

**BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

**At a Meeting of the**

**GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**Held on Wednesday, 26 March 2008 at 10.00 am in  
Norfolk Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

**PRESENT**

Mr R.W. Duffield (Chairman)	Mr D.S. Myers
Mr P.J. Duigan (Vice-Chairman)	Mr I. Sherwood
Mr G.P. Balaam	Mrs L.S. Turner
Mrs K. Millbank	Mrs S.R. Howard-Alpe

**Also Present**

Mrs D.K.R. Irving

**In Attendance**

Rachel Beswick	- Senior Accountant
Julie Britton	- Senior Committee Officer
Mark Broughton	- Unison Branch Secretary
Neil Fordham	- Payroll and Reward Manager
Trevor Holden	- Chief Executive
Ray Johnson	- Asset Manager
Tim Leader	- Deputy Chief Executive
Tracy Miller	- PA to Business Transformation Director
Ian Vargeson	- Democratic Services Manager
Karen Hitchcock	- Human Resources Assistant

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**16/08 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**17/08 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)**

Apologies for absence were received from Messrs. S Chapman-Allen, W Smith and D Williams.

**18/08 LOCAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE : 19 FEBRUARY 2008  
(AGENDA ITEM 5)**

a) Right to Request Flexible Working Guidelines (Minute No. 4/08)

**RESOLVED** that the amended Right to Request Flexible Working Guidelines as presented to the Local Joint Consultative Committee meeting on 19 February 2008 be adopted.

b) Adoption

**RESOLVED** that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Local Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 19 February 2008 be adopted.

**19/08 ELECTION FEES: COUNTY DISTRICT AND PARISH COUNCILS (AGENDA ITEM 6)**

The Democratic Services Manager presented the report and explained that the proposed scale of fees recommended for the County, District and Parish Elections for the year commencing 1 April 2008 had been agreed by the Chief Executives of Norfolk District Councils.

There were no County, District and Parish ordinary elections scheduled for 2008; therefore, the revised fees would only apply to any casual vacancies that might occur during the year.

In reply to a question from the Chairman, the Democratic Services Manager confirmed that the major fees, those payable to polling day staff, did comply with the minimum wage.

**RESOLVED** that the recommended Scale of Fees for County, District and Parish Elections for the year commencing 1 April 2008 be adopted.

**20/08 STAR CHAMBER - ADJUSTMENT TO POSTS (AGENDA ITEM 7)**

The Senior Accountant presented the report which concerned approval to proceed with changes to posts recommended through the Council's Star Chamber process.

Except for the permanent Arts Officer and the Technical Admin Officer (Housing and Homelessness), which were self funding, (see Appendix A of the report), funding for the posts had been agreed through the base budget which had been approved by Council at its meeting held on 17 January 2008

Members were informed that all these posts sat outside the organisational restructure paper that was to be discussed later in the meeting (Minute No. 11/08 refers).

**RESOLVED** that the recruitment of posts as listed at paragraph 1 of the report be approved.

**21/08 REDUNDANCY POLICY AND COMPENSATION (AGENDA ITEM 8)**

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the report.

A Redundancy Policy was required to provide clarity and transparency to all those involved in organisational change. The policy should incorporate the redundancy compensation that would apply to all employees if they should find themselves in such an unfortunate situation.

A draft Redundancy Policy had been produced summarising the approach that was currently used in practice in Breckland Council. The only contentious issue was the way that the Council dealt with the statutory allowance compared to what other authorities were doing. Other local authorities provided much higher levels of redundancy remuneration by applying a higher multiplier to the level of redundancy compensation. The multiplier applied by Breckland Council was one.

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The policy had been accepted by the Local Joint Consultative Committee but not by Unison. Unison believed that Breckland Council should apply a higher multiplier which would be in keeping with other local authorities. Unison further believed that Breckland's current redundancy package had an impact on staff morale and recruitment. The Deputy Chief Executive stated that there was no evidence to back that up and that any further enhancement of the redundancy remuneration could lead to a future drain on Breckland's resources.

A Member was pleased to hear that management had taken a sensible view on this matter and agreed with the Deputy Chief Executive's remarks that people did not look at the redundancy package when taking on a new job. He felt that current terms and conditions gave a very good deal to staff at Breckland.

After further discussion, it was

**RESOLVED** that the Redundancy Policy and the existing redundancy remuneration approach incorporated in the policy be adopted, subject to the inclusion of the additional wording in section 3 of the Policy as follows:

"All redundancies must have the authorisation of full Council **or the General Purposes Committee if this function is delegated from the full Council**".

**22/08 RIGHT TO REQUEST FLEXIBLE WORKING (AGENDA ITEM 9)**

The Payroll and Reward Manager stated that the Right to Request Flexible Working – Guidelines had been accepted by the Local Joint Consultative Committee at its meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008. The Policy had simply been updated to reflect statutory guidelines.

**RESOLVED** that the amended Policy be adopted.

**23/08 STANDBY/OUT OF HOURS PAYMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 10)**

The Payroll and Reward Manager presented the report which concerned options and recommendations for the formal adoption of an out-of-hours standby provision procedure.

Since May 2007, Housing, Building Control and Environmental Health had been taking part in a pilot scheme to establish the volumes and types of activity undertaken 'out of hours' and payments made under this scheme. During the pilot period, officers who had been on standby had received a single flat payment of £100 per week. This method had proved to be a convenient and low cost way of dealing with out of hours working.

The Chairman wished for it to be noted that he had been most disappointed that the information that he had requested at previous meetings from certain managers had not been forthcoming. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the HR Team had done its best to obtain this information.

The Chairman asked how many staff the Environmental Health Manager required to be on call. The Payroll and Reward Manager referred Members to Appendices B to D of the report which provided a breakdown of

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individual officers per service area. A Member asked about the rota system and asked whether there had been any complaints about the out of hours service not being met. In response, Members were advised that Breckland Council had not received any calls about the service not being provided at all hours. The Deputy Chief Executive felt that there was a need to try and stand back from this type of payment and advised that this option would be reviewed as part of the compensation and rewards packages at a later date.

The Committee was ensured that officers would not transgress the Working Time Directive.

**RESOLVED** that the Standby/Out of Hours Payments be approved as set out in option C of the report, subject to the amount payable as a Standby Payment being reviewed in 2010.

**24/08 CAR LEASING SCHEME FOR BRECKLAND COUNCIL EMPLOYEES (AGENDA ITEM 11)**

The purpose of the report was to secure the approval of minor amendments to the Council's car leasing scheme to render it more fit for purpose.

It was proposed to remove the distinction between private and official mileage allowances. Instead, a supplemental charge would only be applied if the hirer exceeded the total annual mileage allowance as specified in the contract. If approved, this would take immediate effect on both existing and new lease contracts.

The current scheme was explained.

A Member asked whether the 'green' agenda had been taken into consideration within the car leasing scheme. In response, the Chief Executive advised that this had already been taken into account; there was already a ceiling on the size of the car that an individual could obtain.

The Process Flow Chart at Appendix 2 of the report was highlighted and it was explained that this would be subject to review following the recent changes in the organisation.

**RESOLVED** that the Car Leasing Scheme be amended in accordance with paragraph 28a of the document attached to the report so that a supplemental charge falls to be paid upon the hirer exceeding the annual mileage agreed under an agreement irrespective of whether it is incurred in the course of Council business or personal use.

**25/08 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (AGENDA ITEM 11A)**

**RESOLVED** that, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it might involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

**26/08 ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW (AGENDA ITEM 12)**

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The Deputy Chief Executive presented the report which described the results of the review of Cabinet Office, Service Directorate and elements of the Transformation Directorate and sought the Committee's authority to implement consequential adjustments of the establishment by:

- creating the new posts as specified in Appendix A of the report;
- declaring redundant a number of existing posts specified as 'deleted' in Appendix A of the report; and
- changing the scope, terms and conditions of a number of existing posts as specified in Appendix A of the report.

The Corporate Management Team (CMT) had carried out a thorough review of all Cabinet Office, and Services Directorate functions to establish whether there was potential to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness and reduce costs. This had highlighted a range of improvement opportunities, which in turn necessitated further adjustments to the establishment, involving the creation of a small number of new posts and the deletion of and changes to some existing posts.

The CMT had also identified the need to make provision for the continued funding of a number of fixed term posts within the Transformation Directorate to safeguard the capacity and skills that were required to complete the transformation of the Anglia Revenues Partnership and the Council's Environmental Health, Planning and Building Control Services. Proposals relating to all three Directorates had therefore been rolled into a single, integrated organisational review.

Members were informed of a number of amendments to pages 83 and 90 of Appendix A.

A Member asked about timescales, and asked how restructuring would relate to the forthcoming Local Government Review. In response, the Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Council had a pretty ambitious change agenda ahead and to implement these changes the Council needed to have capacity and talent in the right place. Breckland was getting on with the transformative approach, and if no changes were made, this authority would grind to a halt.

Members were given the opportunity to go through the appendix page by page. A number of questions were asked with regard to typing functions, changes to job descriptions, delivering the Green Agenda and future recruitment.

The Chairman wanted reassurance that the finances of the review "stacked up" and that the Council would still achieve its aims objectives, would still provide service to the public and that it benefited all staff. The Chief Executive explained that in next year's budget, the Council had already made a 3% staff saving. With the LGR around the corner, the worst thing the Council could do was nothing. This review should be seen as a really positive piece of work for most staff. The LGR would not stop this authority getting on with the business of the day.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the creation of new posts as specified in Appendix A of the report be

approved;

- 2) the existing posts specified as “deleted” in Appendix A of the report be declared redundant;
- 3) the changes to the scope, terms and conditions of the existing posts specified in Appendix A of the report be approved; and
- 4) that the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee be given delegated authority to take any action that is necessary to give effect to the proposals contained in the report (including authority to alter, amend or correct any part of the proposals) provided the budgeted costs of the overall proposal set out in the Proforma B are not exceeded.

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**27/08 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 13)**

The next meeting of the General Purposes Committee would be held on Wednesday, 23 April 2008 at 10.00am in the Norfolk Room.

The meeting closed at 12.00 pm

CHAIRMAN