

Minutes of a Lowestoft Shared Accommodation Joint Committee meeting held on
Wednesday 27 August 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)

Officers present:

A Charvonia (WDC Strategic Director)
D Gallagher (WDC Head of Commercial Partnerships & Strategic Commissioning)
C Phillips (SCC Property Transformation Officer)
P Revell (Programme Director)
D Lee (WDC Democratic Services Manager)

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Douce (WDC).

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2014 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:

- Significant progress had been made with regard to works on-site with the steel frame having been erected and installation of pre-cast concrete planks and ground floor slabs. Some delays had been experienced due to the recent high winds which affected the use of the crane but any lost time had been recovered by working later into the evenings.
- Drainage connections had been made into Canning Road and once completed would allow the laying of the tarmac base course to the south car park providing on-site car parking and storage areas.

- The ground remediation activities have been problematic, having taken longer than originally predicted and as a result overall progress was behind the contract programme. However the contractor was currently working on regaining the lost time and the contract completion date remained unchanged as at 23 March 2015. No extension of time requests had been received from the main contractor but the impact of the lost time would still remain a risk to the programme.
- Investigations were continuing into the cause of the enhanced ground remediation activities by the main contractor and the Councils were supporting them in this process.
- No further variations had been made to the contract agreement since the last reporting period.
- An on-site 'topping-out' ceremony was scheduled for 10 September 2014 at 3pm.
- The furniture procurement process was nearing completion following the e-auction on 31 July 2014. It was estimated that savings of between £50 - £80k would be achieved on the original budget estimate.
- The tender documentation for the move contractors had been completed and was expected to be issued later this month.
- The shared intranet site remained the primary source of staff communication. The monthly e-newsletter for staff, which highlighted key activities and events as the programme progressed was being well received.
- Further sessions with the Senior Manager User Group had been held, the most recent for which was dedicated to preparations for their involvement in managing change workshops for staff across both organisations.
- The last meeting of the Transformation Champions Group involved a visit to West Suffolk House at Bury St Edmunds. The aim of the visit was to enable staff to see an example of a similar working environment to that proposed for the Riverside and also to meet and discuss with staff that had undergone a similar move in the last couple of years.
- Further detailed design workshops had been held with the future occupiers of the Marina Centre. As detailed design details were developed the programme and cost plans would be confirmed. Consideration was being given to where public access activity could be re-located once required works start at the Marina Centre in the new year. It was intended that a Customer Service Reception Area would be retained within the town centre, possibly at St Margarets House (the current location for the Registry Office) but this option had not yet been confirmed.
- The final draft of the proposed Operating Agreement between the two Councils had been produced and was expected to be approved at the next Joint Management Group in September 2014. The associated service level agreements for facilities management services and ICT were also nearing completion. A Building Manager would be appointed at an early stage as part of the building maintenance initiatives in order that they can contribute towards the fit-out and establishment of the building.
- Details of the key activities and milestone dates for the forthcoming period were outlined within the report.

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 £2.547m as at 31 July 2014. However, this had increased to approximately £3m 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 23 open risks. All of the risks had mitigation strategies in place and so none were categorised as 'high'.

Issues Raised

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

- It was suggested that it would be beneficial for all Waveney District Councillors and the Waveney County Councillors to receive a presentation on progress on the Riverside programme. The possibility of lunchtime sessions at Suffolk County Council was discussed and it was agreed that options could be explored with Councillor Bee, as Chairman of this Joint Committee. Formal Member visits to the new premises would be arranged for January / February 2015, prior to the relocation.
- Councillor Bee confirmed that he had liaised with the Lord Lieutenant regarding a formal opening ceremony and was currently awaiting a response but would follow this up.
- Work was progressing on a Travel Plan but any charging proposals had yet to be developed and agreed.
- A discussion was held regarding a name for the new building and a list of suggested names put forward by both Waveney District Council and Suffolk County Council staff was circulated at the meeting.

RESOLVED

1. That the progress and update report be received.
2. That the name of the new building be 'Riverside'.

5 EXEMPT / CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

RESOLVED

That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) 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 as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

6 LOWESTOFT SHARED ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME – PROGRESS AND UPDATE REPORT

The Joint Committee considered an exempt report which provided information on the risk register for the overall programme and the latest financial summary report. A copy of the risk register was attached as Appendix A to the report, whilst the financial summary was attached as Appendix B.

There were currently 23 open risks, none of which were currently rated as high or very high. Details of the current mitigation and actions for each of the open risks were outlined within Appendix A.

Responses were given in relation to specific issues raised by the Joint Committee.

RESOLVED

That the exempt progress and update report be received.

The meeting was concluded at 5.15 pm.

Chairman