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CenSus Revenues and Benefits Task and Finish Group

Monday, 18th September, 2017 at 5.30 pm
Wallis Room, Parkside, Chart Way, Horsham

Councillors:

Nigel Jupp
Tim Lloyd

Brian O'Connell
Michael Willett

You are summoned to the meeting to transact the following business

Tom Crowley
Chief Executive

Agenda

	Page No.
1. Confirmation of Chairman	
2. Apologies for absence	
3. Declarations of Members' Interests	
4. Announcements	
5. To agree the terms of reference	
6. To scope the review	
a) CenSus Joint Committee Minutes 23rd June 2017	3 - 6
7. To agree a programme of meetings and timescale for the review	
Suggested dates for the next meetings:	
Thursday 12 th October 2017 at 6.30pm	
Thursday 9 th November 2017 at 6.30pm	
(To follow on after the S106 T&FG)	

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Minutes of the Meeting of the CenSus Joint Committee on 23 June 2017 from 10:10 a.m. to 10:42 a.m.

Present: Councillors: Jonathan Ash-Edwards (Chairman)
Mandy Thomas-Atkin (Vice-Chairman)

Carson Albury*
Gordon Lindsay

Brian Donnelly
Mark Nolan*

Daniel Humphreys
Neil Parker

*Absent

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Thomas-Atkin nominated Councillor Ash-Edwards as Chairman of the Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Brian Donnelly and agreed.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Ash-Edwards be elected Chairman of the Committee

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Councillor Ash-Edwards nominated Councillor Thomas-Atkin as Vice-Chairman of the Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Brian Donnelly and agreed.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Thomas-Atkin be elected Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Albury and Nolan.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 March 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

6. QUARTERLY ICT SERVICE UPDATE

A Member raised concern that the paper was late, and it did not allow sufficient time for Members of the committee to read it. He sought assurances that it would not be late for future committees. The Member also noted that the contents of the report did not apply to Adur and Worthing Councils, and asked Officers to consider the need for Members of these Councils to be present at the Committee for it to be quorate, and to consider future governance arrangements for the Committee.

Jane Eaton, from Horsham District Council, introduced the report. She apologised that the report was late, and officers will ensure the report is on time in future. She informed

Members that the CenSus partnership has now ended, and the only parts of the partnership that continue to operate together are buying, joint procurement, and the cloud.

David Briggs, from Horsham District Council, summarised the ongoing technology projects as outlined in the body of the report. He stated that the helpdesk continues to operate in the partnership and will require unpicking to separate the Council teams. There is a temporary cloud transition arrangement in place provided by eduserve and the staff will be retained and employed by their local Council. In response to a Member query about staff turnover, he reassured Members that staff levels have been consistent and the changes have not affected staff performance.

A Member sought more information on the two outages suffered by Mid Sussex District Council.

Simon Hughes, Head of Digital and Customer Services at Mid Sussex District Council stated that the first outage was caused by an anti-virus malware alert, and was due to the anti-virus screening being too sensitive. The second outage was a 12 minute outage of outlook and legal department drives, caused by a software problem.

Dave Briggs concluded that when the cloud transition is complete it will be much quicker to recover services in the event of a system wide outage.

As there were no further questions the Chairman took Members to the recommendations outlined in the report.

RESOLVED

Members agreed to note:

- i. The operational performance of the CenSus ICT service.
- ii. The current status of the CenSus & site specific ICT project progress.
- iii. The progress on Project Portfolio Workplans.
- iv. The status of major ICT incident occurrence within the last quarter.
- v. Progress on the future strategy for Census ICT

7. REVENUES AND BENEFITS REPORT

Tim Delany, Head of Revenues and Benefits introduced the report. He reminded Members that the while the 16/17 Housing Benefits targets had changed mid-way through the year the revised change of circumstances target had been met while the new claims target had been missed by only a small amount. Although 16/17 Revenues collection for both Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates was down on target by 0.1% or 0.2%, collection was the same as or better than previous years particularly in Adur where a 1% improvement was seen. .

A Member enquired whether staff turnover has affected morale and performance and praised the positive performance figures.

The Head of Revenues and Benefits replied that there had not been a high level of staff turnover. There have been some changes to agency staff that are more reluctant to travel outside of London, but competent agency staff remain in place

A Member asked whether CenSus Revenues and Benefits staff will move from their respective Councils. It was confirmed that staff will be maintained at their current location.

The Head of Revenues and Benefits informed the committee that there had been an issue with Royal Mail not delivering letters to a new PO address which had impacted on current year's benefits performance and had delayed receipt of tax payments. He confirmed with Members that no enforcement action will be taken with residents whose payments had been delayed and that the Council was pursuing a formal complaint with Royal Mail and was looking to recover costs.

As there were no further questions the Chairman took Members to the recommendations outlined in the report.

RESOLVED

Members agree to note the performance and activity of the Service including the final 16/17 performance figures.

8. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 10:42 a.m.

Chairman

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