14m
Hoople Ltd	April 2011	£11.5m	£620,000	£0	£800,000	£620,000 *2
LGSS	April 2010	£83.0 m	£1.06m	£2.73m	£3.32m	£3.79m *3
Procurement Lincolnshire	July 2008	£0.6m staff costs £194m procurement spend	£0	£5.14m	£148,000	£10.4m
Vale of White House/South Ox	2007	£19.9m	£2.83m	£2.12m		

Less positively, at national level, the NAO found that 'departments have not realised the planned benefits' from shared services; the five shared service centres it studied should have saved £159m by the end of 2010-11. However, the NAO found that only one of those centres was able to demonstrate 'break-even'.

A 2016 National Audit Office (NAO) report analysing UK Cabinet Office shared services found that it had so far been largely unsuccessful. While £90m had been saved through sharing services, £94m had been spent. Reaching similar conclusions to those in the academic literature, they argue that making savings and improving services can only happen where there is effective leadership to ensure departments are signed up and act collaboratively.

The NAO found that the five shared service centres it studied had cost over £1.4bn. This was £500m more than the expected cost of £0.9bn. This cost overrun was due – at least in part – to the software systems used in the centres, which added both complexity and cost.

Other studies more generally suggest that there is a danger in practice that sharing services leads to greater costs. Elston and MacCarthaigh (2016) identify five risks that shared services do not live up to expectations. First, costs might escalate by replacing existing practices that are deeply embedded into an organisation. Second, transaction costs might be increased as time and resources are required to document existing costs and best means of replacement.

Third, service quality can be reduced, and decisions can take longer across collaborating organisations, which can lead to greater costs over time. Fourth, collaboration can lead to some functions being duplicated, and costs multiplied. Finally, the time and resources spent on sharing services can mean that other ways of reducing costs can be lost or ignored.

Audit Scotland (2011) stated that: 'sharing services may not necessarily reduce costs although they may provide more effective service delivery.[46]' Additionally, the up-front costs can be significant.

The New York State case study referenced earlier[47] reported that the consolidation of local governments, the most difficult option to pursue, had been in the order of two to five percent. 'Study after study makes it clear that consolidation is not a magic bullet for drastically reducing costs and can't provide the 10 percent to 30 percent immediate savings that taxpayers want'. Overall, the New York's Local Government Efficiency Program (LGEP) found that among 64 completed projects for shared services and municipal consolidation, the average savings on the local government tax levy is 4.6%.

LGA's review of shared management[48] is more positive in its assessment of savings. It concludes:

'Now that many of us have been sharing management for several years, we have good evidence of the benefits realised – at least £60 million saved, more flexible and resilient workforces and councils that are transforming further and faster than others. This innovation means we are well placed to face the future. Shared management is enabling councils to develop a culture of collaboration and truly lead the public sector'.

But despite this, it notes that the numbers of Councils taking up shared management 'has not continued to grow in line with initial trends'.

The Scottish Government has reported savings from shared services across a number of portfolios[49]. In 2010-11, a total of £71.3m was saved through shared services.

For example, in 2007, the Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA) was established to centralise a number of support services to the police, including IT support and forensics, which were previously managed separately by the eight police boards.

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46 Audit Scotland 2011

47 Shared Services across Local Government: sharing international experience – ICLRD (March 2012)

48 Stronger Together: shared management in local government – Local Government Association (November 2016)

49 from Shared Services in Central Government - Northern Ireland Assembly: Research and Information Service Briefing paper (Colin Pidgeon, September 2012)

In October 2010, Audit Scotland reported that the SPSA had improved the quality, productivity and efficiency of its forensics, criminal justice and training services since it was established. Also, the SPSA had 'achieved its efficiency targets and made £5.3 million of savings in the three years since it was set up.

Overall though, a number of commentators suggest that the hard evidence of proven benefits and cost savings is limited. The Welsh review[50] suggests why this may be the case noting '...there is a lack of evidence about how to address common failures that arise during shared service implementation and overcome difficulties while services are being delivered. While reviews of shared services highlight failures, there is less evidence on how to address them. Part of this problem may be that once organisations have initiated shared services, they are disinclined to highlight their own failures, but to understand the reasons behind these and the potential to overcome them is crucial for the long-term successful delivery of shared services'.

Linked to this, it concludes "...there is also an evidence gap on the long-term impact of shared services on local government finances, the quality of the services it provides, and on user satisfaction and staff morale'.

Related development in other countries and sectors

Reflections on experiences beyond Scotland have been weaved through earlier sections where relevant. This largely suggests the motivations, opportunities, challenges and concerns are common across many countries. In addition, reflections on Scottish examples are prevalent in some reviews of international practice.

This section now summarises some wider and more general international observations. An important caveat here, however, is that not all learning should lead to an assumption of transnational replicability. This is well articulated in the New Zealand research[51]:

'It is important to note that it is not always possible to make direct comparisons with the shared services experiences of Australian, British or American local government because:

- the type and scale of activities suitable for shared services will differ. For example, overseas councils often have greater responsibilities in the delivery of health, social and policing services
- revenue-sharing between central and local government is greater in international

50 Considerations for designing and implementing effective shared services – Public Policy Institute for Wales (September 2017)

51 Shared Services for Local Government: Development Solutions for Local Government in New Zealand (June 2011)

examples, which provides a stronger link to standardised public service systems and processes

- the economies of scale evident in countries with a far greater population will not be so evident in New Zealand
- costs associated with servicing geographic spread in areas of low population may counter efficiency gains reported through shared services'.

Wales[52]

The Welsh Government is already doing a significant amount to support shared services. The Regional Collaboration Fund (RCF) was introduced in 2013, and was designed to support collaborative working between local authorities and/or other sector organisations. This has been complemented by other Welsh Government financial support and other funding delivered by the Welsh Government from the European Union's European Social Fund. Funding has often focused on providing additional expertise. The specific success of Welsh Government support is hard to determine given the different contributing factors to shared service delivery. Evidence suggests that RCF and other Welsh Government support led to increased collaboration, and eventual organisational change (Downe and Hayden, 2016). However, the effects of this could be strengthened by giving councils and other organisations more time to respond to calls for funding, and being more innovative in supporting transformation of services, rather than merely providing pots of money.

The Welsh report further notes that there is scope for the Welsh Government to support collaboration by placing emphasis more on public services as a whole, rather than just local government.

Republic of Ireland[53]

The Irish Government is committed to a wide-ranging reform agenda. A key area of focus on achieving substantial reform is in the area of shared services where we [have] to ensure reform is driven and that we deliver public services in a more efficient, cost effective way. Work on a shared service approach to Human Resources is already well advanced.

In addition to the priorities identified for the Civil Service, the sectors of Health, Education, Justice, Defence and Local Authorities were also asked to prepare shared services plans during the first half of 2012.

52 Considerations for designing and implementing effective shared services – Public Policy Institute for Wales (September 2017)

53 Shared Services in Central Government - Northern Ireland Assembly: Research and Information Service Briefing paper (Colin Pidgeon, September 2012)

Irish Border developments

'A key rationale for the long- running reform of public administration is the achievement of economies of scale in the delivery of public services'.

The shared services agenda also directly supports EU policy initiatives (such as EU Agenda 2020) and the effective implementation of EU Directives that have cross-border implications. The agenda is also responsive to future funding programmes that emphasise the key role of 'territory', 'clustering' and the effective and efficient shaping and delivery of high-quality services to citizens.

Currently, shared services focus largely on 'back-office' functions that serve internal staff – for example, human resources, procurement and information technology. For example, Sligo County and Sligo Borough Councils share back office services in finance, information and communication technology and community services, among others. In Northern Ireland, clusters of councils share services in waste management and building control. In a cross-border context, Louth Local Authorities and Newry and Mourne District Council in the Newry/Dundalk twin city region have formally agreed to cooperate in emergency services, tourism, economic development and the green economy.

It is clear that, shared services have not been without their costs, even within the private sector context. Management executives have noted concerns, for example, that 'the implementation costs and risks would outweigh the benefits'. Nevertheless, technological advances have served to refocus attention on the potential of electronically supporting the so-called 'next generation' of shared services and thereby to secure cost savings. The perceived urgency of this agenda has been given further fillip by the contracting economic environment and the public expenditure cuts facing local government, which has placed an additional emphasis on exploring a shared service model involving private and third sector partners, and individual institutions.

New Zealand[54]

A report by the New Zealand Government's Better Public Services Advisory Group made a number of recommendations in relation to reducing duplication in the public sector.

Over time, by consolidating and disestablishing some public service and state sector entities, reduce their overall number to: better support a results focus; reduce fragmentation, duplication, and transaction costs; capture economies of scale.

54 Shared Services for Local Government: Development Solutions for Local Government in New Zealand (June 2011)

There is also a policy commitment to consolidate and improve policy capability through a combination of more flexible deployment of resources, common human resources arrangements and policy hubs.

Canada[55]

In Canada, a new organisation – Shared Services Canada – was formed in the summer of 2011 to progress shared service models to IT provision. The Canadian Government stated:

'The Government has over 100 different email systems, over 300 data centres, and over 3,000 network services within the Federal Public Service. This is inefficient and wasteful. The Government will move to one email system, reduce the overall number of data centres from 300 to less than 20, and streamline electronic networks within and between government departments. This will improve services to Canadians, make IT more secure and reliable, and save taxpayers' dollars in line with the Government of Canada's plan to return to balanced budgets'.

All IT resources associated with the delivery of email, data centre and network services will be transferred from 44 of the more IT-intensive departments and agencies to Shared Services Canada, which will provide all those services.

Northern Ireland[56]

Enterprise Shared Services (ESS) was established as a Directorate within DFP in January 2010. The overall aim of DFP is to help the Northern Ireland Executive secure the most appropriate and effective use of resources and services for the benefit of the community in Northern Ireland.

ESS was tasked with integrating six previously separate reform projects into a single, cohesive organisation. It monitors and reports on the performance of the shared services in its annual report.

Benefits of the introduction of shared services take the form of reduced public-sector costs and improved service delivery. To date, this has included a 40% reduction in the cost of basic IT provision per user, a reduction in the number of departmental HR staff from around 900 to below 400, and improved payment times for invoices.

Enterprise Shared Services (ESS) brings together responsibility for Human Resource (HR), Information Technology (IT), Finance and Digital Services along with the management of

55 from Shared Services in Central Government - Northern Ireland Assembly: Research and Information Service Briefing paper (Colin Pidgeon, September 2012

56 ESS website

Properties into a single directorate within the Department of Finance (DOF).

A recent review stated that the 'NICS has in place, through the implementation of the shared services, an example best practice in public service delivery'.

England

Much of the material reviewed in this paper concerns experiences in England. At this point only one further important reflection is noted: that English local authorities are very upbeat on their record of advancing these agendas.

Reflecting on recent research, the LGA notes:

'Our latest shared services map shows once again that when it comes to making efficiency savings there is none better than local government. Shared services are no longer just something the most innovative councils do, but have instead become the norm for councils to improve services, increase resilience and save money in times of significant change, reinforcing councils' reputation as the most efficient part of the public sector'[57].

This is echoed in the Local Government Guide: whilst noting many challenges it concludes 'For all this, councils are well placed. Local government has a track record of innovation, of delivering efficiencies, and of serving communities well'[58].

NHS Scotland

In light of increased demand, the Scottish Government has adopted a 'Shared Services Portfolio', where services will be delivered on a set of consistent national principles, unless there is a compelling reason for variation (NHS Scotland, 2016). Services either currently being shared or to be shared include business services such as human resources and finance, health services such as laboratories and public health, and operational services such as procurement and catering.

The most recent annual report (NHS Scotland, 2016) highlights that in 2015-2016, £36.2 million was saved through adopting national contracts, as well as £750,000 saved through national logistics. £2.2 million was saved through public/private partnerships, with 93% of local delivery planning being achieved as planned or beyond what was planned.

57 Cllr Paul Bettison, Chairman, LGA's Improvement and Innovation Board,National Map of Shared Services – Local Government Association (2017)

58 Local Government Guide ibid

Section 3: Conclusions

The overall conclusion from this brief review is that there are very significant similarities between countries on the key issues linked to shared services and collaboration, both in local government setting and elsewhere in the public sector.

In terms of **definitions**, a common picture is suggested of distinguishing but recognising an important link between the wider options presented by 'collaborative working', and the more specific sub option of 'shared services'.

The **drivers** are largely the same across different experiences. A consistent message is that these are in most cases linked to cost savings, but that this should not be the sole motivating factor. If it becomes solely about money, the agenda is restricted, 'buy in' can be much harder, short termism can dominate, and the wider opportunities from action can be missed.

Other repeatedly suggested motivations are:

- better outcomes, improvements in service, and service efficiencies
- protection and resilience for vulnerable services
- increased consistency in service provision
- reduced dependency
- an opportunity for more fundamental and long-term service redesign
- opportunities to specialise and better use expertise
- increased use of information and intelligence.

Similarities are also apparent in the **concerns and challenges**, though it is important to note these largely relate to shared services as opposed to collaborative working. These are cultural, behavioural and technical in nature, and can include:

- concerns that the suggested gains are unproven
- a lack of robust baselines from which to measure progress and impact
- the challenge of practically welding together different organisational cultures
- loss of control
- a potential sense of 'takeover'
- technical challenges e.g. IT, HR/TUPE issues etc
- political and public opposition

- self-preservation and protectionism
- over ambition in the pace of change
- over ambition in the benefits – particularly the scale of savings
- damaged employee relationship – linked to concerns on job losses and reduced conditions of service
- a lack of capacity to drive change (linked to previous service cuts)
- inappropriate and non-transferable comparison with the private sector.

Considerable literature suggests the **pre-conditions and key approaches in getting this right**. Again, consistent patterns are apparent:

- effective leadership (often 'coalitions' of leaders) throughout organisations – based on trust and ideally long-term relationships
- clearly articulated visions, objectives and motivations from the outset – supported by robust business cases
- consistent and wide communication mechanisms throughout
- early stakeholder engagement
- realism on gains
- the identification and communication of 'early wins'
- a commitment to the 'long term' where necessary
- timing, and in certain circumstances 'opportunism'.

The need to adequately resource developmental and feasibility work is also recognised as important. In this respect, support from regional and national governments is cited as important to resource work and reduce risk, though not too 'control/mandate' the process.

Evidencing impact is problematical, and this review solely highlights examples of some apparently positively evidenced experiences and some situations where initial promised gains have not been delivered. Some concerns are also evident on situations where shared services may actually increase costs, or where some benefits are clear but without cost savings. Overall, there is significant sense that clear measurement of gains may often be a weakness. This can be linked to a lack of robust starting point baselines, or defensiveness if initiatives hit problems.

Learning from elsewhere is clearly possible and important, but with the understanding that not all experience can transfer to different settings. The experiences identified are instructive and comforting that Scottish Local Government's record is reflected elsewhere, and on occasions identified in international studies. As indicated the drivers, challenges,

and conditions to get this right seem fairly consistent. English local authorities are very positive that they are at the forefront of developments within the wider public sector. This positioning and narrative may be important to reflect further upon in the Scottish context.

Appendix 1 - Main Literature Sources Reviewed

1. Shared Services in Central Government - Northern Ireland Assembly: Research and Information Service Briefing paper (Colin Pidgeon, September 2012)
2. Considerations for designing and implementing effective shared services – Public Policy Institute for Wales (September 2017)
3. Privatisation and shared services – UNISON
4. Shared Services: costs spared? An analysis of the financial and non-financial benefits of local authority shared services – Local Government Association (August 2012)
5. National Map of Shared Services – Local Government Association (2017)
6. Shared Services across Local Government: sharing international experience – ICLRD (March 2012)
7. Shared Services in the public sector: a critical review – Thomas Elston, University of Oxford (April 2014)
8. Stronger Together: shared management in local government – Local Government Association (November 2016)
9. Shared Services for Local Government: Development Solutions for Local Government in New Zealand (June 2011)
10. Shared Services and management: a guide for Councils – Local Government Group (March 2011)
11. Shared Services: propositions for local government collaboration – ICLRD (March 2012)
12. Local Government: alternative models of service delivery – House of Commons Briefing Paper (May 2019)
13. Success and failure factors in shared services: an IS literature analysis (2011)
14. Will the Government's interest in shared services deliver delight or despair to Whitehall – Andrew Greenway in Public Technology (April 2018)
15. Health and Social Care integration: update on progress – Accounts Commission/Auditor General (November 2018)
16. Considerations for designing and implementing effective shared services – Public Policy Institute for Wales (September 2017)
17. Enterprise Shared Services – Northern Ireland Civil Service website
18. Shared Services Centres – Comptroller and Auditor General Cabinet Office paper (May 2016)

19. Investigating and improving the HR and OD capability in shared Councils – Local Government Association (February 2016)
20. Success factors for implementing shared services in Government – IBM Centre for the Business of Government (2008)

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