

Notice of Meeting

Orbis Joint Committee



Date & time
Thursday, 28 May
2020 at 12.00 pm

Place
Remote Meeting via
Skype

Contact
Angela Guest
Room 122, County Hall
angela.guest@surreycc.gov
.uk

Please note that due to the COVID-19 situation this meeting will take place remotely.

Please be aware that a link to view a recording of the meeting will be available on the East Sussex County Council website.

If you have any queries relating to accessing this agenda please email democratic.services@surreycc.gov.uk. Alternatively you can contact Member and Democratic Services@ East Sussex County Council by emailing democratic.services@eastsussex.gov.uk

Members of the Committee

Cllr Daniel Yates (Brighton & Hove City Council), Cllr David Gibson (Brighton & Hove City Council), Cllr Nick Bennett (East Sussex County Council), Bob Standley (East Sussex County Council), Mr Mel Few (Cabinet Member for Finance) and Dr Zully Grant-Duff (Cabinet Member for Corporate Support)

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members present are required to declare, at this point in the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter

- (i) Any disclosable pecuniary interests and / or
- (ii) Other interests arising under the Code of Conduct in respect of any item(s) of business being considered at this meeting

NOTES:

- Members are reminded that they must not participate in any item where they have a disclosable pecuniary interest
- As well as an interest of the Member, this includes any interest, of which the Member is aware, that relates to the Member's spouse or civil partner (or any person with whom the Member is living as a spouse or civil partner)
- Members with a significant personal interest may participate in the discussion and vote on that matter unless that interest could be reasonably regarded as prejudicial.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING - 15 APRIL 2019

(Pages 5
- 8)

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record.

4 ORBIS PERFORMANCE MONITORING

(Pages 9
- 18)

To provide an update on key performance metrics across the partnership.

5 IT & DIGITAL SERVICE SPOTLIGHT

(Pages
19 - 24)

This spotlight report provides the Orbis Joint Committee with an overview of the activities and achievements by the IT & Digital Service.

6 BUDGET MONITORING

(Pages
25 - 28)

To provide an update to the Joint committee on the financial position of Orbis.

7 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC - IF NEEDED

Recommendation: That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, 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 under the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

8 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Orbis Joint Committee will be held on 16 October 2020.

Philip Baker
Assistant Chief Executive
East Sussex County Council

Geoff Raw
Chief Executive
Brighton & Hove City Council

Joanna Killian
Chief Executive
Surrey County Council

Published: Tuesday, 19 May 2020

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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

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EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL,
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL AND
BRIGTON AND HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ORBIS JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: 28th MAY 2020

LEAD OFFICER: NIGEL MANVELL (DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL), KEVIN FOSTER (CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL), LEIGH WHITEHOUSE (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL)

SUBJECT: ORBIS PERFORMANCE MONITORING

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

To provide an update on key performance metrics across the partnership.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that:

1. The Joint Committee notes the performance statistics presented.
2. Member advise and agree which service should be the focus of a performance review in the meetings.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Joint Committee is responsible for the effective monitoring of Orbis performance

DETAILS:

Background

1. The terms of reference of the Joint Committee are to oversee and improve the delivery of the services for the benefit of each participating council and in particular to monitor the Orbis Business Plan and performance of the partnership.

Orbis Joint Management Board

2. In order to provide an update to the Joint Committee Management (JMB) a briefing report has been created. The highlight report provides a high-level synopsis of activities undertaken across the partnership against savings and identifies key risks for escalation. The briefing can be found in Annexe 1 of this report.

Service Performance Measures and Oversight

3. Building on the insight provided previously to this committee around Full Time Equivalent posts (FTE), sickness, absence etc. It is recognised that providing service specific measures is important to provide oversight to the Joint Committee and enable joint decision making.
4. A dashboard is continuing to be developed that will enable the visualisation of statistics.
5. Opportunity to introduce the concept and purpose of the Orbis Blueprint which has been developed to clearly define our Business Plans and sets out the key building blocks for the Partnership and areas that we need to focus on in order to be successful. The document can be found in Annexe 2 of this report.
6. It is also proposed that a deep dive into the performance measures of a specific service can be requested and be prepared for the Joint Committee. This option is to provide Members with an opportunity to understand existing performance arrangements within that service and to ensure that any issues identified are being addressed. IT&D Service Spotlight will be shared during this report.
7. Special emphasis has been given in this quarter's report to show how the Orbis services have supported and enabled the partner authorities in their COVID 19 response.

People Insight

8. Data provided is for Q4 2019/20 – January, February and March 2020
(Table 1 – Overall headline statistics by organisation)

Orbis Performance Report – Q4 2019/20 – Orbis People

Headline measures	Orbis total	Brighton & Hove	East Sussex	Surrey
Average employee numbers FTE	1721.73	595.18	449.48	677.06
Sickness absence, average days per FTE	0.65	0.82	0.59	0.54
Return to work interview, % complete	78.21% (ESCC and BHCC only)	74.39%	85.43%	N/A
Length of service of leavers	N/A	30.8% had 1-5 years' service	35.3% had 1-5 years' service	39.9% had 1-5 years' service
Average Agency staff spend	4.42	N/A	N/A	N/A

Staffing Numbers

9. It is important to track the number of FTEs in any business to understand whether these are significant changes in the short-term workforce. In an environment where savings are being delivered it is expected that the workforce would be decreasing over time.
10. There was an average of 1,721.73 FTE employed in Orbis in Q4, this is a reduction of 1.9% compared to the Q3 average
(Table 2 – FTEs by service)

Employee numbers

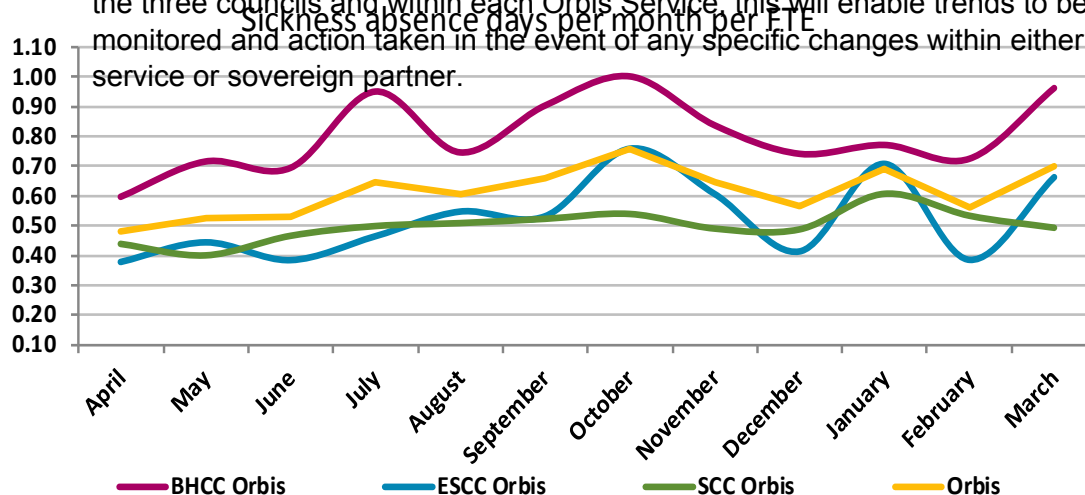
Full Time Equivalent (FTE) members of staff by service						
	Average FTE Q4 2019/20					
	BHCC		ESCC		SCC	
	FTE	% of total	FTE	% of total	FTE	% of total
Business Ops	222.61	37.40%	62.33	13.87%	205.81	30.40%
Finance	43.69	7.34%	73.33	16.31%	75.80	11.20%
HR&OD	70.90	11.91%	45.03	10.02%	59.45	8.78%
IT&D	141.09	23.70%	162.16	36.08%	160.21	23.66%
Procurement	17.01	2.86%	26.47	5.89%	36.45	5.38%
Property	99.88	16.78%	80.16	17.83%	139.33	20.58%
Total FTE	595.18		449.48		677.06	

BHCC and ESCC 1 FTE = 37 contract hours per week, SCC 1 FTE = 36 contract hours per week

Figures include vacant posts and are not the budgeted FTE

Sickness Absence

11. A primary area of focus is to understand the relative sickness absence rates across the three councils and within each Orbis Service, this will enable trends to be monitored and action taken in the event of any specific changes within either a service or sovereign partner.

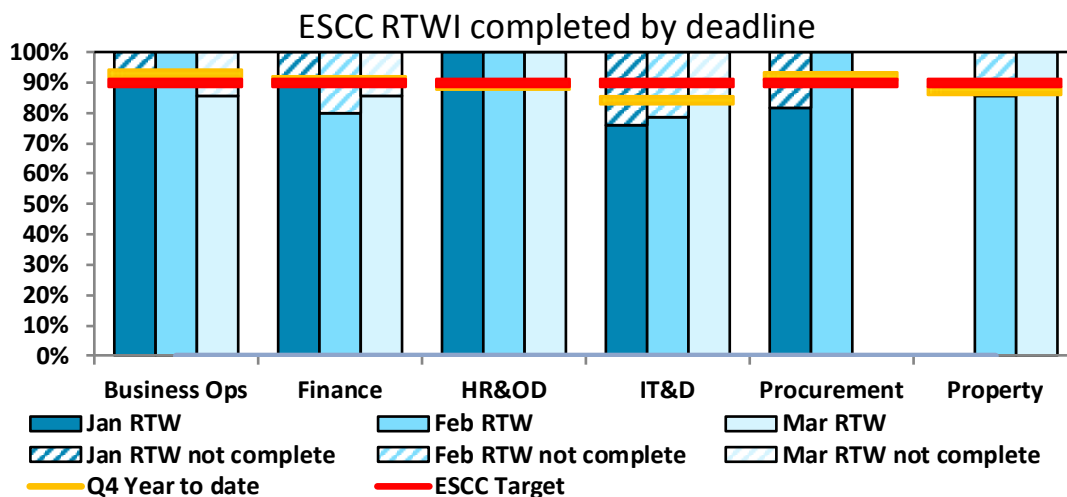
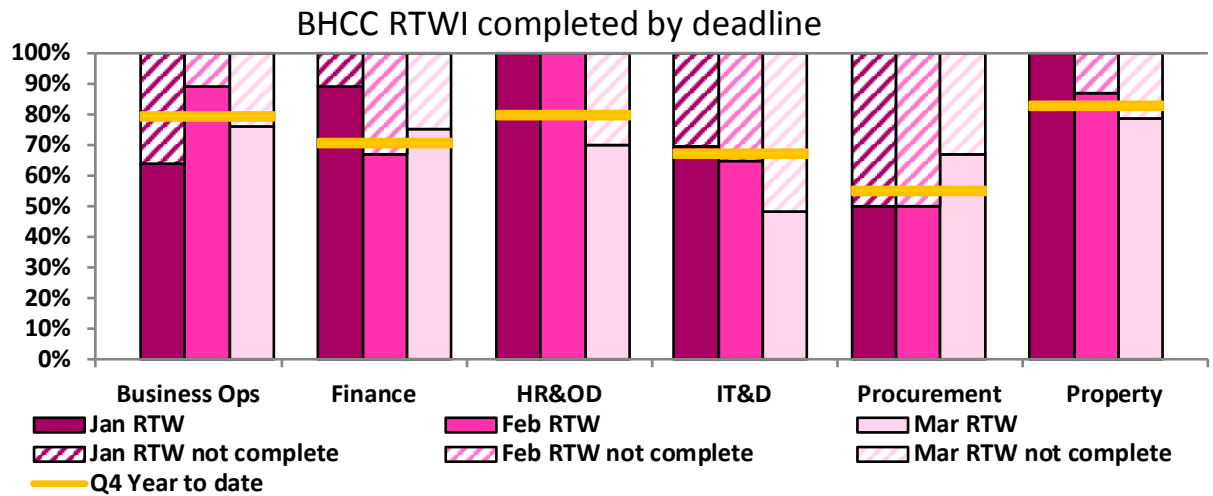


12. BHCC saw higher sickness rates than ESCC or SCC throughout 2019/2020
13. ESCC and BHCC both use Firstcare for sickness absence reporting, this ensures sickness is captured on the first day the employee is absent providing a more accurate measure. In SCC sickness is based on a 12 month rolling average and added by staff on their return to work from a period of absence.
14. Orbis absence rates are generally lower than wider sovereign averages which is consistent with reported data that reflects higher rates of absence in frontline service areas such as Adults and Childrens Services. (Rates are typically in the region of 20% lower)

Return to work interviews (RTWI)

15. Data is available for ESCC and BHCC around return to work interviews.

Note: BHCC RTWI compliance is measured against a five working day deadline, ESCC is measured against seven calendar days. BHCC don't have a target for RTWI completed by deadline.



16. BHCC RTWI compliance has fluctuated in Q4 whilst ESCC has continued to consistently achieve compliance targets.

17. There is currently no way SCC can report RTWI as this is not reported or captured centrally but managed locally by line managers.

Partnership Update

18. New Inter-Authority Agreement for the period April 2020 to March 2023 has been signed and all Partners are committed to the principles underpinning the Orbis Partnership and comfortable with a mixed model, whereby the scope can be different for each council. The apportionment of funding and savings will reflect the mixed model rather than a full partnership basis.

- a. SCC's Finance and HR/OD functions return to SCC, with exception of CoEs within Finance.
- b. No fundamental change in scope to IT&D, Business Operations and Procurement.

- c. Principles and approach for the disaggregation of services developed are being carefully managed.

19. Introduction to the Orbis Blueprint (Annexe 2)

- a. An Orbis Blueprint has been developed to simplify the Business Plans and sets out the key building blocks for the Partnership and areas that we need to focus on in order to continue to be successful.
- b. The Orbis Blueprint outlines our vision and priorities for the future, provides a strategic framework and increased visibility to our sovereign partners, staff and customers regarding how we will continue to develop the Partnership.
- c. There are three key areas of focus outlined in the Blueprint People, Customer and Innovation and what has become apparent over the last 6 weeks is just how integral the pillars are and how evident they have been in the way that staff across Orbis have responded to the challenges that COVID-19 has presented. (Some key areas of focus noted below in point 21 incorporating learnings from our response to COVID-19.)

20.

21. COVID-19 Response

- a. The pace and scale of change required in our response to COVID-19 as a Partnership has meant that we have had to look at how we can do things differently on a scale like never before.
- b. Orbis services have worked together to ensure staff in all partners and directorates have the tools and technology they need to enable safe and effective home working in a supported way, while maintaining BAU delivery.
- c. All services have responded to the specific needs of the sovereign customers and ensured that external customers and residents continue to receive the support they need.
- d. **Key Highlights**
 - i. **IT&D** – Rapid deployment of home working equipment and tools deploying circa 800 laptops to essential staff groups. Sourced and provided over 175 mobile phones and implemented a new softphone solution for approximately 480 staff. Enabling remote access to approximately 1,500 school staff for teaching and administrative purposes. Responding to 2,800 support calls in April 2020 from schools seeking assistance with enabling home learning and teacher remote access.
 - ii. **Procurement** – The PPE team have made great progress on building a reliable supply chain of certified suppliers and getting stocks in place. Additional resource has been provided by the Audit team which is helping with the high level of workload involved in following up multiple supply routes and getting test certificates approved. Delivery system for food and essential hygiene items has been set up using our school meals provider Chartwells/Compass Group and another local supplier delivering to over a 1,000 people each week who are vulnerable or shielded in our local communities.
 - iii. **Business Ops** – Responded at pace adapting and supporting staff with the transition to remote working. Revised Business continuity plans to adapt to the extreme conditions and successfully worked with Audit and corporate partners to verify prioritisation introducing streamlined processes and effective prioritisation of critical payments

ensuring vital services e.g. payroll have been maintained without interruption.

- iv. **HROD** – Pace and responsiveness in interpreting ‘5pm bulletin’ into practical advice for customers leveraging scale and expertise across the Partnership to share guidance and then applied on a local basis relevant to context. Applied expertise in interpretation of national and local guidance to fit with the needs and context of the Customer and successfully co-ordinated the redeployment process to identify volunteers to support PPE distribution.
- v. **Finance & Audit** - Grant funding support quickly put in place to help to provide clear guidance and support across the partnership. The Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Service has fundamentally revisited its approach to audit and assurance in response to Covid19. Recognising the importance of being flexible and supporting priority/front line services, the team have suspended all but the most essential previously planned work and instead commenced a programme of proactive advice, support and assurance to services across all the Orbis partners. In recognition that for virtually all services, key business processes have been adapted in response to COVID-19 and workarounds developed, Internal Audit work has focussed on advising on these changes and providing assurance that risks continue to be mitigated and appropriate controls are maintained. Finally, a comprehensive fraud risk assessment and response plan has been developed for all Orbis partners specifically in response to emerging COVID-19 related fraud risks, with these plans underpinned by additional use of data analytics to help identify potential frauds and provide assurance that key financial controls remain in place.
- vi. **Schools Traded Services** – Services to schools in ESCC took a revised approach to support the changing need of customers providing varied and much needed support during the buyback period which has assisted in securing £6.5m amid lockdown.
- vii. **Performance and Change Team** –Developed innovative virtual learning and discussion sessions for staff including the introduction of a new eLearning approach to continue to provide the ongoing focus on development for our staff.

22. Restart/Recovery Principles and Partnership Focus

- a. Orbis services have worked at pace to streamline, automate and adapt processes to enable remote working and to support customers.
- b. Using service expertise and industry best practice, workarounds have been found, new solutions developed, and planned introductions of new tools and tech brought forward and as part of our recovery principles we are keen to retain these new ways of working for the future.
- c. Works are underway to learn from this experience to develop improved models and capability to continue to enhance the operational infrastructure, customer experience and continue to provide the development opportunities for our people to make sure that they feel informed, supported and have the skills needed to succeed. An outline of some of the key initiatives being progressed noted below in line with the new Blueprint Business Plan.
- d. Customer

- i. Delivery model reviews underway for each service leveraging the learnings from the new ways of working alongside incorporating the Partner Councils individual recovery principles to ensure alignment and consistency where possible.
- ii. Introduction of a new Business Operations Helpdesk driving process optimisation and greater alignment across the teams including performance uplift and enabling a more consistent customer experience.
- iii. Commercial review continuing to refine and agree the principles and parameters for growth.
- iv. Expansion of self-service capability and chat functionality.
- e. Innovation
 - i. Modernisation Programmes promoting improved business practices, process efficiency and increased innovation.
 - ii. Continued focus on design and delivery of digital technology enablers across the Orbis partnership.
 - iii. Refreshed programme of works being developed for Robotic Process Automation driving reduced operating costs and increase throughput.
 - iv. ERP development works across the partnership continuing.
- f. People
 - i. Continuation of virtual and remote ways of working being assessed incorporating feedback from our staff to help formulate clear guidelines for the future.
 - ii. New e-Learning Strategy being developed and implemented.
 - iii. Implementation of the new Learning and Development hub – Orbis Academy.
 - iv. Leadership development programmes ongoing.
 - v. New Partnership Apprenticeship programme being introduced.
 - vi. Refreshed focus on retention and recruitment strategies being developed.

What Happens Next?

23. The reporting will evolve and develop as business needs and requirements change. Ongoing works will continue to enhance data sets enabling insightful and valuable analysis to be provided.

Contact Officer:

Nikki Neal – Head of Strategy, Performance and Change

Consulted:

Kevin Foster – Chief Operating Officer (ESCC)
Leigh Whitehouse – Executive Director of Resources (SCC)
Nigel Manvell – Deputy Chief Finance Officer (BHCC)

Annexes:

Annexe 1 - JMB Highlight Report
Annex 2 - Orbis Partnership Blueprint

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Service	Savings Targets (£)			Total Savings Target	RAG Staus Update	Planned Activites	Risks
	19/20	20/21	21/22				
IT&D	500	500	500	1,500	A further £750k has been reduced from the service expenditure (operating) budget (unallocated efficiencies from previous years and £500k the 20/21 target).	New service pressures relating to pay increments and an unfunded Data Protection Officer post will create pressures that will need to be managed in-year.	Increased demand for support and developments in connection with the Orbis councils' recovery may place additional financial pressure on the service
HR South	500	0	0	500	19/20 targets achieved as a result of a restructure which took effect from 1 April 2019		
Business Operations	770	750	500	2,020	19/20 target achieved xxxxxx	Operational efficiencies planned against service restructure have needed to be paused due to COVID-19.	The combination of COVID and council focus means that the savings continue to be at risk.
Finance South	338	0	0	338	19/20 savings achieved through vacancies (for which some have permanently been removed from budgets), efficiencies and integrated working		
Procurement	873	305	50	1,228	19/20 savings were over delivered through redundancies, income and vacancies	Still finalising the plan for 20/21 to realise savings	Known reduction of income from frameworks (£70k) Risk of delivery of savings targets to partner authorities
Total	2,981	1,555	1,050	5,586			



A trusted partnership delivering value to customers and residents through our expertise, innovation and passion

We will continue to work in Partnership to ensure that we deliver the best possible experience for our customers and staff. Our three key areas of focus will be:



We will achieve this through the Orbis principles:



EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL,
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL AND
BRIGTON AND HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ORBIS JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: 28th MAY 2020

LEAD OFFICER: NIGEL MANVELL (DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL), KEVIN FOSTER (CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL), LEIGH WHITEHOUSE (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL)

SUBJECT: IT & DIGITAL SERVICE SPOTLIGHT

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

This spotlight report provides the Orbis Joint Committee with an overview of the activities and achievements by the IT & Digital Service.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Orbis Joint Committee is asked to note the on-going service and technology developments and the advancement of digital across the Orbis partnership.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Joint Committee is responsible for the effective monitoring of Orbis performance

DETAILS:

Background

1.1 The IT & Digital service is a fully integrated Orbis partnership function. The Service was designed to combine 3 separate council IT functions into a single, unified IT and Digital department. The aim was threefold: to drive out cost by delayering and removing role duplication; to provide an enabling service response to the operational and strategic priorities of each council; to combine the pooled professional and technical expertise to enhance the overall service offer.

1.2 Since the appointment of the Orbis Chief Information Officer in 2016, there has been a strategic and systematic programme of IT service development and enhancement of technology and digital capabilities across the Orbis partnership.

1.3 The Orbis business plan operating budget savings targets and council specific IT savings targets have been achieved each year from 2016/17 – 2019/20. These savings have been achieved through a blend of staffing and contractual efficiencies, whilst continuing to meet the operational needs and strategic ambitions of the Orbis partners.

2 Service Updates

Digital transformation of the Service

2.1 The operational imperative to replace the legacy IT helpdesk systems was used to drive forward a programme of service improvement and enhanced service satisfaction. The old call logging systems have been replaced with three digital-era solutions that enable online self-service for support and provide rich service satisfaction insights. The developments are as follows:

- Cherwell – the core platform, providing the IT Service Management system and end user portal referred to as MyServiceHub. The implementation of this capability also included the review and improvement of processes that reduced 127 processes and forms, across the three councils, into a consistent, set of 26 and achieved an operating cost reduction of £185k per annum;
- ComAround (referred to as KnowHow!) – an online knowledge library enabling service users to browse for user guides, videos, helpful articles and links. It contains 75,000 pre-written articles from Microsoft as well as guides and videos written by IT experts with the ability to share these articles across the three organisations;
- Happy Signals – the customer experience engine that provides real-time analytical insights into the ‘happiness’ of the userbase allows us to drive continuous service improvement processes. This will enable the development of XLAs (experience level agreements) instead of traditional SLAs (service level agreements).

2.2 The solutions were selected and developed in order to create an enterprise-class capability that underpins the Orbis vision for integration, consolidation and efficiency savings. These capabilities have the full potential to be used more widely across the Orbis partnership.

Project Delivery

2.3 The IT & Digital service delivers circa 160 projects each year. These include: compliance led and security driven technology changes; infrastructure upgrades; business-led changes that typically involve the replacement or extension of line of business applications for frontline services such as social care and support services such as HR.

Commercial Development

2.4 The IT & Digital service operates a successful and growing commercial portfolio. Providing services to 267 customers comprising schools and social enterprises; with year on year growth over the last 4 years. The strength of the commercial growth is attributed to the clear and reliable service offer and well-established, direct relationships with the customer base.

Innovation in the data centre

2.5 An innovative new core infrastructure strategy is being implemented to maximise the value of combining Microsoft Azure (public cloud services) and the Orbis operated datacentres. This strategy has begun to put in place the very latest industry technologies,

implementing a design that will provide a highly available, cyber secure infrastructure capable of underpinning a 24/7 digital delivery of council services.

Enabling an Agile Workforce

2.6 The IT & Digital service has been implementing a technological step-change as key enabler to workforce agility, equipping staff with the ability to work from any location and deliver services through multi-disciplinary teams. The key enablers include:

- Upgrading existing end user devices to laptop or hybrid (2 in 1) devices running Windows 10;
- The extension of mobile equipment and apps across council services, with a review of BYOD opportunities (primarily at Surrey County Council);
- Enhancements to the IT infrastructure such as network capacity, increased use of Wi-Fi, implementation of Gov WIFI and rollout of Always on VPN;
- Deployment of Microsoft Teams (collaboration and video conference) technology.

Digital Collaboration across the local government sector

2.7 All three councils within the Orbis partnership have signed up to the Local Digital Declaration. Signing up to the collective ambition to co-create the conditions for the next generation of local public services, where technology is an enabler rather than a barrier to service improvements and where organisations share a vision to deliver more user-centred, cost-effective local public services through open, collaborative and reusable work. The Digital Declaration collaborations include:

- East Sussex and several other councils including the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Milton Keynes to look at improving data and evidence on children in care;
- Brighton & Hove City Council, Bracknell Forest Council, Oxford City and the London Borough of Croydon to improve code-sharing between councils, removing blockers to sharing code and helping projects to collaborate;
- Surrey County Council and the London Boroughs of Islington and Camden councils developing a data ethics framework to support data sharing.

Strategic Digital Delivery

2.8 A current area of focus is the design and delivery of digital technology enablers across the Orbis partnership.

2.9 A significant area of digital delivery has been for Surrey County Council in support of the organisation's transformation programme. The resulting work has put in place the technology foundations to support the business-led digital change initiatives. The digital deliverables include:

- An integration platform, enabling join up of data from different sources;
- A data management platform, supporting the single view of resident and asset information, the creation of 150 automated, self-serve datasets for analytics and 23 Automated Dashboards;
- Robotic automation technology, enabling automation of repetitive tasks to free up staff time. During the last year, 35,000 hours of staff time has been automated and freed up for more impactful and value-adding work.

- Chatbot, smart form and webchat technology, enabling an improved access to services for residents when they contact the Council online. This provides both a digital experience to residents and a reduction in calls to the contact centre;
- A single resident account that can be deployed across a range of services;
- On line forms and a redesign of back-office processes for an improved resident journey. An example is with the Highways department. The number of online forms was reduced from 30 to 9, simplifying the process to contact the department concerning trees, manholes, flooding and blocked drains defects.

2.10 At Brighton and Hove City Council there has been an on-going use of Mendix (a low-code platform) to support process change and enhance back office efficiencies. Alongside this there have been two significant areas of development:

- The establishment of online accounts for residents in Brighton & Hove. (25,000 citizens are currently signed up). These existing accounts, along with all future registrations, have been brought into an identity management platform;
- The development of a Resident Index using two products (Dell Boomi and Clear Core) which are used to connect resident data from disparate source systems to create a “golden record” of resident and property data. Deliverables from this work already include: Address validation against Council Tax Address and the Local Land & Property Gazetteer; Resident name, address and date of birth validation; the transmission of changes within the Council Tax system to the Electoral Register; enablement of the ‘My Account Verification’, used in the Brighton & Hove online account, to check to see if systems already hold resident data when a new account is created.

2.11 At East Sussex County Council there have been trials of chatbot technology in the back office and resident facing service with automation of HR processes and the Blue Badge processes. Drawing on the learning from the other two Orbis partners, a more extensive technology-based programme could be developed for 20/21 alongside a scaling up of employee and leadership digital skills development through the Barclays Digital Eagle initiative.

COVID-19 and recent service delivery achievements

2.12 There are no parallels or precedents for the level of demand that has been placed on the IT & Digital service during the COVID-19 lockdown period. The pressure and demand grew in line with heightened levels of remote working and enabling the provision of services to the most vulnerable in our communities.

2.13 The response from individuals and teams from across IT & Digital has been outstanding. The supporting processes have adapted well and are coping with the on-going need for a dynamic response to new and emerging needs. The support response includes the following:

- Deploying circa 800 laptops to essential staff groups;
- Providing 175 mobile phones and setting up 483 staff (at East Sussex) to use a softphone solution called Jabber; a solution that had not been previously used at the council;
- Enabling staff at all three councils to use Citrix to access council systems and information from their home devices;
- Accelerating the implementation of ‘Always on VPN’ at Brighton & Hove that will enable all Windows 10 device users to connect securely to the council’s systems;

- The rapid deployment of Microsoft Teams across East Sussex and Surrey, with deployments in Brighton & Hove to the council's COVID-19 response teams;
- A programme of virtual training to support the Teams deployment was stood up: 1,293 training enquiries were received, 1,063 courses booked, and 688 staff had attended training by 1st May 2020;
- Enabling remote access to approximately 1,500 school staff for teaching and administrative purposes. Responding to 2,800 support calls in April 2020 from schools seeking assistance with enabling home learning and teacher remote access;
- Producing over 10,000 leaflets, letters and information sheets in East Sussex by the Print Team;
- The development of new digital systems to capture and match diverse data sets that enable frontline services to support our most vulnerable citizens.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The IT & Digital service has been designed, and is now managed, to support and enable the operational and strategic priorities of the Orbis partners. The initial process of integration has been completed and a process of continuous service improvement continues to be delivered.

3.2 The IT & Digital service has achieved the target savings for 2016/17 – 2019/20.

3.3 The IT & Digital service has continued to put in place improvements that have enhanced the service offer and added-value to the councils within the Orbis partnership.

3.4 The IT & Digital service provided exceptional support the councils during the COVID-19 lock down and is well placed to enable the post-COVID-19 recovery and continue to drive forward transformative digital change.

Contact Officer:

Matt Scott – Chief Informaiton Officer

Consulted:

Kevin Foster – Chief Operating Officer (ESCC)

Leigh Whitehouse – Executive Director of Resources (SCC)

Nigel Manvell - Deputy Chief Finance Officer (BHCC)

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EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL,
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL AND
BRIGTON AND HOVE CITY COUNCIL

ORBIS JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: 28th May 2020

LEAD OFFICER: NIGEL MANVELL (DEPUTY CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER
BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL), KEVIN FOSTER
(CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER EAST SUSSEX COUNTY
COUNCIL), LEIGH WHITEHOUSE (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF RESOURCES SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL)

SUBJECT: BUDGET MONITORING

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

To provide an update to the Joint committee on the financial position of Orbis.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Joint Committee is asked to note the report.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Joint Committee is responsible for ensuring the sound financial management of the partnership, delivering the business plan and monitoring the investment.

DETAILS:

The Orbis joint operating budget of £60.4m for 2019/20 included challenging efficiency targets of £3.2m. The year-end outturn is a small underspend of £0.029m, which can reasonably be described as a balanced position for a budget of this size.

Orbis Operating Budget

Full Year Outturn as at Period 12 (March 2019/20)

Orbis Operating Budget	Net Expenditure			2019/20 Savings
	Full Year Budget	Outturn	Year End Variance	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Business Operations	5,779	5,872	93	770
Finance	10,386	10,851	465	338
HR	5,793	5,803	10	700
IT & Digital	19,935	19,495	-440	500
Management	2,316	2,055	-261	0
Procurement	4,681	4,468	-212	873
Property	11,490	11,807	317	0
TOTAL	60,380	60,351	-29	3,181

The reduction in the forecast outturn from month 9 is mainly due to the ongoing impact of vacancies and delays to recruitment. Services are currently working towards the delivery of further efficiency targets in 2020/21. In particular, the underspends in IT&D and Procurement will reflect, in part, early delivery of 2020/21 savings where underspend can be identified as recurrent. The overspends in Finance and Property are due to the impact of temporary staff while those services implement a new service model and disaggregate from the Orbis partnership. The level of agency staffing relative to overall staffing costs are set out on the table below.

Orbis Operating Budget

Year to Date Staffing Expenditure as at Period 12 (March 2019/20)

Orbis Operating Budget	Agency	Non Agency Staffing	Total Staffing	Agency Proportion
	£'000	£'000	£'000	%
Business Ops	289	10,844	11,133	3%
Finance	1,327	11,706	13,033	10%
HR&OD	209	6,636	6,845	3%
IT&D	853	20,832	21,685	4%
Management	0	771	771	0%
Procurement	209	4,252	4,461	5%
Property	840	11,751	12,591	7%
Total	3,727	66,792	70,519	5%

The partner contributions are set out in the table below. In February 2020 it was agreed that partners would fund 100% of any significant variances where those variances related to sovereign activity. This has increased the relative contributions of BHCC and SCC due to overspends in BHCC Property and SCC Finance respectively.

Orbis Operating Budget	Net Expenditure		
	Full Year Budget	Outurn	Year End Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Contributions			
BHCC	13,217	13,277	60
ESCC	13,825	13,644	-181
SCC	33,338	33,430	92
TOTAL	60,380	60,351	-29

Contact Officer:

Thomas Alty –

Consulted:

Kevin Foster – Chief Operating Officer (ESCC)

Leigh Whitehouse – Executive Director of Resources (SCC)

Nigel Manvell - Deputy Chief Finance Officer (BHCC)

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