

draft

**Oxfordshire Schools' Forum  
Services & Contracts Sub-Committee**

**Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 18 January 2018**

1030 - 1230

Unipart House, Cowley, Oxford

**Present:** Michael Dennison (MD), Ian Jones (IJ),  
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

Sarah Carey (SC) (*Item 5 only*)

Sandra Higgs (SH), OCC (*Items 4 & 5 only*)

Gail Witchell (GW), OCC Property & Facilities (*Items 6 & 7 only*)

*The meeting was quorate*

	<b>ACTION</b>
<p><b>1. Apologies</b> Apologies received from Laura Reineke (LR), Kevin Moyles (KM), Ian Dyson (ID), Inga Doherty (ID), Kit Howells (Clerk) (KH), and accepted. Kathy Ethelston (KE) has resigned from Forum. Damian Booth (DB)'s apologies received after meeting</p>	
<p><b>2. Minutes of meeting held 13 September 2017</b> The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2017 were approved and signed as a correct record.</p>	
<p><b>3. Matters arising from 13 September Minutes, not on the Agenda</b> <b>3.1</b> Re IBC discussion and the need for schools to allow administrative staff to be released for training as this was a worthwhile investment, SH had been asked to email a question for governors to ensure that staff are released. KH to ascertain if actioned. <b>3.2</b> Are schools reimbursed for attendance by staff at IBC network meetings? KH to ask SH.</p>	<p><b>KH to ask SH</b></p> <p><b>KH to ask SH</b></p>
<p><b>4. HCC-OCC Partnership (Business Centre) - cost benefits and Update on IBC</b> Ian Dyson (ID), OCC Finance was to have attended but gave apologies due to the Carillion situation. SH was present and discussed issues as known.  Unable to discuss the costs benefits. Committee had hoped for a paper from ID but nothing received. SH sought to explain how things are and how ID was hoping to give schools capacity to challenge poor service from HCC. SH described how the Schools User Group has 18 SMBs from maintained schools and they meet termly. Derek Hall chairs these meetings. SH facilitates. Issues raised are put forward to a working group (consisting of payroll, finance, HR and senior officers). There is a new OCC performance group (Ian Dyson) who meet with senior officers at HCC. There is also a shared services partnership (SH will be attending meetings). Laura Baxter attends. Above that group is the partnership board. The performance group are receiving more robust data and reporting quarterly. CT asked if the data is school</p>	<p><b>KW/BW AP1 pursue paper re cost benefits</b></p>

<p>specific. She also stated that timing of the group meetings is essential. SH responded that she would look carefully at dates. ST commented that this sounds encouraging but she is concerned about how do the school user groups gather evidence from other schools. SH responded that the 18 schools represent a broad range. Perhaps some sort of structure to report back to user group needs to be created. SBMs do not get all the information. ST suggested a button to click on to report faults and feedback. SH said it is a good suggestion but would take a long time to implement. IJ asked whose job it is to find out this information. ST reiterated that she felt users of the system should have someone to talk to. SH said this would never be available. SH went on to say that the customer services team has ben revamped and proved. Queries now stay with one person. CT asked what happens when someone is ill. MD – when referring to performance data, what detail is available? SH said that it will split out schools in Oxfordshire but not individual schools but they can look at enquiries raised by individual schools. BW commented that schools are still being left in the lurch although she appreciates that things are improving. Smaller primaries are stuck on their own with specific issues. What the committee seek to understand is – if there is a cost benefit how is that helping schools? ST stated that schools pay more now in money and time. JC commented that she is worried about the long term effect, what happens when something goes wrong, a member of staff has historically been underpaid because schools staff are not HR trained personnel. ST agreed. SH assured that all contracts are audited and every year the annual pay awards are looked at and scrutinised. Staff salaries are checked to ensure they are correct. Payroll is also monitored. JC asked if there could be a locum system for payroll as there is for finance. NB commented that he has cause for concern as all schools sign a SFVS which asks about contingency planning, succession, etc – he feels that maybe those returns are incorrect.</p>	<p>from ID</p> <p><b>SH AP2</b> To look at dates of various meetings to ensure matters are dealt with in a timely fashion</p>
<p><b>5. Proposed Traded Business Services Offer 2018-19 (including prices)</b> SH and SC attended this Item; SH's Paper 5/S&amp;C/180118 had been previously circulated.</p> <p>SH has called for simplification and has tried to put traded services and admin into one team with one telephone number to contact that team. She has aligned charges and transactions (see paper). JC asked about booking online? SC confirmed that there will be a partially prepopulated spreadsheet. CT asked about data being from the October census. This was confirmed and SC will add to spreadsheet. SH confirmed that we are not losing or gaining any services. Service charges include the administration charge as OCC need to recoup all costs. The biggest change has come in Governor Services following last year's review. There is now one team manager for the clerking service – Megan Castle. Trying to recruit clerks. CT commented that the number of schools without clerks is currently 10. SH confirmed that more had been recruited. ST asked about schools being reimbursed if they do not receive a clerking service. SH confirmed that schools will be refunded where there is no clerk provided. ST asked what the process is for this. SC said she would check and ensure refunds were given. It was suggested that perhaps schools without clerks should not be charged until they have a clerk appointed. CT asked about schools buying the service and SH said that they are trying really hard to recruit. There is a waiting list for customers. ST asked when schools would be notified of reimbursement. SH said that was on going all the time. SC offered to investigate. ST asked about the increase of 2% saying that staff have not had RPI pay rises – could the increase relate? Support for governors: OCC currently try to help all callers but that will change. The hope is that all maintained schools receive</p>	<p><b>SH AP3</b> To give regular feedback on OCC's recruitment, retention of clerks</p> <p><b>SH AP4</b> To inform committee when information</p>

<p>Governor Services. SH cannot quote prices for Governor Support Services but the information would be available before 28<sup>th</sup> February.</p> <p>ST asked about the cost of training - £550 per day. SC responded that this is the cost to schools who do not buy in to the service. SH is going to review. ST commented that these charges are punishing schools which are in difficulty. SH responded that she understands the challenges and OCC are totally committed to providing a good service. She recognised that more investment is needed.</p> <p>ST asked about Education Personnel Services (EPS)' charge of £25.50 per occupied post. SH confirmed that she had made the case but it would not change. ST asked why the jump in pricing between bands. SH replied that these have been uplifted historically and to charge per pupil would be a huge change with some schools losing and some gaining.</p> <p>CT asked about the administration fee of 1.5% and 3% - might it become cheaper to go directly to the NGA. SH confirmed that the offer from OCC needs to be good but that there are costs associated, contracting charges, creating contracts, etc. It is only worth doing if we can provide a service which needs to be administered.</p> <p>Looking ahead – SH talked about relationship between OCC and maintained schools and the need to guarantee a group of services. SH explained the concept of a price per pupil for a list of services to maintained schools and would invite comments, suggestions and discussion.</p>	<p><b>re Governor Services costs are known</b></p>
<p><b>6. Carillion’s contract for Schools services (Standing Item)</b></p> <p><b>7. OCC view of Carillion’s Schools Contract (Standing Item) – monitoring &amp; performance, KPIs, penalties</b></p> <p>Due to the demise of Carillion, Andrew Taft, Carillion’s local Lead for Catering, did not attend this Item. OCC’s Briefing paper on Carillion situation had been circulated by GW. GW attended.</p> <p>GW talked about a Carillion recovery group. JC commented that OCC had been helpful. GW said that OCC were ahead of the game as there was already a plan to expurgate OCC from Carillion. Due to legal requirements, OCC are unable to contact Carillion staff directly and that is why schools are being asked to gather personnel information on their behalf. Academies will need to make their own arrangements. There are 11 schools which contract directly with Carillion. OCC are considering the commercial route. BW commented that more often than not schools do not know what they need as well as not having the time to administer. MD commented further that schools do not assess the risk. OCC now have the opportunity to look and assess what is currently offered – there has been no change to the service in over 5 years. GW said that it is business as usual and there are no major concerns. OCC are now able to openly discuss with Carillion. Cleaning and maintenance provision is the same as meals. CT asked about emergency call outs. GW said that the helpdesk is operational. All contractors have been contacted and a continuation plan is in place. GW said that OCC have been unable to get a full contractor list from Carillion. JC asked if OCC were going to join forces with Oxford City Council as they already provide some schools with many services. GW said that she will contact Oxford City Council and review (note, contact at Oxford City Council is Sean Fry). BW expressed her thanks to GW for attending the meeting.</p>	<p><b>GW</b></p>
<p><b>8. Water Procurement for Schools</b></p> <p>Inga Doherty’s Paper 8/S&amp;C/180118) had been previously circulated.</p>	

<p>ID has informed BW that the unresolved queries on how schools will be able to access the water services contract are being discussed today at a meeting between the London Energy Project, YPO and their legal team. ID will inform the Committee of the outcome of those discussions as soon as it is known and KH will circulate when received.</p> <p>Discussed Castle Water (current water provider) and their accounting incompetence. This has been talked about at EFS Schools Briefings.</p>	<p><b>KH</b></p>
<p><b>9. Budget Planner changes – update</b>  NB informed the Committee of the current status of the changes to Budget Planner provider.</p> <p>NB said that the planner is almost ready. Ann Sambrook (EFS) – no major changes in funding template, OCC already use DFE calculator. Changes to the planner are minimal and any issues sit outside the planner itself i.e. pay awards, etc. Inflation assumption will be integrated in to the planner. ST talked about problems with the planner and noted that HCC are staying with the current planner. CT commented that the planner has gone out to tender and HCC have made a decision without any consultation with OCC. NB stated that HCC use a different planner and that all modification in HCC is handled centrally. HCC have more traded services. NB feels that there are no problems. CT asked about rates. NB consulted with maintained schools and the figures are correct for the sample taken.</p>	
<p><b>10. Items referred by Schools &amp; High Needs Committee – None (not met since).</b>  .</p>	
<p><b>11. Items for referral to Schools &amp; High Needs Committee –</b> These Minutes will be available at next full Forum meeting on 7 February.</p>	
<p><b>12. Date of next meeting</b>  To be arranged to feed into Forum meeting on 21 June.</p> <p>BW expressed her thanks to JC for taking the minutes.</p>	<p><b>KH to canvass for date and book venue</b></p>

*Meeting closed 1230  
Minutes/JC/22.1.18*

Signed.....

Date .....