

Minutes of a Lowestoft Shared Accommodation Joint Committee meeting held on
Tuesday 16 December 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 Johnson (SCC Assistant Director for Resource Management & Corporate Property)

P Revell (Programme Director)

D Lee (WDC Democratic Services Manager)

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 27 August 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:

- Accommodation currently occupied by both authorities would be vacated and disposed of or suitable alternative use identified as part of an associated workstream. This included the Town Hall and Mariners Street buildings for Waveney District Council (WDC) and Clapham House, Adrian House, St Margarets House and Alexandra Road for Suffolk County Council (SCC). It was reiterated at the meeting that 'The Junction' would be moving into the Marina Centre and Canning Road would accommodate the Registrars.
- The main contractor activities on the Riverside Road site were progressing. The north and south elevation cladding frames were complete with panel installations commencing. Windows and brickwork were nearing completion, whilst the internal stairs were cast and in-situ. The mechanical and electrical installation first fix were

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complete, with the second fix underway. Internal atrium walls were being erected with all other internal walls completed. Externally the north car parking area of the site was being prepared to match the work being completed in the south area.

- Confirmation was given that the contractor was slightly behind on schedule but that the programme completion date was unchanged. However, the contractor is currently working on regaining lost time and the current contract completion date is currently unchanged and remains as 23 March 2015. No extension of time requests have been received from the main contractor although the impacts of the above remain an approximate 3 week risk to the programme
- Only minor variations had been made to the contract agreement since the last meeting which had a net impact of less than £10k on the contract value. Changes included amendments to the disabled parking layout, external paint specification and the installation of satellite phone facilities for emergency planning purposes.
- With regard to charging for staff parking on-site, it was reported that for WDC employees, no formal decision will be made until Suffolk Coastal District Council had completed their office accommodation move, expected to be September 2016 at the earliest. SCC staff will be charged from initial occupation.
- Positive feedback had been received following a number of 'Managing Change Workshops' for staff involving over 250 employees who would be affected by the move.
- The Transformation Champions Group was continuing to work with the programme team and their own teams to ensure staff were prepared for the move. This included addressing filing and equipment storage issues. It was reported at the meeting that the various principles of occupation had been finalised and would be published the following week.
- Detailed design work for the Marina Centre refurbishment was nearing completion with the contractor procurement due to commence in January 2015. Staff from the Marina Centre would be temporary located in the Mariners Street offices, whilst St Margarets House would be utilised for front-facing SCC staff. An extensive communications plan was being developed to inform the public of the temporary office arrangements.
- The final draft of the Operating Agreement between the two councils had been agreed and the associated service level agreements for facilities management services and ICT were also nearing completion. The delays were due to finalisation of some Service Level Agreements that needed to be attached as Appendices to the formal Agreement.
- Details of the key activities and milestone dates for the forthcoming period were outlined within the report, including the holding of a further change workshop in January 2015 involving the Assistant Chief Executive from St Edmundsbury Borough Council, who was willing to share his experience of a similar office move.

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 £5.767m as at 28 November 2014. This has increased to approximately £7m since the report had been published.

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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 26 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 a tour of the building should be arranged for the members of this Joint Committee immediately prior to the next meeting.
- Confirmation was given that the postal address for the new building will be: Riverside, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft. This has been agreed with the Post Office.
- Clarification was sought as to what arrangements were being put in place with regard to the storage / display of civic regalia. It was reported that there would be a display cabinet at the new building which would be situated outside the main conference room. An inventory was currently being compiled of all the civic regalia held and once this was complete a decision would be taken as to the retention / disposal / loan of the artefacts but no formal decision had been taken to-date.
- Specific clarification was sought as to the future of the three stained glass windows within the Council Chamber at the Town Hall in Lowestoft. The Town Hall was formerly in the ownership of the Borough of Lowestoft but under local government re-organisation in 1974, the Borough of Lowestoft was abolished and Waveney District Council came into being. All civic regalia was transferred into the ownership of Waveney District Council, unless an item(s) had been specifically entrusted to a charity at that time.
- Confirmation was given that attendance at the staff workshops was on a voluntary basis.
- The term 'Marina' was associated with a number of venues both within and outside Waveney and an enquiry was made as to whether the name of the 'Marina Centre' was likely to be changed to coincide with the planned refurbishment of this building. It was reported that the signage of the building would be: 'The Customer Services Centre'.
- With regard to the proportional staff split of the two authorities across the Marina Centre and the new Riverside building, it was reported that even though The Junction was now moving into the Marina Centre, the Registrars were now moving to Canning Road and so the staff numbers at the Marina Centre would largely remain unaffected. There was currently an approximate 50 / 50 staff split at Riverside.

RESOLVED

That the progress and update report be received.

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 EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 AUGUST 2014

RESOLVED

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 27 August 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7 LOWESTOFT SHARED ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME – EXEMPT 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 26 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.

Confirmation was given that firm costs associated with the refurbishment works for the Marina Centre and the Canning Road premises had not yet been established.

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

RESOLVED

That the exempt progress and update report be received.

The meeting was concluded at 5.00 pm.

Chairman