

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TRANSITION BOARD
8 MAY 2009**

Transitional Scrutiny – Legacy Report

Purpose

1. This report marks the end of the work of the (joint) Overview and Scrutiny Transitional Board (JOSTB) and represents a legacy of issues to be recommended for continuing interest to the new overview and scrutiny (OS) function following the elections in June.

Background

2. The Board was established at the beginning of 2008 following the successful bid for unitary status for Wiltshire. This was in response to the creation of an implementation executive to take decisions on behalf of the 5 effected authorities. All 5 authorities were represented on JOSTB, it was chaired by Tony Molland who was both a member of Wiltshire County Council and Kennet District Council and met on a monthly basis.

Scrutiny Topics

3. Early on JOSTB agreed a work programme focused on the main frontline district services and the development of community area boards – the cornerstone of the bid. It established the following small member task groups which again had representation from all 5 authorities and were supported by a joint team of scrutiny and policy officers:
 - (1) Development Control
 - (2) Waste
 - (3) Housing
 - (4) Community Area Boards
 - (5) Customer Access
 - (6) Change Management and ICT
 - (7) Critical Path, Day One and Communications
4. Members were keen to explore the options to transform a number of the frontline services in these task groups in order to implement best practice and gain the efficiencies promised in the bid. However it was quickly realised that most of the effort would be directed at transitional activity to ensure continuity of service delivery on Day One. This was subsequently reflected in the recommendations in the final reports of these task groups. Formal responses have been received from either the IE, lead member or service director to the recommendations and reported to the Board.

5. JOSTB itself reviewed a number of topics including leisure services, car parking, organisational and senior management structures, staff appointments procedure (and ongoing progress), council tax equalisation and ICT, people, and property strategies. It also held rapid scrutiny exercises on the wide area network, voluntary and community sector funding and electoral and members' services.
6. JOSTB held a prominent and well-attended special meeting in February this year to challenge the IE's recommendations for the revenue and capital budgets for the first year of the new council. Its recommendations and comments were taken into account when the full council set the budgets.
7. Finally the members on the Board worked closely with the Scrutiny Manager (WCC) and an external consultant to design the proposed OS arrangements for recommendation to the new council. These were also supported by the IE and corporate leadership team. A structure chart is appended for ease of reference.

Conclusion

8. JOSTB has been a prominent and influential forum during the period of transition. It has benefited from having experienced non-executive members from all 5 authorities who have worked hard through constructive challenge of the IE and its directors. It has done its best on behalf of the public of Wiltshire to ensure that the services provided by the new council meet the published objectives.
9. The vast majority of its recommendations have been accepted by the IE. Some of these were forward-looking and will need to be picked up under the new OS arrangements following the elections in June. These are summarised in the table below:

Activity	Subject	New Arrangements
JOSTB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leisure Services – options for transformation including contract implications ▪ Car parking – harmonisation of charging 	Environment Select Committee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff terms and conditions – harmonisation ▪ People Strategy – implementation ▪ Property Strategy (Workplace Transformation Programme) – 	Management and Resources Select Committee

	<p>implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Voluntary and Community Sector Funding - Policy 	
Housing Task Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key issues relating to the transformation of housing services, including the development of new strategies, and the 'lean review' of aspects of the housing directorate ▪ Key ongoing risks, in particular those associated with the HRA business plan, and how these are taken into account in medium term financial planning from 09/10 ▪ How affordable housing targets will be met from 09/10, bearing in mind the lack of capital funding prioritised in the council's capital programme ▪ How the role and voice of housing tenants will be preserved and further strengthened in the new council 	Environment Select Committee
Budget Scrutiny Task Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How the impact of the recession on Wiltshire's communities should be taken into account when setting council tax levels for 2010/11 ▪ Cost pressures associated with the capital programme ▪ The recovery of assets from the Icelandic Bank crisis ▪ The rationale for the distribution and delegation of budgets to area boards ▪ The use in 09/10 of general reserves and 1C4W savings (forecast for 10/11) on one off projects ▪ The cost and demand for children's care placements (this to be primarily scrutinised by the 	Budget & Performance Task Group

	Children's Services Select Committee) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ongoing overview of the annual budget setting process ▪ Ongoing monitoring of budgets (and the additional responsibility of monitoring performance) 	
Waste Scrutiny Task Group	Transformation of the Waste Service to include options for Alternate Weekly Collection and Green Waste Charging	Environment Select Committee
Area Boards Scrutiny Task Group	Implementation of the new governance model, particularly evidence to demonstrate effectiveness	Management and Resources Select Committee
Change Management Scrutiny Task Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To review future change programmes and to continue to monitor SAP benefits realisation and implementation of lean systems across the organisation ▪ ICT – implementation of the Strategy and members support 	Management and Resources Select Committee
Development Control Task Group	Provision through single IT system	Environment Select Committee
Customer Access Task Group	Transformational aims of Customer Access Strategy	Management and Resources Select Committee

Recommendation

10. JOSTB is asked to note that the topics summarised above will be included on the agenda for the first meetings of the appropriate select committees (or task groups) as a recommendation for inclusion in their respective future work programmes.
11. Any decisions taken earlier at today's meeting which also need to be reported as recommendations will be added to the above list.

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