

CENTRAL SUSSEX PARTNERSHIP
CENSUS JOINT COMMITTEE
14TH DECEMBER 2007

Present:	Councillors:	John Cox Neil Parkin Julie Searle Susan Seward Christopher Snowling	Horsham District Council Adur District Council Adur District Council Mid Sussex District Council Mid Sussex District Council
	Officers:	Tom Crowley John Jory Ian Lowrie Andrew Gardiner Clifford Weatherall Tim Delany Paul Anderson Jeremy Beales Peter Dawes	Chief Executive, Horsham DC Chief Executive, Mid Sussex DC Chief Executive, Adur DC Chief Finance Officer Partnership Programme Director (SECE) Head of Revenues & Benefits Mid Sussex DC Adur DC Horsham DC
Also present:		Councillor Keith Sunderland Mark Gawley	Worthing BC Worthing BC
Apologies:	Councillors: Officers:	Gordon Lindsay Ian Davison	Horsham District Council Secretary & Solicitor

ICT/9 **CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED

That Councillor Julie Searle be elected Chairman of the Committee for the purposes of this meeting and until the next meeting of the Committee.

ICT/10 **MINUTES**

The Chief Executive of Adur District Council gave an update in respect of the West Sussex Accessible Services Partnership and its Sussex Improvement Partnership Bid.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 15th June 2007 be approved as a correct record, subject to the list of those present being amended to show that Mark Gawley (not Ganley) of Worthing Borough Council attended the meeting.

ICT/11 **INTERESTS OF MEMBERS**

There were no declarations of interest.

ICT/12 **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements. However, Members expressed some concern regarding the lack of written reports to support the items on the agenda.

ICT/13 **UPDATE PRESENTATION BY THE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME DIRECTOR**

The Partnership Programme Director gave an update on the current position in respect of the CenSus partnership, referring to some outstanding issues including the need to resolve the relationship with OpenText in respect of the operation of the electronic document and records management system.

ICT/14 **UPDATE FROM THE PROGRAMME BOARD ON CORE WORKSTREAMS (ICT AND REVENUES & BENEFITS)**

The Committee received an update from the CenSus Programme Board on the core workstreams, including:

ICT

- Projects completed in 2007/08 (EDRMS Server hardware, additional SAN disk storage, installation of additional LAN network hubs, upgrade of tape backup solution)
- Current live projects (collaborative working, security, active directory, new computer room suite)
- Future projects (IT information library, ICT disaster recovery, 'Thin Client' technology, review of data communications and telecoms requirements)
- Management structure and appointments
- Operation of partnership working

Revenues & Benefits

- Management structure and appointments
- Staffing issues
- Operation of partnership working
- Process management
- Implementation of ICT systems
- Performance
- Timetable for implementation of joint Revenues and Benefits structures

The Committee emphasised the need for the Members of all three authorities

ICT/14 Update from the Programme Board on Core Workstreams (ICT and Revenues & Benefits) (cont.)

to be informed of the successes of the partnership. The Chief Executives would discuss the need for a communicating strategy at their next meeting and it was agreed that the CenSus ICT Technical Operations Manager and the CenSus Head of Revenues & Benefits should speak to Members at each of the authorities.

A note of the issues addressed in the update was to be circulated to Members.

ICT/15 UPDATE ON ADUR/WORTHING PARTNERSHIP

The Chief Executive of Adur District and Worthing Borough Councils gave an update on the current position regarding the Adur/Worthing partnership.

ICT/16 CENSUS JOINT COMMITTEE – APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

The Chief Finance Officer reported on correspondence with the Audit Commission regarding the appointment of an auditor to the Joint Committee.

The Committee reluctantly accepted that there was a requirement, in accordance with Section (2) of the Audit Commission Act 1998, for the preparation and audit of accounts each year. However, officers were seeking to identify which aspects of the Code were potentially applicable and those that might be inappropriate to the Joint Committee, for example, because of the nature of its business or the relatively small amounts of public money controlled by the Joint Committee.

The imposition of an external audit on the Joint Committee would involve the partnership in additional fees and significant internal resources in preparing the statutory accounts and supporting documentation. This would be in direct conflict with one of the main reasons for setting up the partnership, which was to produce efficiencies and savings in procurement and joint service operations. However, a review of governance arrangements might be appropriate if the current delivery of services/activities could be overseen under different arrangements, thereby avoiding the full audit requirements proposed by the Audit Commission.

RESOLVED

- (i) That Officers continue discussions with the Audit Commission and local auditors to find a way of minimising the impact of the audit requirements.
- (ii) That representations be made to the Department for Communities and Local Government requesting that current regulations be amended to make proper

ICT/16 Census Joint Committee – Appointment of External Auditor (cont.)

but less burdensome audit requirements for the joint committee style of governance resulting from shared service arrangements which were increasingly being promoted as the way forward by the Government.

- (iii) That governance arrangements be reviewed in order to identify a solution for the delivery of services/activities that could be overseen under different arrangements, in order to avoid the full audit requirements proposed by the Audit Commission.

REASON

To ensure that the auditing requirements for the Joint Committee and all three accounting entities are met as efficiently as possible.

ICT/17 URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

ICT/18 NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Joint Committee would be at 9.30am on Friday 7th March 2008 at Horsham.

The meeting closed at 10.45am having commenced at 9.30am

CHAIRMAN