

Minutes of a Lowestoft Shared Accommodation Joint Committee meeting held on
Wednesday 19 February 2014 at 4.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lowestoft

Suffolk County Council Member present:

Councillors C Noble (Cabinet Member) and M Ladd

Waveney District Council Members present:

Councillors M Barnard (Cabinet Member) and G Douce

Officers present:

D Gallagher (WDC Head of Commercial Partnerships & Strategic Commissioning)

D Lee (WDC Democratic Services Manager)

A McFarlane (WDC Director of Resources)

B Prettyman (SCC Corporate Property Senior Manager)

P Revell (Programme Director)

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 LOWESTOFT SHARED ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME - PROGRESS AND UPDATE REPORT

The Programme Director presented an update report on the Lowestoft Shared Accommodation Programme including a summary of key activities and decisions made since the last meeting, key milestones, financial information and risks.

Programme Updates

Progress had been made in the following key areas:

- Agreement had been reached with the main contractor on a contract value within the guaranteed maximum price and a contract project timeline agreed which meant that construction would be completed by 23 March 2015. The project was therefore projected to be on time and within budget.
- Confirmation was given that the contract price included the installation of furniture and many elements of the fit out. This meant that the cost of the furniture would be funded through the project but the risks for co-ordinating the fit-out would be transferred to the contractor.

**SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL AND WAVENEY DISTRICT COUNCIL
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- The contractor had entered onto the Riverside Road site on 10 February 2014. A photo opportunity has taken place on 19 February 2014 (immediately prior to this meeting) for publicity purposes.
- The Design Team had been novated to the contractor and the arrangements for the retained team comprising of individuals from Architects, Building Services Engineers, Structural Engineers and Acousticians had been completed.
- The land transfer arrangements had been completed ensuring equal ownership of both the Riverside Road and the Marina Centre, whilst legal documentation for the Canning Road element would be completed shortly.
- Specifications for the furniture solutions and other fixtures and fittings were being finalised. Procurement of the main items of furniture was expected to commence in March 2014.
- The shared intranet site was proving very popular as the primary means of communication with staff. It was anticipated that a 'live' webcam of the construction site would be available for staff only soon after works had commenced.
- It was reported the project was moving towards greater involvement with staff and a joint Transformation Champions Group is being established with nominations from each team area. In addition, a joint Senior Manager Group (SMG) is being established to lead and drive the change to new ways of working and to identify opportunities for better working together as a result of sharing the buildings etc. Confirmation was given that Suffolk County Council staff were more familiar with the open plan way of working having experience of Endeavour House in Ipswich and West Suffolk House in Bury St Edmunds. The Transformation Champions would be able to visit West Suffolk House to gain a better understanding of the proposed working arrangements.
- The Project Team was engaging with 'Lowestoft Rising' to make sure that no opportunities for working in partnership with this initiative were lost.
- Final versions of the design work for the refurbishment of the Marina Centre had been completed in conjunction with the services who will be occupying the site, including Young People's Services and the Youth Offending Team. These proposals were reviewed by the Joint Management Group on 17 February 2014 and approval given to progress the work into detail design and implementation. Clarification was given that the Registry Office would be based in Canning Road in Lowestoft.
- Joint sessions had been held with Property Services and Facilities Management to discuss the Operating Agreement Heads of Terms, which would be largely based on that utilised for the agreement between Suffolk County Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council. Legal input was still required but this element of the project was on-track.
- Details were given of the key milestones for the forthcoming period and it was reported that the milestone list would be reviewed and expanded as many of the tasks had now been completed and to incorporate more change management activities into the programme.

The Programme Director wished to place on record thanks to all in the Project Team and the Design Team for their hard work and dedication in achieving agreement of the contract documents and contract sum within the agreed timescales.

Programme Finance

The programme budget was £13.65m – split equally between the two authorities (£6.85meach).

The latest estimate for out-turn costs remained within the parameters of the allocated budget, having taken account of the apportionments to-date. At the time of writing the report, programme expenditure stood at £781k as at 31 January 2014. However, this had now increased to approximately £820k to today's date.

Programme Risks

The Programme Risk Register was monitored by the Programme Director and reviewed at each Joint Management Group meeting. Any risks deemed as high were given special attention and appropriate actions put in place. It was reported that there were currently 25 open risks, all of which had mitigation strategies in place. None of the risks were categorised as 'high'.

The following issues were raised during the discussion on this item:

- Clarification was sought as to whether the Procurement Framework and the facility for E-Auctions in particular required UK based companies only or not. In addition, it was asked whether it was possible to favour local suppliers. In response, it was stated that all companies that had registered with the Suffolk Procurement Framework would have had their competency assessed and that the procurement objectives for the project may have included such issues as social, wellbeing and local suppliers but it was not possible to give a concise answer at this meeting. However it was considered unlikely that you could stipulate local suppliers only. It was agreed that a copy of the Procurement Framework utilised for the project would be circulated to all Members of the Joint Committee for information outside of this meeting.
- An explanation was given as to how an E-Auction worked and an offer of invitation was extended to all Members on the Joint Committee to view an on-line bidding process in the future should they wish to do so.
- Confirmation was given that staff representatives were being involved in determining the selection of some of the furniture items. Operator chairs were a good example of where staff feedback would be assessed as part of the evaluation work.
- The opportunity was given for any members of the Joint Committee to visit West Suffolk House to view the working environment there, which would be similar for the Riverside Road development, where they had not done so already. Councillor Douce indicated that he would find such a visit very useful. Other Councillors were already familiar with the premises.
- Clarification was sought as to whether there were any unexpected risks that could potentially derail the project, such as bomb surveys, archaeological surveys, contaminated land issues etc. It was reported that a full range of such surveys had already been undertaken and processes for dealing with waste products were being dealt with in accordance with procedure. There was however always the opportunity for unexpected risks, as demonstrated by the recent collapse in the road near Station Square in Lowestoft, but all known and identified risks had been assessed and mitigation strategies put in place.

- Clarification was sought on whether a Travel Plan has been developed. It was confirmed that the production of a Travel Plan was a requirement of the planning consent. It was anticipated that the Plan would be comprised of a mixture of disincentives to travel in cars and incentives to encourage staff to use more sustainable modes of transport. There were noted implications for both Suffolk County Council, whose current policies mean that staff will be charged for staff parking and for Waveney District Council, whose staff often worked across two sites (Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Councils) but were not currently charged for parking.

RESOLVED

That the progress and update report be received.

The meeting was concluded at 4.45 pm.

Chairman