

**Extraordinary CenSus Joint Committee
(Central Sussex Partnership)**

Minutes of a meeting held in
the Queen Elizabeth II Room, Shoreham Centre, Shoreham-by-Sea
at 10.31am on Friday 18 March 2016

Present:

Councillors: Neil Parkin, Adur District Council
Jim Funnell, Adur District Council
Daniel Humphreys, Worthing Borough Council
Mark Nolan, Worthing Borough Council
Brian Donnelly, Horsham District Council
Jonathan Ash-Edwards, Mid Sussex District Council
Gary Marsh, Mid Sussex District Council

Apologies:

Councillors: Gordon Lindsay, Horsham District Council

Also Present:

Jane Eckford, Director for Customer Services, Adur and Worthing Councils
Paul Brewer, Director for Digital & Resources, Adur and Worthing Councils
Paul Tonking, Head of Revenues and Benefits, Worthing Borough Council
Dave Briggs, Head of Digital & Design, Adur and Worthing Councils
Carol Stephenson, Partnership & Business Support Manager, Adur and Worthing Councils
Neil Terry, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Adur and Worthing Councils
Joanne Lee, Senior Solicitor, Adur and Worthing Councils
Tim Delany, Head of CenSus Revenues and Benefits, Mid Sussex District Council
Peter Stuart, Head of Finance: CenSus CFO, Mid Sussex District Council
John Ross, Head of Census ICT, Horsham District Council

CJC/036/15-16 Declarations of Interest

None.

CJC/037/15-16 Urgent Items

None.

CJC/038/15-16 Withdrawal of Adur District Council from the Revenues and Benefits Partnership

The Committee received a report from the CFO to Census Joint Committee, setting out the implications of Adur DC's decision to withdraw from the Census Partnership for Revenues and Benefits.

The report outlined Adur District Council's decision to withdraw from the partnership and confirmed that notice had been served on the existing partners as per the Partnership Agreement. Officers advised that the earliest date that severance could take place was March 2017. This would coincide with the annual billing run of council tax and non-domestic rates. It was therefore suggested that the final termination date for the current partnership agreement should be 1 October 2017.

Staffing was identified as a major consideration of the demerger and the initial advice indicated that TUPE did not apply because there was no identifiable grouping of staff dealing solely with Adur Work. Similarly, the relocation of staff to Adur would not constitute 'Suitable Alternative Employment' given the travel arrangements and change of employer.

Members were also asked to consider the following technical issues:-

- the core system – would create no significant ICT implications for the wider partnership although there could be potential implications for the CenSus ICT partnership in delivering the core system at different sites;
- EDRMS – the document management system was shared across the partnership with one database being used for all 3 authorities. Adur's records would therefore need to be extracted from the system. In addition, the contract for the system was due to expire in September 2019. A renegotiation with the service provider would be necessary to decrease the future contract sums payable.

The Committee was asked to consider the ramifications of the demerger and approve the workstreams proposed. Officers stressed that a collaborative approach was desired and that customers being unaffected was the primary objective.

Members respected the decision taken by Adur but expressed frustration that just when the partnership had resolved staffing issues, significant changes had been proposed. The staffing issue was sensitive and therefore it was important that the partnership provided staff with certainty at the earliest opportunity. Members requested that all the current partners worked together to ensure a seamless transition. Members also questioned why a risk assessment had not been carried out.

Officers confirmed that a risk assessment would be undertaken and that officers across the partnership would be working collaboratively to minimise risks.

Members questioned the discrepancy in staffing numbers outlined in workstream 1. The Director for Customer Service at Adur and Worthing Councils, confirmed that

the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) requirement would become clearer over time. However, future staffing levels required for an Adur and Worthing service was not for the Census Joint Committee to decide.

Consideration was given to governance of process including the proposed 'delegation of decision-making powers relating to the termination to the Chief Executives to avoid delays in progressing disaggregation of the service'.

It was proposed and seconded that the delegation to the Chief Executives be in 'consultation with the Leaders'.

Resolved:

That the Census Joint Committee:-

- agreed the workstreams outlined within the report to facilitate the withdrawal of Adur-Worthing from the Revenues and Benefits partnership;
- delegated decision-making powers relating to the termination to the Chief Executives, in consultation with the Leaders, to avoid delays in progressing disaggregation of the service, but when agreement could not be reached between the partners then further reports would be brought back to the Committee.

The meeting was declared closed by the Chairman at 10.49am, having commenced at 10.00am.

Chairman

