

MINUTES of the meeting of the **ORBIS** Joint Committee held at 2.00 pm on 22 April 2016 at CC1, County Hall, Lewes.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Monday, 18 July 2016.

Elected Members:

- * Councillor Denise Le Gal
- * Councillor David Elkin (Chair)
- * Councillor Les Hamilton (non-voting)

Officers In attendance:

East Sussex County Council (ESCC)

Kevin Foster, Chief Operating Officer
Marion Kelly, Chief Finance Officer
Philip Baker, Assistant Chief Executive
Leatham Green, Programme Director, People and Change
Emma Nash, Orbis Public Law, Project Manager
Bethan Hampson, Executive Officer

Surrey County Council (SCC)

John Stebbings, Chief Property Officer
Adrian Stockbridge, Orbis Programme Manager

Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC)

David Kuenssberg, Executive Director for Finance and Resources

Also Present:

Cllr Mike Blanch (ESCC)
Cllr Peter Charlton (ESCC) (Item 4a)

25/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies for absence were received from Ann Charlton, Julie Fisher and Sheila Little.

26/16 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING [Item 2]

The Chair commented that the figures requested in actions/further information under minute 19/16 were still outstanding. The Chief Operating Officer will ensure the requested information is provided.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 February 2016 were agreed.

27/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interest.

28/16 PROCEDURAL MATTERS [Item 4]

a MEMBERS' QUESTIONS [Item 4a]

Cllr Charlton asked if East Sussex County Council (ESCC) was happy to agree that Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) join the partnership given the form BHCC Children's Services sent parents regarding their children's gender.

The Chair responded that he did not regard this was an appropriate question for this forum. Councillor Le Gal added that the decision to admit BHCC is a matter for the Orbis Joint Committee.

b PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 4b]

None were received.

29/16 ORBIS UPDATE - SERVICE SPOTLIGHTS [Item 5]

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Property Officer on Service Development and Integration (Service Spotlights). The Assistant Chief Executive (ESCC) gave the Committee an update on the progress to establish Orbis Public Law.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Service spotlights for Property Services, Business Operations and Procurement were presented to the Committee. Further information was also presented under item 11 of the agenda.
2. Orbis Public Law is a partnership of four local authorities to provide legal services. The partner authorities are BHCC, ESCC, Surrey County Council (SCC) and West Sussex County Council (WSSC).
3. Progress to date has included agreeing the strategic business case, appointing a Project Manager, Emma Nash, and conducting a soft launch of Orbis Public Law on 4 April 2016. The first Orbis Public Law Joint Committee will take place in July 2016. Work has started to establish a common practice manual and implement a common case management software system to enable staff from all the authorities to access case information.
4. The partners have held twelve 'think change' sessions with staff and a number of managers' workshops. There have been good examples of peer to peer support (e.g. "phone a friend") and work on joint recruitment protocols. Each authority has set up its own staff stakeholder group and is part of a common partnership board.
5. One of the workstreams for Orbis Public Law is to evaluate the possibility of establishing a separate trading company to provide services. The regulatory requirements of the Solicitors Regulatory Authority have made this process more complex and it will take a number of months to complete. The evaluation will establish whether it is worthwhile doing this having regard to cost and issues such as the academisation agenda.

Resolved:

The recommendations agreed from this report are detailed under item 11.

30/16 JOINT BUDGET APPROACH OVERVIEW [Item 6]

The Committee considered a report by and the Chief Property Officer on the Joint Budget Approach.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Orbis is an integrated service and has two sorts of budgets; operational budgets and; budgets for services managed on behalf of the partners. There are some key differences in the financial reporting procedures used by each authority, but where possible a common approach has been agreed.
2. Orbis has developed a framework for ongoing integrated budget monitoring and will present monitoring reports to the Joint Committee on a quarterly basis. Monthly budget monitoring is carried out, but is reported to the ESCC Cabinet on quarterly basis. At SCC and BHCC budget monitoring is reported on a monthly basis.
3. If there is an increase in demand for Orbis services (e.g. from demand led services like Adult Social Care), the partnership will try to manage the budget pressures within the operational budget (cash limit). Each sovereign partner has ability to make request to amend the budget at any time under the terms of the Inter authority Agreement (IAA). In the longer term this could be dealt with through the annual or mid-year review of the operational budget.

Resolved:

The Orbis Joint Committee resolved to:

- i. note the approach to managing joint budgets and;
- ii. undertake budget monitoring quarterly.

31/16 BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL - UPDATE [Item 7]

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Property Officer on the Brighton and Hove City Council update.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Joint Committee noted the work that is taking place with BHCC officers and the spirit of collaboration and enthusiasm for the partnership. All the three main political parties of BHCC are keen to pursue the partnership.
2. The work that BHCC is undertaking to join the Orbis partnership is outlined in a report to the forthcoming BHCC Policy and Resources Committee on the 28 April (appendix 1). Section 3 of the report describes the services in scope and outlines some of the key issues for BHCC in joining the Orbis partnership. It is anticipated that the recommendations of the report will be adopted at the meeting on the 28 April.

3. Discussions with trade unions have taken place for BHCC staff and as part of joint union discussions with all partners. Some further work may be required to ensure that what the partnership involves is fully understood by all BHCC staff and their representatives. BHCC are also making sure staff are aware of the alternatives for services should BHCC not take part in the Orbis partnership.

Resolved:

The Orbis Joint Committee resolved to:

- i. note the progress being made to integrate Brighton and Hove City Council into the Orbis Partnership and;
- ii. note the report being taken to Brighton and Hove City Council's Policy & Resources Committee on 28 April 2016 which outlines progress being made to join the partnership.

32/16 ORBIS PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT (APPRAISAL) [Item 8]

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Property Officer on Orbis Progress and Development (appraisal). The Programme Director, People and Change introduced the report.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. It is important for the partnership to develop a common way of working across the three organisations. Currently there are approximately 160 policies around how to manage people, particularly around the issue of progress and development of staff.
2. The new approach moves away from a concentration on an annual appraisal meeting, to a greater focus on a continual progress throughout the year. The approach looks at the achievement of objectives and places responsibility for personal development onto individuals. It has been well received by unions at ESCC and SCC.
3. The new approach tackles the issue of changing the culture, at the same time as encouraging and empowering people. The work to manage change has been recognised nationally through an award for people and change.
4. For pay and reward it is important to have a common approach, whilst retaining the sovereignty of the employing organisation. It is recognised that this may be a challenge in some circumstances. There are number of blended roles which are shared between both organisations. Any new situations will be fully discussed to find an appropriate solution. At present there are no situations where staff from the ESCC and SCC carry out the same role, in the same service, but are paid differently.

Resolved:

The Orbis Joint Committee resolved to note the approach for progress and development of staff.

33/16 ORBIS TRANSFORMATION PARTNER [Item 9]

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Property Officer on Orbis Transformation Partner.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Orbis partnership had some transformation support when it first developed the business case. It would be beneficial to have access to further business transformation support and to be able to offer it to other partners or customers.
2. The report outlines the approach that is being taken to the purchase business transformation support. Further information is provided under item 12 on the agenda.

Resolved:

The recommendations agreed from this report are detailed under item 12.

34/16 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC [Item 10]

Resolved:

That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information under the relevant paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Act.

35/16 ORBIS UPDATE - SERVICE SPOTLIGHTS [Item 11]

The Committee considered a part 2 report by the Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Property Officer on the Service Development and Integration (Spotlights).

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Property Officer introduced the service spotlight reports. The Committee asked a number of questions which were responded to by the officers present before moving to the recommendations.

Resolved:

The Orbis Joint Committee agreed to note the content of the service spotlights.

36/16 ORBIS TRANSFORMATION PARTNER [Item 12]

The Committee considered a part 2 report by the Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Property Officer on the Orbis Transformation Partner.

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Chief Operating Officer introduced the report and outlined the procurement process for providing business transformation support through the Orbis Transformation Partner. The Committee asked a number of questions which were responded to by the officers present before moving to the recommendations.

Resolved:

The Orbis Joint Committee agreed to note the proposal, requirements and approach for selecting a transformation partner.

37/16 PUBLICITY OF PART 2 ITEMS [Item 13]

Resolved:

The Committee agreed that information relating to the Part 2 items were to remain confidential.

Meeting ended at: 3.40 pm

Chairman