

Minutes



meeting	Chief Executive's & Resources Departmental Briefing meeting
date	17 October 2007

Present:

Councillor Peter Barnes (L)
Councillor Chris Baron (L)
Councillor Martin M Brandon-Bravo, OBE (C)
Councillor John Clarke (L)
Councillor Jen Cole (L)
Councillor Jim Creamer (L)
Councillor Vincent Dobson (C)
Councillor David Kirkham (L)
Councillor Andy Stewart (C)
Councillor John Stocks (L)
Councillor Mick Storey (L)
Councillor David Taylor (C)

Peter Rendle, Corporate Peer Review Team

Chief Executive's Department:

Elizabeth Bennett
Matthew Garrard
Roger Latham
Lynn Senior

Alison Brock

Resources:

Arthur Deakin
Sharon Eaton
Richard Hanson
Jack Markiewicz
Steve Sankey
Alan Sumby

Erica Fletcher

1. Welcome and introduction

Councillor David Kirkham, Leader of the County Council, welcomed everyone and introduced the first joint Chief Executive's Department and Resources Department Committee.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Councillor Tsimbirdis and Councillor Llewellyn-Jones.

3. Declarations of Interest by Members and Officers

No declarations were made.

4. Chief Executive's Department – overview -Improvement programme

Roger Latham, Chief Executive, gave a presentation on the programme management approach; an overview of the programmes' status; and an update on the five programmes: Service Development, Community Strategy, Resources, Member Support, and Access and Communications. He identified the next steps which were to monitor progress, roll forward the strategic programmes, and focus on resourcing issues.

Questions:

Councillor Jen Cole commented on the high cost of outside consultants illustrated on the cost control graph. Roger Latham explained that this referred mainly to the costs incurred at the second stage of a project. Support arrangements, including skills training, are required to deliver a project particularly as resources become in scarce supply (eg. Olympics 2012).

Cllr John Clarke asked about the consideration of risk management in the programmes. Roger Latham explained that this would come under the Resources programme which Arthur Deakin would speak in more detail about. He also commented that each project should be risk managed throughout its life.

5. Resources Department – overview - Business Plan Executive Summary

Arthur Deakin, Strategic Director for Resources, gave a presentation which provided an overview of the department's aims and services; and its achievements and challenges over the last five years.

Questions:

Councillor Peter Barnes asked how the authority could keep on achieving more for less? He also asked if it would be more easy for Government to say that it will get rid of Nottinghamshire County Council and move towards regional government?

Arthur Deakin recognised that there will inevitably come a time when we can't keep achieving more for less, However, he explained that the County Council is service intensive and needs to make changes to deliver services in a different way. He advised that there was still a lot of scope to achieve this. He also advised of the difference between the community and democratic role. Steve Sankey (Service Director, ICT) added that the authority will work more efficiently as the Customer Service Centre becomes further developed. Opportunities to develop shared services and reduce duplication will also provide scope for making savings.

Councillor John Clarke commented that the County Council needs to look at its use of buildings. The effect of National Job Evaluation (NJE) on sickness absence figures also needs to be monitored.

Arthur Deakin explained that arrangements are being made to effectively identify the impact of NJE on sickness absence. Richard Hanson (Service Director, Property) also explained that some offices are being reconfigured i.e. Ashfield and Meadow House to make them more efficient and effective and enable them to be used out of usual office hours. The authority is down to six sq m per person which is below the Government average. Other work was being undertaken to make better use of our buildings and generate income, such as holding local meetings in area offices, increasing partnership working and 24/7 access to buildings within the community.

Councillor John Clarke suggested that County Hall could be put to better use i.e. weekend conferences. It was explained that there were high overhead costs and catering to be considered, but a review of County Hall was being undertaken.

Councillor Andy Stewart commented that a member of the public, had they been at the meeting, may have asked why efficiencies have not been looked at before. Arthur Deakin explained that this was a gradual and on-going process and that Gershon savings of 2.5% per year had been made over the last three years.

Councillor David Kirkham added that further advancement in technology and partnership working would help to make further savings in the future.

Councillor John Clarke requested basic costings for opening County Hall for weekends. It was agreed that Councillor Baron and Richard Hanson would provide figures on the approximate cost that would be incurred.

Councillor David Taylor asked if there were any current restrictions on advertising the catering facilities in County Hall for members of the public, visitors to the cricket etc. Arthur Deakin suggested that a clear policy for County Council catering was required. Roger also stated that there were guidelines around advertising the usage of the building as this would incur public money.

Councillor Peter Barnes commented that the County Council has good news to tell, such as savings, on going plans, but that this is not effectively communicated to the general public. Arthur Deakin advised that the Leader had made the suggestion of establishing these departmental briefings to inform Members, officers and members of the public of such issues. Roger Latham said that the media would not be

interested in publishing good news relating to money. Councillor Jen Cole replied that Council Tax matters are of interest to the media and general public.

Arthur Deakin asked colleagues to complete the circulated sheets to identify which particular issues they would be interested to hear more about at future Chief Executive's Department and Resources Department briefings.

**Copies of the presentations are available from Erica Fletcher on 0115 977 2338
Or erica.fletcher@nottsc.gov.uk**