

# Minutes



OF A MEETING OF THE

Listening Learning Leading

## **Five Councils Partnership Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee**

**HELD AT 10.30 AM ON TUESDAY 23 MAY 2017**

**MEETING ROOM 1, 135 EASTERN AVENUE, MILTON PARK,  
OX14 4SB**

### **Present**

Councillors Will Hall (Chairman), Cllr Ed Blagrove, Cllr Paul Buckley, Cllr Debby Hallett, Cllr Damon Hooton, Cllr John North, Cllr David Neighbour, Cllr Clare Satchwell, Cllr Wendy Makepeace-Browne and Richard Pullen (South Oxfordshire)

### **Apologies:**

Councillors Toby Newman and Cllr Tim Southern (Hart) tendered apologies.

### **Officers:**

Andrew Down, Susan Harbour and Mark Stone (South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse), Dawn Adey (Interim Client Director), Stuart Brown (Mendip), and Patricia Hughes (Hart)

## **1 Election of chairman**

The democratic services officer opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. She asked the committee whether they wished to propose a chairmanship which rotated with the host council, or a permanent chairman.

Councillors debated the merits of both options.

It was proposed and seconded that the chairmanship would rotate with the host councils, with the next council in line holding the vice chairmanship.

### **RESOLVED**

To have a rotating chair held by the host council and the next council to hold the vice chairmanship.

Therefore, South Oxfordshire District Council would nominate a chairman for this meeting and Hart District Council would nominate a chairman for the next municipal year.

South Oxfordshire District Councillor Will Hall was proposed and seconded as the chairman.

## **RESOLVED**

To appoint Councillor Will Hall as the chairman until the next meeting.

## **2 Apologies for absence and notification of substitutes**

There were apologies for absence from Councillor Tim Southern from Hart District Council. He was substituted by Councillor Wendy Makepeace-Browne.

## **3 Chairman's announcements**

As per the draft terms of reference, the meeting would be held in accordance with South Oxfordshire's constitution. This meant that the meeting could not continue beyond 2.5 hours unless members voted for a possible half an hour extension to complete unfinished business.

## **4 Role of the Joint Scrutiny committee**

The committee considered the report of the Interim Client Relationship Director for the partnership on the role of the Five Councils Partnership Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee and the draft terms of reference for this committee.

The committee also considered the proper role of scrutiny committees under the terms of the Local Government Act 2000.

The committee considered the role and usefulness of key performance indicators (KPIs) in the contract, being mindful that each council may have different priorities. It was considered important that KPIs were meaningful for residents of the five councils and that they monitored customer satisfaction. The committee debated the issues around standardised KPIs whilst wishing to leave some flexibility, and also recognised that the contract was still in the early stages and that there was a need for these to evolve. The committee proposed items for the action list at the end of this minute.

There was a discussion as to the best way for the Scrutiny Committee to "call in" items. This Committee has no ability to use call in powers as it is not directly working with an executive committee. However, individual Scrutiny Committees at each council would be able to call in decisions of their executive bodies. If these matters affected all councils they could be referred to Five Councils' Scrutiny Committee. There could be a standing item on the agenda for councillors to raise any items which had been called in or referred to their own scrutiny committees. It was also appropriate for members of the Five Councils' Scrutiny Committee to proactively put items onto the agenda outside of the call in process.

The committee considered how it could be effective and develop its role as a "critical friend" to the Five Councils' Partnership Joint Committee, rather than act as a "helping hand" to management, and proposed items for the action list at the end of this minute.

## **RESOLVED:**

1. To adopt the draft terms of reference for the Five Councils' Partnership Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee with the following amendments:

A new point 1.1) to be added stating that this is a Scrutiny Committee constituted under the Local Government Act 2000 (subsequent points to be renumbered accordingly).

A new section 4 to be drafted to cover the regular assessment of the Key Performance Indicators at this Scrutiny Committee.

2. To agree to the themes for the Joint Scrutiny Committee of:
  - Finance
  - Contract performance
  - Governance and decision making including the Inter Authority Agreement
  - Joint Client team – form and function
  - Review of objectives (including the Communications Strategy)
  - Marketing and brand
  - Risk management

And to also add:

- Business continuity (especially IT)
- Data protection.

This list of themes is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive.

3. To balance public scrutiny and an evidence base which may include commercially confidential (exempt) material. (Exempt items could be considered by task groups which reported back to the scrutiny committee).

### **Action List**

- Meetings of the Five Councils' Joint Scrutiny Committee should meet quarterly, in advance of the Five Councils' Joint Committee meeting.
- The responsible Democratic Services team will email all councillors on the Joint Scrutiny Committee in advance of agenda publication to ask for items for the agenda.
- KPIs and how to monitor them will be on the agenda for the next meeting.
- There will be training for members of the Joint Scrutiny Committee before the next meeting which will explain the KPIs and what they actually mean. Information was requested on how many calls or visits the relevant KPIs represent.
- The Interim Client Manager Relationship Director will produce a one page organogram showing the management structure for the contract, inter alia: Strategic Management Board, Joint Tactical Board.

- There will be a standing item on every agenda for councillors to raise items relating to the partnership which have been raised at their own council scrutiny committees.
- Some time will be scheduled in for the members of the committee to get to know one another informally before the next meeting.
- All committees, boards etc. relating to these contracts should be preceded with the words “Five Councils’ Partnership Corporate Services” to avoid confusion.

## **5 Performance Review**

The officer introduced the report. The report was yet to be finalised, but was a statement of the current position.

Both Capita and Vinci contracts are adequately meeting the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) at the present time, although there are some outstanding issues.

There are some areas of activity where no baseline performance has yet been established for the contractor. These are transformational issues and performance is expected to be satisfactory after the transition period. The executive narrative explains that the Capita Customer Service fell below its April target due to a spike in calls over three days following the issuing of council tax bills. The actual number of calls is not recorded.

KPIs are contractual and can be adjusted. Highest performing KPIs should be adopted across the councils, but for some services, such as benefits collection which is location based, local measures need to be used.

Data should be collected on misrouted calls and training opportunities sought to improve efficiency.

Significant amount of retained officer input has been required to achieve the KPIs. Further work will be needed to enable the suppliers to meet these on their own.

Cost to the councils of officers supporting the contract is being monitored at South and Vale. It is currently costing approximately a quarter of a million pounds per council.

The contract is performing well against its KPIs. They are set at the minimum level agreed. Behaviour indicators are not yet formally reported, but will eventually become performance indicators, which are informal but are performing far less well. These services are currently trading on the good will of retained staff to ensure that the contract will perform. There is, therefore, a significant problem to overcome.

The services which are working best are those which have not yet been “transformed”. The process of transforming the services has been difficult. HR and payroll have been difficult as there have been risks that have needed to be managed.

The committee expressed its gratitude to officers for the hard work undertaken to make the contract work.

### **Action Points**

Officers to bring a report on individual councils use of retained staff and other resources to achieve KPIs to the next meeting.

## **6 Exclusion of the public**

Members of the press and public were excluded from the rest of the meeting in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 on the grounds that:

- (i) it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1-7 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and
- (ii) the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

## **7 Performance Review**

The Interim Client Relationship Director introduced the report.

The risks in the report are split by contractor/council and are monitored monthly to joint tactical board.

The Joint Scrutiny Committee reviewed the performance of the two contracts.

## **8 Transition and transformation report**

The committee received and noted this report from the Interim Client Relationship Director.

The meeting closed at 12.45 pm

Chairman

Date