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Oxfordshire Schools' Forum
Services & Contracts Sub-Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 24 May 2017

1030 - 1230

Jurys Inn, Oxford

Present: Ian Jones (IJ), Jolanta Lis (JL), Carole Thomson (CT), Sue Tomkys (ST),
Brenda Williams (BW) (CHAIR), Jo Clarke (JC)[Co-opted member]

In attendance:

Nick Baggett (NB), Education Finance Manager, Corporate Services, OCC

Sophie Green (SG), Carillion (*Item 4 only*)

Sue Labbett (SB) (*Item 6 only*)

Andrew Taft (AT), Carillion (*Item 4 only*)

Gail Witchell (GW), OCC Property & Facilities (*Items 4 & 5 only*)

Jeff Woodall (JW), OCC (*items 4 & 5 only*)

Kit Howells (Clerk) (KH)

The meeting was quorate

	ACTION
<p>1. Apologies and welcome Apologies received from Kevin Moyes (KM), and accepted. The Chair welcomed attendees.</p> <p>JL informed that she will stand down as Special School Governor representative of Forum at the end of the Summer Term 2017. Members expressed gratitude for her commitment and work on behalf of Forum and Special School pupils in the County.</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of meeting held 1 February 2017 The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2017 were approved and signed as a correct record.</p>	
<p>3. Matters arising from 1 February Minutes, not on the Agenda</p> <p>3.1 (Item 4 final para): <i>Traded Services</i>: The serious concerns relating to charges being listed as per occupied post had been allayed as Sandra Higgs had notified that charges will in fact be made per <u>head</u> (ref: Schools Forum meeting held 2.3.17 Item 3, this Committee's report).</p>	
<p>4. Carillion's contract for Schools services – monitoring & performance – update report (<i>Standing Item</i>) Andrew Taft, Carillion's local Lead for Catering, and Sophie Green (support to Carillion Regional Director Mark Harding) attended for this Item. GW and JW also attended. Carillion's Paper had been previously circulated.</p> <p>AT tabled Carillion's new staff safeguarding training pack rolling out in September for all staff including those who have already undertaken safeguarding training and all new staff will undertake this when appointed. He confirmed this includes Prevent Duty training. It will be delivered by the Service Delivery Managers initially, and then by the lead member of staff ongoing, who will be responsible for ensuring that substitute staff are trained. AT will circulate the presentation to members electronically via KH.</p>	AT

It is acknowledged by Carillion that there has been some inconsistency in provision of safeguarding training previously for its staff with some staff not trained, as had been highlighted by Headteachers with this Committee's members. The Committee emphasised to Carillion that schools can fail Ofsted inspections if statutory safeguarding requirements are not met. AT confirmed that Carillion managers will liaise with school safeguarding leads to ensure any gaps are filled for compliance. Members are aware of the difficulties (lack of time and access to online training) in ensuring staff are properly trained, including those employed temporarily to cover sickness absence. AT confirmed staff will be provided with time and access to tablets on all sites. Substitute and agency staff coming on school sites need to be able to evidence to school that they have undertaken the statutory safeguarding training. AT will ensure that this is understood by Carillion staff and GW will ensure other providers follow correct procedures. Members emphasised the need for the LA to be aware of which schools have Carillion staff requiring training and are therefore vulnerable, and GW will follow up (including with the other catering providers). The Committee recognised that there have been improvements but it is necessary to ensure rigorous compliance as a matter of urgency.

AT

GW

AT confirmed continuing difficulty in recruiting and retaining catering staff due to the challenges provided by the introduction of the living wage, high employment, and higher wages paid by retail businesses, which will be exacerbated once the new retail developments in the Oxford and Bicester areas are open. Carillion is currently discussing pricing issues with OCC and the schools with which it contracts directly; it is acknowledged that schools do not have funds to meet substantial increases in costs.

Recruitment of cleaning staff is also difficult currently, and Carillion have been increasing mobile capacity in order to find cover staff; however, sometimes there are no staff available. Whilst understanding the recruitment issues, the Committee emphasised that Carillion has contracted to provide services and if it is unable to provide them it is not meeting its obligations for staffing or for Health & Safety and must be required to refund the costs to schools via OCC; schools should also not be required to argue this issue individually.

SG reported that uptake of Universal Infant Free School Meals remains low and GW confirmed this is the case for all providers in Oxfordshire. There does not seem to be any single factor contributing to this.

SG informed members about the Carillion service Book Lender, a method of leasing books. Members recommended the best route would be to have a stall at the March Headteachers Conference, where other providers can also market their offers.

AT informed that Carillion are currently verifying school assets in order to provide schools with an in-depth report on the life cycle of their assets so that they can better plan ahead for future needs. The importance of Carillion understanding how schools budget for repairs and maintenance was emphasised.

A specific case of complaint about floor repair work in an Oxford school was discussed as an example of issues faced by schools, and the lack of prompt attention, poor workmanship, need for repair by another company and unanswered complaint were noted. AT will investigate the circumstances. Members are concerned that there are many complaints about standards of work or unfinished work in the system to which no response has been received from Carillion.

AT

<p>5. OCC view of Carillion’s Schools Contract (<i>Standing Item</i>) – monitoring & performance, KPIs, penalties</p> <p>Gail Witchell and Jeff Woodall attended for this Item.</p> <p>GW informed that catering numbers remain constant.</p> <p>Carillion are restructuring the management side of the catering team increasing the senior delivery managers from 4 to 5. There are some concerns about services to schools as there are now less staff underneath the managers, and some of these are on temporary 1-year contracts, which has resulted in some long-serving staff with good experience taking voluntary redundancy and leaving the business. OCC has expressed concern to Carillion about this issue as it is a significant risk to service.</p> <p>Carillion staff are DBS checked; currently there are 10 staff in the process of renewing but OCC has been assured that all other staff hold certificates.</p> <p>There is generally stability in catering contracts, including that with Carillion, although some Nursery Schools are withdrawing from catering altogether due to funding difficulties and some schools that convert to academies may not retain Carillion.</p> <p>Carillion has requested a price increase from September to £2.20 per meal, which GW feels is reasonable (at commencement of contract, the price started at £2.10, then reduced to £2 and then reverted to £2.10); OCC has to formally accept the increase and this is not yet known. However, the Government will not increase the funding given to schools in order to meet the increase.</p> <p>Members understood that there have been financial penalties applied to Carillion where agreed KPIs have not been met, but noted that the schools themselves do not receive refunds to compensate them for the inconvenience or lack of work carried out.</p> <p>JW reported that, following the expressions of concern, OCC is working with Carillion to review and reset the Contract. This includes partial termination of some services, working through each of the separate areas of service in turn. JW will keep the Committee updated on progress and implications for schools as soon as these become known. The Committee emphasised the need for clear and timely communication to schools of any changes that are made via the Schools Website and <i>Schools News</i> (as Schools cannot necessarily see all the Webpages).</p> <p>The Committee was pleased that concerns had been heard and solutions were being sought.</p>	<p>JW</p>
<p>6. Joint Use Agreements</p> <p>Sue Labbett attended to provide verbal update for members.</p> <p>Intensive work has continued with legal advisers and surveyors but the legal work has not yet been completed in relation to any of the JuAs, although agreement is very close to being reached with South and Vale District Councils where the legal processes have begun for OCC to withdraw from the JuAs. SL will meet the other three Councils’ representatives in June (Cherwell, West, and City) to further discuss coming out of their JuAs. There are many complex issues to take into account and the scenario is different in each of the Districts; in some the withdrawal process is a natural one related to</p>	

<p>regeneration and this makes negotiations and legal work much more straightforward.</p> <p>SL informed members that she is also formulating a plan of action should Oxfordshire become a Unitary Authority.</p> <p>She is also spending much time in ensuring that the leisure providers control their leisure centre running costs and are not passing on costs to schools which are not their responsibility to pay.</p>	
<p>7. OCC contracts for schools – Paul Ashby’s answers to Committee’s queries Paul Ashby’s answers to the Committee’s queries from its previous meeting had been circulated, including explanation and implications of Framework Agreements.</p> <p>There had been an assumption made that schools can see Framework Agreements but sometimes this is not possible or too difficult or staff are not aware so would not know how or when to utilise them. JC reported on a recent workshop held to explain framework agreements to staff and informed that they are simple to use and helpful in providing information once found, and contain details of checked suppliers. However, it can be difficult to find the relevant one for the work required; Links to frequently asked for frameworks would be useful. It is noted that local companies may not be included in the supplier lists, even though they might provide better and cheaper service.</p> <p>It was agreed to recommend that an explanation of framework agreements and how to access them should be included in the next OCC Headteachers & Chairs Briefing</p> <p>It was also agreed that KH will pass these concerns to Paul Ashby and that he should be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee.</p>	<p>NB</p> <p>KH</p>
<p>8. IBC Update (<i>information – Standing Item</i>) There has not been an IBC User Group meeting since the February meeting of this Committee. The next meeting of the Group will be in September.</p> <p>JC reported on her recent meeting with Cherwell Partnership of School Business Managers, at which services of the IBC are discussed as a ‘standing item’. Business Managers are of the opinion that, although some aspects have improved since the Partnership with Hampshire commenced, generally they remain unhappy with the services; however, there is no alternative for many schools which are simply putting up with the difficulties. Business Managers find that using their local networks for advice and assistance is better than using IBC Customer Services, but concern was expressed for those schools which are too small to have Business Managers and those that are unable to purchase the services elsewhere by themselves due to lack of funding or expertise in these areas of work. The Oxon Academies group has indicated willingness to share procurement and other information to ease their situation.</p> <p>Members expressed concern about how changes to ways of paying staff from 1 April are being handled and that there has been little or no communication with schools where difficulties are likely to be encountered in correct identification of payments. NB will investigate and provide information to S&C Committee.</p> <p>Members repeated their serious concern that the IBC is still not providing the service which it was agreed the OCC-Hampshire partnership would provide to Oxfordshire Schools, and many Governors report their frustration at poor service and high costs in a</p>	<p>NB</p>

<p>time of reducing funding for education. There appear to be no performance indicators by which service from Hampshire can be measured.</p> <p>It was agreed to recommend to Forum that Forum requests sight of the SLA and a financial report from Hampshire so that expenditure and costs are transparent, and to ask how Hampshire measures its performance if there are no opportunities for Oxfordshire schools (or even the IBC User Group as there have been no meetings recently) to feed back concerns and issues that are constant difficulties for schools.</p>	<p>BW Rec to Forum</p>
<p>9. Items referred by</p> <p>(i) Schools & High Needs Committee – None (not met since)</p> <p>(ii) Early Years Working Group – None.</p>	
<p>10. Items for referral to</p> <p>(i) Schools & High Needs Committee – None</p> <p>(ii) Early Years Working Group</p> <p>It was noted that this Working Group has been temporarily suspended.</p>	
<p>11. Date of next meeting</p> <p>To be arranged in September so that the Committee can have early sight of OCC's proposals for Traded Services Offer and so that Derek Hall of HCC can be invited to talk through the operation of Traded Services. KH to canvass members for suitable date, noting that ST is not available 18-22 September.</p>	<p>KH</p>

*Meeting closed 1230
Minutes/kh/2.6.17*

Signed.....

Date