

Minutes of a Lowestoft Shared Accommodation Joint Committee meeting held on **Wednesday 27 January 2016 at 4.30 pm** in the Conference Room, Riverside, Lowestoft

Suffolk County Council Members present:

Councillors R Smith (Cabinet Member) and M Ladd

Waveney District Council Members present:

Councillors M Barnard (Cabinet Member) and S Logan

Officers present:

- A Charvonia (WDC Strategic Director)
 - H Javadi (WDC Chief Finance Officer)
 - D Johnson (SCC Assistant Director for Corporate Property)
 - P Revell (Programme Director)
 - A Stapleton (WDC Democratic Services Officer)
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1. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no interests declared.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2015 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 the background to the project, 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:

- Operation and occupation of Riverside continued to progress well. The management of defects was on-going, with regular meetings taking place between the Building Manager and main contractor representatives. The remaining list of defects was small.
- As reported previously, the main concern was the inconsistency of the heating and cooling Actimass system, along with the building management system controls. Various approaches were being tested and continued to be monitored to ensure everything was satisfactorily resolved, however, it was necessary to bear in mind that a new building with such a system needed at least a year's worth of data in order to bed down and provide consistent temperatures. Councillor Logan added that in his experience, such systems required two winter periods to reach maximum effectiveness.

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In the meantime, however, it was necessary to ensure the comfort of building users. The design engineer for the Actimass system continued to assist the contractor in terms of testing the system on an ongoing basis, and was confident it would settle and reach a temperature which most people were happy with. Temperatures in all areas were within the parameters of where they should be for office space, but it needed to be borne in mind that people were individuals and one person's too warm was another's too cool.

- Following ongoing problems with glare, and the rejection of other options such as raising or lowering the lights, the light shades within the atrium space had been replaced during the weekend of 16/17 January 2016 with opaque shades, replacing the previous clear ones.
- A consultation process was underway to implement the various recommendations of the parking feasibility report produced as a result of the concerns raised over hazardous driving conditions in the vicinity of Riverside. The results of the consultation, and a decision on the way forward, would be referred to the Suffolk County Council Highways Committee. The proposals being put forward, to allow parking only along one side of roads and not at all around site entrances and road junctions, would reduce the hazardous parking in the area, although of course would also have the effect of reducing the overall parking space available on the site. There were also plans to enhance the visitor parking area.
- Various items were in progress as a result of ideas for improvement from the Riverside Building User Group, which was now well established. These included installing a mechanised gate to the cycle store and providing dropped kerbs on the Children's Centre boundary. It had been expected that such issues would come to light following occupation of the building, and funds had been retained within the capital budget for the project for such changes.
- Prior to the move to Riverside, a wellbeing survey had been commissioned for SCC/WDC staff asking how they felt about their current working environment and how it impacted on productivity levels and wellbeing, with a view to the responses informing the design of the building, and to be used as a measure post occupation. The post occupation wellbeing survey results were now available, and showed significant improvements (c. 20%) across all elements of the survey compared to that carried out before moving.
- The Marina Customer Services Centre re-opened to the public on 25 January 2016. This included the relocation of the SCC Youth Offending Team and Catch 22 team into the refurbished site. The move had gone smoothly, according to the building occupants, with only one or two issues being notified so far, including the fire alarm having been activated a couple of times, probably by mistake due to its proximity to the public door exit. Measures were being put in place to reduce the likelihood of accidental activation, whilst ensuring the requisite position and height were retained. It was too early for customer feedback, but the building occupiers felt it was a real improvement compared to their previous accommodation.
- A formal opening ceremony for the Marina Centre was being planned for February 2016, and it was hoped that a suitable local person would be asked to open the building, rather than a dignitary.
- The programme delivery was soon to come to a close after the re-opening of the Marina Centre. The Joint Committee would then be dissolved and the overall ongoing development and monitoring of shared site strategy issues would be via the Joint Senior Management Group, in consultation with Portfolio Holders. Members asked that one more meeting of the Joint Committee be arranged, in order for it to consider the final accounts for the project, and this would also be one year on from the defects liability period, so would be the true end of the project.

Issues and questions raised on the programme update were as follows:

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- Members were concerned at the noise in the conference chamber when the heating/cooling fans kicked in during meetings. The Programme Director advised that this issue was being looked at alongside the temperature issue. The fans were there to support the main Actimass system, which worked on the concrete within the building, acting as the heating and cooling element. This was slow to alter the internal temperature, so when temperature changes were required more quickly the fan system kicked in during those troughs and heights of temperature, but it was acknowledged that they appeared to kick in very easily. The possibility of turning them off altogether had been explored, and the temperature had been maintained quite well, but the design engineer was looking at the system in more detail in order to adjust the fans' triggering points, although he did stress again that the system needed a year to bed in, so it was also important to manage peoples' expectations.
- A Member had today seen a note on the car park barrier stating "car park full", although he had been able to find a space. The Programme Director was not involved with the day to day running of the building, but was confident that this was a rare occurrence.
- Members discussed visiting the Marina Centre for a tour, and agreed on a date and time of Tuesday 2 February 2016 at 2.30pm, when the Programme Director was also available to conduct the tour. Councillor Smith also requested briefings from the two County Council services located in the building, and the Programme Director would make the necessary arrangements.

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. Programme expenditure currently stood at £11.839 million.

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 17 open risks, all of which had suitable mitigation strategies in place, and none were categorised as 'high' or 'very high'.

RESOLVED

1. That the progress and update report be received.
2. That one more meeting of the Joint Committee be arranged, at the end of the defects liability period, and in order for Members to see the final accounts for the project.
3. That a tour of the Marina Customer Service Centre be arranged for Members of the Joint Committee on Tuesday, 2 February 2016, at 2.30pm.

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 28 OCTOBER 2015

RESOLVED

That the Exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2015 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 17 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.

Appendix B provided a summary of the financial status for the overall programme. Final account negotiations for the Riverside element of the programme were nearing completion, and were expected to be concluded during February 2016.

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