
BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

**Held on Wednesday, 7 January 2009 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	Mr A.C. Stasiak
Mrs J. Ball	Mrs L.S. Turner
Mrs K. Millbank	

Also Present

Mrs D.K.R. Irving	Mr W.H.C. Smith
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In Attendance

Neil Fordham	- Payroll and Reward Manager
Trevor Holden	- Chief Executive
Natalie King	- Principal Human Resources Adviser
Richard Kirk	- Consultant
Andrea Long	- Environmental Planning Manager
Helen McAleer	- Member Services Officer
Mark Stokes	- Strategic Director (Services)
Ian Vargeson	- Member Services Manager
Robert Walker	- Sustainable Communities Manager

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1/09 MINUTES

Subject to an amendment to note apologies received from Mr R Duffield, the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2/09 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Chapman-Allen.

3/09 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

Mrs D Irving and Mr W Smith were in attendance.

4/09 LOCAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE : 16 OCTOBER AND 4 DECEMBER 2008

(1) Minutes of the Local Joint Consultative Committee Meeting held on 16 October 2008

(a) Mobile Devices Policy (Minute No 21/08)

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The Chairman had no recollection of not allowing a member of Unison to comment on the recommendation.

(b) Christmas Office Closure (Minute No 23/08)

RESOLVED that the local collective agreement covering closure of the council offices over the Christmas period with effect from 16 October 2008, be adopted.

(c) Adoption

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Local Joint Consultative Committee meeting on 16 October 2008 be adopted.

(2) Minutes of the Local Joint Consultative Committee Meeting held on 4 December 2008

(a) Breckland Performance Management and Pay Scheme (Minute No 28/08)

Members deferred adoption of the recommendation until consideration of the report at Agenda Item 7.

The amendments to the existing Performance Related Pay Scheme were subsequently approved (see Minute No 6/09 below).

(b) Adoption

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Local Joint Consultative Committee meeting on 4 December 2008 be adopted.

5/09 THETFORD HEALTHY TOWN

The Environmental Planning Manager explained that the only change in the revised version of this report was the deletion of the Project Manager Post.

Thetford was the only town with both Growth Point and Healthy Town status. The report sought approval to recruit two extra members of staff; a planner and a Community Health Promotion Specialist. The Planner would be located within the existing Growth Point Team and make sure that health issues were embedded in proposed new schemes and take a role in educating the existing development control team to get the best for health out of new developments. There would also be spin-off benefits to other areas of the district from the knowledge gained from this process, particularly as Development Control Officers operate District wide.

Members discussed the financial implications and the possible redundancy costs which might be incurred. They were assured that money for the posts would be covered by the funding award passed down by NHS Norfolk as the accountable body.

Match funding was also discussed and the Sustainable Communities

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Manager confirmed that although the Council's contribution had not yet been agreed, the overall responsibility for Matching rested with the Health Authority.

The Chief Executive concluded by saying that investment for hard infrastructure was already taking place in Thetford and this was an opportunity to invest in the soft infrastructure at the same time.

RESOLVED to agree the extension of the Council's establishment to include an additional Senior Planner in the Thetford Growth Point Team and a Community Health Promotion Specialist in the Sustainable Communities Team.

6/09 BRECKLAND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND PAY SCHEME

The Chief Executive briefed Members on the scheme and explained the proposed changes and the reasons behind them.

From April 2008, with the introduction of the BRRS scheme, increments were removed; and performance related pay was introduced. The principles of performance related pay remain, although the HR team have been working on suggested amendments to the BRRS scheme (as indicated in the report) in response to trade union and staff feedback after April 2008.

The proposed changes seek to simplify the reporting regime and reduced the number of appraisals per year. The moderation process had also been amended to make it fairer and more transparent.

Consultation with the Union had seemed to be going well, and representatives were initially enthusiastic about the proposed amendments to the scheme. However, during recent negotiations some concerns had been highlighted. The Chief Executive and HR had encouraged and supported further staff consultation through the union, although to date there did not appear to have been a high attendance or response rate to any consultation conducted by HR or the union. In addition, a question had arisen about the length of the previous agreement concerning the Cost of Living allowance – now known as the Basic Performance Allowance.

Unison held that this agreement ran out at the end of the financial year and there was therefore a need for negotiation on a new rate from April 2009.

If agreement was given to the Performance Scheme, the Chief Executive asked for delegated authority to commence negotiations with Unison on a new Basic Performance Allowance.

It was clarified that the pay percentages were finite and if spot bonuses were awarded for achievements then staff could not be awarded again through the performance scheme (ie an employee should not gain financially from a performance related payment if they had already been rewarded for the same piece of work through a spot-bonus and vice versa).

RESOLVED to approve the proposed amendments to the existing scheme, as recommended by the Local Joint Consultative Committee, incorporating:

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- (a) Replacement of numerical scoring mechanism with performance 'ratings'.
- (b) Awarding a basic performance increase (BPI) to staff rated at 'performing' or above.
- (c) Reducing the frequency of formal appraisal meetings from quarterly to half yearly.
- (d) Amendment to the moderation process to include a more in depth two-staged panel approach.
- (e) Incorporating the non-consolidated bonus element of the scheme into the consolidated salary budget.
- (f) A review of the terms and conditions of the scheme every three years, with percentage awards including BPI being negotiated annually depending upon available budget.

It was further **RESOLVED** that authorisation be delegated to the Chief Executive to negotiate the Basic Performance Allowance rate from April 2009.

7/09 NEXT MEETING

The arrangements for the next meeting on 18 February 2009 were noted.

8/09 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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 involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

9/09 ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW - ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

The Strategic Director (Services) explained that the review had been carried out to identify weaknesses and propose improvements.

Consultations had taken place with staff, Unison, other Local Authorities and the County Council.

Significant savings had been identified and changes to working practices had been proposed. Changes would prevent duplication and rationalise relationships between departments to avoid conflicts of interest and maximise opportunities for work sharing.

The proposed establishment changes were listed at Appendix C and the savings were detailed on the Proforma B.

A Member was concerned that the review should have included an assessment on mobile working. However, it was considered that until the

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right staff and the right structure were in place, the introduction of mobile working was unlikely to be successful.

The second stage of the review, programmed to commence this month, would involve the Business Improvement Team looking for efficiencies and at proposals for mobile working.

The Executive Member for Business Transformation agreed that mobile working was an important aspect, but said that changes needed to be structured. He looked forward to significant improvements following the review and thanked Mark Stokes, Richard Kirk and the HR team for the work they had done so far. He had no hesitation in recommending the report to the Committee.

It was confirmed that the role of the Strategic Director was not included in the review.

RESOLVED

- (1) to authorise the establishment changes outlined in Appendix C, of the report, by:
 - (a) creating new posts as indicated;
 - (b) declaring redundant the existing posts indicated;
 - (c) changing the scope, terms and conditions of existing posts as shown in the report; and
- (2) delegate to the Strategic Director (Services) in consultation with the Chairman, 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 attached Proforma B are not exceeded.

The meeting closed at 11.13 am

CHAIRMAN