

MINUTES of the meeting of the **ORBIS** Joint Committee held at 9.30 am on 5 December 2016 at Members' Conference Room, County Hall, Kingston-upon-Thames, KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Friday, 20 January 2017.

Elected Members:

- * Councillor Denise Le Gal (SCC)
- * Councillor David Elkin (ESCC)
- * = in attendance

In attendance

Adrian Stockbridge, Orbis Programme Manager, Surrey County Council

Ann Charlton, Director of Legal, Democratic and Cultural Services,
Surrey County Council

David Kuenssberg, Executive Director for Finance and Resources,
Brighton & Hove City Council

Kevin Foster, Chief Operating Officer, East Sussex County Council

John Stebbings, Chief Property Officer, Surrey County Council

Sheila Little, Integrated Director of Finance

64/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were none.

65/16 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING [Item 2]

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

66/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Mr Leslie Hamilton.

67/16 PROCEDURAL MATTERS [Item 4]

a MEMBERS' QUESTIONS [Item 4a]

There were none.

b PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 4b]

There were none.

68/16 ORBIS JOINT COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN [Item]

Declarations of interest:

None

Witnesses:

Adrian Stockbridge, Orbis Programme Manager, Surrey County Council
Ann Charlton, Director of Legal, Democratic and Cultural Services
David Kuenssberg, Executive Director Finance and Resourcing, Brighton & Hove City Council
Kevin Foster, Chief Operating Officer, East Sussex County Council
John Stebbings, Chief Property Officer, Surrey County Council
Marie Greenan, Orbis Programme Coordinator, East Sussex County Council
Sheila Little, Integrated Director of Finance

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Members agreed to consider an additional item at this meeting to review and approve the Orbis Joint Committee Forward Plan. Consequently, a copy of the Forward Plan was tabled at the meeting for consideration by Members. The Committee was advised that officers were currently reviewing the format of the Forward Plan with a view to improving how it is structured.
2. It was agreed that the Service Update from Finance would be considered at the Joint Committee meeting scheduled to take place on 3 April 2016 as it was felt that the January meeting would be too early to provide Members with an update on the progress of integrating Finance teams.
3. Members asked whether existing legislation governing local authority committees permitted meetings to take place via videoconference. It was agreed that officers would review the legislation to determine whether or not this was possible.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

1. The service update from Finance to be considered at the Orbis Joint Committee meeting scheduled for 3 April 2017.
2. officers to review whether existing legislation permits local authority committee meetings to take place via videoconference.

69/16 BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL JOINING THE ORBIS PARTNERSHIP [Item 5]

Declarations of interest:

None

Witnesses:

Adrian Stockbridge, Orbis Programme Manager, Surrey County Council
Ann Charlton, Director of Legal, Democratic and Cultural Services, Surrey County Council
David Kuenssberg, Executive Director Finance and Resourcing, Brighton & Hove City Council
Kevin Foster, Chief Operating Officer, East Sussex County Council
John Stebbings, Chief Property Officer, Surrey County Council
Marie Greenan, Orbis Programme Coordinator, East Sussex County Council
Sheila Little, Integrated Director of Finance

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Officers introduced the report and advised Members that the recommendations the Joint Committee was being asked to consider reflected the fact that the decision on admitting Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) to the Orbis Partnership was required to go through separate decision-making processes at East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and Surrey County Council (SCC).
2. Members were informed that integrating BHCC into the partnership would present some challenges which would need to be mitigated as integration progressed. Addressing the concerns of existing staff members and those joining Orbis from BHCC in relation to the integration process was identified as a significant potential challenge. Officers further highlighted that integration would need to take place in tandem with the delivery of the Business Plan in accordance with agreed timescales. Uncertainties relating to the financial position of all three partner authorities also continued to present a risk to Orbis as there was the potential for one of the partner authorities to need to drive additional budget savings through the shared service. The Committee was advised, however, that the inclusion of BHCC presented some real opportunities including the addition of 600 extra staff to Orbis as well as the chance to broaden its scope through the inclusion of a unitary authority to the Partnership.
3. The Committee discussed an event on public sector shared service centres that had been hosted by the Local Government Association (LGA) and which was attended by officers. The event had enabled delegates to share learning and best practice around integrating the delivery of local authority business functions. Members asked how the Orbis Partnership's operating model compared to that of other shared service partnerships. Officers stated that alongside Orbis there were just two other public sector shared service partnerships at the event and that these employed divergent operating models. Orbis has sought to blend these two approaches in order to develop the most effective shared service model and Orbis is the only one of the three partnerships that will fully integrate services. Officers highlighted that although Orbis was the newest of the three partnerships it was more advanced in tackling some of the key challenges related to integrating local authority service delivery particularly around people management and organisational development.
4. Further information was requested on what impact the introduction of BHCC into the partnership would have on members of staff and people management processes. Officers advised that some staff would inevitably find the process of integration challenging and so it is important that, where possible, members of staff are engaged in the integration process as a means of mitigating these concerns.

5. The Committee also heard that work around BHCC joining the partnership meant that Orbis was now required to deal with Trade Unions at a regional level which meant building new relationships with Trade Union representatives. As a reduction in the number of staff was part of the Orbis Business Plan it would be necessary to manage these new relationships carefully. Reconfiguration of Finance Teams across the partner authorities to integrate them into Orbis would provide a test bed for working and forming relationships with Union representatives.
6. Further information was sought on reductions in the number of staff which had taken place since the Orbis Partnership came into being. Members were advised that there had been a 30% reduction in senior leadership posts (tier 2 and 3) which had been managed through natural wastage and voluntary severance. Officers highlighted that based on the financial efficiency target that has been set for Orbis, based on an average salary, this would equate to around 150 posts over the three year period of the current Orbis Business Plan (up to March 2019). The implications on the workforce of BHCC joining the Partnership was still being determined. Furthermore, Members were advised that over this time period the majority of employees in Orbis will be impacted by service redesign to a greater or lesser degree.
7. It was agreed that an item on formalising arrangements for Orbis' governance structure would be added to the Committee's Forward Plan for consideration at its meeting on 3 April 2017.
8. Members were advised that the process of integrating BHCC into the Partnership was governed by some specific principles that it was necessary to follow before Orbis was expanded. Much of the work on this had taken place informally through the Due Diligence process but it was necessary to undertake this formally.
9. The Committee expressed concern that Members across both ESCC and SCC were not clear on what Orbis is or how it works. Officers were asked to consider how they could better advertise to Members the benefits that Orbis provides to both councils.

Actions/ further information to be provided:

1. An item on formalising arrangements for Orbis' governance structure should be added to the Committee's Forward Plan for consideration at its meeting on 3 April 2017.
2. Officers to consider how they can better advertise the benefits of the Orbis Partnership to Members and residents.

RESOLVED: That;

the Orbis Joint Committee agreed to:

- i. approve, subject to the agreement of the Cabinet of East Sussex County Council and the satisfactory completion of the assessments as set out in the Cabinet report (13 December 2016), to BHCC joining Orbis as a founding partner and to BHCC joining the Orbis Joint Committee upon completion of the IAA.
- ii. delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of East Sussex County Council, in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive of Surrey County Council, the Lead Member for Resources

for East Sussex County Council and the Cabinet Member for Business Services and Resident Experience for Surrey County Council, to:

- a. determine whether the results of the assessment referred to above are satisfactory; and
- b. to take any actions necessary arising from or to give effect to the integration of BHCC in the Orbis partnership including (but not limited to) agreeing the timings and terms of the integration, and the terms of the Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) and any other agreements the COO considers appropriate.

70/16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 6]

The Committee noted that its next meeting would be held on 20 January 2017.

Meeting ended at: 10.18 am

Chair