

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 15 FEBRUARY 2011**

Councillors Meehan (Chair), Waters, Whyte and Bloch

Apologies Councillor Rice, Khan and Wilson

Also Present: Councillor Gibson, Ian Bailey, Jean Croot, Steve Davies, Dave Burn,
and Aeres Howell

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION
GPCO75.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY) Councillors Rice, Wilson and Khan submitted apologies to the meeting. Cllr Gibson substituted for Cllr Rice. This was in accordance with the Constitution rules on substitutions as set out in part 4, rules of procedures, section B, committee rules, and paragraph 55.
GPCO76.	URGENT BUSINESS There were no items of urgent business submitted.
GPCO77.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST None were declared.
GPCO78.	DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS There were none received.
GPCO79.	FUTURE OF NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT SERVICE Following Cabinet endorsement, on the 25 January 2011, to dis-establish the Neighbourhood Management Service, the enclosed report set out the proposals for closing down the service to achieve the associated financial savings. The committee were aware that due to the scale of spending cuts being imposed on Local Government there would be 42 million less for the Council to spend on services in 2011/12. The Council priority was to protect services for the most vulnerable residents. The Council was no longer in a financial position to maintain the Neighbourhood Management Service as it was neither statutory nor an essential service. The closure of the service would achieve £1.4m with some funds set aside for the continued operation of Area Assemblies, which would become Area Forums, and the establishment of the Area Committees which would facilitate local decision making. The Making the Difference funds (this was a funding pot which local groups could apply for funding from, in each of the 7 area assembly catchments) would remain but at a reduced level. The community engagement function of the Neighbourhood Management team would be facilitated by the new Single Frontline service later in the year.

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The committee noted that consultation with staff was currently underway and would complete on the 27th February. Following this an equalities impact assessment would be completed. The beginning of the assessment was enclosed as part of the report for the committee's information. Members noted that a total of 12 staff from the service had been accepted for voluntary redundancy, leaving 16 staff that would enter the redeployment pool. Members were advised that four community engagement posts were likely to be created in the autumn and be located in the Single Frontline service. This was after the period in which the staff would be placed in the redeployment pool and also likely to be after the expiry of their notice period, Unfortunately, it was not possible to dovetail these exercises in order for these new positions to be available before the autumn. This was due to the need to make the financial saving of 1.4m, by the end of the financial year (April) by closing the Neighbourhood Management service. Significant work on the creation of the Single Frontline service was underway. This involved co-ordinating the required services that would form this service and undertaking the necessary staff consultations. This exercise was expected not to be completed until May.

In noting, that the payment for the redundancies would be financed by the reserves of the Council, clarification was sought on the total cost of the redundancy payments across the Council. The committee learned that the total cost of redundancy to the Council's reserves would not be fully known until the redundancy process was complete. The committee noted that there was still another cohort of staff applications, for voluntary redundancy, to be considered after the finalisation of further staff structures.

Clarification was sought on the impact of the overall reduction in Council staff, in terms of contribution levels to the pension fund. It was noted that no increases were planned for pension contribution levels at present and central government was the vehicle, in future years, to provide clarity and guidance on this matter.

Further to considering this report, the committee expressed concern at the limited number of staffing restructure reports being considered at the special committee meetings. The committee were expecting the majority of staffing restructures to require agreement before the end of the financial year, hence the agreement to hold extra committee meetings. The committee agreed the need for individual reports to be compiled from directorates detailing where their change to staffing structures will be and advising how they relate to the overall Council reorganisation. The committee further agreed that these reports be scheduled to forthcoming meetings as a matter of importance. With the aid of these reports, the committee could then further decide if any of the directorate's individual service restructures would need to come back to committee, after staff consultation, or if they could be agreed by delegated authority by the chair of the committee and the required director. The committee could be kept informed of the decisions taken by delegated authority, by the chair and directors, by the means of a summary report being considered at a committee meeting when a sufficient number had been completed.

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RESOLVED

- i. That in principle the Neighbourhood Management Service be deleted, which would include the potential deletion of 28 staff posts. That it be noted that twelve of the twenty eight Neighbourhood Management staff have applied and been accepted for voluntary redundancy.
- ii. That the staff consultation which started on 26th January 2011 involving officers affected is completed, in line with the Council's policy and procedure, and comments received will be considered and responded to accordingly.
- iii. That the Director of Urban Environment with the Chair of the General Purposes Committee be delegated authority to agree the deletion of the service following the consultation process and providing nothing of a substantive matter arises during or from the consultation period and process. The final decision will take into account the authority's public sector equality duties following completion and consideration of the equality impact assessment.
- iv. That individual reports be compiled from directorates detailing where their change to staffing structures will be and advising how they relate to the overall Council reorganisation. That these reports be scheduled to forthcoming meetings as a matter of importance.
- v. That the committee be kept informed of decisions taken by delegated authority by the chair on staffing matters, when a sufficient number have been completed, by the means of a summary report.

GPCO80. PROPOSALS TO REDUCE PA SUPPORT TO SENIOR MANAGERS IN THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

The committee were informed that the Business Support and Development Business unit, of the Children and Young People's service was in the process of being wound up. As a consequence there would be one fewer Deputy Director post based at Station Rd and other reductions in the overall numbers of senior managers. In conjunction with the reduction in management, it was proposed to the committee, that there be a further reduction in the directorate support team from 6 members of staff to 3. The deletion of these posts was part of the implementation towards the overall Council savings targets.

RESOLVED

- i. It be noted that formal consultation on these proposals began on 23 December 2010 and was concluded on 28 January 2011.
- ii. The comments received from staff and trades unions and the management response to these enclosed in (Appendix 2) be noted.
- iii. That the proposed reduction in staff as set out in the enclosed consultation document (Appendix 1) be agreed.

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Councillor George Meehan

Chair