



**JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TRANSITION BOARD**

**Minutes of the Meeting Held at KDC Offices – 29 August 2008**

**In Attendance**

<b>Members</b>
Cllr Tony Molland (Chairman) WCC
Cllr Jeff Osborn WCC
Cllr Chris Humphries WCC
Cllr Margaret Taylor WCC
Cllr Christine Reid NWDC
Cllr Keith Humphries WWDC
Cllr Jonathon Seed KDC
Cllr Mike Hewitt SDC

Also in attendance:

Cllr Pat Rugg WCC

Cllr Tony Deane WCC

Cllr Janet Giles KDC

Keith Robinson, Paul Kelly, Ceri Williams, Janine Gassmann WCC

Marie Lindsay WWDC

Julia Densham NWDC

Karen Scott KDC

**1. Apologies and Membership**

Apologies were received from Ian West WCC.

Margaret Taylor WCC substituted for Ricky Rogers WCC.

**2. Minutes of Previous Meetings – 25 July and 5 August**

The minutes for the meeting of 25 July were signed as a correct record subject to the following amendment. The third paragraph under item number 5 (Parking Enforcement) was amended by the deletion of the word “area” from the last sentence.

The minutes for the meeting of 5 August were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**3. Chairman’s Announcements**

The Chairman reported that the next meeting of the JOSTB would be chaired by Jeff Osborn WCC in the absence of the Chairman.

#### **4. Managing the Transition to 1 April 2009: Appointments to the New Council**

##### **(1) Report by the Chief Executive WCC**

The Chief Executive WCC introduced the report on transition management and reported that all but three of the senior positions had now been filled. The appointed directors were expected to focus attention on preparation for their responsibilities under the new authority post-April 2009. This would be better secured by making appointments of service directors effective from 1 January 2009 and this was agreed by the IE on 27 August subject to the effective management of service provision in the districts up to April 2009.

Members commented on the practical implications of this which would have to be explored together with the chief executives (and leaders) of the district councils prior to 1 January. This included senior staff holding posts at district and county level and implications on workloads, service provision and the budget, appropriate backfilling of positions, as well as addressing uncertainties and losses among remaining staff.

Maintaining effective service provision in the districts up until April 2009 was considered fundamentally important if senior staff were to be transferred early to the County Council. Members enquired about the risk management arrangements for the period January-April 2009 which was anticipated to be drafted by the end of October. As well as securing a smooth transition to the new authority, senior management would still be required at the district councils to ensure a smooth winding up of business.

##### **Resolved**

**To request further reports to a future meeting of the JOSTB on:**

- (i) details on the agreements and decisions between the chief executives of the five councils.**
- (ii) the financial implications of the transfer of senior management to Wiltshire County Council from 1 January 2009 and the accommodation of this in the budget; and**
- (iii) the risk management for the period January-April 2009.**

##### **(2) Response to JOSTB's comments on the draft Service Director Roles and Responsibilities**

Members noted the officer comments made so far in response to the Board's consideration of the draft Service Director Roles and Responsibilities chart on 25 July.

##### **Resolved**

**To circulate the missing officer responses electronically prior to the next meeting and to bring the complete set of responses back to the next meeting of the JOSTB for consideration.**

## **5. Towards One Council – Progress Report**

### (1) Progress Report

JOSTB received the Progress Report and the appended first version of the Service Director Handbook.

Within the Progress Report, members highlighted that the Minister for Local Government recently stressed the importance of the delivery of the full unitary business case, including strategic leadership, neighbourhood and community arrangements and service provision as envisaged in the original bid. They also expressed concerns regarding the different stages of progress made within individual pilot area boards.

Members noted the position regarding member representation on the regulatory committees and outside bodies during the interim period, although negotiations were ongoing with DCLG.

Members enquired about the feasibility of a budget incorporating a cash-freeze provision, the commitment to deliver savings and to also take into account local priorities. The Chief Executive WCC commented that the budget depended on government grants which would fit in with the savings identified in the original bid. The budget in the future would be driven by local circumstances and service directors would be expected to identify solutions to fit the budget around those needs.

In respect of the Service Director Handbook, members made the following observations:

- The completion of the overall plan on benefits realisation was more likely to be December 2008;
- There was a discrepancy in the figures for savings made from LGR and BMP in the Service Director Handbook and the response to Board members from the Programme Office regarding further opportunities for savings;
- The timetable for submission of organisational structures for the new authority and attendance of the was questioned;
- Members enquired about the timescales for the production of a Wiltshire Community Charter to which the new services should contribute;
- Members had experienced problems with communicating with officers using WoW;
- There was no mention of issues such as equality and sustainability in the procurement section of the Service Director Handbook.

### **Resolved**

**(1) To note the Progress Report and advise the Programme Manager of the comments made including those on the Service Director Handbook for response at the next meeting;**

**(2) To circulate the note prepared by the Chief Executive WCC on the timetable for new organisational structures.**

(2) Response to JOSTB's comments on the Progress Report on 25 July

Members felt that the information received to date on property-related LGR savings was uncertain and wished for clarification through the previous Property Strategy expected towards the end of the year.

**Resolved – To receive the response and seek clarification on property-related savings.**

**6. Financial Update**

Members recognised that the report identified a draft schedule of finance activity between now and January 2009, rather than containing a financial update with figures.

Members also noted that the IE requested reports on top line figures of all five budgets from the current year and on the current standing of the One Council for Wiltshire budget line for their next meeting on 23 September.

**Resolved – To note the Financial Update and that reporting would be enhanced in the future.**

**7. Task Groups**

(1) Development Control

Marie Lindsay WWDC, one of the Task Group's support officers, reported that Brad Fleet, Paul Mountford WWDC and herself would meet on 10 September. The Task Group would also meet later that day to consider the further report which had been requested by the IE on 9 July. The Task Group's views would be considered by the JOSTB at their next meeting on 26 September before being considered by the IE on 29 October.

**Resolved – To note the update**

(2) Waste

Jonathon Seed KDC, member of the Task Group, introduced the second interim report in the absence of the Chairman after having met with the Chairman of the IE, the new IE portfolio holder for Waste and Recycling and the recently appointed Director of Amenities & Leisure. At the last meeting of the IE on 27 August, he also clarified that work on the transformation of the waste services was planned for post-April 2009 and the level of savings to be achieved through the move to One Council.

Prior to the meeting, the Chairman of the JOSTB had liaised with the Corporate Director of Transport, Environment & Leisure who in turn discussed the matter with the Director of Operations and the Director of Amenities & Leisure. The Corporate Director would write a report for the next meeting of

the JOSTB on 26 September responding to the issues raised in the interim report which both Service Directors would attend. The Chairman indicated therefore that he would prefer the interim report to be deferred until then.

Members discussed the best way forward in order to maintain effective scrutiny of the high-profile service during the transition period. Tony Deane WCC, member of the Task Group, also contributed to the debate. The Chief Executive WCC responded with views on the overall process.

Cllr Seed then moved a motion, seconded by Christine Reid NWDC, which was carried.

### **Resolved**

- (1) To accept the second interim report of the Task Group;**
- (2) To ask the Task Group to continue to scrutinise the development of the transitional action plan in the areas of waste and recycling and to oversee the development of the transformational action plan in these service areas.**
- (3) To receive the report of the Corporate Director of Transport, Environment & Leisure at the next meeting of the JOSTB, and extend an invitation to the members of the Task Group.**

### **(3) Area Boards**

Mike Hewitt, Chairman of the Task Group, reported that John Thomson, IE lead member for Community Leadership & Support, attended the Task Group's last meeting and clarified the roles of cabinet members in conjunction with chairmen of area boards.

The second draft of the area board rule book was being produced, a copy of which would be received at a future meeting of the JOSTB. At present, the establishment of 17 area boards was envisaged which will partly incorporate more than one community area per area board.

### **Resolved**

- (1) To note the update and that a draft map of community areas allocated to area boards and a copy of the second draft area board rule book would be considered at the next meeting of the Task Group.**
- (2) To ask that the information is also circulated to JOSTB members when available.**

### **(4) Customer Access**

The Task Group would next meet on 2 September following cancellation of the previous meeting. The group would focus on savings and LEAN systems.

### **Resolved – To note the update**

## (5) Housing

Janet Giles, Chairman of the Task Group, introduced the interim report. She expressed her confidence that a focus had been agreed for its work and praised the scrutiny officer for the support given. The same report would be considered by the IE at their meeting on 23 September with regard to concerns over resource levels.

JOSTB members were also supportive and in response to comments it was noted that:

- Representation on housing associations' boards had not been ensured yet and that housing associations would need scrutinising after April 2009. It was suggested that the Housing Task Group respond to Westlea Housing Association's concerns as appended to agenda item number 9;
- Opportunities to increase the housing stock in Wiltshire were currently being explored.

It was anticipated that the Task Group's final report would be available in December.

**Resolved – To endorse the interim report of the Task Group and its recommendations to the IE and to thank the Chairman and members for the work they have done so far.**

## **8. Member Interest**

Keith Humphries WWDC, lead member for ICT, reported that he continues to meet regularly with Tim Gregory, Director of Procurement & ICT.

Elaborating on paragraph 5.10 of the most recent Progress Report regarding a delay in providing the WAN, he reported that the work of contractor H2O had been delayed for two weeks for Health and Safety reasons although this had no implications for the budget. It was also clear now that BT could not provide the direct link between Devizes and Salisbury. Several options were being considered but the two favoured options appeared either less resilient or more expensive.

Further challenges were staffing delays and the increasing budget requirements of ICT contracts in the districts. The Director of Procurement & ICT intended to report to JOSTB at their November meeting.

Keith Humphries expressed concern that one member was not sufficient to scrutinise a fundamental issue such as the future of ICT which affects all areas of work in the council. JOSTB members recognised the difficulties and discussed options in the light of the comments made by Tony Deane and the Scrutiny Manager WCC.

## **Resolved**

**(1) To note the update.**

**(2) To move towards incorporating the scrutiny of ICT transition in the existing WCC Change Management Task Group under the Chairmanship of Tony Deane subject to securing district member representation.**

## **9. Rural Unitary Task Group**

Christine Reid, NWDC member, introduced the report on behalf of the Chairman and noted that an outdated version of the report had been circulated.

The report set out a number of recommendations for consideration by various groups within the transitional governance arrangements. Some of these were for the Board's task groups and would be taken into account as part of their work. There was one specific recommendation identified for JOSTB relating to the production of a single asset register.

Members commented on a number of matters within the report and were particularly interested in the experiences of the other recently formed unitary councils.

### **Resolved**

**(1) To note the report and the work done by NWDC scrutiny members;**

**(2) To endorse the production of a single asset register and to include this matter on the Board's work plan.**

## **10. Implementation Executive Minutes**

The IE minutes of the meeting on 27 August had not been available prior to this meeting. The Vice-Chairman, who had attended the IE, updated the JOSTB verbally.

The IE endorsed the Board's views on the ICT, People and Property Strategies which had been circulated for consideration by IE members.

**Resolved – To receive the IE minutes of 27 August at the next meeting of the JOSTB**

## **11. Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements in the New Council**

The Scrutiny Manager WCC reported that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the JOSTB and himself had met with Derek Bishop, Local Government Consultant and Facilitator, to initially discuss Overview and Scrutiny redesign for the new authority.

Evidence gathering was ongoing at present, including information on resources, current arrangements across the five authorities, best practise both within and outside Wiltshire and considering initial redesign plans for the new structure. A questionnaire was currently being drafted for members to express their views on current experiences and future service levels.

Future scrutiny would feature a broader scope, including strategic and partner scrutiny and the implementation of a Councillor Call for Action.

It was anticipated that an interim report on the Overview and Scrutiny Arrangements in the New Council would be available for consultation towards the end of the year.

**Resolved – To note the update**

**12. Outline Work Programmes**

The Board received its outline work programme and the future work programme of the IE.

Christine Reid took the opportunity to report that NWDC had currently drafted a report on the impact of the loss of free car parking which will be circulated to Board members prior to the next meeting when the update report on Parking Enforcement of the Director of Sustainable Transport will be considered.

Members enquired about the risk register which previously had been attached to the Progress Report.

**Resolved**

- (1) To approve the outline work programme for the Board and the additions made as a consequence of the decisions made at today's meeting;**
- (2) To note the IE Work Programme.**

**13. Next ordinary meeting – 26 September at Kennet District Council Offices**

(Duration of Meeting: 10.30am – 13.15pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Janine Gassmann, Democratic & Members' Services, Wiltshire County Council. Direct line: (01225) 713597.