
BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Special Meeting of the

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

**Held on Wednesday, 1 April 2015 at 10.30 am in
Anglia Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr P.J. Duigan (Chairman)
Mr T R Carter (Vice-Chairman)
Mr W.P. Borrett
Mrs S.M. Matthews

Mrs B Canham (Substitute Member)
Mr P R W Darby (Substitute Member)
Mr R. R. Richmond (Substitute Member)

Also Present

Mr S.G. Bambridge
Mrs E. M. Jolly
Mr M.A. Kiddle-Morris

Mrs L.S. Turner
Mr M. A. Wassell

In Attendance

Anna Graves
Julie Britton
Natalie King
Maxine O'Mahony

- Chief Executive
- Senior Democratic Services Officer
- Interim HR Manager
- Executive Director of Commissioning & Governance

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28/15 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Chapman-Allen, C Clark, R Goreham, K Millbank, B Skull and A Stasiak.

Councillors B Canham, P Darby and R Richmond were in attendance as named substitutes.

29/15 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (AGENDA ITEM 2)

None.

30/15 URGENT BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 3)

None.

31/15 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 4)

Councillors E Jolly, L Turner, G Bambridge, M Kiddle-Morris and M Wassell.

32/15 EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC (AGENDA ITEM 5)

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the act.

33/15 SHARED MANAGEMENT RESTRUCTURE (AGENDA ITEM 6)

The Chief Executive thanked the Chairman for allowing this Special meeting to take place and thanked the Members for attending.

The consultation document being discussed had been presented to the Local Joint Consultative Committee meeting on 26 March 2015. The two amendments requested from that meeting were highlighted:

1. the top two tiers on the two structure charts within the consultation document would be amended to mirror each other.
2. the Capita Contract Manager, as a shared post, would change colour on the structure chart to reflect the fact that it was shared with Capita rather than South Holland District Council.

Another suggestion made at the LJCC meeting was the role of the Executive Directors in relation to their work with Members and this should be reflected in the job description. Any further areas that Members felt should be changed/included in the consultation would be welcomed.

The presentation provided the Committee with a detailed overview of the current shared arrangements in so far as what had been achieved, where it was now and the proposed new model going forward.

Over the past 4 years, £4.4m had been saved by sharing the most expensive resource in terms of staffing but there had been limited progress against other planned key deliverables from the shared model; therefore, this was considered to be an appropriate time to review the arrangements of the shared management model given a range of internal and external factors and given that this was the first review since the initial implementation during 2011.

There were ongoing Member and Officer concerns regarding balance of resources, visibility and expectations, frustration with delivery, support systems being inadequate, capacity and effectiveness. There had been changes in the key influencers of the model with a new Leader/Chief Executive and Directors bringing through new thoughts and ideas. Across the public sector there was a move towards the use of combined authorities and economic prosperity boards. The new shared model needed to flex to take full advantages of this development. Further to this, the external landscape was changing and had shifted significantly since 2010, with LEP and Health and Social Care agendas resulting in even greater emphasis on joint working with other agencies within respective County and LEP areas.

Both Councils would continue to deliver services through a complex set of shared arrangements with many partners, alternative service delivery vehicles such as council owned companies and joint ventures, and outsourced contracts with private organisations. Transformation programmes for both Councils were being developed which would include many objectives including focusing on cultural shift in how the services operated and new ways of working.

Fundamental to the success of the new model and structure was a set of underpinning principles defining the way in which senior officers would work together as one team, and in the way in which they worked with Members and Officers. The underpinning principles were highlighted and explained. One of the main underpinning principles focused around place based delivery to

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ensure that the deliverables reflected the specific needs and requirements of the local residents.

The posts within the new proposed management structure were explained in great detail and the proposed approach, together with the three planned phases for the restructuring including the timeframes were highlighted.

Members' questions were invited.

Councillor Canham pointed out that when any restructuring took place the key was to have the right people in the right place and she asked the Chief Executive if she was confident that she had. In response, Members were informed that it was difficult to restructure any organisation but it was important to manage the change process well to ensure that everyone had a fair chance. Such a process must be kept transparent and the period of uncertainty must be kept to a minimum.

Councillor Borrett said that the most disappointing point that he had heard was in relation to the lack of agile working after 4 years which should be addressed. The Chief Executive explained that although it had been very difficult there was a solution, namely the Transformation Programme, but this would take time to implement and develop.

Councillor Borrett drew attention to page 24 of the agenda in relation to the proposed two tier structure which, in his opinion, looked like another layer in so far as appearing to have a Chief Executive, 1 x Deputy Chief Executive and 2 x Deputy/Deputy Chief Executives. Members were assured that there was not another layer and in fact some layers were being removed. She pointed out that these posts (highlighted in 'blue'), could be created as a separate entity.

In terms of money, Councillor Borrett asked where the benefit would be if the restructure was ending up being cost neutral – would the Council be able to do more for the money and what was it that the electorate would be getting out of all this. The Chief Executive advised that this restructure would also stabilise the Management Team and maximise the Council's commercial ability to provide added value. This was about having the capacity at senior level to ensure that the Council received the income it needed whilst driving down the dependency on grants. Councillor Borrett felt that targets and figures should be included for Members to measure against as well as the aspirations and outcomes. The Chief Executive thought these suggestions were good and would give them further thought; however, care needed to be taken as to how this related to the Transformation Programme.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Wassell hoped that what was being proposed was what the Council should have received in the first place back in 2010. This was an opportunity to look at what had been learnt, the structure had never changed below the Shared Management Team and now the opportunity would be there to do this.

Councillor Darby asked if the posts below the proposed structure would be looked at. Members were informed that the Transformation Programme would do exactly that and service reviews would happen driven by the Senior Team.

Councillor Kiddle-Morris agreed that various matters had evolved since 2010 and he had had serious concerns with capacity issues and commended the report that the Chief Executive had presented.

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Councillor Jolly mentioned the length of time that the Council had been without a permanent Chief Executive which in her opinion had had a very disabling affect on both staff and Members. In terms of performance she mentioned the excellent work that had recently been carried out in relation to strategic finance and with this type of structure everything would become deliverable. She felt that the initial restructure had been like a slice that had been put on top, this she felt had been the same for the Constitution, bolted on to make it work. She had every confidence in the Chief Executive and the Senior Management to make this work.

Councillor Carter was really pleased that this restructure was taking place. There had been many issues and at times very difficult and stressful situations within the current Shared Management Team. This restructure addressed these issues in a very comprehensive way and would be an excellent opportunity for Breckland.

One observation that Councillor Borrett had noticed during the detailed overview was that all Suffolk District Councils had some form of sharing of the Chief Executives. The Chief Executive stated that Suffolk was quite unique and nationally there were a number of interesting examples including sharing of Chief Executives between County Councils and District Councils.

The Deputy Leader, Lynda Turner fully supported the proposal as it would support the recently approved Corporate Plan and would enable the Council to reshape the Portfolio responsibilities. All would be streamlined, linear and matrix, delivering a fit for purpose service to Breckland's residents.

The Chief Executive drew Members' attention to page 26 of the agenda that proposed a new pay policy for shared posts due to be developed.

The Leader felt that the Chief Executive had provided stability to the Council since being in post.

Councillor Bambridge added his support. He had no doubt that there would be some changes but was quite surprised that this review had not taken place before.

Councillor Richmond applauded the Chief Executive on her presentation. He asked where the current Housing Needs Manager would fit in this as he was currently employed by Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council (KLWNBC). Members were informed that this Manager worked across three Councils and this arrangement would not continue in the new restructure but partnership working would continue with KLWNBC. The Executive Director of Place and the said post holder were looking at a new arrangement as this was about an enabling service with KLWNBC and Breckland Council and not South Holland; therefore, within the proposed structure, coloured 'green', was a dedicated Housing Manager for Breckland.

Councillor Darby asked if Members could have some indication on how long this restructure process would take if approved. Attention was drawn to page 30 of the agenda which highlighted the timelines for the Shared management restructure. The Chief Executive advised that the Transformation Programme was a four year programme along the life of the Corporate Plan. There would never be a settled period as change was constant but staff would be helped every step of the way.

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In response to a question, the restructure would have to be approved at both Councils.

Councillor Canham thought it very important that this restructure provided value for money for residents in both areas. The Chief Executive explained that whilst money was important it was not the only consideration, other benefits such as resilience, innovation and a customer focus would be important.

The recommendations were proposed and seconded, and it was:

RESOLVED that the recommendations as listed in the report be approved.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Executive for an excellent presentation. He also thanked the Committee and the Executive Members for attending this extra meeting.

34/15 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The arrangements for the next meeting on Wednesday, 10 June 2015 at 10.00am in the Norfolk Room were noted.

The meeting closed at 11.55 am

CHAIRMAN