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## **BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

### **At a Meeting of the**

## **GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**Held on Wednesday, 17 December 2014 at 10.00 am in  
Norfolk Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

### **PRESENT**

Mr P.J. Duigan (Chairman)  
Mr T R Carter (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor M. Chapman-Allen  
Mr R.F. Goreham  
Mrs K. Millbank

Mr A.C. Stasiak  
Mr D.R. Williams JP  
Mr P R W Darby (Substitute Member)  
Mr R. R. Richmond (Substitute Member)

### **Also Present**

Mr M. A. Wassell

### **In Attendance**

Helen McAleer  
Cal Spearman  
Richard Wills

- Senior Democratic Services Officer
- HR Business Partner
- Managing Director, Breckland Training Services

### **Action By**

#### **55/14 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **56/14 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Borrett, Clark, Matthews, Skull and Steward.

Councillors Darby and Richmond were present as Substitutes.

#### **57/14 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (AGENDA ITEM 3)**

No declarations were made.

#### **58/14 URGENT BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 4)**

None.

#### **59/14 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 5)**

Councillor Wassell (Leader of the Council) was in attendance. Councillor Turner (Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Community & Environmental Services) had sent her apologies.

**60/14 LOCAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 6)**

a) Breckland Training Services Growth (Minute No 40/14)

The recommendation would be considered under Agenda Item 7.

b) Policy Review Matrix (Minute No 43/14)

The Chairman of the LJCC said that the Committee had fought to get Health & Safety and the Policy Matrix updated for some time and he was pleased that HR were now carrying out a rolling programme of reviews.

c) Adoption

**RESOLVED** that the unconfirmed Minutes of the LJCC meeting held on 4 December 2014 be adopted.

**61/14 BRECKLAND TRAINING SERVICES GROWTH (AGENDA ITEM 7)**

The Managing Director, Breckland Training Services (BTS) presented the report which recommended an increase in the staffing structure of BTS. He explained the background to BTS which had been set up as an external training arm to generate income. Targets had been set for the first three years and in year one all had been met and in many cases exceeded.

Year two had also been successful, but some targets had not been met in the October to October reporting period. However, it was expected that they would be achieved by the end of the financial year. Following an Audit recommendation future reporting would cover the financial year.

The biggest risk to the service was sustainability which was why approval to recruit an additional senior trainer and an apprentice was being sought. The service was currently fully booked until March 2015 and had no capacity to take up other opportunities.

The Chairman noted that if Members wished to discuss the details in the Business Plan which were commercially sensitive, it would be necessary to go below the line. Members agreed to that and the following resolution was proposed and approved.

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100(A) 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 disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

The Managing Director, Breckland Training Services then gave further details of the current client list and the proposed restructure. An amended Proforma B was still awaited. It had been requested to clarify the income figures which did not match those in the report as re-charges for training received by South Holland were not included as income.

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The Leader of the Council supported the proposals and endorsed the recommendation. He said that BTS was held in high regard and had an opportunity to be visible locally and nationally to a wider audience.

Councillor Carter was concerned that an apprentice would need to be trained and that might nullify the effect of the extra post. He asked if it would be possible to extend the business whilst providing that training. He also asked if the increase in establishment was sufficient.

The Managing Director, BTS said that if the right person was recruited, which would be someone already studying a relevant course at College, they would be almost ready to start work immediately. However, there would be a structure for the apprentice role to ensure growth. With regard to whether the increase was sufficient he asked to be given six months to decide. The proposed increase would certainly help in the short term, and an 18 month contract would reduce any risk. In six months he would be in a better position to determine if more resources would be needed.

Councillor Goreham thought that Members should do all they could to support the growth and potential of the service which was clearly a success story.

The Leader of the Council advised that as most of the training was offered to other Local Authorities he was in a good position to act as a salesman. With regard to the need for more resources he suggested that authority could be delegated by the Committee to the Portfolio Holder and himself to appoint more staff if needed.

Members discussed that suggestion. Councillor Williams thought that there were advantages of such decisions going to LJCC and GP as it got Union buy-in.

Councillor Goreham agreed that the Committee system had worked well in the past but also acknowledged that there were times when it was necessary to make quick decisions. He thought that the Managing Director, BTS should receive financial support to grow at a rate at which he felt safe and comfortable.

The Chairman noted that there were other training providers in Breckland and he suggested that they could work in partnership with BTS to deliver periphery courses. That would give extra capacity without having to commit to extra staff.

Councillor Chapman-Allen was concerned that the unique selling point of BTS would be watered down by using external trainers and it might also lead to a loss of intellectual property.

Councillor Darby noted that with the elections in May there would be a requirement for training for new Councillors. He asked if that had been factored in to the BTS timetable.

The Managing Director, BTS confirmed that time had already been booked and he would be working with the Member Development Panel to develop a training and induction programme.

Councillor Chapman-Allen asked the Managing Director, BTS if he thought it would be helpful if the Committee delegated powers to enable a quick take up

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of additional staff if required.

The Managing Director, BTS acknowledged that other providers might be able to act more quickly, but he felt the proposed increase was the right way forward for the time being, erring on the side of caution. He suggested that the position should be reviewed in six to twelve months.

Councillor Williams pointed out that if a quick decision was required a special meeting could be called, but he still felt it was better to follow due process. He was glad that the BTS Manager was being cautious as the third year of trading was always a challenge for a new business.

The meeting moved back into public session.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the progress made by the Breckland Training Service be noted;
- (2) the changes to the staffing structure of the HR training team as detailed in section 14 of the BTS Business Plan be approved; and
- (3) the increase of the establishment of Breckland Training Services by 1 FTE (full time equivalent) and 1 Apprentice, with the post being on an 18 month fixed term contract and to commence as soon as the recruitment process would allow, be approved.

**62/14 NEW REMUNERATION PACKAGE (AGENDA ITEM 8)**

The HR Business Partner introduced himself and advised Members that the HR Manager had not been able to attend and so no update was available. However, March would mark the end of the first year of the new package and it would be possible to evaluate the impact of the amendments and update the Committee once the full cycle was completed.

**63/14 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 9)**

The arrangements for the next meeting on 4 February 2015 were noted.

The meeting closed at 10.45 am

CHAIRMAN