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To: The Chairman and Members of the Council

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Date: 23 February 2021

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT (1)

Dear Sir/Madam

COUNCIL - THURSDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2021

I refer to the agenda for the above-mentioned meeting and enclose the following item:

Item No	Report Title	Page Nos
6.	Questions on Notice under Standing Order No 6	3 - 6

In accordance with Standing Order No. 6, the following questions have been received which includes the subsequent responses.

According to the Council's Constitution, if there is a supplementary question the rules below must be followed:

A member asking a question (under paragraph 6.1 or 6.2 of the Constitution) may ask one supplementary question, without notice, of the member to whom the first question was put or by whom it was answered. The supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.

Response to Supplementary question:

If the Director responsible for Democratic Services, Maxine O'Mahony, considers the supplementary question to be out of order no response will be necessary. Otherwise, an answer to a supplementary question (under paragraph 6.5 of the Constitution) may take the form of:

- a) a direct oral answer;
- b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated within 5 Working Days of the meeting where practicable to the questioner and all other members.

The supplementary question shall be put and answered without discussion.

Yours faithfully

Julie Britton

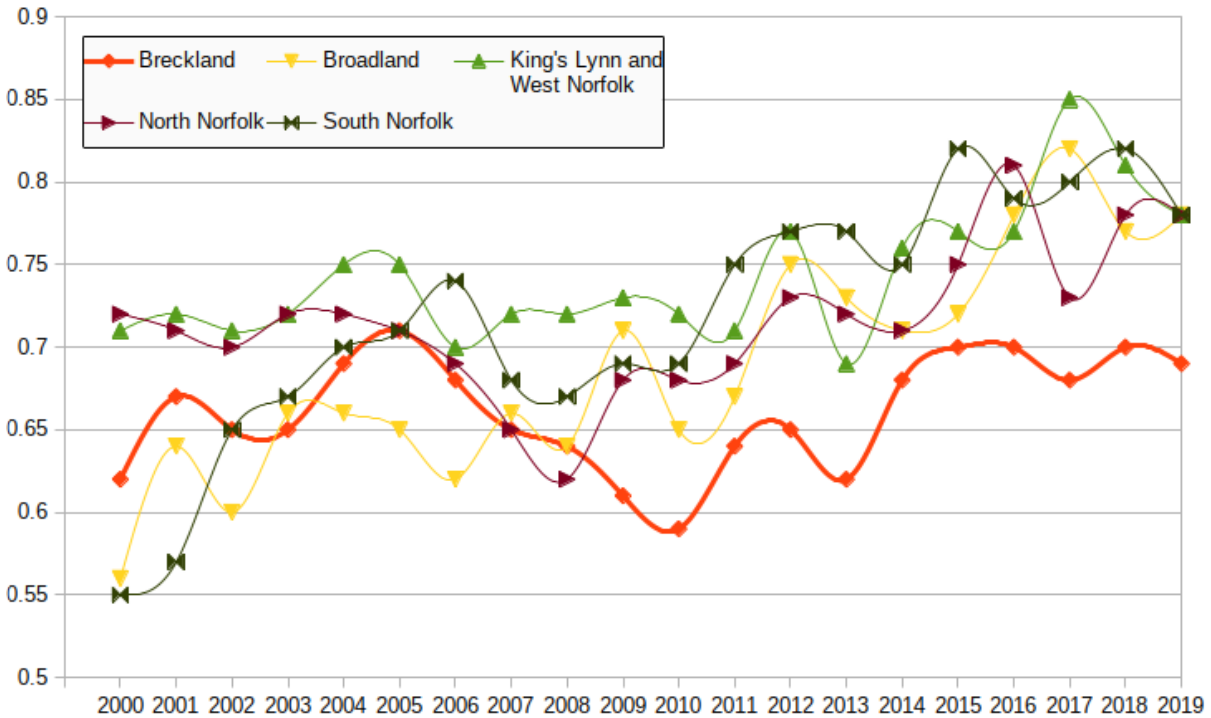
Democratic Services Officer

Questions with Notice under Standing Order No. 6 – Full Council, 25 February 2021.

QUESTION 1:

Cllr Birt to Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen, Leader of the Council

At previous Council the leader agreed with me that jobs are the best way out of poverty and having work close to where you live benefits both the individual and the environment. Looking at official labour market statistics from the ONS (via nomisweb.co.uk):



Breckland has plummeted to the bottom in terms of jobs density and our performance has merely 'flat-lined' over the last 5 years; similar charts show Breckland at the bottom in terms of salary. Would the leader provide an explanation of how the Council plans to reverse this disappointing trend.

Should this important 'jobs density' statistic be included as a Breckland KPI (key performance indicator) and be reported regularly to Council?

RESPONSE:

We are currently reviewing all KPIs and measures, including those relating to the performance of the Breckland economy.

Regarding job density, ONS guidance is that these figures should be considered as part of the wider framework for local labour market statistics, particularly as they are intended to show the relationship between labour markets across functional economic geographies. Traditionally, job density counts are useful in showing how high-density urban areas tend to generate higher volumes of employment than lower density rural areas, and act as prompt to urban policy makers around the retained benefit of employment within cities. In fact, the ONS published national guidance when this new indicator was released in 2003, which included the observation that “the city of Norwich has the highest estimate of jobs density outside London.... but has a lower employment rate and a higher claimant count proportion than the surrounding rural areas”.

The ONS also provides a wider suite of employment data such as Claimant Counts (where Breckland has continued to track lower than the Norfolk average), and Economic Activity (where Breckland continues to track above the Norfolk average). These factors will be incorporated into the review of the most meaningful data to use moving forwards.

Because of this and following some potentially structural changes in working patterns as a result of Covid-19, it is not as straightforward as seeing employment density as leading measure to be increased at any cost. Instead, the Council's focus is on inclusive growth and effective partnerships. Through our work with the Cambridge to Norwich Tech Corridor and the New Anglia LEP, we are putting in place the structures to secure significant new jobs and investment growth – both within the District, and its wider economic geography. Whilst through our Inclusive Growth Programme, we are investing in making a difference for key local communities through things like skills and enterprise.”

QUESTION 2:

Cllr Birt to Executive Member for Executive Member for Customer Engagement and Climate Change

Initial questions based around the Carbon Audit Report:

1. The majority of local authorities are aiming to be Net Zero by 2030 (pg 197), whereas Breckland's target is five years later, 2035. One reason suggested for this delay is to avoid purchasing *carbon offsets*, however there is no absolute commitment to this in our emerging carbon plan. Will a commitment to avoid purchasing carbon offsets be formally specified?
2. The Carbon Audit makes particular reference to Riverside and our Leisure Centres, but none to Barnham Broom Golf & Country Club;
 - (a) was this included in the audit?
 - (b) Were any Council owned buildings omitted from the Audit?
3. Energy consumption data for Elizabeth House appeared anomalous (pg 203), why was this?
4. (a) Was actual metered energy consumption data made available to the audit team for all supplies where Breckland Council is responsible purchasing the energy?
5. (b) Is a plan in place to acquire more accurate data on buildings where estimates have been used?

RESPONSE:

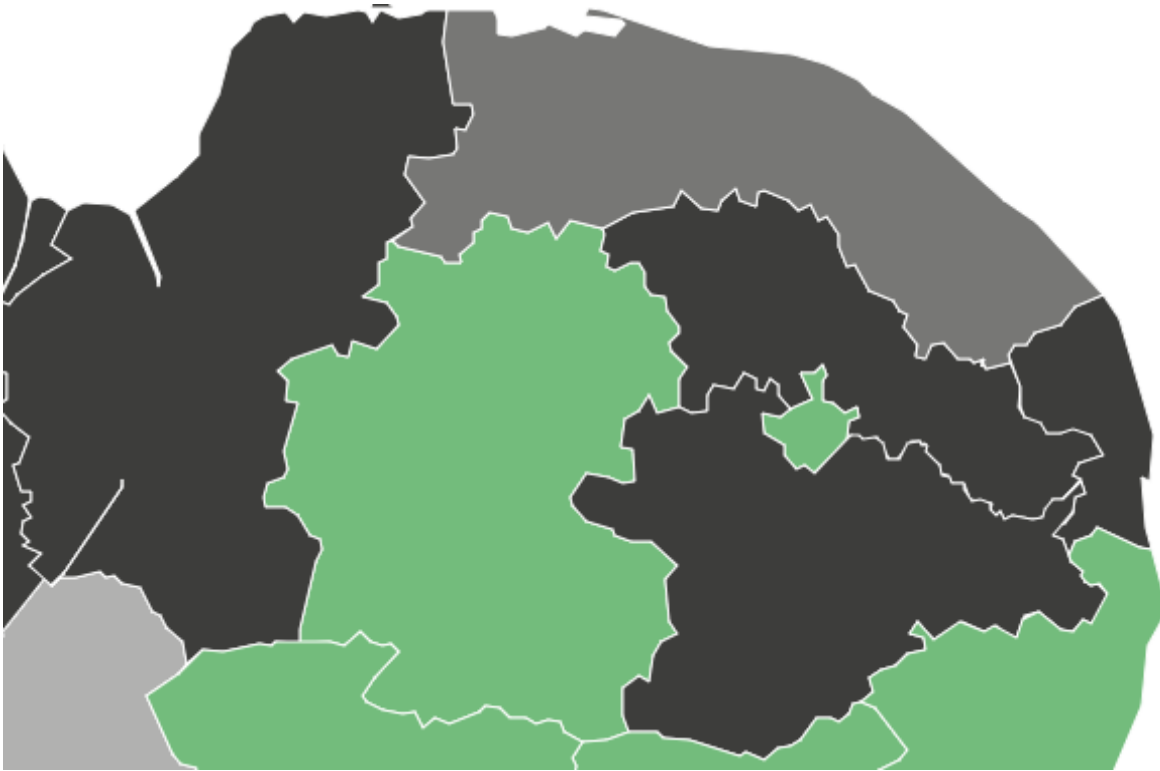
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Within the Council's Sustainability Policy Statement which is attached as appendix 5 of the Sustainability Strategy report at council the Council clearly sets out its position with regards to carbon offsets. For ease on page 216 of the agenda pack it states "The

council wants to be explicit in its intent to affect positive behavioural change and lead by example. Therefore, unless there is no other practical option the Council will not use carbon offsetting activities to reduce its carbon footprint. On the very limited occasion that it does this, it will be a temporary measure to enable the council to have time or to secure resources to address the fundamental issues affecting emissions.”

In relation to the Council's net zero ambitions, it is worth noting that according to the UK charity Carbon Copy Breckland is only one of the two second tier councils in Norfolk that has set a date by which it will be net zero (as shown in the diagram below).



2. The Carbon Audit makes particular reference to Riverside and our Leisure Centres, but none to Barnham Broom Golf & Country Club;

(a) was this included in the audit?

No, only properties that the council owns that it is responsible for energy provision were included.

(b) Were any Council owned buildings omitted from the Audit?

As above, only properties that the council owns that it is responsible for energy provision were included.

3. Energy consumption data for Elizabeth House appeared anomalous (pg 203), why was this?

The consultants looked at the ratio of gas consumption to electricity consumption for all of the sites in order to help the create an estimated value for Roman House's electric consumption as referenced in that part of the report. The 'anomaly' is that for most sites, the ratio of gas to electricity consumption is fairly similar, because they are heated by gas boilers, and gas and electricity consumption tend to track each other over a year. However, Elizabeth House, being heated via electricity and not a boiler, uses significantly less gas as a proportion of electricity. The consultants therefore did not want to include it

in this ratio calculation, because it would have led to an inaccurate result when informing the Roman House calculation.

4. (a) Was actual metered energy consumption data made available to the audit team for all supplies where Breckland Council is responsible purchasing the energy?

Yes, where this was available.

(b) Is a plan in place to acquire more accurate data on buildings where estimates have been used?

Yes, when buildings like Elm Road and Roman House are operational and tenanted then actual metred consumption will be used when the council recalculates it carbon footprint.

QUESTION 3:

Cllr Morton to Executive Member for Executive Member for Customer Engagement and Climate Change

Given the success of the GHG LAD application for retrofit funding in conjunction with Flagship, which has already begun at Redhill, will the Cabinet member for Sustainability confirm an application will be made through the Local Energy Hub to replicate this success?

RESPONSE:

As stated in a previous question under notice, the Council will look at bids into external funding sources where it meets the requirements of the schemes and it feels that there is benefit to do so.