ABSTRACT
This report seeks agreement in principle to the further development of shared services and collaborative working arrangements and in particular seeks approval to conduct a review with Tayside Contracts to identify possible efficiency improvements and financial savings that could arise to the council in the areas of parks maintenance and waste management from such working arrangements.

1 RECOMMENDATION

The Committee:

i Agree the principle that the development of shared services and collaborative working arrangements for the provision of services will play an increasingly important part in the council’s future arrangements making a key contribution to the achievement of the council’s financial management objectives over the medium term.

ii Authorise the Chief Executive and relevant directors to enter into detailed discussions with potential partner organisations within Tayside’s public sector, including Tayside Contracts, and with other potential public sector partners.

iii Agree that the Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhood Services conduct a review with Tayside Contracts in respect of the Neighbourhood Services Department’s frontline parks maintenance and waste management operational services.

iv Agree that further reports in regard to ii) and iii) above be brought forward to committee as required.

2 BACKGROUND

Members will be aware of the current and future financial pressures facing the council as outlined in the council’s medium term financial strategy, approved by Council on 22 June. The challenge presented by the financial projections and efficiency targets within that strategy will require us to make wider use of alternative and innovative arrangements for the delivery of council services.

Shared services and collaborative working is one such arrangement and members will be aware that this is an agenda promoted by the Scottish Government and one that features in the recently published Christie Commission report on The Future Delivery of Public Services.

While the principle of shared services and collaborative working is well embedded in this area, particularly through the use of Tayside Contracts, further development with partner organisations is a possible means through which savings can be achieved and the provision of services safeguarded.

Against this backdrop a number of initiatives have been put in place with other councils and partner organisations to consider the possibility of shared services and collaborative working, and to continue to inform discussions and decisions within the council.

- A Public Sector Strategy Group (PSSG) has been established at chief executive level comprising the three Tayside councils, the police and fire and rescue services and NHS Tayside. The PSSG has established a number of workstreams and working groups to identify/consider potential areas of cross council/organisation collaboration. The most significant area of work affecting the council at present is a review regarding a possible Tayside-wide Fleet Structure and which has previously been reported to members.

- Meetings have been held between Tayside Contracts and the council’s Neighbourhood Services and Infrastructure Services departments. Most recently this has resulted in the transfer of the building cleaning function and frontline operational staff from Neighbourhood Services to Tayside Contracts.
• Plans are being made to undertake dialogue in the near future with nearby councils outwith the Tayside area.

3 PROPOSAL

Following the successful transfer of building cleaning to Tayside Contracts it is now proposed to conduct a review focussing on other frontline operational services within Neighbourhood Services to determine whether working with Tayside Contracts could lead to efficiencies and savings, while at the same time safeguarding service provision.

It is proposed that the review will focus on the department’s frontline parks maintenance and waste management operational services but also cover Tayside Contracts road maintenance and winter maintenance operations to see if there could be better integration and more flexibility between all these operations thereby enhancing service provision in these areas all year round.

The review would specifically consider the potential for partnership working and for integration of frontline council operational functions and how these would be managed from a strategic perspective.

By its very nature the review would identify possible efficiency savings, opportunities to minimise duplication of effort and streamline management, administrative and back office (both within and outwith the department) functions, and possible efficiencies within asset and resource management.

The intent would be to prepare a business case and proposed action plan with a view to potential implementation commencing in April 2013.

Members are asked to note that the Tayside Fleet Review, which as indicated is currently the subject of a separate review through the auspices of the PSSG, will continue with its outcome used to inform this review.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

To help take the proposed Neighbourhood Services review forward it is proposed that a temporary project officer be appointed, employed by Tayside Contracts, but part funded by Neighbourhood Services, such costs, estimated at no greater than £20,000, being contained within the department’s revenue budget.

Otherwise there are no financial implications directly associated with this report.

It is recognised however that shared service and collaborative working arrangements do offer the opportunity for budgetary savings, albeit they should not be regarded as a panacea for all the financial challenges facing the council.

5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no human rights implications associated with this report.

6 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective. An equalities impact assessment is not required.

7 CONSULTATION

All Directors, the Assistant Chief Executive, Head of Finance and Head of Law and Administration have been consulted on the terms of this report.

RICHARD STIFF
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

HMR

NOTE No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.