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Oxfordshire Schools' Forum
Services & Contracts Sub-Committee

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 12 June 2018

1030 - 1230

Unipart House, Cowley, Oxford

Present: Michael Dennison (MD), Ian Jones (IJ), Brian Mitchell (BM), Geoff Sutton (GS), 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

Vaughan Burnand (VB), OCC (*Item 6 only*)

Sandra Higgs (SH), OCC (*Items 3.1 - 4 only*)

Ruth O'Loughlin (RO), OCC HR (*Item 5 only*)

Fiona Percival (FP), OCC HR (*Item 5 only*)

The meeting was quorate

	ACTION
<p>1. Apologies and Welcome</p> <p>BW opened the meeting with thanks to Jolanta Lis, a long-time member of Forum and this Committee on behalf of Special School governance, who recently died suddenly, for her hard work and valuable contribution to Forum.</p> <p>The Committee welcomed new Forum members, Brian Mitchell (Academy Primary Governor) and Geoff Sutton (Maintained Primary Governor) and introductions were made.</p> <p>Apologies received from Damian Booth (DB), and accepted.</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of meeting held 18 January 2018</p> <p>Subject to 2 minor amendments in Item 4, the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2018 were approved and signed as a correct record.</p>	KH
<p>3. Matters arising from 18 January Minutes, not on the Agenda</p> <p>3.1 Skanska contract/County's procurement advice for schools</p> <p>CT referred to concerns which had arisen due to some schools' needing to amend contracts for minibuses. Although she had been assured that there is County assistance for schools for procurement of large item purchases, there remains concern that schools do not know there is such assistance and that it is very difficult to find any reference to that support on the LA website/intranet. Whilst JC noted that business managers had been given a briefing on procurement recently, not every school has a business manager and not all will necessarily have attended the briefing.</p> <p>This is one issue in relation to the lack of updating of the LA intranet and website and members agreed there needs to be clear direction. There appears to be no Officer with responsibility for oversight of the LA website. Various departments are working on updating their specific areas, eg Governor Services, but many departments with reduced staff no longer have a person responsible for updates. Members agreed that, if the LA is proposing to support schools in a more 'hands off' way, one</p>	S Higgs pass on concerns + ask for

<p>next round of Briefings. It is likely that there will not be a menu of services but a membership model will be the way forward in order to ensure sustainability of services.</p> <p>All non-traded services are a cost to the LA and require resourcing and these costs will be detailed so that further debate can be held about future-proofing essential services to Maintained schools.</p> <p>SH will give timescales for this work to KH so that they can feed into the Forum review of work taking place on 21 June and may also inform future Forum meeting dates.</p> <p>Members emphasised the need for this piece of work to have direction and vision for the future from the top politicians and Officers in the County, taking account of the LA's statutory responsibility for every child's education and the need not to distract schools from their core responsibility to provide this education. Schools understand the expectations which are being put on the Council by Schools to maintain services, but schools are also being expected to do more at school level and are under scrutiny to provide excellent education. There needs to be a more public debate in order to understand the needs, resources and expectations.</p> <p>Members noted that OTSA (Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance) does provide subject specific advisers but perhaps some schools are not aware of what OTSA offers and the LA does not signpost the Alliance.</p> <p>Members added Procurement as an issue to be addressed (as per discussion at 3.1 above). Knowing where to source advice and information is imperative for schools and with the recent and ongoing reduction in staff and changes at OCC it is difficult for schools to know who to approach.</p> <p>Members expressed disappointment on behalf of all Oxfordshire's schools with regard to support for GDPR. Noting that the DfE had not published guidance until 24 April, the Committee heard that OCC's information has been late and incomplete and schools which were waiting for OCC to provide services will not have been ready for the 25 May deadline. There is no firm package available. There also remains lack of clarity about whether or not every school should have a Data Protection Officer, with some legal advice saying this is necessary and some not. Examples of MATs where the DPO is outside schools as deemed to be required, were noted. The County advises the DPO should be a staff member in the school. ST drew attention to an offer from neighbouring Bucks Learning Trust with an annual cost including a Data Protection Officer. The Committee requested a written legal statement clarifying the position for schools on DPO position.</p> <p>SH will circulate her presentation to members via KH.</p>	<p>S Higgs</p> <p>S Higgs to note</p> <p>S Higgs</p> <p>S Higgs</p> <p>S Higgs</p> <p>S Higgs</p>
<p>5. Occupational Health Provider – Re-tender: engaging with Schools RO and FP attended this Item. Paper 5/S&C/120618 had been previously circulated.</p> <p>RO noted that the contract renewal date had now been extended from February to August 2019. She confirmed that 149 maintained schools and 36 academies are using the OH service. The reference to Employee Assistance is for staff other than Leaders; only small numbers of schools use this part of the provision. It was noted</p>	

<p>that although numbers of staff covered by the contract are largest in schools, the greatest usage is within OCC Offices. The greatest use of the provision is due to mental health and muscular and skeletal issues. Mental health issues remain the most common reason for sickness absence.</p> <p>The LA is seeking to engage with user schools to ensure that the occupational health provision is what is required, and to establish what has worked well and what not in order to ensure a strong basis for going to re-tender. Academies are included: some buy the service. It would be useful information for the LA to understand why those that do not buy in choose to go elsewhere.</p> <p>IJ and BW advised the LA to talk face to face with as many Headteachers as possible who have used the service under the current contract rather than trying to judge from a paper survey as Headteachers who have not used the service will have no knowledge of its quality.</p> <p>Members advised that generally many Headteachers are not satisfied with the current contract, despite improvements made since implementation. It is clearly a lower quality contract than had been in place previously, despite the request for the same quality and assurance that a qualified doctor to be involved in all discussions as standard practice (which is not in fact the case; this is often not a doctor and discussions are taking place on the telephone not face to face). The Schools are currently expected to be the conduit for information between the contractor and staff members, which is not best practice. Quality of communication between all parties and of the overall service and early responses to users is of paramount importance. Academies have bought into more expensive contracts, but these provide quality and professional decision-making assistance, advice and guidance in a timely manner. Union staff should also be asked for input as they will have the greatest insight into the quality and timeliness of the service provided. Unions do provide input to discussions at the Oxon Human Resources Forum.</p> <p>Members also recommended discussing with the Business Managers groups in the County.</p> <p>RO and LP will take members' advice and work with stakeholders to draw up a new specification by September with a view to going out to tender later in the year. They will report back, bringing the draft specification back to this Committee's September meeting and thence to full Forum meeting in October, for Forum's input (and approval if necessary) prior to going out to tender.</p>	<p>Ruth O'Loughlin & Fiona Percival</p> <p>KH for Sept S&C agenda and Forum agenda Oct.</p>
<p>6. Update/review of work and processes following Carillion demise</p> <p>VB, OCC's Interim Head of Construction, attended for this Item to brief members on the actions being taken on the premises work undertaken previously by Carillion and remaining outstanding.</p> <p>TND, a local surveying business, has been commissioned to survey all schools where Carillion projects have been undertaken, as it is understood that Carillion did not discharge the work for which they were contracted in a proper manner and therefore the work requires to be fully checked. OCC has raised a budget to repair/deal with all defects in schools as a result of Carillion's unfinished or inadequate work. Many schools have already been contacted to arrange surveys and VB understands the needs to ensure all contractors maintain good communication with the schools. Urgent issues are being addressed in advance of</p>	

<p>the survey programme. All surveys will be completed by the end of June, and schools will then be informed of the programme to put right the defects found in the surveys. The work will be fully checked as compliant.</p> <p>VB will update the Committee via KH.</p>	<p>Vaughan Burnand to keep S&C informed</p>
<p>7. Water Procurement for Schools Inga Doherty's Paper 7/S&C/120618) had been previously circulated. Members noted the provider decision and requested more detailed explanation of the tender process and why this provider has been chosen. In addition, members enquired why academies cannot also be offered the opportunity to opt in. Members suggested it would be more efficient if schools were asked to opt out rather than in, so making less work and automatic transfer of provider. KH will send the enquiries and suggestion to Inga Doherty and circulate her responses when received.</p>	
<p>8. Items referred by Schools & High Needs Committee – Carillion issue (Item 6 above).</p>	
<p>9. Items for referral to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Schools Forum – OCC website update - Schools & High Needs Committee – None. 	<p>KH</p>
<p>10. Date of next meeting - To be arranged in September.</p>	<p>KH</p>

*Meeting closed 1245
Minutes/KH/14.6.18*

Signed.....

Date