

Public Document Pack

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Joint Meeting of the

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE & OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held on Monday, 6 December 2010 at 10.30 am in
Norfolk Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham

PRESENT

Mr R.W. Duffield (Co-Chair)	Mr R.G. Kybird
Mr P.J. Duigan (Vice-Chairman)	Mr K.S. Gilbert
Mrs J. Ball	Mr A.P. Joel
Mrs S.M. Matthews	Mr B. Rose
Mrs L.S. Turner	Mr J.D. Rogers
Mr S. J. F. Rogers	Mr K. Martin
Mr R.F. Goreham (Vice-Chairman)	Mrs D.K.R. Irving
Mr J.P. Cowen (Co-Chair)	

Also Present

Mr S. Askew	Mr J.W. Nunn
Mr P.D. Claussen	Mr M.A. Kiddle-Morris
Lady Fisher	

In Attendance

Julie Britton	- Senior Committee Officer
John Chinnery	- Solicitor & Standards Consultant
Robert Leigh	- Assistant Director, Communications and Communities
Teresa Smith	- Member Services Support Officer
Kathryn Ralphs	- Human Resources Adviser
Roger Wilkin	- Interim Environmental Services Manager
Terry Huggins	- Chief Executive
Jane Osborne	- Committee Officer
Rory Ringer	- Elections and Scrutiny Manager

39/10 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Messrs P Balaam, I Sherwood, D Williams, A Byrne and S Chapman-Allen and Mesdames M Chapman-Allen and K Millbank.

40/10 LOCAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE :6 DECEMBER 2010 (AGENDA ITEM 4)

A Member provided the meeting with a verbal update from the Local Joint Consultative Committee. The Vice-Chairman and the Unison representatives had been satisfied with the explanation in relation to the proposed pay structure for the new management team and were happy that they would be consulted on the pay scheme when it eventually cascaded

Action By

Action By

down to all staff.

The Vice-Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission was surprised that no-one from Unison was present for this meeting as he felt there should have been someone in attendance so that views from both sides could be debated. He said he would have liked to have seen a written opinion from the Union reps to ensure that all opinions were balanced.

The Chief Executive assured Members that Unison had been fully consulted throughout.

41/10 SHARED MANAGEMENT PROJECT (AGENDA ITEM 5)

The Chief Executive presented the report which advised Members of the detail and progress of the formal consultation process on the creation of a shared management team for Breckland Council and South Holland District Council.

A short presentation was also provided.

It was emphasised that this was about shared management and not shared services; the two councils would stay very much separate and governance arrangements would not be merged. There would be one management team that served the two authorities.

The key drivers were around finance and it was expected that the proposed structure would deliver a minimum 35% saving in overall management costs for 2011-12. The savings would also create space for Leaders and Executive Members to work within both authorities - training and development would take place for these particular Members.

This was the first step leading to shared management and it was stressed that not every department would be going through this process.

In the course of taking this vision forward, the two authorities were proposing to build a structure based on three core functions. The first was commissioning services. Local authorities provided a range of services either directly to their own citizens or internally to support their own business. They ranged from street cleaning to HR services. These could be delivered in a number of ways, direct service provision, partnerships, in-sourcing, outsourcing and so on. These services represented massive opportunity for joint management leading to joint commissioning with the realisation of efficiencies. Commissioning had a wide definition covering delivery options from outsourcing to in-house provision.

The second was organisational governance. Local authorities were led by Elected Members with special accountabilities to their communities and to Government and had to have a high degree of transparency and accountability. This required the management of Elections and serving and supporting the Elected Executive, scrutiny, audit, licensing and granting of planning permissions. Governance and accountability would need to be specific to each of the two authorities but there was opportunity to share management and expertise.

Action By

The final function was local government of place, in other words place shaping. A term which was not universally liked but which none the less conveyed the most important function of local government to shape the social, environmental and economic well being of its area. This function needed to reflect the needs and nature of both Breckland and South Holland.

A diagram was shown of a revised structure (attached as structure B of the report). This structure had evolved from the consultation process and comments on this alternative proposal were sought to influence the development of the shared management proposals. This structure reduced the number of Deputy Chief Executives from two down to one shared role, reduced the Community Development Manager role from one in each Council down to a single shared manager and added an additional Assistant Director resource to the commissioning function.

A joint Project Team, consisting of officers from both councils, and led by an Independent Interim Manager, commenced the process of delivering proposals for a shared management structure in September 2010. The Project Team reported to a Project Board, the membership of which included the Leaders of both Councils, two senior members from each Council, along with the Joint Chief Executive and the Chairmen of the two Council's Overview & Scrutiny Commission. All were invited to attend meetings. The two senior Members for Breckland Council were Adrian Stasiak and William Smith.

On completion of the formal consultation process it had been proposed that the Project Team would formulate draft proposals for Shared Management to the Project Board for informal approval. However, due to the large amount of responses recently received, proposals could not be finalised in time for Project Board comments on 3rd December; therefore, there was an opportunity for the joint meeting to express their views which would then be relayed by the Interim Independent Manager to the re-arranged Project Board meeting on Tuesday, 7th December.

All project processes such as staff consultation, other stakeholder communications, committee meetings etc would be and had been carried out in parallel with both Councils as far as reasonably practicable in order to ensure equity and fairness. Both Councils had also consulted with trade unions, prior to, and throughout the consultation and subsequent restructuring process.

Members were informed of the timetable of completion, by which, assuming approval by both Councils, job descriptions, following job evaluations of posts, would be finalised and the final structure would be announced in January 2011.

Individual 1:1s with affected staff would commence at the beginning of January, posts would be advertised towards the end of January and interviews would be held between the 25 January and 18 February 2011. Appointments would be announced on 21 February, the redeployment/redundancy process would come into effect from 21 February onwards and the proposed implementation of the new structure would commence from 1 April 2011.

Action By

A draft Memorandum of Agreement for joint governance, which had been kept as straightforward and as simple as possible, had been prepared. One simple mechanism that had already been agreed was to share the cost equally between authorities. If, in future, more services were to be merged, the sharing of such costs would be looked at again on a service by service basis.

An audit of the selection process had been carried out independently. The same independent process would also be carried out for the assessment of candidates.

The outcome of this joint meeting would be reported to the Project Board on 7 December and would influence what went forward in the Council report for the South Holland District Full Council meeting on 15th December and the Breckland Full Council meeting on 16th December 2010.

The indicative costings were highlighted. A gross and net saving of £0.7m for 2011/12 was predicted; however, there would be one-off transition costs for pension and redundancies and final figures would not be forthcoming until the new structure had been completed.

The Council report would contain the following documents:

- Final Management Structure
- Implementation process
- Core Competencies
- Memorandum of Agreement and Joint Management Board
- Joint Appointments Committee – with Elected Members from both authorities to select the managers - all would be scored against the new core competencies.

Referring to the revised structure (Structure B), Members were asked whether they felt there was a need for a Deputy Chief Executive. By removing this capacity would require both Councils to work differently and more effectively. Members' views on this matter were sought.

Another comment that had come forward through the consultation process was on the absence of a business case. The Chief Executive explained that this restructuring method had been based upon business sense, democratic leadership, sound principles and practices. It had also been based on the savings that the Government had urged local councils to make.

Other issues mentioned, if the new management structure was approved, were new ways of working that would be necessary such as video conferencing and common formatting of reports.

In response to a question concerning the consultation process, in relation to representations and responses, Members were informed that all feedback had been carefully considered and responded to. There could be a number of minor adjustments to what had been proposed once the Project Board had discussed the views received from the final consultation. The Interim Independent Manager pointed out that a further 110 pages of feedback had

Action By

been received.

The Overview & Scrutiny Commission Chairman said that most comments were available on the Council's intranet which was being updated accordingly.

Referring to the Deputy Chief Executive's post, a Member felt there was a need for a deputy to be in control when and if the Chief Executive was ever incapacitated.

In response to a question with regard to job descriptions, the Chief Executive explained that whilst all job descriptions listed covered the nature of the post they did not cover employment conditions. However, terms and conditions would be harmonised across both authorities in the future.

Mentioning the £0.7m savings, a Member asked whether anyone had managed to work out the exact amount of redundancy costs. Members were informed that both authorities would be making a contribution to the Transition Budget as both had Organisation Development Reserves. The Leader of the Council, in attendance, pointed out that Breckland Council had the lowest redundancy scheme in Norfolk. A final salary scheme was still being debated by Government.

The Vice-Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission put forward the following points. Firstly, he concurred with the suggestion about the need for a Deputy Chief Executive to be in post. Secondly, he asked for it to be confirmed that both Councils would endorse the appointments made by the Joint Staff Appointments Panel. The third point related to the redundancy/redeployment process where he asked for compulsory redundancies to be kept to a minimum. The fourth point was in relation to the consultation responses displayed on the Council's website which he felt should have been conveyed to this meeting. The final point was in regard to the savings that were envisaged, and whether the Council would be looking at other partners if this shared management project was successful.

The aforementioned points were endorsed particularly in relation to the need for a Deputy Chief Executive and it was agreed that this proposal would be fed into the Project Board meeting. The Leader concurred with the above proposal and felt that a single Chief Executive and a single Deputy Chief Executive who would be accountable for both authorities were definitely required. As far as the latter point was concerned, the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee believed that Breckland Council and South Holland District Council should hold back on looking for other partners at this moment in time.

The Solicitor, in attendance, raised the point made about all appointments made by the Staff Appointments Panel being endorsed by both Councils and clarified that the Panel had been given delegated powers to appoint all Directors/Managers, except for the Head of Paid Service, without having to go through to Full Council.

Referring to the redundancy situation, the Chief Executive advised that redundancies were going to be difficult to avoid; some of them could be voluntary.

Action By

A Member agreed with the principle of not producing a business case as it had saved the Council a great deal of money. The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission endorsed the above comment but pointed out that a management structure did not warrant a business case as it followed work streams and service delivery.

The Interim Independent Manager highlighted the fact that both structures had formed part of the consultation and, as it had proved impossible to put forward all the recent feedback to this joint meeting, a final structure had not been forthcoming. The Solicitor advised that a full legal assessment and a full financial appraisal also needed to be taken into account when the proposals were discussed by Full Council.

Given the time frame, it was proposed that the recommendation be changed, and accordingly, it was resolved that:

- 1) the draft Implementation Strategy, as set out at Appendix 2 of the report, be recommended to Full Council for approval; and
- 2) the aforementioned views be reported to the Project Board meeting on 7 December 2010.

The meeting closed at 11.50 am

CHAIRMAN