

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE:

MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 25 June 2015

Time: 2.00-3.40pm

Place: Glebe Lounge, Grafham Water Training and Conference Centre, Perry Huntingdon PE28 0GW

Present: Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC): Councillors Paul Bullen and Mac McGuire

Northamptonshire County Council (NCC): Councillors Bill Parker (Chairman) and Graham Lawman

Others in attendance:

Quentin Baker (LGSS Director of Law, Property and Governance), Matt Bowmer (LGSS Director of Finance), John Kane (LGSS Managing Director), Mark Lloyd (Chief Executive, Cambridgeshire County Council), Andrew Maddison (Performance Improvement and Quality Manager), Christine Reed (LGSS Director of People, Transformation and Transactions), Daniel Snowdon (Democratic Services Officer).

Apologies: Paul Blantern (Chief Executive, Northamptonshire County Council), Ian Farrar (LGSS Director of IT Services), Claire Townrow (LGSS Head of Service Assurance, Customers and Strategy)

66/15 MINUTES – 26 MAY 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th May 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

67/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

68/15 LGSS ANNUAL REPORT (STATEMENTS OF ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT) 2014/15

The Joint Committee received the draft statement of accounts that was drawn from the general ledger of both Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire County Councils. It was highlighted that no capital assets were included in the report because LGSS did not own any.

During discussion of the report:

- It was confirmed that the statement of accounts would be presented again to the Joint Committee in August.
- Clarification was sought over the governance statement on page 34 regarding the scrutiny arrangements. It was confirmed that there were separate arrangements for both Councils and the text may need to be amended.
- It was questioned why LGSS did not own any assets as the Joint Committee had previously authorised expenditure on pensions software. Officers explained that the assets were owned jointly by both authorities.
- Officers drew attention to section 16 of the report and explained that following refinement of the processes it had been identified that some debtors were in fact of the host authorities and they had subsequently been removed.
- Officers informed Members that the regulations regarding the Joint Committee accounts had changed and the requirement to publish them had been removed from 2017, however it was confirmed that the accounts would continue to be published beyond this date.
- It was explained that the audit report had cost less this year because last year's report required additional work.
- Confirmation was given that the LGSS Head of Transactions would be involved in discussions with the auditors.

It was resolved:

To note the completion of the Draft LGSS Annual Report (Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement) 2014/15, to be submitted to the external auditor.

69/15 UPDATE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

The Managing Director provided an oral update to the Joint Committee that highlighted the challenges facing LGSS over the next 12 to 18 months and facing the host Local Authorities. There was a need to get the balance right between the different priorities and that balance changed from week to week and month to month. The importance of the support from Members was emphasised to the Joint Committee.

Following the update from the Managing Director:

- Members questioned what support was required from Members. Officers explained that the support was around keeping an open mind to what was being proposed over the course of the next 18 months and to support the process by suggesting ideas and challenging officers.

- The Governance arrangements for LGSS were discussed and although a change in ownership was some time away a report for the October meeting was being produced that would provide options with regard to Governance.
- It was noted that an alternative structure and Governance arrangement would potentially provide an opportunity for LGSS to become an employer and look at terms and conditions. The current business model would not serve the organisation well beyond the next 18 months.
- The alternative model of LGSS Law was highlighted in discussion but it was noted that each model has pros and cons associated with it.
- Members questioned the level of information that was disseminated to employees. Officers explained that a workforce strategy was in place and that the employee recognition scheme had been adopted by Cambridgeshire County Council and Childrens Services at Northamptonshire County Council. LGSS Directors carried out regular “walkabouts” at office bases and there was a desire to have flexibility to reward performance.
- Members requested a comprehensive report and to be afforded a substantial amount of time to discuss recommendations made. It was confirmed that a workshop would be arranged to take place in October.

It was resolved to note the oral update provided by the Managing Director.

70/15 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee resolved that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the Following 4 items of business on the grounds that it contained exempt information under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and that it would not be in the public interest for this information to be disclosed (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

71/15 REVENUES AND BENEFITS UPDATE

The Director of People, Transformation and Transactions provided an information report on the ongoing work regarding collaborative arrangements for Revenues and Benefits services.

The Committee was informed that 18 “Design Principles” had been drawn up and that Foundation Partners would adopt them. All budgets would be controlled by the new Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee. There would be a cost of entry for a partner that had particularly poor systems that may have affected overall performance figures.

Foundation Partners shared equally the cost and risks attached and would have equal voting rights and casting vote arrangements had been drawn up.

It was noted that Norwich City Council had significant cost of entry associated with becoming a Foundation Partner but there were still massive benefits that outweighed the entry costs.

Any agreement reached with the potential Foundation Partners required the agreement of all Local Authorities affected and constitutional changes made.

Noted that Huntingdonshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council combined could become the fourth Foundation Partner as combined they were of a size that would make it viable.

It was resolved to note the Revenues and Benefits update given to the Joint Committee.

72/15 CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

Performance Improvement and Quality Manager gave an update on existing and initial customer engagement, focusing on timescales and key milestones, and engagement visits which were being progressed. Members noted the three contracts that were due for renewal in 2017 and that it was unlikely that Huntingdonshire District Council would renew theirs.

Members were informed that the Head of Service Assurance, Customers & Strategy was attending all client organisations to present the detailed customer satisfaction framework results and the associated service improvement plans.

The Committee's attention was drawn to Fenland District Council requesting a meeting with the Managing Director and this was arranged for July and Northamptonshire Police had also requested a meeting with the Managing Director following the appointment of a new Chief Constable.

It was resolved to note the customer engagement update presented to the Joint

Chairman