

MINUTES of the meeting of the **ORBIS** Joint Committee held at 10.30 am on 15 April 2019 at Room G90, BHCC, Hove Town Hall, Norton Road, Hove, BN3 3BQ.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its next meeting.

Elected Members:

- * Councillor Andrew Wealls (Chair)
- * Councillor David Elkin
- * Councillor Keith Glazier (substituting for Councillor Bob Standley)
- * Councillor Charlotte Morley

In attendance

Kevin Foster, Chief Operating Officer (East Sussex County Council)
David Kuenssberg, Executive Director for Finance and Resources
(Brighton & Hove City Council)
Leigh Whitehouse, Executive Director of Resources (Surrey County Council)
Adrian Stockbridge, Head of Performance, Strategy and Change, Orbis
Simon Pollock, Assistant Director of Business Operations
Louise Lawson, Senior Principal Accountant
Beth Stewart.
Shaun Hughes, Democratic Service Officer (Brighton & Hove City Council)

20 PROCEDURAL MATTERS [Item 1]

(a) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Leslie Hamilton (Brighton & Hove City Council), Councillor Bob Standley (East Sussex County Council) and Councillor Mel Few (Surrey County Council).

(b) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

(c) EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee decided to address any Part Two issues as they arise.

21 MINUTES [Item 2]

The minutes of the Orbis Joint Committee meeting held on 12 October 2018 were agreed as a true record of that meeting.

22 ORBIS JOINT COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 3]

The Committee considered the Forward Plan and the date and number of future ORBIS Joint Committee meetings in 2019.

Resolved: The Committee approved the forward plan and noted the need to arrange future dates.

23 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT [Item 4]

David Kuenssberg (Executive Director of Finance and Resourcing, Brighton & Hove City Council) introduced the report to the committee.

Key points raised during the meeting:

The Committee discussed the relevant income streams and over spends. The Committee were informed that over spends often result from employing agency staff to fill gaps in service teams. Contract staff are more expensive as the salaries are more competitive. A general discussion on attracting staff ensued. The support of university students was discussed as a way of streaming new staff into council jobs. It was noted that apprenticeships already exist for local authorities and guiding university students into jobs would be a challenge as the ORBIS members have different policies. The Committee discussed the lack of younger members of staff and agreed this was challenging for all members of ORBIS. The Committee exchanged ideas and gave anecdotal evidence on how different approaches worked. It was noted that the council hierarchy was seen as off putting and considered old fashioned in relation to private companies approach to modern working patterns. It was noted that looking for the right mind-set as opposed to experience had achieved better results in certain areas.

Resolved: That the Committee duly noted the recommendations in the report.

24 ORBIS PERFORMANCE UPDATE REPORT [Item 5]

Adrian Stockbridge introduced the report to the committee.

Key points raised during the meeting:

The Committee were informed that turnover for Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) staff in the first two years of employment was comparatively high when set against East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and Surrey County Council (SCC). It was generally agreed that some turnover was a positive and no movement was a negative. It was noted that the approach to exit interviews was different across the ORBIS group, therefore information was not comparable regarding the reasons for staff leaving. It was agreed that the group need to do something to attract and retain staff. The Committee were informed that private business staff

retention appeared to relate to career progression which was not seen generally as possible in councils. The Committee requested that the issue of staff retention and in particular the attraction of younger staff to council working be looked into and reported back to the committee in October 2019.

Annex 3 to item 5 of the agenda was explained to the Committee along with other highlights of the Business Operations Performance deep dive. It was noted that the combining workloads reduced spend and growth was a positive. The huge amount data in Business Operations means that deployment of robotics can be used and this assisted in reducing costs. Targets and weekly meetings were found to be useful. It was noted that in areas such as pensions the smallest of errors had a big impact and this has proved challenging. The right balance needs to be struck between risk and service changes. The Committee agreed that the Business Operations performance was positive news and should be disseminated throughout the ORBIS councils. It was also noted that wider successes around the partnership are not always communicated effectively and more needs to be done to articulate the benefits.

Actions/ further information to be provided: Retention of staff and attraction of younger staff to council working - information on progress to be provided to next committee meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Committee dually noted the recommendations in the report.

Meeting ended at: 12.15 pm

Chairman