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**BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

**At a Meeting of the**

**GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**Held on Wednesday, 16 February 2011 at 10.00 am in  
Norfolk Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

**PRESENT**

|                                |                        |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Mr R.W. Duffield (Chairman)    | Mrs M.P. Chapman-Allen |
| Mr P.J. Duigan (Vice-Chairman) | Mrs S.M. Matthews      |
| Mr G.P. Balaam                 | Mrs L.S. Turner        |
| Mrs J. Ball                    | Mr S.G. Bambridge      |

**Also Present**

Mrs D.K.R. Irving

**In Attendance**

|                 |                           |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Mark Finch      | - Head of Finance         |
| Stephen McGrath | - Member Services Manager |
| Kathryn Ralphs  | - Human Resources Advisor |
| Kate Martin     | - Senior HR Consultant    |
| Jane Osborne    | - Committee Officer       |

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**11/11 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**12/11 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Millbank, Rogers and Sherwood.

**13/11 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**14/11 URGENT BUSINESS**

There were none.

**15/11 GUIDANCE ON POLICIES THAT AFFECT GENERAL PURPOSES  
COMMITTEE**

The Solicitor & Standards Consultant was not present at the meeting, but had provided Members via the Agenda, guidance on policies that affected the General Purposes Committee.

Members were happy with the guidance provided.

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**16/11 LOCAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE : 3 FEBRUARY 2011**

- (a) Flextime Policy (Minute No. 6/11)

The Human Resources Advisor advised that the content of the Policy had not changed apart from some minimal word changes and terminology used.

**RESOLVED** that the Flextime Policy be adopted

**Kathryn  
Ralphs**

- (b) Adverse Weather Policy (Minute No. 8/11)

A sentence had been changed, but there had been no changes to the Policy content.

**RESOLVED** that the Adverse Weather Policy be adopted

**Kathryn  
Ralphs**

- (c) Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy (Minute No. 13/11 (a) )

**RECOMMEND** to the Audit Committee that the Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy be approved

- (d) Anti-Money Laundering Policy (Minute No. 13/11 (b) )

**RECOMMEND** to the Audit Committee that the Anti-Money Laundering Policy be approved

- (e) Adoption

**RESOLVED** that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Local Joint Consultative Committee meeting on 3 February 2011 be adopted.

**17/11 WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

The Head of Finance advised the Committee that the Head of Internal Audit had reviewed the Policy and Guidance, and brought Members' attention to the Appendices and associated paperwork that went with the report. They had been asked to review the content of the Whistleblowing Policy and put forward any enhancements where appropriate, ahead of presentation of the policy to the Audit Committee for formal approval.

He went through the main changes within the Whistleblowing Policy itself shown at Appendix 2, with key changes to the Contacts for Whistleblowing which had been separated into Appendix 1. The intention would be to look at policies across South Holland and Breckland in the future, as it would make sense to amalgamate them.

There had been no matters of concern received through the mainstream policy during the last 3 years.

The Policy made reference to the Monitoring Officer as being the Deputy Chief Executive. Under the Shared Services Structure, the Monitoring Officer would be the Assistant Director of Democratic Services and by the time the Policy reached the Audit Committee the names of the postholders

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| <p>within the Shared Services Management Structure would be known.</p> <p>A Member felt that as the role of the Monitoring Officer was a recognised post within the Council, it would be preferable to keep it as such to avoid the need for the Policy to be changed.</p> <p>With regard to the Guidance for Employees (Appendix 1) shown on page 34 of the Agenda, second bullet point final paragraph, 'You must reasonably believe it to be substantially true', it was felt that this sentence was not explicit enough. However, within the Guidance for Managers (Appendix 2) on page 35 of the Agenda, it was felt that under the paragraph entitled, 'be responsive to employees' concerns' helped to rationalise the said sentence.</p> <p>A Member wanted assurance that anyone who raised a matter of concern was made aware that it was being looked at as he felt that the Policy in its current form was quite vague about how such concerns were subsequently dealt with. He drew attention to the paragraph entitled 'Feedback' on page 43 of the Guidance for Audit Committee Whistleblowing Arrangements. The Head of Finance assured Members that he would highlight this concern at the Audit Committee meeting on 25 March 2011.</p> <p>In response to a question, Councillor Matthews, who was also a Member of the Local Joint Consultative Committee, said that the Staff-side and the Union Representatives had been fairly content with the Whistleblowing Policy.</p> <p><b><u>RECOMMEND</u></b> to the Audit Committee that the Whistleblowing Policy be adopted.</p> <p><b><u>RESOLVED</u></b> that :</p> <p>(a) the Whistleblowing Policy be reviewed by the Local Joint Consultative Committee in six months, and</p> <p>(b) The General Purposes Committee be provided with a hard copy of the updated Policy once adopted by the Audit Committee</p> | <p><b>Mark<br/>Finch</b></p> <p><b>Mark<br/>Finch</b></p> <p><b>Mark<br/>Finch</b></p> <p><b>Mark<br/>Finch</b></p> |
| <p><b>18/11 <u>BASIC PERFORMANCE INCREASE</u></b></p> <p>The Human Resources Advisor advised that the purpose of the report was to outline the proposals for the pay award for Breckland staff in 2010/2011, and had been based upon the outcomes of consultation with Unison.</p> <p>The main points and the recommendations were highlighted as follows :</p> <p>(a) award staff a Basic Performance Increase (BPI) of 0% of their salary;</p> <p>(b) award staff an increase of 0% of their salary for being rated Performing;</p> <p>(c) award staff an increase of 0.5% of their salary for being rated Overachieving;</p> <p>(d) award staff an increase of 1% of their salary for being rated Exceptional;</p> <p>(e) review and renegotiate the Basic Performance increase (BPI) in</p>   |   |

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- a years time with renegotiated terms to be implemented in April 2012;
- (f) review the PRP scheme for implementation April 2012.

The proposals were felt to be sound and reasonable, and it was therefore

**RESOLVED** that the Pay Award for 2010/11 for Breckland staff be approved and the Scheme be reviewed in accordance with points (a) – (f) above

**Kathryn  
Ralphs**

**19/11 ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP - REDUCTION IN FULL TIME EQUIVALENT POSTS**

The Senior HR Consultant provided Members with an overview and the background of the report and sought approval for the proposed possible redundancy of up to three posts.

Unison Representatives had been involved in the process from the start, and the structure had been through the ARP Joint Committee. The report had also been to the Corporate Management Team, the Local Joint Consultative Committee and the financial aspects to Cabinet on 11 January and Council on 27 January 2011.

In order to try and mitigate some of the losses, some vacancies had been dealt with by secondments, and there were only three posts now at risk of possible redundancy. Staff had managed with temporary posts and all had worked very hard to ensure the service had been provided to the level required.

HR had provided individual out-placement services for those at risk which consisted of skills training on CVs, application forms and mock interview practice. The grades of the posts involved at possible risk were Grades 9, 8 and 6. Just over 150 staff had been looked at across the four Councils.

It was asked if sufficient capacity was available in the new structure. The Senior HR Consultant advised that a new post had been created as quality control and support services had been lacking.

It was a very difficult time for those at possible risk of redundancy and therefore everyone needed to be sensitive and aware of the issues.

The Chairman was concerned that no figures or indication was available to the Committee of what the financial impact would be on the Council. The Senior HR Consultant stated that a financial report went to Cabinet on 11 January 2011 and Council on 27 January 2011. The Chairman was not happy that the General Purposes Committee had only been given part of the information, and it had already been approved by the Cabinet despite the fact that it should have come to the General Purposes Committee first to agree any possible redundancies. The Member Services Manager explained that whilst the Committee should have been made aware of the financial cost of the redundancies, Full Council of each of the three partner authorities in the ARP needed to agree St Edmundsbury as a partner first.

In accepting that principle, the Chairman felt that the financial information

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should have been available to the Committee on 12 January 2011 as an urgent item, and that a representative of the Cabinet should have attended that meeting so comments from the Cabinet meeting held on 11 January could have been communicated and visa versa, in so much as the Council on 27 January should have been aware of the comments of the General Purposes Committee when making the decision on accepting St. Edmundsbury as a partner.

**RESOLVED** that the possible redundancies be approved and the HR team proceed with issuing notice to staff of termination of employment, on the grounds of redundancy.

**Kate  
Martin**

**20/11 NEXT MEETING**

The arrangements for the next meeting on 30 March 2011 at 10.00 am in the Norfolk Room were noted.

The meeting closed at 11.00 am

CHAIRMAN