

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Five Councils Partnership Corporate Services Joint Committee

held on Wednesday, 1 December 2021 at 2.00 pm
in 135 Eastern Avenue, Milton Park, OX14 4SB

This meeting was live streamed.
You can watch the recording here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxhiV6kdsjo>

Open to the public, including the press

Present in the meeting room:

Councillors:

Cllr Neil Fawcett, Vale of White Horse District Council
Cllr Debby Hallett, Vale of White Horse District Council
Cllr Pieter-Paul Barker, South Oxfordshire District Council
Cllr David Rouane, South Oxfordshire District Council
Cllr Lulu Bowerman, Havant Borough Council
Cllr Ros Wyke, Mendip District Council
Cllr Liz Leyshon, Mendip District Council

Officers: Andrew Down, Matt Goodwin, Susan Harbour and Candida Mckelvey

Remote attendance:

Councillors: Cllr Kenneth Crookes, Hart District Council
Officers: David Clark, Susan Parker, Patricia Hughes
Guests: Dale Wood, Regional Partnership Director, Capita.

20 Opening announcements

Lead officer for this meeting, Matt Goodwin, ran through housekeeping matters. He also informed committee that Dale Wood from Capita was here for the public part of the meeting, to help answer questions.

21 Nomination of the Chair

The existing chair, Cllr Wyke, formally nominated the new chair for 2021-22 to be Cllr Fawcett.

22 Nomination of a Vice Chair

Chair, Cllr Fawcett, asked for nominations to elect a vice chair. Cllr Barker was nominated and elected.

23 Chairs announcements and urgent business

Chair informed committee that item 11 would be moved into confidential session, due to commercial sensitivity.

24 Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr Radley from Hart District Council, and Cllr Rennie from Havant Borough Council. Cllr Crookes of Hart District Council was present remotely so could not vote on any items.

25 Declarations of interest

None.

26 Notes of the last meeting

Noted.

27 Capita performance report

Matt Goodwin updated the committee on performance, with material updates from over the last two months. Capita's Regional Partnership Director was present to assist.

Main points:

- Land charges performing on target. Workloads remain high.
- Customer service has had a more difficult few months, due to waste collection issues. Some improvement had been seen since. Havant had secured new drivers for waste collection, and better communications were in place.
- PI4 for revenues and benefits had a few failures to meet targets, mainly due to the opening of courts and pursuing of council tax debt. The Call centre had received extra calls, and the calls had been longer, in order to support customers through the process.
- IT failed a PI on service desk – a recording error that caused the failure had now been corrected.
- Revenues and benefits – no PIs to report at the present time,
- DWP process / universal credit backlog creates an onward backlog for Capita, but Capita were working hard to resolve this. Robust plans in place should mean that PIs would be achieved by year end.

Committee asked questions to Matt Goodwin.

Committee members raised concerns, as they had previously, on how feedback was captured from the 20% of calls which were not being answered quickly? Matt Goodwin noted that detailed information was available in this space. Chair suggested a high-level

summary of such data and was in agreement with Cllr Wyke on this issue. Councillors were encouraged to report complaints, to be investigated by Capita. Capita do investigate what went wrong and aim to learn from this.

Action: Matt Goodwin to follow up with Capita on what happens to the 20%.

Discussion on Customer Services PI004: It was explained that Council Tax recovery and court actions had negatively affected this target. Call volumes had increased, in regard to letters and summons issued, and handling times were longer as agents worked to support customers on making arrangements. On the positive side, collection rates were on the increase.

Action: Matt Goodwin can circulate evidence of council tax improvement via email.

On the topic of dropped calls (revs and bens), it was asked why a high customer satisfaction rate was reported if there were dropped calls? Why aren't these customers asked for feedback? It was responded that the customer survey was a random selection of people who did speak to an agent. Even if some calls aren't picked up straight away, they may still be satisfied with the resulting service. This was part of the ongoing issue about how to monitor those callers who were unable to get a resolution within the "closed loop" system.

Committee was informed that there was intention to develop an end-to-end survey to capture those customer's experiences. This may assist in obtaining the whole picture of customer service. This would likely be in the new calendar year. Matt Goodwin would feedback on this, and work was being carried out on this by Gareth Stemp at Capita.

Committee were advised that the mystery shopper suggestion would be discussed in the following agenda item.

Resolved: The committee considered the report and provided comments as outlined above.

28 Presentation on customer quality briefing

Matt Goodwin presented on customer quality – the slides would be circulated to the committee.

The mystery shopper option was discussed, and Matt Goodwin provided an appraisal. He advised that, whilst quality arrangements were in place, these were not always transparent and there was no ongoing contract PI for measurement of quality.

It was explained that there were current plans to improve in this area: these included access by Authorities to calls, and ongoing quality checks on real life calls. Havant was currently piloting accessing of calls. The data may form the basis of a new PI.. Councillors were welcome to get involved in sampling.

In regard to a way forward, an options appraisal was presented in the slides:

1. do nothing – not an option
2. sampling of live calls – viable, already in place
3. mystery shopper – viable, independent but extra resource and investment needed. Would add to call volume.

Matt Goodwin recommended option 2 and would work with Capita collate the results of call checking, and feedback to the committee for comment. We will look at whether we can feed data into a new PI, or if not happy, potentially try another option.

Training for staff who listen into calls was queried – were staff trained in the same way on the same criteria? Dale Wood confirmed there was a robust training process, that could be shared.

Resolved:

The committee agreed with the Matt Goodwin's proposal for customer quality – option 2. Slides would be circulated. Dale Wood can provide some information on the training process for call listening.

29 Contract budget

The committee considered the report on the contract budget, which was in two parts. Details were within the report presented in the agenda pack.

The two parts to consider were:

1. Client budget (Client team) – as advised in the last meeting. Slight rise due to deployment of IT project support and resource, as a necessity, and agreed by JTB.
2. Contract pricing between Capita and Authorities

Prudent indexation for next year was predicted at 4%. In addition, it was advised that the loan financing would cease in December 2022 (correction to the report), saving £3.6M on a full year basis thereafter.

Chair commended the forensic analysis of the budget, and support shown by other members.

Resolved:

Committee endorsed the tabled draft contract budget, and noted the caveats tabled.

30 Exclusion of the public

To consider whether to exclude members of the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business under 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.

Resolved:

The committee voted in favour of excluding the public to consider an item of commercial sensitivity.

31 Update on the Somerset Unitary Authority

The committee and lead officers were present to receive an update on the Somerset Unitary Authority.

Committee was assured that communication and updates would be in place as the decision progressed.

32 Any other business

None.

The meeting closed at 3.30 pm