



IMPLEMENTATION EXECUTIVE

Notes of the Informal meeting held on 16 January 2008

In Attendance

Wiltshire County Council

Mrs Jane Scott – Leader – in the Chair
Mr John Thomson – Deputy Leader
Mr Mark Baker
Mrs Nancy Bryant
Miss Fleur de Rhe Philipe
Mrs Mary Douglas
Mr John Noeken
Mr Toby Sturgis
Mrs Bridget Wayman

Kennet District Council

Mr Lionel Grundy – Leader
Mr Jerry Willmott – Deputy Leader

North Wiltshire District Council

Mr Dick Tonge – Leader
Mrs Allison Bucknell – Deputy Leader

Salisbury District Council

Mr Paul Sample – Leader
Mr Steven Fear – Deputy Leader

West Wiltshire District Council

Mr Tony Philips – Deputy Leader
Mr Rod Eaton

Also in attendance: Mr Paul Clegg and Mr Fred Westmoreland (Salisbury DC)
and Mr Jeff Osborn (West Wiltshire DC & WCC)

1. Notes of Last Meeting

The notes of the last meeting held on 28 November 2007 were confirmed as a correct record subject to an amendment at note number 4 – Outline Work Programme - to correct the title of Richard Payne to read 'Director of the South West Provincial Employers'.

2. Draft Procedure Rules

The first draft of the Procedure Rules for the IE had been circulated to all Wiltshire Monitoring Officers for their views. Members' views were sought on the Procedure Rules, details of which were circulated for consideration. It was noted that in terms of membership, substitutions would not be permitted.

The following comments were made:

Para 16.1 – It was clarified that reference to the Constitution in this paragraph referred to the Constitution of Wiltshire County Council

Para 14.2 – inclusion of agenda items by the IE Leader. Cllr Phillips (WWDC) suggested that all members of the IE should be permitted to include items on the IE agenda. The Chair explained that in order to manage the workload of the IE, she would be happy for members to suggest items for consideration and she would then take a view on how they should be dealt with.

ACTIONS

- a) That the website link to County Council's Constitution be circulated members of the IE (JQ).
- b) That the Procedure Rules be agreed in principle and presented to the first formal meeting of the IE for adoption together with any feedback from Monitoring Officers and that the formal meeting of the IE be advised that the Procedure Rules had been endorsed at this meeting SG/IG).

3. Towards One Council – Transition Plan

A report on progress since the last meeting was presented, on which comments were sought. Mr Gregory asked if Members would prefer future reports in a different format.

Para 2 – item 10 - Mr Tonge explained that the letter inviting district councils to nominate representatives to serve on the Community Leadership and Governance Reference Group had been circulated only to Chief Executives and not Leaders.

Para 4.4.1 – Role of Chief Executives – Mrs Bucknell suggested that the structure required change. Mr Gregory explained that this was very much a work in progress although the Chief Executives were broadly in support of the terms of reference.

Para 4.10 – Human Resources – Mrs Bucknell questioned why there was no reference to harmonisation of severance and redundancy pay and sought an assurance that this was being taken on board. Mr Gregory confirmed that such matters with advice from Richard Payne where appropriate, would be brought to the IE along with other key issues.

Para 5.2 – Work Streams - the subject areas of work streams might need to adapt due to the outcome of the IE's work.

Mr Phillips sought an assurance that revenues and benefits would be considered as a frontline service. Mr Gregory explained that this service was currently under resources, but was of equal priority. A review of priorities would be held in February.

Para 5.5.1 – Area Boards – Noting that North Wilts Area Committees had already agreed to trial area boards, Miss de Rhe Philipe hoped that this would not exclude other areas from trialling area Boards. Mr Thomson confirmed that there is a proposal to resource developmentwork in up to ten areas. Mr Sample was concerned that currently there was no timetable to agree the role of area boards and develop proposals before they were trialled. Mr Sample was reassured that the pilots would not have an implementational role but would work with the relevant work stream to develop their role.

Para 5.5.2 – Boundary Review – An assurance was sought that despite concerns from the Electoral Commission, the review would be undertaken in time. Dr Robinson explained that the Boundary Committee had expressed a view that it might not be in a position to complete the review if the Order was not made by February. The DCLG was aware of this and was progressing the Order urgently in order to meet the Boundary Committee's timescale. Mr Quinton explained that the Boundary Committee would like to provide a briefing to Members on the review and Members' views were sought on whether there should be separate briefings for the IE and the councils or a collective briefing for all.

5.5.3 – Noted that the first sentence of this paragraph should also include reference to the involvement of district councils. Mr Clegg updated Members on the proposals for the parish warding of Salisbury. The recent consultation exercise resulted in a huge response in favour of the option for a city council for Salisbury. A 12 week consultation was now in progress on what powers could be devolved to such a city council.

Mr Tonge requested an officer report on the number of LDF's required. It was noted that an officer group was being formed with district and county council representation to consider proposals from GOSW on how to take this forward. An update on this would be made at the next meeting with an options paper being

presented in due course. Mr Batten added that the creation of a single LDF team was an early goal it was hoped to achieve.

ACTIONS

- a) That the letter to Chief Executives inviting district councils to nominate representatives to serve on the Community Leadership and Governance Reference Group be circulated to all Wiltshire Leaders (TG).
- b) That a collective briefing on the Boundary Review for all Members be arranged (JQ)
- c) The IE was happy with the format of the progress report which would be presented to each meeting (TG).

Members considered the Programme Initiation Document.

Mr Gregory confirmed that whilst individual budget areas will more than likely require adjustment, it remained the target to achieve overall savings of £18.145m. An update of the transition costs and savings in key areas would be provided to the next meeting. The risk management element had been looked at carefully by all the Councils and the risk register would be refined and brought back for further consideration.

Communications Strategy – this was a critical area to get right in all aspects of the programme and would include initiatives on services, events and publications to keep everyone informed ie staff, stakeholders and public.

Mr Sample commended the report which he felt provided clear and specific objectives. He gave an assurance that Salisbury District Council would co-operate in order to bring about savings. CSM 4.3 – Mr Sample suggested that as a key ambition of the Council, we should include 'to have a leading voice in the South West region' and in relation to community engagement, he suggested the inclusion of 'increase community involvement'.

The Chairman accepted that having a leading voice was very much part of the submission for One Council, but she pointed out that the Critical Success Measures detailed in the report were more short term than long term goals. The point was also made that the transition phase would not avert attention from what was happening regionally and Members would be kept up to date on regional issues.

CSM 3 – Mr Fear emphasised the importance of community area boards in relation to community engagement and suggested that there should be performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of community engagement. He also stressed the need for a clear menu of devolution of powers to town and parish councils. He asked that Salisbury City be involved with the work with town and parish councils.

Risk management – Mr Eaton considered there were two elements of risk in relation to the risk of failure to achieve, namely the breadth and depth of risk and the effect of risk. Mr Gregory offered to develop the risk matrix further to take this on board.

Following a question from Mr Eaton on the programme costs in relation to HR and relocation costs, Mr Gregory explained that these costs had been amended in the updated bid.

Mrs Bucknell pointed out that a number of issues raised by Members at this meeting had already been covered under paragraph 7 – Quality Assurance – Meeting our Objectives rather than covered by a specific Critical Success Measure. She also reminded members that the purpose of the programme was to take us up to April 2009.

In response to a question from Mr Sample, the Chairman confirmed that the programme would continue to be developed and all further PID's would be reported to the IE.

ACTIONS

- a) Update on transition costs and savings in key areas be presented to next meeting (TG/SS).
- b) That Salisbury City be involved in any discussions with town and parish councils (NL).
- c) That a report be prepared for a future meeting on the longer term goals for community area boards and community engagement (NL).
- d) The risk matrix be further developed. (TG)
- e) That references to 'army' be changed to 'Armed Forces'

4. Member Engagement

Mr Gregory presented a report to assist Members to identify arrangements for Members' involvement and engagement in the transition process to establish the new Council.

The Chairman explained that the Executive and the Scrutiny functions were distinct but would require coordination to avoid duplication. The IE should be free to commission advice from Members with relevant experience in order to formulate its views, but this did not mean that the IE would be duplicating the work of the scrutiny committees.

Mr Phillips suggested that the Joint Transition Scrutiny Board might also like to increase its membership to reflect the IE's increase in membership from what was originally proposed. Mr Osborn, Chairman of WCC Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, explained that it was far better to have a smaller Board to allow for increased participation by Members on the task groups which carry out the actual research and investigative work. Mrs Scott indicated that this was a decision for the Joint Transition Scrutiny Board and not the IE.

ACTIONS

- a) To note the comments of WWDC in respect of increasing the membership of the Joint Transition Scrutiny Board and ask the Scrutiny Committee to respond (TG).
- b) That further work be undertaken on the options available to engage Members on governance arrangements (TG)
- c) To accept the report presented as the basis for ensuring that the wider membership of all 5 councils can be involved and engaged in the process (TG).
- d) To require the Joint Implementation Team to ensure a regular update of progress is provided for all Councillors and a programme of seminars is arranged TG/JQ).

5. Unitary Councillor – Job Description

Members' views were sought on a job description and person specification for the role of unitary councillor which had been drawn up following collaborative between the district and county councils. Mr Sample considered it was a very good piece of work and asked for information on publicity arrangements on recruiting Councillors for the new Council.

The Chairman confirmed that publicity will be made to meet the public's interest in standing at election and for induction material. The recruitment of Members would be dealt with under the Community Leadership and Governance work stream.

Mr Grundy suggested that further information should be provided to people considering standing for election ie how the unitary council will operate, when and where will meetings be held (daytime or evenings) and the nature of the job and pay. The Chairman explained that whilst we can at this stage give a view on these matters, it was very much up to the unitary council to decide. As far as pay was concerned, this would be at current WCC levels in accordance with the bid submission. Mr Noeken suggested that in giving some guidance on this, we could simply report what the current arrangements with an explanation that these were subject to decisions by the unitary council.

Mr Willmott took exception to a person specification accompanying the job description as in his opinion, this was a matter for the electorate to decide upon. Mrs Bucknell suggested that rather than emphasise the skills a prospective councillor should have at the outset, emphasis should be placed on skills councillors were expected to acquire during their term of office.

ACTIONS

That a paper on recruitment of Members be prepared for the IE to include job description and person specification (JQ).

6. Outline Work Programme

Members' views were sought on the outline work programme for January to November 2008.

Mrs Bucknell considered that the recruitment of a new Chief Executive scheduled in the work programme for November 2008 was leaving it too late and should be brought forward to possibly the Summer 2008.

It was noted that in respect of Community Area Boards/Partnerships, the work programme should be considering their roles and responsibilities in March and their models and locations in April.

ACTIONS

- a) That a report detailing the pros and cons of dealing with the recruitment of a new Chief Executive earlier than the scheduled November 2008 be presented to the next meeting (RW).
- b) That an updated project timeline be presented to each meeting as a way of showing progress (TG).

7. Dates of Future Meetings

Members' views were sought on suggested meeting date and times for future meetings. It had been hoped to arrange them on a fixed day and time, but so far this had not been possible, but hopefully would be achievable in the longer term.

ACTIONS

That the following dates of meetings be approved:

13 February

19 March

15 April

22 May

17 June

9 July

All at 4pm with a pre-meeting briefing at 3pm.

Venue: The Chestnut Room, County Hall, Trowbridge

Date of Next meeting Wednesday 13 February at 4pm