

JSC 9

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the **JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** meeting held at the Council Offices, Needham Market on Wednesday 30 May 2012 at 9.30pm.

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs E B Gibson-Harries - Chair – Conservative and Independent Group

Babergh

Councillors: S R Barrett
D M Busby
J R B Cave
B D Hurren
D C Rose

Mid Suffolk

Councillors: D M Burn
Mrs R J Eburne
R M Melvin
M R Redbond

*Denotes Substitute

Also Present

Councillors: D T Haley Mid Suffolk
B Riley Babergh

In attendance: Interim Transformation Director (MH)
Interim Head of Programme Delivery (CF)
Director of Finance (BH)
Committee Officer (GH)

SY01 ELECTION OF MEETING CHAIRMAN

Councillor Mrs E B Gibson-Harries was proposed and seconded as Chairman of the meeting.

By a unanimous vote

RESOLUTION

That Councillor Mrs E B Gibson-Harries be elected as Chairman of the meeting.

SY02 APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no apologies.

SY03 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL OR PERSONAL/PREJUDICIAL INTEREST BY MEMBERS

There were no declarations of interest.

SY04 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Report JSC/5/12

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2012 were confirmed as a correct record subject to an amendment to the first paragraph of item 6 to read as follows:

'Mike Hammond (Interim Transformation Director) introduced Paper JSC3 which provided an update on the costs and savings to date against the BMI Project Budget and compared to the Business Case, and sought Members' views on the type of information that they would wish to see included in future monitoring reports. Members noted that the process to date is within cost, and on target overall for the 2012/13 savings, **however, this was not clear from the paper presented**. The Director of Finance outlined the key aspects identified in Paper JSC3 and clarified figures referred to in various paragraphs of the report, as detailed below. Both officers responded to Members' questions on matters covered by the report.'

SY05 PETITIONS

None received

SY06 UPDATE – SAVINGS, COSTS AND BENEFITS OF INTEGRATION AND TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Report JSC/6/12

Director of Finance

The report advised Members on the latest position on savings, costs and benefits of the Integration and Transformation programme. Achieving savings to meet the financial challenge faced by both Councils was one of the key aims and priorities of the programme.

The Director of Finance advised Members that the date of further submission of reports to Members as stated in point 2.4 of the recommendation should read October and not August.

Members were assured that the latest known position showed that integration savings, costs and benefits were proceeding in accordance with the Business Case forecast. However, it would not be possible to confirm actual costs and total savings until the Tier 5 staffing structures were in place. The transformation programme would, however, have to contribute to the further significant savings that will be needed over the next few years.

In response to concerns and queries raised, Members were informed that:

- The figures shown in the report and Appendix A were net of RIEP funding.
- It was recognised that Tier 5 posts represented the front line operations of the Councils and whilst the final number of posts had yet to be determined, the main reductions in posts were at Tiers 1 to 4 i.e. up to and including Corporate Managers.

A Member considered that Appendix B should also reflect that 3 external staff appointments that had been made at Tier 1 and Tier 2 levels.

By a unanimous vote

RESOLUTION 1

That Members note the progress on achieving integration savings, as set out in the report and Appendix A, which indicates that the Councils are on track to meet the joint ongoing savings of just over £1.3m forecast in the Business Case for 2012/13.

RESOLUTION 2

That Members note that costs in 2011/12 and 2012/13 are expected to be within the Business Case forecast, as set out in the report and Appendix A.

RESOLUTION 3

That Members note the reductions in staffing numbers, as set out in Appendix B.

RESOLUTION 4

That further reports be submitted to the Joint Committee in October 2012 and early 2013 once appointments to the tier 4 and 5 staffing structures have been made.

SY07 VERBAL UPDATE ON THE CORPORATE MANAGERS APPOINTMENT PROCESS

Members received a verbal update from the Interim Head of Programme Delivery on the Corporate Managers appointment process, details of which were also provided in Appendix B of the report JSC/6/12.

From the 34 Corporate Managers posts that were available, 11 members of staff had been 'slotted' into positions, and 14 of the current Managers/Lead Officers had chosen not to apply for any of the available Corporate Manager posts. The selection process was currently underway and Corporate Manager appointments would be completed by July. As a result of no applications being received for the post of Corporate Manager – Public Realm, the post had been advertised internally. In the event of no suitable applications being received, the post would then be advertised externally.

In response to concerns and comments raised, Members were informed of the following:

- Staff considered 'at risk' during the Tier 4 process, who were not appointed to a Corporate Manager post, would be eligible to apply for Tier 5 posts as and when they were advertised, they would not, however, receive preferential consideration over and above their Tier 5 colleagues and would be expected to follow the due selection processes.
- External advertising would only take place once the internal application process had been exhausted.
- There was not an even mix of applicants for Tier 4 posts, therefore, competition for posts was varied.
- The Selection Panels would appoint the best candidate for any post, and not be ruled by individual circumstances. Being the only candidate for a particular post did not guarantee appointment.
- Whilst the delay in Tier 4 appointments had some impact on projected savings, these did not adversely impact upon the Business Case forecast.
- Staff departures and the cascading effect of staff through Tier 3 to Tier 4 had contributed to the reduction in the number of pre integration posts shown in Appendix B.
- All staff members would know in July which Corporate Manager they were responsible to.
- A range of reasons had been received from staff who had requested voluntary redundancy. The 3 main reasons were believed to be:
 - (1) Age and length of service
 - (2) Reluctance to be part of a changing and uncertain process
 - (3) Opportunity for career change
- Applications for voluntary redundancy were not automatically granted, a post would only be declared redundant if it was no longer required. Staff at Tier 5 level who had applied for redundancy had recently been notified as to whether their application had been successful, deferred, or unsuccessful.
- It was expected that significantly more members of staff would be 'slotted in' during the Tier 5 process.
- Once Corporate Managers were in place the creation of the Operational Delivery Teams would be put in place. Input from Members reflecting the needs of their communities would be needed in order to facilitate this. Community engagement was all important in the transformation process.
- The final post integration figures for Tier 5 had still to be determined; the delivery plan was yet to be put in place; and dependant on the length of the consultation period it could be the end of the year before all Tier 5 appointments were in place. Completion of the delivery plans would vary between service areas. The Interim Head of Programme Delivery apologised for the misleading statement in Appendix B, report JSC/6/12 which said that Tier 5 appointments would be made in the autumn.

- 5 Members from Babergh and 5 Members from Mid Suffolk formed part of the advisory panel for planning services.

Detailed discussion centred on the departure of experienced Officers and any subsequent associated training costs. Members were assured that training would not be compromised. It was important that associated training costs were monitored and kept within the cost parameters of the Business Case. The new Corporate Managers together with the Management Team would be looking at their development needs in July. Members were informed that a report detailing costs would be presented to the October meeting and Officers were requested to be mindful that costs did not differ from those projected in the Business Case.

Members expressed concerns that due to the absence of a revised organisational structure they were finding it increasingly difficult to direct their communities concerns to the appropriate council services and officers. Moreover, it was very confusing for the electorate at the moment and it was important that their needs were not overlooked. Following discussion and the distribution of a draft organisational structure chart, Members concurred that this would be a useful tool both for themselves and for the parish councils. A completed chart to be distributed to Members later in July would also include a brief description of duties. Members were further informed that an updated poster showing all the members of the Management Team would also be circulated.

Concerns were raised regarding public awareness; the distinction and connection between integration and transformation; and compliance with the business case. Members were assured that these issues would be addressed in the next report to Joint Scrutiny.

Members recognised the importance of getting the integration and transformation process right but also expressed their concerns for the welfare of Tier 5 staff during the lengthy process.

The Interim Transformation Director and the Interim Head of Programme Delivery offered to meet each of the political groups if this would help improve communication with, and the understanding of all Members, on the issue of integration and transformation.

SY08 PROPOSED FORWARD PLAN 2012/13

Report JSC/7/12

Members were invited to make comments.

Some concern was expressed regarding the large content scheduled for October:

- Deliberation took place as to whether item 7 (review of integration and transformation) should be reviewed 6 monthly or 3 monthly. Most Members concurred with the Officers' view that it was important that such a review take place at every Joint Scrutiny meeting.

- Members were informed that outcomes for Item 1 (Peer Review) meeting) would be available on line and that the scheduled report would be an action plan addressing the points raised by the review.
- The Interim Head of Programme Delivery concurred with Members that item 4 (localism, community engagement and neighbourhood planning) needed to be a specific and defined report.
- Some concern was expressed over the inclusion of Item 5 (Shared Revenue Partnership) and the scrutiny of a partnership which included Ipswich Borough Council. Members agreed by a majority vote, that the item should remain on the Forward Plan subject to discussion with Ipswich Borough Council on what was the best approach to take forward the scrutiny of the Shared Revenue Partnership.

The proposed forward plan was received subject to the inclusion of a report on staff development at the October meeting.

SY09 PROPOSED DATES OF FUTURE JSC MEETINGS

Report JSC/8/12

That the dates and venues of future meetings be as follows:

Tuesday 2 October 2012	Council Chamber, Hadleigh
Tuesday 8 January 2013	Council Chamber, Needham Market
Thursday 23 May 2013	Council Chamber, Hadleigh