



AGENDA

Event: JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TRANSITION BOARD

Place: Kennet District Council
Devizes

Room: Council Chamber

Date: Friday 25 July 2008

Time: 10.30 am

This is a formal meeting of the Board although substitute members, and indeed any other members of the participating councils, and the public are welcome to attend.

Members	
Cllr Tony Molland WCC (Chairman)	Cllr Keith Humphries WWDC
Cllr Chris Humphries WCC	Cllr Christine Reid NWDC
Cllr Jeff Osborn WCC	Cllr Jonathan Seed KDC
Cllr Ricky Rogers WCC	Cllr Michael Hewitt SDC
Cllr Ian West WCC	

Substitutes	
Cllr Mollie Groom WCC	Cllr Pip Ridout WWDC
Cllr Margaret Taylor WCC	Cllr Alan Hill NWDC
Cllr Ross Henning WCC	Cllr Paula Winchcombe KDC
Cllr Roy While WCC	Cllr Ray Parsons KDC
	Cllr Bobbie Chettleburgh SDC

NOTES

- (1) Members are encouraged to view the latest IE papers as background to the work of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Transition Board. These can be found on WCC website – Towards One Council – Members Information.
- (2) The regular progress report on overall programme activity will generally be circulated as an information item at the end of each JOSTB agenda.
- (3) Board members are encouraged to communicate with each other, and scrutiny support officers, on relevant transition issues between meetings.

Members are advised that a picture of the JOSTB for the One Council website will be taken at the beginning of the meeting.
--

AGENDA

1. Apologies and Membership

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 4 July 2008

A copy circulated herewith.

3. Chairman's Announcements

4. Structure and Organisation of the New Council

(a) Structure Chart and Roles and Responsibilities

The latest information reflecting the most recent staff appointments and changes in the organisational structure is circulated as requested at the last meeting.

(b) Migration from Workstreams into Service Director Management

The following are circulated:

- (i) Report to JIT on 8 July
- (ii) Discussion paper tabled at IE on 9 July
- (iii) Minute from JIT on 8 July

JOSTB is asked to consider the issues contained in the papers and express views which can be reported to the IE on 27 August when it formally decides a way forward.

The Programme Office Manager will attend the meeting to introduce the report and respond to members' questions.

5. Towards One Council – Progress Report

The latest transition programme progress report prepared for the IE meeting on 9 July 2008 is circulated for information.

The Programme Office Manager will attend the meeting to introduce the report and respond to members' questions.

6. Resource Plans

A report by the Director of Resources WCC is circulated.

Attached as appendices are the following documents:

- (a) People Strategy
- (b) ICT Strategy
- (c) Property Strategy
- (d) MTFS (this was received by JOSTB on 30 May)

The resource plans were adopted by WCC Cabinet on 15 July and will be considered by the IE on 27 August. This provides JOSTB with an opportunity to comment on the strategies for report to the IE.

7. Parking Enforcement

A report by the FLS Parking Project Manager is circulated.

The Board agreed at the last meeting to scrutinise transitional progress on the application of the civil parking enforcement for the new Council at the request of WCC Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

The Parking Project Manager will attend the meeting to introduce the report and respond to members' questions.

8. Task Groups

To receive progress reports from the leading authorities on the Board's current task groups as follows:

(1) Development Control – WWDC

The Task Group's final report was endorsed at the last meeting.

The same report was considered by the IE on 9 July along with the recommendations of JOSTB. The decision of the IE is set out at minute no. 67 of the minutes circulated under item no. 11.

It has been agreed that the Task Group would continue in being to scrutinise the implementation of the recommendations and the further reports requested by the IE, and remain supported by WWDC.

(2) Waste – WCC

The group meets on 28 July to review waste budget proposals for 2009/10 and to receive a project update. Timescales for transforming the service are still a concern with members keen to support the development of the transformation plan.

(3) Community Area Boards – WCC

The Community Area Board Task Group met on 4 July where the members received a project update and considered the latest draft of the Area Board Rule Book.

The task group is concerned about the lack of detail around the role of the Cabinet Member and has invited the WCC Deputy Leader (John Thomson) to its next meeting on 1 August to provide additional evidence.

Members have been told by the project team that the proposed budget for each Area Board is £50k. The task group will be inviting John Thomson to discuss further opportunities to increase this amount, with one suggestion being the reallocation of section 106 funds. There is a concern amongst the members that the £50k will not be enough of an incentive to encourage public participation.

The key risk identified by the project team is the need for services to devolve responsibility to the locality. At this stage it is too early to identify the level of commitment from services but the task group will be maintaining a watching brief.

This project is centred on delivering a 'new' governance structure for Wiltshire. It does not have a transitional period, with an aim of delivering a seamless service into the new council. The project team has moved directly into transformation with a clear project deadline. The message from the officers is that they are in a 'developmental phase'. Options are being tested through the 12 pilot areas, from which the detailed proposals will flow. In response to this, the task group's involvement is currently biased towards policy development.

Following the appointment of service directors, the Community Leadership and Support Service Director will assume the responsibility for delivering the Community Area Boards Project.

(4) Customer Access – NWDC

The meeting of the Task Group scheduled for 14 July was cancelled as the information on the detailed cost savings requested by members would not be available by this date.

The Task Group will meet again in September when they will receive a presentation from John Rogers (Workstream Manager) on the efficiencies the Customer Access Strategy will achieve. The Customer Contact Centre Project Lead (Jackie Tavener, NWDC) will also attend to explain the principles of LEAN fundamentals and its application to Customer Access.

(5) Housing – WCC

(a) Task Group Update

This task group has now met three times, and as a consequence, its key findings so far have identified that:

- the new council will be the second largest housing authority in the south west, and it will inherit one of the largest housing waiting lists in the south (13,000);
- the aim is to have one unified housing strategy by April 2010;
- a mapping process is currently underway to identify how much (and the location of) all temporary accommodation available for the homeless, in order for this supply and service to be ready for April 2009;
- the task group will be taking the paper to be written for the IE in October with a proposal to agree a draft policy for the combining of all four district "choice based lettings" services into one new "Homes 4 Wiltshire". The development of this is underway countywide, and will hopefully be in place by February / March 2009;

- without careful management and a favourable government review, there is a risk that the Salisbury District Council Housing Revenue Account will be in significant deficit by 2012/13;
- Salisbury District Council have drafted proposals for a “Local Authority Housing Vehicle” which is intended to act as an independent financial arm of the council (similar to an “Arms Length Management Organisation”) to enable the council to build its own housing stock, especially to help with the shortage of affordable housing;
- the Supporting People Strategy is about to be reviewed for the next five years.

At its next meeting on 1 August the task group will interview the new Corporate Director for Economic Development, Planning & Housing, and the new Housing Service Director. This is with a view to securing what are the most critical issues facing housing services in the transition. It is hoped that this will place the task group in a better position to single out which issues warrant in depth scrutiny and analysis over the coming months.

An interim position paper, for this board’s consideration on 29 August, will be finalised following the task group’s August meeting.

(b) West Wiltshire District Council Scrutiny Committee

At the meeting of the West Wiltshire District Council Scrutiny Committee on 16 July, Members discussed the JOSTB task groups and were particularly concerned about housing. They made the following recommendation to JOSTB:

“In the light of the current housing problems nationally and locally, greater priority must be given to this task group and it must be properly resourced.”

The JOSTB is invited to respond to the Committee’s concerns.

9. Member Interests

To provide an opportunity to authorised members to report on progress as appropriate:

Keith Humphries – ICT

The ICT Strategy is circulated under item no. 6(B).

10. Implementation Executive Budget Working Group (IE BWG)

The IE has the responsibility for developing a revenue and capital budget for the first year of the new unitary authority 2009-10. To support this process the IE had agreed that a Budget Working Group (BWG) of the IE should be formed to oversee the budget preparation process and to consider and advise the IE on budget matters.

A report considered by the IE BWG at its first meeting on 14 July is circulated. The notes of the meeting will be circulated, which contain the group's slightly amended role and a work plan for the near future.

The Leader of the IE has suggested that transition scrutiny may need to consider how it responds to the creation of the new group and the wider engagement needed on next year's priorities and budget for the new council. JOSTB may wish to express an initial view which can be refined after the meeting. The options would appear to be:

- (1) JOSTB itself to receive periodic reports at key milestones in the development of priorities and the budget for the new council:
This would be the least resource intensive approach and ensure that only the main issues are scrutinised, although it may not achieve the detailed level of scrutiny expected by some members and the public. However as part of the budget schedule, training and workshops are proposed for all members and consultation meetings for the public and business community.
- (2) JOSTB to establish a task group to scrutinise the activities of the new IE BWG:
This would give scrutiny a higher profile in the process and provide the opportunity for detailed review. However it would need to be careful not to simply duplicate the work of the new IE group which is after all only a working group reporting back with recommendations. This also assumes that JOSTB can find members (probably one from each authority) interested in undertaking the work and that capacity exists to support it. A down-scaling or migration of any existing scrutiny activity in each of the councils relating to next year's position would be expected to allow this to work effectively.
- (3) Use existing task groups already undertaking this role within councils:
As an example the current WCC standing task groups on Budget and Performance could be expanded to include district representatives. These groups, as well as monitoring current activity, also look forward by scrutinising draft budget and corporate plan proposals and it is this work that will be relevant for the new council. Most of the district councils have similar groups covering these topics so some form of amalgamation may be more appropriate. This would have the advantage of utilising existing structures and experienced members. However a similar suggestion was made earlier in the year in respect of the WCC Change Management Task Group looking at BMP but only NWDC decided to take up the opportunity – although taking the lead from the earlier IE discussion paper at item no. 5(b), closer co-operation is desirable/inevitable as we move towards one council.

Although another option used by JOSTB is for a single member interest such as Keith Humphries WWDC for ICT but it is felt that this would be too much work for one member. JOSTB has to date has been mainly focused on scrutinising/assisting with policy development on frontline services. This would be a departure but is equally important as scrutiny should have a prominent

role in the development of the new council's priorities and budget. The exact role and timing of the IE, full CC and joint scrutiny meeting in respect of the budget has yet to be finalised.

JOSTB may like to express a preferred approach and allow the Chairman and Vice Chairman in consultation with scrutiny officers to work up the detail of how this would operate. A report back would be made at the next meeting.

11. Implementation Executive Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting of the IE held on 9 July 2008 are circulated herewith.

Members asked that these are included on the agenda for each meeting.

12. Outline Work Programmes

- (1) To consider the attached Work Programme of the JOSTB
- (2) To receive the attached Outline Work Programme of the Implementation Executive
- (3) Members are asked to give guidance on any specific transitional matters requiring scrutiny.

13. Next meeting – Friday 29 August 2008 at Kennet District Council Offices