

ORBIS JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Orbis Joint Committee held at County Hall, Lewes on 28 May 2020.

++ The Members were not present in person, but took the decisions remotely ++

PRESENT Councillors Nick Bennett (Chair) and Bob Standley (both East Sussex County Council); Zully Grant-Duff and Mel Few (both Surrey County Council); and Daniel Yates and David Gibson (both Brighton & Hove City Council)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 There were no apologies for absence.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING - 15 APRIL 2019

3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

4 ORBIS PERFORMANCE MONITORING

4.1 The Committee considered a report by Nigel Manvell (Deputy Chief Finance Officer Brighton & Hove City Council), Kevin Foster (Chief Operating Officer East Sussex County Council), Leigh Whitehouse (Executive Director of Resources Surrey County Council) together with a presentation by officers which highlighted:

- The Covid-19 response and request for ideas for future agenda items of interest to Members
- The Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) for 2020-2023 now signed, which provides a good way forward for the Partnership
- Annex 2 and the Orbis Blueprint which sets out the strategic framework and the business plans, with their focus on Customer, Innovation and People
- Collaboration between partners to ensure service delivery to customers across the Partnership
- Rapid responses from IT&D to enable flexible and homeworking

4.2 Members asked questions about:

- Property and HR disaggregation, when this took effect and impacts on budgets
- New IAA, the levels of service integration and the Blueprint
- Annual Audit process, and any potential delays impacting of publication of the accounts
- Transition of services from pandemic response to a new “business as usual” delivery, and how the Committee could oversee that transition

4.3 Officers responded:

- Property is fully disaggregated from the budgets for 2020/21, and was disaggregated during 2019/20. The Contribution Ratio has been amended accordingly, and the 2020/21 budget based on the new Ratio.

- Fully integrated services are: Business Operations; IT&D; Procurement. Partially integrated are: Finance and HR & OD. Centres of Excellence are: Internal Audit; Insurance, Financial accounting systems; Treasury and Tax.
- The accounts will be audited independently based on the partners' contributions, which will be reflected in the respective Statements of Accounts. The deadline for publication has been put back to November.
- Officers suggested the Committee consider a report on the Target Operating Model and priorities for the Partnership post-Covid at a future meeting, and the impacts on performance monitoring in future years.

4.4 The Committee RESOLVED to note the report

5 IT & DIGITAL SERVICE SPOTLIGHT

5.1 The Committee considered a report by Nigel Manvell (Deputy Chief Finance Officer Brighton & Hove City Council), Kevin Foster (Chief Operating Officer East Sussex County Council), Leigh Whitehouse (Executive Director of Resources Surrey County Council). Matt Scott, the Chief Information Officer, highlighted the following:

- The requirement to replace 3 separate IT systems, used as an opportunity to catalyse the digital transformation, including a new helpdesk and replacement core platform and a review to simplify and streamline support services.
- The Improvement programme includes the "Knowhow" platform to provide online guides and tips for staff, in the form of video guides and documentation.
- Pioneering experience level agreements using Happy Signals to get feedback from service users on satisfaction levels. It can be benchmarked against other authorities that use the platform.
- Project delivery programme delivering 160 projects in a range of areas such as digital innovation and replacement of frontline systems.
- Commercial development is successful, with four years of year on year growth adding revenue contributions against overheads down to the direct relationships with the customer base, being able to respond to their pressures.
- Innovation in the data centre, moving towards a cloud solution, but with older, legacy, systems that don't work as well in a cloud environment being refreshed, moving towards hyperconvergence.
- Enabling the agile workforce, supporting an advanced form of flexible working and responding to the needs to work remotely during the Covid-19 crisis, including: the deployment of Windows 10; issuing of hybrids and laptops; development of wifi and virtual private networks to share data securely.
- Digital collaboration across local government – to deliver consistent services there is a need to engage across traditional authority boundaries, so work has been done on the national Digital Declaration for better use of technology and data.
- Digital strategic delivery – each authority has a different digital posture which needs a different response, but a benefit of the Partnership is accelerated learning which can be shared and applied.
- Covid-19 response which has demonstrated where the Digital Service has supported the partner authorities which was a significant mobilisation of resources.

5.2 Members asked questions about:

- Hyperconvergence and whether the data centre would be completely cloud-based.

5.3 Officers responded:

- The authorities have an in-house cloud-based platform, which is combined with use of the public cloud. Each authority has provision in its own capital programme to complete implementation with a strategy setting out core component of the project which will provide enhanced computing processing power, with a cyber security benefit in terms of a response to an incident. There will still be a need for an in-house provision for the next 4-5 years given the legacy systems. The Partnership can also monitor developments in the market of on-premises cloud-based solutions.

5.4 The Committee RESOLVED to thank the staff, in particular in relation to the Covid-19 response, and noted the report.

6 BUDGET MONITORING

6.1 The Committee considered a report by the Nigel Manvell (Deputy Chief Finance Officer Brighton & Hove City Council), Kevin Foster (Chief Operating Officer East Sussex County Council), Leigh Whitehouse (Executive Director of Resources Surrey County Council) together with a presentation by officers which highlighted:

- Achievement of the 2019/20 budget targets, including some challenging savings targets of £3.1m
- Finance and Property services had overspends, but these have been disaggregated from the partnership, with temporary resources put in place to support disaggregation process
- Underspends in IT&D and Procurement, which will hopefully be carried forward, linked to open positions in the service structure
- Covid-19 will impact the modelling of the savings target going forward
- Challenges in relation to savings for 2020/21, which will be reported through the usual monitoring channels of each authority

6.2 Members asked questions about:

- Total expenditure and operating budget figures provided in the report

6.3 Officers responded:

- There are significant levels of traded services, treated as income, which reduces the net total expenditure. The figures will be clarified for the next meeting.

6.4 The Committee RESOLVED to note the report.

7 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

7.1 The next meeting will be held on 16 October 2020.

The meeting ended at 12.35 pm.

ChairPresentList
Chair