
BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

**Held on Wednesday, 8 August 2007 at 10.00 am in
Norfolk Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr G.P. Balaam	Mr D.S. Myers
Mr R.P. Childerhouse	Mr I. Sherwood
Mr R.W. Duffield (Chairman)	Mr W.H.C. Smith
Mr P.J. Duigan (Vice-Chairman)	

Also Present

Mrs D.K.R. Irving

In Attendance

Rachel Beswick	- Senior Accountant
Julie Britton	- Committee Services Officer
Sarah Bruton	- Street Scene Manager
Monica Coffey	- Customer Services Manager
Colin Fleet	- Organisational Development Manager
Michael Horn	- Head of Legal Services
Stephen McGrath	- Principal Committee Officer
Keith Stevens	- Acting Business Transformation Director

Action By

49/07 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

- a) Community Safety – Domestic Violence and Hate Crime Co-ordinators (Minute No. 46/07)

At the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 4 July 2007, Members had resolved to defer the appointment of the two posts of Hate Crime Co-ordinator and Domestic Violence Co-ordinator pending further information.

Since that meeting, the Chairman had received further information from the Safer Communities Manager which he felt satisfied the requests of the Committee and accordingly he had agreed to support the two posts and the original resolution. (A letter confirming his decision had been sent out separately to the General Purposes Agenda of 8 August 2007 for Members information).

RESOLVED that the two part-time, fixed term contract posts for a Domestic Violence Co-ordinator and a Hate Crime Co-ordinator be supported subject to the Job Evaluation Panel confirmation of grade.

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b) **Adoption**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

- to add Mr I Vargeson's name to the list of those present;
- to remove Mr S McGrath's name from the list of those present; and
- to amend Councillor L Turner's title from Mr to Mrs (Minute No. 41/07 refers).

50/07 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Chapman-Allen, Mrs S Matthews, Mrs L Turner and Mr D Williams.

51/07 STREET SCENE - INCREASED TO FIXED TERM CONTRACT (AGENDA ITEM 5)

The Street Scene Manager introduced the report which sought approval to increase the fixed term contract for the post of Community Waste Assistant for a further 12 months.

Funding for the post would be covered by the DEFRA grant received by the Council.

The main tasks of the Community Waste Assistant were to review recycling provision within communal and localised problem areas, and tailor education/awareness campaigns to targeted audiences.

The Street Scene Manager advised that the Community Waste Assistant had been part of the Street Scene Team since June 2002, since that time the recycling rate had increased and the contamination of recyclable material had decreased. This improvement had been attributed to the additional resources within the Team.

A Member asked who was responsible for the role under the Environmental Services contract. In response, the Street Scene Manager advised that the Council was responsible for educational matters. The Member further asked what would happen once the DEFRA funding had been spent. The Committee was informed that if the position was still required, it would then have to be brought back to this Committee for further consideration.

RESOLVED that the extension of the current Community Waste Assistant be supported for a further 12 months.

52/07 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 6)

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The Chairman informed Members that the Standby Duty Payments report that had been discussed at a previous meeting, and where an interim recommendation had been endorsed, would be presented to the next General Purposes meeting scheduled for 19 September 2007. Members were made aware that the meeting could last longer than usual as the matter could result in a lengthy debate.

53/07 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (AGENDA ITEM 7)

RESOLVED that, under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

54/07 STAR CHAMBER REPORT 2007 (AGENDA ITEM 8)

The report identified several posts recommended through the Council's Star Chamber process. Supported by the appropriate funding, the Committee's approval was sought to extend a number of current fixed term posts and the establishment of one new post.

The Senior Revenue Accountant was in attendance and explained that extensions for the Housing Technical Administrator Officer and Business Support Officer posts had been put forward at the previous General Purposes Committee meeting to tie in with contract extensions. The remaining posts to be reviewed by this Committee were as follows:

- Senior Business Improvement Officer (extension)
- HR Assistant (extension)
- ICT Manager (new post).

The first two posts would both be extensions to current contracts. If agreed, it would allow the retention of currently fully trained staff resulting in value for money as no time would be lost in further training.

The ICT Manager post had been filled in the past by an interim manager which incurred temporary agency fees in excess of the cost of a permanent post.

The details of each post had been summarised in Appendix 2 of the report.

A Member explained that the Senior Business Officer's role contributed to the achievement of specific Local Performance Indicators set for the Project Create Team. Capita had identified the need for an HR Assistant's post as it was in the Council's interest to have an HR department that was fit for purpose if the shared services agenda transpired.

Action By

The Organisational Development Manager explained the composition of staff within the HR Team. He informed Members that in the longer term, one of the assistants' roles would be to implement the pay and appraisal scheme. The Organisational Development Manager agreed with the Members aforementioned views; that HR did need to look attractive in the market place and be able to continue with a service that was fit for purpose.

RESOLVED that the establishment/extension of the posts on the bases set out in Appendix 1 of the report be approved, subject to Cabinet authorising the use of reserves for this purpose.

55/07 ILL HEALTH RETIREMENT (AGENDA ITEM 9)

The Organisational Development Manager informed Members that it was his intention to present Members with a suite of HR policies at the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee. Within those policies there would be a fundamental change, not just in sickness absence, but also with capability and misconduct issues.

The Committee considered the content of the report which was presented by the Organisation Development Manager who, along with the Solicitor and the Customer Services Manager, answered Members' questions.

The recommendation stated that:

"It is recommended that General Purposes moves option 5.2 of the report to terminate the employment contract (with due notice) for the reasons set out in 6.2 of the report. The options at 5.1 of the report should be discounted as it does not benefit either the Council or the employee".

In explaining the legal implications, the Solicitor informed Members that staff had a legal entitlement to retire on ill-health grounds if they had met the relevant statutory criteria and had been duly medically certificated on grounds of permanent ill-health.

Therefore, in the circumstances of this case, the officer concerned had met the necessary criteria and had an automatic right to retirement. Accordingly, the Committee was not required to make a decision on the matter, and it was with regret, that the request for retirement, on the grounds of ill health, be accepted.

RESOLVED that the circumstances of the case be noted.

The meeting closed at 10.40 am

Action By

CHAIRMAN