

**JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TRANSITIONAL BOARD
27 FEBRUARY**

ELECTORAL SERVICES & MEMBERS' SUPPORT

RAPID SCRUTINY EXERCISE ON 26 JANUARY 2009

Background

1. On 19 December 2008 JOSTB considered the outcome of the rapid scrutiny exercise of Democratic & Election Services on 21 November 2008. In doing so, the Board agreed that a second meeting should take place with the Service Director, Legal & Democratic Services.
2. This report is a summary of this second meeting held in County Hall on 26 January 2009.

Summary

Electoral Services

3. The structure for the elections team was likely to be flat until 4 June, although a structure chart was not available for consideration at the meeting.
4. Clarification on the timeline to 4 June was sought, including the election nominations process and access to the electoral role.

Democratic Services

5. The Service Director and the newly appointed Head of Democratic Services had reviewed the numbers of staff proposed for each of the three teams. As a result, the proposed team structures remained unchanged but it was recognised that this would be closely monitored. However, the Cabinet Personal Assistants would now report directly to the Head of Democratic Services, as recommended by the group at its meeting on 21 November.
6. The group discussed the flexibility of the team and its ability to cope with peaks of demand from member meetings. During debate the structures for the Governance Team and Legal Services were covered in brief.
7. The accommodation for Democratic Services staff and office facilities for members in the new council was discussed. Members concluded that further communication would be helpful in this area.

Members' Support

8. The group reaffirmed their position that members should not be forced to use the Customer Care Unit, when contacting the council.

9. The group discussed IT support for members and highlighted this as another area where further information would be helpful.
10. The Service Director was leading on the development of a protocol for member-officer relationship.

Recommendations

11.

- a) To provide the rapid scrutiny group with the structures for the following teams:
 - Electoral Services
 - Governance
 - Legal Services
- b) To ask the Head of Electoral Services to produce a short briefing note providing the timeline of the key events for members wishing to stand at the elections on 4 June. To include information on access to electoral roles and the nomination process.
- c) To ask the Head of Democratic Services to explore the potential of using Parish/Town Clerks or other part time staff to manage peak demand.
- d) To ask the Head of Democratic Service to communicate to the rapid scrutiny group the office facilities and space available for members in the new council.
- e) To ask the Head of Democratic Services to write to members co-opted during the pre-election period. To include information on allowances and voting rights.
- f) To ask the Change Management Scrutiny Task Group to seek clarification on the level of member ICT support in the new council, the results of which to be communicated to all members
- g) To recommend to JOSTB that it is kept informed in the development of the protocol for member-officer relationship.
- h) To ask the Service Director, Legal & Democratic Services to meet with the rapid scrutiny group on 27 February 2009 prior to JOSTB to provide an update on the recommendations.

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