
BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

**Held on Wednesday, 13 July 2022 at 10.00 am in
Anglia Room, The Conference Centre, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Cllr Lynda Turner (Chairman)
Cllr Linda Monument

Cllr Susan Dowling
Cllr Phillip Duigan (Substitute Member)

Also Present

Cllr Gordon Bambridge
Cllr Philip Cowen
Cllr Jane James

Cllr Timothy Birt
Cllr Philip Morton

In Attendance

Sarah Barsby	- Assistant Director People and Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Claire Burton	- Organisational Development Performance Manager
Alison Chubbock	- Section 151 Officer & Assistant Director Finance
Gill Duffy	- Housing Manager
Ben Meen	- ICT & Digital Manager
Sarah Wolstenholme-Smy	- Legal Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Julie Britton	- Democratic Services Officer

Chairman's Opening Remarks

The Chairman, Councillor Lynda Turner advised that due to IT difficulties the meeting could not be livestreamed but would be recorded.

When wishing to speak, Members were reminded to turn their microphones on, and off when finished.

19/22 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 April 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

20/22 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Colman, Ashby and Hambidge. Councillor Duigan was in attendance as substitute.

21/22 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (AGENDA ITEM 3)

None declared.

22/22 URGENT BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 4)

Action By

None.

23/22 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 5)

Councillors Bambridge, Cowen, James, Birt and Morton were in attendance.

24/22 MEMBER TRAINING (STANDING ITEM) (AGENDA ITEM 6)

The Chairman mentioned the IT training that took place for Members in June 2022 and advised that Ben Meen, the IT & Digital Manager had been looking at how to better equip Members going forward. Further bitesize training sessions were now being arranged and the dates would be announced shortly.

Members were reminded to complete the cyber security training which was available on-line.

Although this was a very good idea, Councillor Cowen, the Executive Member for Finance, Revenues & Benefits, pointed out that due to the forthcoming Elections in May 2023, he felt that such training should be deferred as there could be new Members.

Councillor Birt felt that it might be worth going ahead with the training as it would provide an opportunity to finesse the programme if needed. On a different subject, Councillor Birt mentioned staff welfare and felt that welfare for Members was a little random and asked if 1 to 1s could be considered for Members.

The Chairman pointed out that pre-covid, all Members had the opportunity to have 1 to 1 sessions, and this could be revisited on the Member Development programme.

As there was no further training scheduled, Councillor James, the Executive Member for Customer & Corporate Services, asked Members to contact her for any training needs.

Councillor Monument had been a Councillor for many years and still struggled with IT and felt that some Members could benefit from an assessment.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that Members had been sent a survey to complete to establish levels of competency in respect of IT and suggested that the survey be sent again.

Councillor Duigan suggested a test for Members as many might have no idea of how competent they were.

The IT & Digital Manager explained that from the recent survey pilot, it had become very clear that sessions needed to be tailored to ability levels and therefore a further survey was being considered to establish where these levels should lie.

The Chairman then reminded Members that if anyone had any issues with IT or in respect of welfare to contact Councillor James or Sarah Barsby, the Assistant Director for People & Governance.

25/22NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The arrangements for the next meeting on Thursday, 22 September at 10am in the Anglia Room were noted.

26/22EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC (AGENDA ITEM 8)

After being duly proposed and seconded, it was

RESOLVED that 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 items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 & 2 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

27/22REVIEW OF SUPPORT SERVICES AT ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP (ARP) (AGENDA ITEM 9)

Councillor Cowen, the Executive Member for Finance, Revenues & Benefits presented the report in the absence of Lorraine King, the Head of Benefits, Council Tax Billing & Systems but Alison Chubbock, the Assistant Director of Finance & S151 Officer was in attendance to answer any questions if required.

Members were provided with a detailed overview of the report and the reason for it being presented to the General Purposes Committee was explained.

It was noted that the Anglia Revenues & Benefits Partnership (ARP) had been working extremely hard particularly in the last two years during the pandemic and due to much better technology, ARP was much more efficient and had become a beacon of excellence and was seen as a market leader. The Executive Member for Finance, Revenue & Benefits believed that if Members supported the recommendation in respect of the proposed changes to the structure further efficiency savings could be made.

In response to a concern, and if Members were mindful to approve the recommendation, it was explained that although there would be a reduction in roles there would be no redundancies as only the actual post was being removed.

Councillor Duigan felt that ARP was a great success story of which Breckland Council should be very proud.

The setup of staff employed by each authority was explained.

Councillor Birt was in support of the recommendation as, in his opinion, it was just a technical saving.

The recommendation was proposed and seconded, and it was:

RESOLVED that the recommendation as listed in the report be approved.

28/22ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & PERFORMANCE REVIEW (AGENDA ITEM 10)

Councillor James, the Executive Member for Customer & Corporate Services presented the report. Claire Burton, the Organisational Development &

Action By

Performance Manager was also in attendance to answer any questions.

Members were provided with a detailed overview of the report and attention was drawn to section 2 of the report in respect of the key changes and expected benefits if Members were mindful to approve the recommendation.

Concerns were raised about the some of the aspects to the revised staff structure.

Councillor Monument queried one of the job titles in the new structure at Appendix A of the report. The Organisational Development & Performance Manager explained that this post worked very much in partnership with other Services within the Council.

The recommendation was proposed and seconded, and it was:

RESOLVED that the recommendation as listed in the report (Option 1) be approved.

29/22 ROUGH SLEEPER INITIATIVE FUNDED POSTS (AGENDA ITEM 11)

Gordon Bambridge, the Executive Member for Housing & Homelessness introduced the report and explained the reason for its confidentiality.

Gill Duffy, the Housing Manager was also in attendance and provided Members with a detailed overview of the report and also asked for Members agreement to add further wording to the recommendation.

Councillor Dowling felt that the work that had been done within the Housing Team was excellent and she hoped that it would continue.

Councillor Birt fully supported the recommendation and asked about the work involved to end rough sleeping in the District. He also pointed out that rough sleeping was some people's own choice.

The Housing Manager explained that it was a challenge, but it was about minimising rough sleeping and visiting those who had welfare issues and providing the relevant support.

The Executive Member for Housing & Homelessness said it was a very important piece of work and Officers did recognise that on occasion it was the individual's choice not to have a home and sleep rough. He felt that the Team should be commended as it had an excellent record and most importantly it was a lifesaving matter for some people.

The recommendation as amended was proposed and seconded, and it was:

RESOLVED that the recommendation (as amended) be approved.

The meeting closed at 11.05 am

CHAIRMAN