

Draft minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on Thursday 15 January 2009 in Committee Rooms A, B & C, Level -1, Monkton Park Offices, Chippenham

Present:

Councillor C Reid (Chair)

Councillors CJ Caswill, PCB Coleman, P Darby, PJ Doyle, JM Hartless, SG Parker, A Phillips, N Phillips, JPSS Thomson

Other Members Present:

Councillors R Tonge and V Vines

Officers Present:

J Densham (Democratic Services Assistant), P Jeremiah (Legal Services Manager), S McGregor (Acting Head of Paid Service), L Robertson (Head of Policy and Performance) and M Todd (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

O57. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hill and Singlehurst.

O58. Membership

The following changes to membership were reported:

Councillor to be replaced	Replacement	Political Group
Councillor A Hill	Councillor A Phillips	Conservative

O59. Public Question Time/Receipt of Petitions

No public questions were received.

O60. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 December 2008 were considered.

Resolved that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 December 2008 be approved and signed as a correct record.

O61. Urgent Business – Chairman’s Statement

The Chair stated that 'In accordance with Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 having regard to the special circumstances pertaining in this matter – namely the imminent demise of North Wiltshire District Council, she was of the opinion that, despite its non-inclusion on the Agenda, the matter of Senior Officer Redundancies should be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgency.' This item would be taken after the Chair's Announcements.

O62. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Jennie Hartless declared a personal interest in the Urgent Item as Vice Chairman of the Personnel, Licensing and Administration Committee which had previously considered the matter.

Councillor Andy Phillips declared a personal interest in the Urgent Item as a member of the Personnel, Licensing and Administration Committee which had previously considered the matter.

The Acting Head of Paid Service, Legal Services Manager and Head of Policy and Performance declared interests in the Urgent Item and left the room for the consideration of this item.

O63. Chair's Announcements

The Chair made no announcements.

O64. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved that under Schedule 12A of Section 100A(4) of The Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that the it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined below and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information:

Agenda item/Report name	Paragraph of the Act/Schedule describing the exemption
Urgent Item – Senior Officer Redundancies	Paragraph 1 – Information relating to any individual. Paragraph 2 – Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

O65. Senior Officer Redundancies

Consideration was given to the decision taken by the Personnel, Licensing and Administration (PLA) Committee on 6 January 2009 to agree senior officer redundancies.

Items discussed included:

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- Councillor Caswill listed the following three concerns he had regarding the decision taken under delegated powers by the PLA Committee:
 - The eleven posts agreed seemed in excess of the small number of redundancies that had been originally promised.
 - The Overview and Scrutiny Committee be assured that every effort had been made to match these individuals to posts in the new Council.
 - Full assurances that the Trade Union had been involved.
- NWDC staff had not been disproportionately mismatched; it had been understood that the Local Government Reorganisation process would present the greatest risk of redundancy to first and second tier officers. This had also been discussed at the Overview and Scrutiny meeting held on 11 December 2008 (minute O56).
- The Unitary bid always envisaged District Council services would continue but that the greatest savings would come from streamlining senior posts.
- Many NWDC staff had already secured roles within the new authority.
- Much work had been done by the Human Resources team to match individuals to posts via ownership and ring-fencing processes and that the terms and conditions set for redundancy packages were the highest across all the authorities.
- It would be possible to raise questions regarding the decision on statutory posts at the Council meeting on 27 January 2009.
- It was pointed out that any decision to rescind this decision would cause anxiety to those involved and to staff in general.
- The PLA Committee member present said he had been assured that the Trade Union had been involved at every stage of the decision and that they had provided an excellent service on behalf of our employees.
- This Overview and Scrutiny review process provided a learning opportunity for the future.

There were no recommendations following the discussion.

O66. Service Plan Review 2008/09

Consideration was given to Report No.7 which informed Members of the Service Plan Review 2008/09.

Items discussed included:

- The Head for Policy and Performance had prepared the way for the new authority to take forward the Local Development Framework which would address town centre 'Visions' across the area.

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- The Pound Arts Centre was seen as an excellent asset for Corsham and North Wiltshire and the project officer was addressing the remaining snagging issues.
- While the Salisbury Vision had been adversely affected by the failing property market the long-term nature of Chippenham's Vision meant that the town had not been prejudiced in the same way.
- The Chippenham Town Council had achieved much and had further aspirations for the coming year, none of which required an increase in their normal precept.
- The new authority would own over 1000 buildings and an evaluation was underway to assess the use, energy efficiency and economic viability of each location.
- It was questioned whether cycle routes were being adequately maintained.
- A new officer had been appointed to work on the ever increasing programme of work on flooding risk assessments.

Resolved that

- 1 The Committee note the report;
- 2 The Chair raise the issue of cycle route maintenance with the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Transition Board; and
- 3 The Head of ICT give an update via email on the Whitespace waste management system.

O67. Strategic Risk Register

Consideration was given to Report No. 8 which provided an update on the Council's Risk Management arrangements and the Strategic Risk Register

Items discussed included:

- IT Business Support would continue to be considered a high risk item for the demising authority due to its dependence on bespoke software and knowledge of IT personnel.
- While the Concessionary Travel Scheme may become costly due to bus operator appeals, this would be mitigated by additional Government grants.
- The management of the Monkton Park offices had been placed on the risk register; but this was no longer considered to be an issue.

Resolved that the Committee note the report and Strategic Risk Register.

O68. Transitional Corporate Plan Progress Update

Consideration was given to Report No. 9 which provided an update and exceptions report on the delivery and performance of the Transitional Corporate Plan for the second quarter of 2008/09.

Resolved that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee note the second quarter exception report for delivery and performance of actions under the priority areas in the Transitional Corporate Plan (presented to the Executive on 8 January 2009).

O69. Leisure Centre Update

Councillor V Vines, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Economy gave an update on the Leisure Centres.

Items discussed included:

- Spending over the last two years on the four retained leisure centres will amount to £1.619 million; grants had also been given to the CLIC and CLAG action groups.
- Currently, membership income was down £16,000 which was attributed to the economic downturn.
- Energy saving schemes had been implemented, for example, pool covers.
- The Olympic grant initiative had awarded £1000 to nine prospective Olympic competitors for training or equipment.
- All Districts had signed up to the Government initiative offering free swimming for under 16s and over 60s and this had been endorsed by the Implementation Executive. Wiltshire County Council was working on a jointly funded project with the Primary Care Trust.

Resolved that Councillor Vines circulate to the Committee the latest spreadsheet showing the costs of refurbishment at the four retained leisure centres and also a copy of his report.

O70. Joint Overview & Scrutiny Board Update

Councillor A Hill was to give an update on the last Joint Overview and Scrutiny Transition Board meeting that he attended on behalf of the Chair, Councillor C Reid, but was unable to attend due to illness.

Resolved that the minutes from the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19 December 2008 be circulated to the Committee.

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The meeting finished at 8.25pm.

There were 0 members of the public present.