

Report to: Audit, Best Value and Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 14 July 2017

By: Chief Operating Officer

Title: Orbis Partnership Update

Purpose: To provide an update on the integration of Brighton & Hove City Council into the Orbis Partnership.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

- 1) Review and note the developments within the Orbis Partnership; and
 - 2) Identify any topics to be included in future update reports
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1 Background

1.1 Orbis is a partnership between East Sussex County Council, Surrey County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council that will integrate Business Services functions to provide improvements in service provision and reduce costs.

1.2 Services in scope are: Property, Procurement, IT & Digital, HR/OD, Finance, Revenues & Benefits and Business Operations.

1.3 The Partnership was formally launched in April 2015 between East Sussex County Council and Surrey County Council with a detailed 3 year business plan approved by Cabinet in October 2015.

1.4 Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) formally joined the partnership on 25 May 2017 as the final founding partner.

2 Supporting information

2.1 To recognise BHCC joining the partnership a celebration event was held in Brighton offices on 25 May 2017. The event provided an opportunity to welcome colleagues from BHCC into Orbis and a number of activities were arranged accordingly, these included staff briefings, Questions and Answer (Q&A) sessions, marketplace stalls and the handing out of Orbis lanyards.

2.2 The Orbis logo has been updated to incorporate an additional colour to reflect Brighton and Hove City Council as the final founding partner. A new suite of branded templates has been generated, as well as updated email signatures and Orbis lanyards.

2.3 The activities were well received in BHCC and there was a real sense of excitement and energy about joining Orbis. A number of follow up activities have subsequently taken place such as newsletters, publishing Frequently Asked Questions responses and further Q&A sessions to further embed the partnership ethos.

2.4 Each service is developing plans for integrating BHCC into Orbis. This will mean differing approaches and timescales depending on the nature and complexity for each service. For

example, Property services in BHCC do not currently sit within the Business Services directorate and will require significant change before integration can start in earnest.

2.5 The plan is to have all services integrated by March 2019, using the 'collaborate to integrate' model developed by Orbis (see Appendix 1 slides 15 - 16). It is understood that the journey to integration can take time and is hugely complex due to factors such as different working practices, Information Technology (IT) systems, cultures and structures.

2.6 In terms of managing the financial aspects of the partnership, East Sussex and Surrey Councils have already integrated budgets and the plan is to integrate BHCC budgets from April 2018. This means that 2017/18 will be treated as a 'shadow year' and treatment of benefits and investment will be governed by a set of agreed principles (appendix 2).

2.7 To ensure all parties are protected and that the partnership is legally binding, an interim Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) has been signed that forms the legal basis for the partnership. The interim IAA covers areas such as governance, IPR, disputes, branding, services, staff management protocol and termination of the agreement. The interim IAA covers the period April 17–March 2018 with a full IAA being developed to coincide with integration of budgets from April 2018.

2.8 The Orbis partnership is governed by the Orbis Joint Committee, which was set up in 2015. As part of BHCC joining Orbis, governance arrangements have been updated to ensure full voting rights on the Joint Committee. In addition, each Council has agreed to increase the number of appointed Members on the Joint Committee to two per partner. These changes will take effect immediately.

2.9 Further progress reports will be provided to the Committee at agreed intervals to ensure appropriate scrutiny can be undertaken in relation the partnership. The next report will be presented to the Committee on 29 November 2017.

2.10 Appendix 1 of this report provides focus on a number of key elements of the partnership and provides detail in the following areas:

- An overview of the scale and financial aspects
- Governance
- An overview of People, Partners & Customers
- The approach to integrate services
- Benefits (financial and non-financial)
- A summary of the forward plan for the partnership together with specific overviews for each service area

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The Committee is asked to review and note developments within the Orbis Partnership for the areas specified in this report and to identify any topics, or areas of work, to be included in future update reports.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Orbis Business Plan

Joint meeting of the Orbis Scrutiny Boards - Comments and Recommendations to Cabinet 13
October 2015

Orbis Joint Committee Papers (19 February 2016, 22 April 2016, 18 July 2016)

ABVCSSC Orbis report (27 September 2016)