



AGENDA

Event: JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TRANSITION BOARD

Place: Kennet District Council
Devizes

Room: Council Chamber – **Please Note Change of Venue**

Date: Friday 19 December 2008

Time: 10.30 am

NB. The report on O&S Arrangements in the new Council will be considered in the third part of this meeting at approximately 12 o'clock.

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 Jeff Osborn WCC	Cllr Christine Reid NWDC
Cllr Ian West WCC	Cllr Jonathon Seed KDC
Cllr Chris Humphries WCC	Cllr Michael Hewitt SDC
Cllr Ricky Rogers 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 circulated to them as background to the work of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Transition Board.
- (2) The regular progress report on overall programme activity will generally be circulated as an information item with the JOSTB agenda.
- (3) Members are encouraged to communicate with each other and scrutiny support officers on relevant transition issues between meetings. They are also expected to act as the lead member for transitional scrutiny within their own authorities.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies**
2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting – 21 November 2008**

Copies circulated herewith.

3. **Chairman's Announcements**

Items for Consideration

4. **Finance**

(1) Council Tax Policy Harmonisation

(2) Council Tax Base for Wiltshire Council

(3) Financial Update

Three reports by the Chief Financial Officer WCC are circulated. The same papers were considered by the IE on 10 December. Please see the minutes of the IE meeting on 10 December at item number 11 of this agenda for decisions.

A representative from the WCC Corporate Finance Office will attend the meeting to introduce the reports and respond to members' questions.

The IE will consider the report on the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2009-10 on 28 January and 11 February in order to formulate recommendations to full Council on 24 February. The JOSTB will be holding a special meeting on 17 February to consider the 2009-10 budget recommendation of the IE.

5. **Benefit Realisation in Service Areas**

A joint report by the Head of Financial Planning and the Programme Office Manager prepared for the IE meeting on 10 December is circulated. Please see the minutes of the IE meeting on 10 December at item number 11 of this agenda for the decision.

JOSTB has always stated its desire to scrutinise benefits realisation and had received previous documentation, including the Service Director Handbook and the Critical Path document, which stated that this would be available in December 2008.

6. **Transformational Priorities**

At the last Board meeting, the Service Director, Policy, Research & Communications tabled a progress report on the Development of the Corporate Plan which would contain transformational priorities in its final version.

Following a meeting of the Extended Leadership Team (ELT, which comprises the CLT and Service Directors) on 25 November, the Director agreed to update the Board at this meeting on the progress in identifying transformational priorities. A verbal update will be given.

According to the Critical Path, the Corporate Plan will be developed and submitted for approval by 31 March 2009.

7. Task Groups

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

(1) Pilot Area Boards – WCC (Chairman: Mike Hewitt SDC)

The Task Group last met on 28 November.

Issues Considered

- The relationship between Tracy Carter's frontline service (Operations) and the Area Boards;
- The role of Area Boards in determining Section 106 Agreements;
- The level of support for the Boards from democratic services;
- The relationship between the Boards and Partnerships.

Key Challenges

- a) Gauging how busy the Area Boards will be when determining resources;
- b) The need for the planners to have a policy base if Area Boards are to become involved with Section 106 agreements;
- c) The desire to develop close but distinct working relationships between Community Area Partnerships & Area Boards.

The Task Group will next meet on 9 January.

(2) Customer Access – NWDC (Chairman: Anthony Lake KDC)

The Task Group last met on 24 November. Jacqui White, Service Director, Shared Services Team & Customer Care, attended the meeting and gave a presentation regarding the new Customer Care service and training arrangements for the new Customer Service Team. John Rogers, Customer Focus Lead, also gave an update on the implementation of the Access Strategy.

A "super spreadsheet" is in use to ensure that all necessary tasks are covered in the lead up to 1 April. This will be available on the Extranet. The focus for Day One lies on high volume, high impact services such as waste and amenities, revenues and benefits, housing and development control. The essentials for operation on Day One are:

- a) one consistent service merging all front desk services;
- b) one main telephone number plus golden numbers;
- c) one new website with all current web transactions brought forward.

The plans for these operations are currently on track. Existing Council telephone numbers will still work on Day One but new direct dial numbers and golden numbers will be promoted to enable customers to call direct.

A new “clean” version of Lagan will be used by all customer services from February 2009. Separate Lagan archives will be available in each Council for past enquiries.

A large number of scripts will be available for training purposes by the end of December. The main focus currently lies on scripts for the most common enquiries and transactions. Progress is being made on consistency of scripts, putting scripts in the best places and linking them to the web pages (500 out of 2,500 have been completed).

Plans for Customer Services Officer training are underway and training will take place, in the main, between mid-January and mid-March.

The Task Group will next meet on 26 January where the Communications process, the proposals for handling member enquiries and any tasks shown as amber or red in the Critical Path document will be considered. The Task Group will also give consideration to the contents of its final report.

(3) Housing – WCC (Chairman: Janet Giles KDC)

The following provides a summary of the key issues discussed at the Task Group meeting on 2 December:

2009/10 Budget for Housing

- a) Despite staffing cost pressures, the Service Director, Housing is optimistic that the housing service revenue budget will comply with the cash freeze requirement and with the 1C4W savings target for 2009-10 of £200,000.
- b) The new Council's Capital Programme is currently indicating a very significant gap in resources available, compared with those required, and this is likely to result in the housing service being unable to pursue all of the capital projects it had planned to pursue in 2009-10.
- c) The Salisbury District Council (SDC) Community & Housing Scrutiny Panel, in identifying the anticipated shortfall in the Housing Revenue Account, requested the IE lead members and Service Director to urgently hold discussions with tenants and any other relevant parties to explore all the options available to secure tenants housing standards.

Social Housing – New Schemes

The Task Group expressed support for two new schemes, one in Trowbridge and one County-wide, which received IE approval in November, especially as they appeared to have originated from a robust long term strategy for social housing, and a carefully conducted needs

analysis. The schemes will see the development of new extra care housing and supported living units for service users with learning disabilities and mental health needs.

Key Risks & Issues Update

- a) Staff retention and capacity continues to be monitored as a high risk factor in the transition, due to uncertainty caused by the appointments' process and the length of time it could take to populate the housing service's new structure.
- b) Lack of priority given to capital funding schemes remains a key issue.
- c) The Task Group has asked to see the report that is to be written on how decision making and reporting arrangements is to be governed in the new council for the Salisbury housing stock.

Housing Services Support for Area Boards

The Service Director, Housing is proposing to ensure strong housing officer representation at area board meetings. The Task Group is encouraged by these proposals, stressing that it is important to ensure that the area boards do not simply become "talking shops", but that they hold meetings of real purpose and action.

New Housing Reference Partnership to Oversee the Transition Process

- a) New partnership arrangements have been agreed to ensure that all lead councillors, officers, partners and stakeholders for housing are given the opportunity to meet together monthly to communicate and consult on housing matters in the transition.
 - b) The Task Group will be monitoring the discussions and recommendations arising from these new partnership arrangements.
- (4) Change Management (Incl. ICT Transition) – WCC (Chairman: Tony Deane WCC)

The Task Group last met on 11 December where the following issues were considered:

BMP

The Critical Path deadline of 17 October 2008 to freeze structures into SAP down to the lowest managerial levels was not achieved. Work was continuing and was expected to be completed by mid-January 2009. Contingency arrangements were in place but if this slipped further, staff would not be in paid post by 1 April.

Members were concerned about the timing of the appointments process. Staff would know if they had ownership of a role by end of December, but for those ring-fenced or unknown they would be appointed to positions between January and 31 March.

ICT Workstream

Work towards completing the final link of the Wide Area Network (WAN) started on 8 December. There was now less concern about the support contract. A report was scheduled to go the IE on 13 January with proposals for supporting ICT across the county after 1 April. The Task Group would see this in advance and comment accordingly.

Shared Services

The Service Director was busy populating the senior positions within the structure. The Task Group would receive an update on the SAP competency centre at its next meeting.

(5) Waste – WCC (Chairman: Alan Hill NWDC)

The Task Group will continue its work once information on transformational priorities and the budget 2009-10 is available.

(6) Development Control – WWDC (Chairman: Fred Westmoreland SDC)

The Development Control Task Group has effectively completed its work but is being kept informed of developments as appropriate.

8. Electoral Services and Members' Support – Rapid Scrutiny Exercise

A rapid scrutiny exercise on proposals for the Democratic Services and Election teams was undertaken on 21 November. The group reported the outcomes and key findings of the exercise verbally at the last Board meeting on the same day.

A report by the Scrutiny Support Officer WCC is circulated which contains a number of recommendations, two of which are directed to the JOSTB and the Board's Customer Access Task Group:

- a) To request JOSTB to consider scrutinising the development of the Constitution, especially those areas relevant to Overview & Scrutiny.
- b) To request the Customer Access Task Group to review proposals for handling member enquiries within the new Council.

In responding, the Board is asked to note that the IE are scheduled to consider the Draft Constitution and Scheme of Delegation on 28 January. A Focus Group with member representation of all five authorities is leading on this work. Part of this will include O&S arrangements which will be drafted following consideration of the proposal for O&S arrangements in the new authority at item number 14 of this agenda.

9. Scrutiny of the Critical Path and Day One Plan

A report by the Scrutiny Support Officer NWDC is circulated.

The Board on 26 September asked Christine Reid NWDC to lead a small group of interested members in the scrutiny of the Critical Path and Day One Plan. NWDC officers agreed to support the review.

In advance of the first meeting of the Group, work was undertaken to identify key areas of risk in the Critical Path and Day One Plan documents and the Board at its last meeting asked that these be referred to the relevant task group for more detailed scrutiny. This is acknowledged in paragraph 7 of the Group's report.

Christine Reid and her group first met with Laurie Bell, Service Director Policy, Research and Communications and a representative of the Programme Office at NWDC offices to consider the Critical Path and Day One Plan on 2 December. The initial findings and recommendations are set out in the report.

JOSTB is asked to respond to the recommendations but in doing so will be aware that:

- a) It had previously tracked progress with communications through the regular Towards One Council Progress Reports and had received a demonstration on development of the extranet and website in April. The Customer Access Task Group is also considering communications at its next meeting on 26 January 2009. It is understood that the same group of members who undertook the scrutiny of the Critical Path and Day One Plan are meeting again on 19 December (immediately before the Board) to specifically review progress with communications. NWDC officers will also be supporting this meeting. An oral report will be made to the Board on its findings at the meeting.
- b) ICT transition was incorporated into the work of the Change Management Task Group (with an expanded membership) following initial scrutiny by Keith Humphries WWDC.
- c) A rapid scrutiny exercise was undertaken on 21 November on Electoral Services and Members' Support, the latter being one of the three main teams which make up the new Democratic Services Unit. The discussion on the day did also extend to the other areas of Democratic Services (see previous agenda item for report). Overview and Scrutiny, another team within the Unit, is considered in the report on the proposed OS arrangements for the New Council (see last item on this agenda).
- d) It received a briefing back in April on the key HR issues faced during transition and specifically reviewed the new People Strategy at its special meeting on 5 August. The Appointments Procedure adopted by the IE on 6 October indicated that on 1 April staff currently employed by the district councils would be transferred to the new Wiltshire Council with TUPE rights i.e. protected on their existing terms and conditions. Harmonisation to common terms and conditions will commence by October and will be

subject to consultation and negotiation. This was confirmed by the Corporate Director, Resources at JOSTB on 31 October and was fundamental to delivering efficiencies in the bid.

In determining its response, JOSTB will also be mindful of the member capacity and officer resources potentially required. Current activity is being supported by WCC and NWDC and therefore approaches could be made to the other councils on a case by case basis as agreed at the last meeting if appropriate.

Items for Information

10. Towards One Council – Progress Report

The latest transition programme progress report prepared for the IE meeting on 10 December is circulated for information.

Any key views expressed by the JOSTB will be reported back to the Programme Office.

11. Implementation Executive Minutes

To receive the minutes of the meetings of the IE held on 26 November (circulated) and 10 December – to follow.

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

Members are asked to note that additional JOSTB meetings during the interregnum period will take place on 24 April and 15 May.

The report on fees and charges, originally scheduled for this Board meeting, will be incorporated in the report on the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for 2009-10 which will be prepared for the IE meeting on 28 January.

(2) To receive the attached Outline Work Programme of the Implementation Executive

13. Next meeting – Friday 23 January 2009 at 10.30am at Kennet District Council Offices

Refreshments (approximately 12 o'clock)

14. O&S Arrangements in the New Council

A report by the Local Government Consultant and Facilitator is circulated, who will also attend the meeting and present the report together with the Scrutiny Manager WCC.

This report will provide the Board with the opportunity to comment and/or make revisions prior to undertaking consultation on the proposals in the report. The outcome of consultation will then be reported back along with a final report to the Board on 27 February 2009.

If accepted then this will form the basis of the recommended O&S arrangements for the new council and be incorporated in the new constitution. Operational protocols and guidance will be prepared in support and an induction/awareness programme developed for members and officers.

After the end of the meeting lunch will be provided.