

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Transformation Committee held on
Tuesday, 21 November 2006 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Dr DR Bard – Chairman

Councillors: JD Batchelor
SGM Kindersley SM Edwards
Mrs DSK Spink MBE

Officers: Susan Gardner Craig Human Resources Manager
Steve Hampson Executive Director
Greg Harlock Chief Executive
Richard May Democratic Services Manager

Councillors NN Cathcart, Mrs A Elsby, R Hall, Mrs EM Heazell, Mrs CAED Murfitt, Mrs DP Roberts and RT Summerfield were also in attendance.

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor SGM Kindersley declared a personal interest as an elected Cambridgeshire County Councillor.

3. TRANSFORMATION PROJECT STATUS REPORT

The Committee considered a report summarising the key issues which had occurred in the Transformation Project since the last meeting. The Chief Executive advised that delays in the appointment of the second business analyst had delayed the Business Process Reviews. In response to concerns regarding the outcomes of the business process review of planning, he advised that it had been appropriate to undertake the review of the Planning Service first as this provided a natural follow-up from independent reports by the Audit Commission. Furthermore, the opportunity to undertake a business process review had been welcomed by lead Officers within the service.

The Committee noted the report.

4. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) (exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act).

5. SECOND TIER REORGANISATION

The Committee considered a report by the Senior Management Team (SMT) recommending proposals for the reorganisation of the Council's second tier officer

structure.

The Chief Executive introduced the report, outlining the background to, and rationale for, its recommendations. Having been tasked by Members to review the second tier structure within six months of their appointment, SMT had developed a proposal for the creation of five new Corporate Manager posts supported by the retention of four existing second tier posts. The four retained second tier posts were intended to maintain management capacity at its current level without introducing additional significant financial burdens on the Council's funds.

The Chief Executive advised that, through this proposal, the reorganisation could be implemented in a way that minimised the risk of losing significant numbers of current senior management staff. In the medium term further changes, particularly in the Finance and Support Service area, could be made when opportunities arose, for example when the postholders left the Council's employment. This approach retained senior management capacity in the short to medium term whilst affording the opportunity for review at a later stage. In the event that current employees successfully applied for the new Corporate Manager posts then an early opportunity to review third tier requirements would be presented.

The Chief Executive referred to the principles followed in developing the proposal set out in paragraph 5 of the report, adding that it was also based on Members' desire for two Chief Officer posts only.

The Chief Executive drew Members' attention to the following key aspects of the proposal, as set out in the report:

- The new Corporate Managers would have cross-cutting briefs as well as management responsibilities for the services under their remit.
- Modest financial provision would be made to increase the remuneration of up to five third tier managers whose duties might broaden as a consequence of a new structure.
- It was proposed that the new Corporate Manager – Finance and Support post should have, as an essential requirement, the holding of a prescribed accountancy qualification. This would enable the transfer of Section 151 responsibilities from the present Chief Executive, if required in future.
- The proposal had been subject to extensive consultation with the Officers likely to be affected.

The Chief Executive drew the Committee's attention to the proposal that the Executive Director be designated as Monitoring Officer and that the current post of Head of Legal Services be made redundant. The Committee was advised that this aspect of the proposal would, if agreed, require a separate recommendation to Council. Members were advised that the Deputy Monitoring Officer had expressed concern at this proposal, given that best practice suggested that the Monitoring Officer should possess an appropriate legal qualification and that there would be a conflict between the Executive Director's statutory role as Monitoring Officer and his responsibility for service delivery. Whilst acknowledging these concerns, SMT had concluded that the proposal would enhance the role of Monitoring Officer and would take away the need to appoint a new Chief Officer.

The Chief Executive asked the Committee to consider written representations from the Head of Policy and Communications and Deputy Monitoring Officer, together with other supporting documentation, copies of which were circulated at the meeting.

Members of the Committee, and other Members present, asked questions and made comments on the proposal. Some Members expressed concern that there did not appear to be a clear business case for the restructuring in terms of identifying efficiency saving and improved customer service, and the view was expressed that the second tier review should be deferred until after the receipt of the Corporate Governance Inspection report, due to be made public in January 2007.

Other Members supported the recommendations, considering that it was appropriate to implement the second tier review at this stage rather than await the outcome of the Corporate Governance Inspection (CGI) as acting now provided a window of opportunity before current arrangements for discretionary compensatory added years were withdrawn after 31 March 2007 and would minimise the uncertainty for the postholders affected caused by ongoing delays in the Transformation Project. In addition, the Council had previously committed itself to this course of action having requested that SMT undertake the review. Whilst there were undoubtedly risks involved and associated costs, it was felt that the proposal provided the best way forward for the organisation.

The Committee considered the interview process for the Corporate Managers should the recommendations be agreed, taking the view that interviews should be undertaken by the Employment Committee whose Members had received the necessary training.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the second tier structure set out at Appendix A to the report be adopted with effect from 1st January 2007 and that SMT be requested to establish and evaluate posts and arrange for recruitment to proceed in line with the Council's reorganisation and redundancy procedure.
- (2) That Council note the revised structure agreed by the Transformation Committee and approve the associated budget variances for the 2006/07 and subsequent financial years (estimated at £60,000 General Fund [best case scenario] and £5,000 HRA for 2006/07, and from 2007/08 on going revenue expenditure of £80,000 pa and £45,000 pa respectively).
- (3) That Council resolve that, with effect from 31 December 2006, the combined post of Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer be made redundant as part of the Second Tier restructuring proposals and that the role of Monitoring Officer be reallocated to the Executive Director with effect from 1 January 2007
- (4) That, following implementation of the second tier structure, SMT be requested to review third tier management arrangements with the new Corporate Managers.
- (5) That interviews for the Corporate Manager posts be undertaken by the Employment Committee.

The Meeting ended at 3.40 p.m.
