



JOINT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY TRANSITION BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting Held at KDC Offices – 19 December 2008

In Attendance

Members
Cllr Anthony Molland WCC – in the Chair
Cllr Jeff Osborn WCC
Cllr Ian West WCC
Cllr Chris Humphries WCC
Cllr Margaret Taylor WCC
Cllr Alan Hill NWDC
Cllr Jonathon Seed KDC
Cllr Mike Hewitt SDC
Cllr Keith Humphries WWDC

Also in attendance:

Cllr Mollie Groom WCC
Cllr Jane Scott Leader WCC
Sandra Farrington, Chief Financial Officer WCC
Laurie Bell, Service Director, Policy, Research & Communications
Ian Gibbons, Service Director, Legal & Democratic Services

Support Officers Scrutiny:

Paul Kelly, Ceri Williams WCC
Paul Mountford WWDC
Karen Scott NWDC
Marie Todd, Julia Densham NWDC
Paul Trenell SDC

1. Apologies and Membership

Margaret Taylor WCC substituted for Ricky Rogers WCC, Alan Hill NWDC substituted for Christine Reid NWDC

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 21 November 2008

The minutes for the meeting of 21 November were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. Finance

(1) Council Tax Policy Harmonisation

(2) Council Tax Base for Wiltshire Council

(3) Financial Update

The Chief Financial Officer introduced the three reports which were considered by the IE on 10 December.

During the subsequent debate the Board established that the Wiltshire Councils had not been exposed to the Bernard Madoff Wall Street fraud. Members then considered Council Tax equalisation and noted that Wiltshire's council tax would be equalised by 2010-11. The level of non-collection rate for the new Wiltshire Council was still under consideration at this stage. Focusing on the 2009-10 it was highlighted that there were sufficient savings and efficiencies to balance the budget and the IE Budget Group would make assessments in January on the options for where these could be made. The Leader of WCC agreed to circulate to the Board a copy of her response to the Leader of WWDC 10 December letter, which had posed a series of issues related to the 2009-10 budget.

Resolved

To note the reports and the related December 10 minute from the IE.

4. Benefit Realisation in Service Areas

The Service Director for Policy, Research & Communications introduced the report that had been noted by the IE on December 10.

During discussions it emerged that the Benefits Realisation Plan would be finalised by 31 March. Capacity issues had resulted in the revised date. Considering BMP, Logica was confident that it would be delivered as predicted and two pilots were being trialled from January, in the areas of Design & Print and the booking of training. SAP would replace existing systems and as such would ensure that this change programme did not encounter resistance. The planning application for the contact centre in Salisbury was confirmed by the Leader to be on schedule.

Resolved

To note the report and to agree that the Board would consider the completed Benefits Realisation Plan at a future meeting.

5. Transformational Priorities

The Service Director for Policy, Research & Communications tabled a report which listed possible areas of early transformation activity in the new council.

Whilst reviewing the report members discussed the potential impact post April 1st on Social Service users and carers. Transformation of the Waste Service was then raised and the Leader clarified the IE's position towards transition and the subsequent transformation of the service in the new council. Further discussion took place around transformation, with general acknowledgement that transformational activity in the main would fall to the new council.

Resolved

To note the report.

6. Task Groups

(1) Pilot Area Boards

The Chairman of the Task Group emphasised that the workload of the Task Group was increasing as the pace of project delivery accelerated and would therefore mean meeting more frequently.

The Board shared some of their personal experiences which included commentary on the Issues Log DVD, the role of the Chairman, frequency of Area Board meetings and the relationship between Section 106 agreements and the Area Boards.

Resolved – To note the update

(2) Customer Access

The update on the Task Group's activity was reported. In addition Mrs Groom informed the Board that the use of web cameras by staff was a further area of interest for the Task Group.

Resolved – To note the update.

(3) Housing

The update on the Task Group's activity was reported. The Board asked for clarification on when they would receive the Final Report and discussed with the Chief Financial Officer the potential budgetary impacts of the Salisbury housing stock.

Resolved – To note the update.

(4) Change Management

The Task Group position was reported. Further discussion took place in relation to ICT equipment needs of members in the new council and the potential for the Task Group to scrutinise the training available for new members.

Resolved – To note the update.

(5) Waste

Following earlier confirmation of the IE's position towards Waste, the Chairman thanked the Task Group for their work and recommended that the Task Group now stood down. The Chairman of the Task Group felt that there was still important work to be undertaken, particularly around the budget setting and requested that the Task Group continued its work. This position was supported by the Board.

Resolved – To agree to the continuation of the Task Group review of Waste

(6) Development Control

Resolved – To request the Scrutiny Officer to provide clarification on the relationship between the Community Area Boards and the Planning interests in respect of Section 106 Agreements.

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

The Service Director for Legal & Democratic Services provided the Board with a verbal response to the recommendations that emerged from the rapid scrutiny exercise that had taken place on 21 November.

It was acknowledged that the Elections Structure was still to be agreed and as a result had not been circulated to the members. The Director explained that it was difficult to gauge the workload of the Area Boards at this time, however the structure was flexible and a review in the light of experience would take place. The Director was happy to revise the structure to ensure that the Cabinet PAs reported directly to the Head of Democratic Services.

Mr Seed, the lead member on the exercise, requested that a second meeting took place with the Service Director on the outstanding matters

Resolved – To agree to a second meeting between the Service Director for Legal & Democratic Services and the Rapid Scrutiny members to clarify the responses to the recommendations contained within the report

8. Scrutiny of the Critical Path and Day One Plan

Cllr Seed introduced the item, in the absence of Christine Reid as the lead member, providing an overview of the Group's work to date. The Group had met twice, with the first meeting focusing on the Critical Path and the second on communication, including branding and the "100 Day Campaign". The Board supported the statement that the Group members should also take ownership of the Critical Path within their respective councils.

A suggested response to the recommendations was circulated to the Board which was amended during debate.

Resolved

- (1) To thank the members involved in the initial review of the critical path and day one plan and for the two reports and recommendations contained therein, and in doing so to acknowledge the points set out under item 9 on the agenda sheet.**
- (2) On the basis that the members involved in the review had indicated the need to meet on more occasions, to establish a task group for this ongoing work with the following terms of reference:**
 - (i) to consider the purpose and application of the critical path and day one plan;**
 - (ii) to review periodically the content with particular focus on areas of highest risk;**
 - (iii) to report to the Board (or relevant task group) on issues requiring further scrutiny.**

- (3) To appoint the following non-executive members from each council to the Task Group (acknowledging the interest of the members who undertook the initial work) and each member be responsible for reporting back to their own councils:

Mr Jonathon Seed – KDC
Mrs Christine Reid – NWDC
Mr Ian West – WCC
Mr Bill Parks – WWDC
SDC to be confirmed

- (4) To agree that this task group also takes on the responsibility to review the progress of Communications during transition to One Council.
- (5) To agree that the Service Director for Policy, Research & Communications would help determine the officer support for the task group (NWDC having supported the initial work but were unable to commit to further meetings).
- (6) To note that scrutiny of ICT was incorporated in to the work of the Board's Change Management Task Group with expanded membership following initial scrutiny by Keith Humphries WWDC.
- (7) To note that a rapid scrutiny exercise was undertaken on 21 November which included Democratic Services and an update given to the Board today by the Head of Service – see previous minute. Overview & Scrutiny, a function of Democratic Services, is specifically considered in the report on the proposed OS arrangements for the New Council (see minute 13).
- (8) To note that the Appointments Procedure adopted by the IE on 6 October (and received by JOSTB on 31 October) indicated that harmonisation of staff to common terms and conditions would commence by October 2009 and would be subject to consultation and negotiation, and express the view that these should represent best practice. The need to move to common terms and conditions was confirmed by the Corporate Director, Resources at JOSTB as they were fundamental to delivering efficiencies in the new council.
- (9) To request an update to the Board's meeting on 27 February on progress with staff appointments, highlighting any areas of potential staff shortages or shortages of expertise.

9. Towards One Council – Progress Report

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

Resolved

To note the report.

10. Implementation Executive Minutes

The Board received the minutes of the meetings of the IE held on 26 November and 10 December.

Resolved – To receive the minutes.

11. Outline Work Programmes

The Board considered the work programmes for JOSTB and the IE.

Discussions took place in relation to electronic communication with district members post 1 April and the dates for JOSTB meetings during the interregnum period.

Resolved

To agree that JOSTB would meet during the interregnum period on 20 April and 11 May.

12. Next Meeting – Friday 23 January 2009 at Kennet District Council Offices

13. O&S Arrangements in the New Council

The Local Government Consultant commissioned by the Board and Scrutiny Manager WCC presented a report in two parts which offered the Board an opportunity to comment on and make revisions to the proposed arrangements prior to the document being circulated for consultation.

The Board during discussions highlighted that the new scrutiny arrangements should ensure that the portfolio holder was scrutinised and that it was important to develop this culture. Other issues raised in discussions included the level of scrutiny representation on Area Boards and the arrangements that currently operate in Kennet District Council.

Resolved

- (1) To endorse the draft arrangements for consultation and the outcome of which would be reported to the Board on 27 February, with a final report agreed for adoption by the new Council in June.**
- (2) In the meantime, to include the papers again on the agenda for the next meeting of the Board to enable continue dialogue.**

(Duration of Meeting: 10:30 – 13:15)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Ceri Williams, Democratic & Members' Services, Wiltshire County Council. Direct line: (01225) 713079.