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BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

**Held on Wednesday, 13 June 2012 at 10.00 am in
Norfolk Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr P.J. Duigan (Chairman)	Mrs S.M. Matthews
Mr T R Carter (Vice-Chairman)	Mrs P. Quadling
Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mr B J Skull
Mr W.P. Borrett	Mrs A.L. Steward
Mr C. S. Clark	

Also Present

Mrs E. M. Jolly	Mr M. A. Wassell
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In Attendance

Jane Osborne	- Committee Officer
Rod Urquhart	- Operations Manager (Support and Fraud)
Ms Lucy Hohnen	- Interim HR Manager
Robert Walker	- Assistant Director of Commissioning

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33/12 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

A report on the Review of Housing Advice and Homelessness, which would include standby payments would be brought to General Purposes on 25 July 2012.

34/12 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr S Green.

Cllr Duigan received congratulations on becoming the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee.

Cllr M Wassell, Executive Member for Finance & Democratic Services and his Executive Support Member, Cllr E Jolly were present and welcomed by the Chairman.

35/12 LOCAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE : 31 MAY 2012

RESOLVED to adopt the unconfirmed Minutes of the Local Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 31 May 2012.

36/12 PRP OUTCOMES 2012

The report which gave an overview of the results of the 2011/12 Pay and Appraisal Scheme and to consider a review of the current scheme, was presented by Rob Walker, Assistant Director of Commissioning. He brought the Committee's attention to the overall percentage results and stated that it had become apparent, that the level or reward for Overachieving and Exceptional performance was not significant enough to drive or incentivise performance improvement.

When asked why the scheme had not worked, as a Councillor believed that 17% of staff rated as Exceptional was a high figure, the Assistant Director of Commissioning stated that the level of engagement was no longer as it was when the scheme commenced. This was felt to be disappointing and that if the scheme continued in the future, the percentages would be higher and better.

Some Councillors did not believe that any evidence had been presented to show that staff had not engaged with the process, as the percentage of staff rated as Performing and Exceptional had not dipped, therefore his view was that the scheme had performed extremely well. A Councillor thought that the problem with the scheme was that Managers had not engaged in the process or had managed it.

Further comments by Councillors were that they had not been told of what checks and balances had been put into place for engagement, and how aims were statistically proven. In response and for Members' benefit, the Assistant Director of Commissioning explained the appraisal process and evidence required, and acknowledged there was an element of subjectivity in the process.

Further comments from Members were that it would not take a lot of training for the current 44% of Overachieving staff to reach Exceptional, and the scheme had not been delivered or applied in the way the Council had initially agreed.

Percentages expected at the start of the appraisal year for 2011/12 were 50% Performing, 35% Overachieving and 15% Exceptional.

A Councillor questioned why there were only 3 categories, and not one for Underachievers, as they would be the staff that required assistance. The Assistant Director of Commissioning explained the

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performance management process for underperforming and capability, to which the Councillor responded by stating that Members had not been made aware of the capability percentage.

A view expressed by a Councillor was that although the scheme had been designed in a certain way, it had not been implemented that way by Managers, and therefore was a training issue, and as part of introducing any alternative scheme it would have to be managed to avoid a repeat of the weakness and failure of the current scheme.

It was requested that Members be provided with a breakdown by department which showed the percentages of staff not achieving, which the Assistant Director of Commissioning agreed to provide.

Rob Walker

As Chairman of the Member Development Panel, Cllr Carter would recommend that Members received training on how staff were assessed during the Pay and Appraisal scheme.

Cllr Trevor Carter

RECOMMEND to Council that :

- (a) the contents of the report be noted
- (b) that a review of PRP with any new scheme to be implemented for 2013/14, be approved.

It was expected that the review would commence after the summer period and the Assistant Director of Commissioning agreed to bring a report back to the General Purposes Committee in the Autumn which would include points raised by Members.

Rob Walker

37/12 BRECKLAND TRAINING SERVICES

The Assistant Director of Commissioning presented the report which was to consider the proposals to charge for Breckland's Training Services including the proposal to increase the staff establishment to enable that, which were linked to Option (c) below.

He clarified the Options which were :-

- (a) To provide training to Breckland Council employees only
- (b) To provide training to Breckland Council employees, whilst also generating income by delivering externally to the extent that current capacity allows
- (c) To establish Breckland Training Services, to provide training internally and externally as set out in the Business Proposal document (appendix a)
- (d) To establish Breckland Training Services as a Trading Unit, to provide training to Breckland (as a client) and other external clients

He gave examples of training courses already booked despite no

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active marketing or promotion having taken place. A meeting was due to be held on 14 June 2012 with Inspire East with regard to being one of their nominated training providers.

A Councillor liked the current flexibility of Member Training and would not like to see it lost within a bigger organisation. Breckland Council was only one of two in the South East to have received the Member Development Charter Plus Standard, and Member Training would be a core part of the Business Plan for the Service as advised by the Assistant Director of Commissioning. He would clarify the charges stated in the report with regard to training delivered at Elizabeth House/Breckland House.<4>

Whilst a Councillor felt there might be a risk that the internal training would suffer as a result due to increased external clients, he believed the proposal was a brilliant idea. There were a lot of very good reasons that it would help Breckland both as an area of excellence and help Breckland businesses. He encouraged it and wondered if Breckland were being over cautious, but understood the reluctance at this stage to recommend Option (d). He suggested a review after Year 1 to enable a speedier process be implemented if required. The Assistant Director of Commissioning advised that he was already scheduled to attend the LJCC on 13 December 2012 with a review report.

The Executive Member for Finance & Democratic Services would have preferred to have seen the confirmed income in place, which had been forecasted in Year 1 as being circa £60k, and that the current training capacity was at its maximum rather than employ an additional member of staff. To which the Assistant Director of Commissioning explained that currently there was not enough resource to fulfil obligations internally and to promote services more widely externally. The Executive Member's response was to employ someone on a temporary contract to ascertain if there was a demand for the services proposed.

Spelling mistakes and grammatical errors were pointed out within the draft Training & Development Prospectus, which would be reviewed prior to being finalised by the Communications Team.

Whilst a Councillor believed the proposal was a positive way forward she advised of her concern with regard to other providers

The Assistant Director of Commissioning was asked what would be Breckland Training Services' unique selling point, to which he advised that the style and delivery of training was different to others provided within the local area, along with Charter Plus being held, and clear proven Member training tested at both Breckland and South Holland. With the staff's regional reputations there would be an opportunity to meet targets and projections advised in the report.

As Breckland District Council were undertaking research into what services they should provide and were intending to consult with the public and Parish Councils later in the year, the Executive Member for Finance & Democratic Services questioned if it would be more opportune to await the outcome of the consultations.

RECOMMEND to Council that they :

- (a) Agree to charge for Breckland's Training Services
- (b) Agree to increase the staff establishment in the training team by 1 FTE on the basis that it would be funded entirely by the income to the trading unit
- (c) Establish Breckland Training Services, to provide training internally and externally as set out in the Business Proposal document (Appendix A) subject to, it being reviewed after one year and not three, with regard to the establishment of a trading unit, and that an interim report returned to the General Purposes Committee after it had gone to LJCC on 13 December 2012.

38/12 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of the Schedule 12A to the Act.

39/12 PROPERTY INSPECTIONS & VISITS REVIEW

The report was presented by Rod Urquhart, ARP Operations Manager, the purpose of which was to gain approval to changes in working practices in order to maximise service efficiencies. He gave background information on the current system along with that proposed.

RECOMMEND to Council that they :

- 1. Approve the implementation of the Property Inspections and Visits Review
- 2. Approve the commencement of formal consultation with affected staff
- 3. Give the Assistant Director of Commissioning the delegated authority to make changes to the establishment (in consultation with the Chairman of General Purposes) as detailed in the report and appendices

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40/12 NEXT MEETING

The arrangements for the next meeting on 25 July 2012 at 10.00 a.m
in the Norfolk Room were noted.

The meeting closed at 11.35 am

CHAIRMAN