

JSC/6/13

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the **JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** meeting held at the Council Offices, Needham Market on Tuesday 8 January 2013 at 9.30pm.

PRESENT:

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

Babergh

Councillors: D M Busby
J R B Cave
D C Rose

Mid Suffolk

Councillors: Mrs R J Eburne
Mrs D K Guthrie*
M R Redbond
Mrs J C Storey

*Denotes Substitute

In attendance: Interim Head of Programme Delivery (CF)
Head of Corporate Organisation (PQ)
Corporate Manager – Financial Services (BH)
Committee Officer (GH)

SY13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Mrs D K Guthrie substituted for Councillor D Burn

SY14 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL OR PERSONAL/PREJUDICIAL INTEREST BY MEMBERS

There were no declarations of interest.

SY15 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Report JSC/1/13

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2012 were confirmed as a correct record.

Matters rising thereof:

Shared Revenues Partnership (SRP) – Members reported that they had found the visit to the offices for the SRP in Ipswich very helpful and enlightening. Members requested that their appreciation of the visit be forwarded on to the relevant Officers. It was further suggested that a future visit following government reforms to the benefit and revenue system would be beneficial.

SY16 PETITIONS

None received

SY17 UPDATE ON SAVINGS AND COSTS RELATING TO THE INTEGRATION AND TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Report JSC/2/13

Corporate Manager – Financial Services

The report provided Members with a brief update on the latest position on savings and costs of the Integration and Transformation programme.

Since May 2012, 34 Corporate Managers had been appointed with the process for 2 further posts relating to Governance and Legal being progressed as part of the Operational Delivery (ODT) consultation proposals.

The current position in relation to savings and costs as compared to the Business Case for the financial years 2011/2014 were set out in tables within the report. The Corporate Manager informed Members that the figures illustrated could be subject to change as the actual position for 2013/14 would be dependant on the final ODT structures following consultation. Following on from this, further savings would need to be achieved from the transformational reviews due to commence during 2013/14.

In response to a request for more detail on savings; the Corporate Manager explained that out of the £1.1m estimated staff savings in 2012/13, £0.9m related to Integrated Management Team savings (Tier 1 to Tier 4) and other savings would be made from vacancies. Work was still ongoing, however, to finalise details of the total staff savings for the year. Members would receive an update following completion of the final ODT structures in May.

By a unanimous vote

RESOLUTION 1

That Members note the current position on integration savings and costs.

RESOLUTION 2

That Members note that further savings will be required from the transformational reviews that will start in 2013/14 in order to achieve balanced budgets year on year and financial sustainability for both Councils in the medium term.

SY18 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE UPDATE

Report JSC/3/13

Head of Corporate Organisation

The report provided Members with an update on the approach taken with regard to the actions and issues identified through the Local Government Group (LG Group) Peer Challenge process.

The Head of Corporate Organisation emphasised that the Peer Review should not be seen in isolation of the integration and transformation and that the proposed actions would be embedded in the said programme rather than developed as a separate action plan.

In response to questions, Members were provided with an explanation of the role, function and funding sources for the LG Group.

Members were informed that regular report updates on the integration and transformation programme would be provided to the Joint Management Integration Board (JMIB) and that a review of benefits, costs and savings of the integrations and transformation programme would be available for joint scrutiny at the meeting on 23 May 2013.

Members noted the report.

SY19 ESTABLISHING THE OPERATIONAL DELIVERY TEAMS

Report JSC/4/13

Interim Head of Programme Delivery

The report provided an overview of the key elements of the consultation process currently being undertaken on proposals for a single, fully integrated Operational Delivery Team (ODT) structure and two Corporate Manager posts for Babergh District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council. The proposals build on the significant progress already made in achieving a single integrated management structure.

The Interim Head of Programme Delivery further informed Members that in the region of 450 staff would be involved in the structuring of the new ODTs. Since the consultation document had been made available on 12 December 2012, a lot of initial responses had been received, one staff meeting had already been held and future meetings scheduled. Members were assured that the proportion of staff reductions as a result of the new ODT structure would be far less than previous reductions seen at other levels.

By the end of April/May Babergh and Mid Suffolk would be the first councils in the country to have a fully integrated staffing structure serving two sovereign council bodies. Once this single integrated workforce had been achieved a programme of transformation reviews would be launched to determine how best to focus resources to deliver the outcomes set by Members.

Members expressed some concerns regarding the lack of an integrated IT system in relation to email addresses, and the lack of personal designated telephone numbers.

In view of the progress made in respect of integrated staffing, Members felt that it would be worthwhile investigating the possibility of the Councils providing a consultation service to other councils.

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

- Staff training costs had been budgeted for. Once the ODTs were in place a training programme would be developed to accommodate the differing staffing skills needed.
- The release of the ODT consultation document before Christmas was considered preferable for staff rather than creating further delay by releasing the document in the New Year.
- The process of establishing the ODT teams prior to undertaking a transformational review would enable a sound base to be established and allow teams to be involved in the creative process of transformation.
- The time taken to get the new staffing structure in place was not considered to be overly long in terms of the complexities involved and in comparison to staffing reorganisations undertaken by other local authorities.
- The new ODT jobs had generic job profiles and were skill based; flexibility was built in to develop and accommodate to changing community needs. They were designed to unlock skills not being used and to unleash potential which would enhance the transformation process.
- The HR Panel were involved in the setting of pay and conditions.
- Negotiations with trade unions were proving to be a very useful and positive part of the consultation process.

Members noted the report.

SY20 FORWARD PLAN

Report JSC/5/13

The Forward Plan was noted.

SY21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 23 May 2013.