

Minutes of a Lowestoft Shared Accommodation Joint Committee meeting held on **Tuesday 24 June 2014 at 4.00 pm** in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Lowestoft

Suffolk County Council Member present:

Councillors M Bee (Cabinet Member) and M Ladd

Waveney District Council Members present:

Councillors M Barnard (Cabinet Member) and G Douce

Officers present:

A Charvonia (WDC Strategic Director)
D Gallagher (WDC Head of Commercial Partnerships & Strategic Commissioning)
H Javadi (WDC Head of Financial Services)
D Lee (WDC Democratic Services Manager)
J Reeves (SCC Property Transformation Officer)
P Revell (Programme Director)

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

2 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Nominations were sought for the position of Chairman of the Joint Committee for the 2014/15 municipal year. In accordance with the Lowestoft Shared Accommodation Joint Agreement, the chairmanship of this Joint Committee needed to alternate between the two authorities and the 'Chair' needed to be the respective Cabinet Member. As Councillor Barnard (WDC) was the Chairman for 2013/14, Councillor Bee (SCC) needed to chair meetings for the 2014/15 municipal year.

RESOLVED

That Councillor M Bee be appointed as Chairman of the Lowestoft Shared Accommodation Joint Committee for the 2014/15 municipal year.

(Councillor Bee presided from this point on in the meeting)

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Nominations were sought for the position of Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee for the 2014/15 municipal year. In accordance with the Lowestoft Shared Accommodation Joint Agreement, the Vice-Chairmanship of this Joint Committee needed to alternate between the two authorities.

RESOLVED

That Councillor M Barnard be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Lowestoft Shared Accommodation Joint Committee for the 2014/15 municipal year.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

5 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 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:

- All contract documentation had been agreed, completed and signed.
- Press coverage from the photo opportunity held on 19 February 2014 had been comprehensive and positive.
- Main contractor activities had commenced on site with piling activities and steel erections well underway.
- Ground remediation activities had taken longer than originally anticipated and as a result overall progress was slightly behind the contract programme. Discussions were being undertaken with the contractor as to how this lost time could be made-up, including options for longer working days and some Saturday working.
- One variation had been made to the contract agreement increasing the size of the rainwater collection tank. There was no detrimental effect on the programme.
- The furniture tender documentation was issued on 3 June 2014 and a supplier session held on 10 June 2014. Product assessment sessions with the Programme Team and Transformation Champions were taking place week commencing 30 June 2014 at the Orbis Energy Centre. The e-auction would take place on 14 July 2014 and the contract awarded by the end of July 2014.
- All Members of the Joint Committee were invited to contact the Programme Director if they wished to attend any of the furniture assessment sessions. It was also reported that representatives from the Disability Forum had been invited to have an input into the assessment process.
- Further consultation had taken place with the Disability Forum during early May 2014 and endorsement received for the Riverside Road designs and for the feasibility drawings for the Marina Centre. Feedback received in relation to left and right handed disabled toilets for the new building had been particularly useful. Future meetings would focus on the detailed design for the Marina Centre.
- The Senior Manager User Group and Transformation Champions were formally launched on 19 March 2014. This would enable more emphasis on the people and change element of the programme. Leadership and managing change workshops were planned to commence from July 2014.

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- The detailed design work for the Marina Centre was progressing well following the appointment of Concertus and a project plan was being developed.
- The Waveney Planning and Building Control Teams had moved into temporary accommodation into Canning Road, Lowestoft. This would allow work on revised layouts and an improved working environment within the Marina Centre to commence.
- The first draft of the Operating Agreement for the two councils for facilities management had been produced and was currently being refined by the Legal workstream prior to further consideration by the Joint Management Group.
- Membership of the Joint Management Group and overall Programme Team had been revised following the departure of several members of staff but replacements had been identified and their involvement in the programme well established.

Programme Finance

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

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 £1.176m as at 14 May 2014. However, this had increased by an additional £930k since that time.

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 24 open risks but one of the risks in relation to the relocation of the telecoms mast on the Riverside Road site had been addressed and so the total number of risks had been reduced to 23. All of the risks had mitigation strategies in place and so none were categorised as ‘high’.

During the discussion on this item it was requested that in future it would be helpful from a governance perspective to have a copy of the risk register attached as an appendix to the update report, utilising the traffic lights system for categorising the status of each risk. Any issue that was commercially sensitive could be included in the exempt part of the Agenda.

It was also requested that a financial summary report be appended to the overall report. It was agreed that this would be commercially sensitive and would need to be included in the exempt part of the Agenda. It was therefore agreed that both the risk register and financial summary report would be regular items within the exempt part of the Agenda.

Issues Raised

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

- Clarification was given that information was being disseminated to staff regarding the different working environments and working practices that would be operational in the new building. This included initiatives for sharing information via the Transformation Champions, Team Meetings, managing Change Workshops, Drop-In Sessions, information on the respective intranets etc.
- A site visit to West Suffolk House was planned for the Transformation Champions on 21 July 2014. Previously an invitation to attend the site visit had been extended to the members of this Joint Committee and Councillor Douce had expressed an interest in such a visit. It was agreed that Councillor Douce would contact the Programme Director if he was able to accommodate this visit in his diary.

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- Confirmation was given that other initiatives were in progress to support the move to the Riverside Road site and different ways of working. This included the scanning and electronic storage of documents, refresh of IT equipment etc. In addition, Managers and Team Leaders had been tasked to help drive the changes required and assist in achieving a smooth transition.
- Concern was expressed regarding the scheduling of the May 2015 Elections and the proposed move to the Riverside in April 2015. However, it was reported that the Electoral Registration Team would not move until after the May 2015 Elections in order to minimise disruption.
- It was reported that the Town Hall would still be in use immediately after the move to the Riverside Road site as other employees may temporarily be moved there whilst refurbishment works were being undertaken elsewhere. This would mean that there would be an overlap in terms of budgetary pressures. A programme of work was being commenced with regard to budgetary planning, phasing and disposal of assets to take account of these issues.
- The importance of having a communications strategy in place was stressed in terms of being clear where the public could access Council services once the new building was operational.
- There would be no dedicated 'Members Room' within the new building for Councillors but the provision of flexible working spaces would mean that Councillors could utilise any unoccupied workstation. Wifi access would be available for both Suffolk and Waveney District Councils and public wifi access would also be available. The Leader of the Council would have utilisation of a room within the new building but this would also be used as a meeting room and so was not specific office provision.
- Clarification was given that work was on-going in relation to the production of a Travel Plan. Issues being considered included the provision of off-site parking and charging mechanisms. Categories for who will be charged and the cost of charges had yet to be established. It was suggested that the grading / phasing in of car parking charges would help staff change their travel habits and promote more sustainable forms of transport.
- Confirmation was given that contractors would be employed to move any furniture / equipment from one site to another. The acquisition of furniture would not be based on cost alone and feedback from the Transformation Champions would be taken into account.
- It was reported that a wide variety of workstations and docking units would be available to allow staff / Members to hook-up IT devices. Where appropriate this may involve a greater rollout of laptop devices as part of the more flexible working programme. Confirmation was given that as part of health and safety requirements, Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessments would be carried out by electronic self-assessment.
- The webcam on the Riverside Road site was 'live' on the Council's intranet for all staff to access. In response to a query it was confirmed that consideration could be given by the Project Board on extending access to the webcam on the Council's website but an appropriate communications strategy would need to be place to support this.
- With regard to the Operating Agreement and room bookings within the new building, it was reported that some agencies would have priority over others. This would include the Family Case Conferencing Rooms that had been specifically set up for this purpose. Waveney District Council meetings would mainly be held in the main Conference Room. Any standing bookings for priority Waveney meetings would be honoured. In addition, the Calendar of Meetings for 2015/16

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was approved by the Full Council on 28 May 2014, a full year in advance, which would mean that these meetings dates would be included within the new room booking diary.

- Consultation would be undertaken with staff, Waveney District Councillors and the Waveney County Councillors as to a proposed name for the new building at Riverside Road. An item calling for name suggestions would be included within the next e-newsletter with a two-week window for responses. The names put forward would then be accessed by the Project Board and then referred to the Members of this Joint Committee and a consensus reached via email communication.
- The Committee was asked whether a 'topping out' ceremony should be held. The best time would be during September 2014. After discussion it was agreed that such a ceremony should take place with a similar format to that of the 'turning the first sod' ceremony held earlier in the year. The Programme Director undertook to make the necessary arrangements.
- The Lord Lieutenant for Suffolk had been approached to explore whether it would be possible to have a member of the Royal Family formally open the new Riverside Road building. A response was awaited.
- On-site storage would be limited but there would be some off-site storage. With regard to civic regalia which had historical value, there would be some capacity to store items off-site and a limited area for the display of civic regalia would be made available in the main Reception Area.

RESOLVED

That the progress and update report be received.

7. DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Consideration was given to re-affirming the Calendar of Meetings for 2014/15 (as previously approved by the Joint Committee on 19 August 2013).

RESOLVED

That meetings of the Lowestoft Shared Accommodation Joint Committee for 2014/15 be held at 4pm in the Council Chamber at Waveney District Council unless notified otherwise on the following dates:

Wednesday 27 August 2014
Wednesday 29 October 2014
Tuesday 16 December 2014
Tuesday 17 February 2015
Tuesday 23 June 2015 (Annual Meeting).

The meeting was concluded at 5.15 pm.

Chairman