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BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Held on Thursday, 9 February 2023 at 10.00 am in
Anglia Room, The Conference Centre, Elizabeth House, Dereham

PRESENT

Cllr Lynda Turner (Chairman)
Cllr Linda Monument

Cllr Tristan Ashby
Cllr Phillip Duigan (Substitute Member)

Also Present

Cllr Peter Wilkinson
Cllr Timothy Birt
Cllr Philip Cowen

Cllr Helen Crane
Cllr Jane James

In Attendance

Rob Walker
Alison Chubbock

Sarah Barsby

Teresa Smith
Ruth Tudge

- Deputy Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer
- Section 151 Officer & Assistant Director
Finance
- Assistant Director People and Governance
(Deputy Monitoring Officer)
- Democratic Services Team Leader
- Democratic Services Officer

Action By

11/23 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

12/23 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dowling and Hambidge.

Councillor Duigan was in attendance as substitute.

13/23 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

14/23 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

15/23 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

Councillors Birt, Cowen, Crane, James & Wilkinson.

16/23 MEMBER INDUCTION

Action By

Councillor Jane James, the Executive Member for Customer and Corporate Services introduced the report.

Teresa Smith, the Democratic Services Team Leader explained that an officer working group representing Democratic Services, IT and Communications had been set up to successfully deliver the induction programme in May 2023. A new welcome pack had been agreed which would align more closely with the staff induction experience. It had also been agreed that all members, whether existing or newly elected, would be provided with a Breckland Council device, and should they wish, a mobile phone to allow them to perform their duties as a ward member and all new members would be offered training on any device issued.

Councillor Duigan suggested that more than one induction day should be offered to ensure new members could attend at some point and could benefit from the information and training given as it was extremely useful.

Councillor Birt asked about the opportunity to bring your own device. The IT & Digital Manager, Ben Meen explained that this was something that Breckland Council had explored and investigated, however due to concerns over security and the resources to manage this, it was not something that could be accommodated at this time.

Councillor Wilkinson welcomed what he thought was an in-depth report on induction and training with lots of initiatives for newly elected Members which had not been offered in the past and felt that this was an improvement.

Councillor Monument felt it might be worth contacting Members newly elected at the previous election to find out their thoughts on what worked or not and what they found useful.

Councillor James said that she was part of the last intake and was very mindful of speaking to others and there had been discussions on what had been useful or not. Councillor James said that she would have further discussions with the team around possible notifications of training and induction dates.

The Chairman suggested that refresher training for all Members would be a good thing as things were constantly evolving and changing.

Members of the committee noted the report.

17/23 MEMBER TRAINING (STANDING ITEM) (IF ANY)

None.

18/23 PARTNERSHIP WORKING THROUGH A SECTION 113 AGREEMENT FOR LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS' FRAUD SERVICES

Councillor Philip Cowen, the Executive Member for Finance, Revenues & benefits introduced the report. He stated that cabinet had approved entering into a Section 113 agreement with Lincolnshire County Council (to include Boston Borough Council, City of Lincoln Council, East Lindsey District Council, West Lindsey District Council, South Kesteven District council, North Kesteven District Council and South Holland Council) for ARP to provide Single Person

Discount Fraud services.

In addition, it was recommended that the Breckland staffing establishment be increased by 3 permanent FTE and 2 temporary FTE for the fully funded posts required to deliver the services included in the Section 113 agreement. The fully funded posts would be funded by Lincolnshire County Council and no cost would be incurred by the ratepayers of Breckland Council.

Councillor Duigan welcomed the report and praised the work of ARP stating that over the years since the collaboration with Breckland Council, the service had improved greatly.

Councillor Ashby asked for further clarification on the option to make the posts permanent, subject to funding. Councillor Cowen explained that it would be prudent to look ahead and that based on ARP's history it was probable that the posts would continue.

Councillor Birt asked for assurance that the new full-time posts would cover the full external contract provision requirements with no dilution of Breckland Council's Fraud Services. Councillor Cowen confirmed that this would only enhance and strengthen the ability of the officers concerned to fulfil the commitment.

The recommendation was proposed and seconded, and it was:

RESOLVED that the Breckland staffing establishment be increased by 3 permanent FTE and 2 temporary FTE for the fully funded posts required to deliver the services included in the Section 113 agreement.

19/23 PARTNERSHIP WORKING THROUGH A SECTION 113 AGREEMENT FOR BROADLAND AND SOUTH NORFOLK COUNCILS' FRAUD SERVICES

Councillor Philip Cowen, the Executive Member for Finance, Revenues & benefits introduced the report. He stated that Cabinet had agreed to entering into a Section 113 agreement with Broadland District Council and South Norfolk District Council for ARP to provide Fraud services and it was recommended that Breckland Council increase staffing by 2 permanent FTE for the fully funded posts.

The recommendation was proposed and seconded, and it was:

RESOLVED that the Breckland Council staffing establishment be increased by 2 permanent FTE for the fully funded posts required to deliver the services included in the Section 113 agreement.

20/23 NEXT MEETING

The arrangements for the next meeting on Wednesday, 22 March 2023 at 2pm in the Anglia Room were noted.

21/23 EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC

Following a vote, it was:

Action By

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 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.

22/23 DIRECTORATE REVIEW

This item was discussed in a private session.

23/23 RESTRICTED MINUTES: 12 JANUARY 2023

This item was discussed in a private session.

The meeting closed at 10.48 am

CHAIRMAN