



Council Overview Board
10 September 2015

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Purpose of the report: Scrutiny of Services and budgets

Background

Orbis is the partnership between East Sussex and Surrey County Councils, covering a range of business services provided by the two councils, including finance, procurement, property, IT, HR and shared business services such as payroll and pensions functions.

A Joint Partnership Committee has been set up by the two councils to oversee the strategic governance of Orbis. The Joint Partnership Committee steers the work of Orbis as it has developed its detailed business plan, operating model and performance framework. The business plan will go for final approval to the East Sussex and Surrey Cabinets in October.

The scrutiny functions at both East Sussex and Surrey County Council have a role in reviewing the business plan and the Orbis partnership. In order to formulate possible joint arrangements to scrutinise Orbis, the Chairman of the Council Overview Board has recently met with his opposite number at East Sussex to discuss how this could be done.

Process for joint scrutiny

As a result of these discussions, the Board is asked to agree the following broad procedures to undertake joint scrutiny of Orbis.

A Joint Orbis Scrutiny Group should be set up, consisting of five elected members from each authority. There will be two joint Chairmen, that of Surreys to be the Chairman of the Council Overview Board. The establishment of this Group will help ensure clear communication, collaborative scrutiny and avoid contradictory recommendations. The Group will act as a Joint Scrutiny Committee, however, will not be a formally constituted body.

- At Surrey County Council the members will consist of those already appointed to the Council Overview Board's Transformation Sub Group.
- At East Sussex County Council the work will be undertaken by a Sub Board of the Audit, Best Value & Community Services Scrutiny Committee.

- The first meeting will be held in October 2015, and further meetings will be scheduled as and when necessary. Officers overseeing the Orbis project have agreed to present the Business Plan of the project at that meeting and to respond to questions and comments. It is not anticipated that this will be more than a couple of times per year.
- The meetings will be hosted alternately at Surrey and East Sussex County Halls, and the hosting chairman will chair the meeting. The first meeting will be hosted by Surrey County Council and its democratic services will manage the meeting.

The recommendations of the Joint Orbis Scrutiny Committee will be presented to each authority's parent scrutiny committee and their respective Cabinets

Key dates for joint scrutiny

| Date | Meeting | Next steps |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| 11 September 2015 | Transformation Sub Group – Surrey County Council review of the Orbis business case | Feed any outcomes or potential recommendations to East Sussex County Council's scrutiny committee. |
| 15 September 2015 | Sub Board of the East Sussex Audit, Best Value & Community Services (ABV&C) Scrutiny Committee review of the Orbis business case | Feed any outcomes or potential recommendations to Surrey County Council's scrutiny function. |
| 5 October 2015 (tbc) | Joint meeting of the Transformation Sub Group and Sub Board of the ABV&C | Discuss the outcomes and findings of the 11 and 15 September workshops with a view to forming a joint statement of recommendations from the Chairmen of both Council's scrutiny committees. |

Recommendations

The Council Overview Board are asked to agree the approach to joint scrutiny, as set out in this report.

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Sources/background papers: *none.*