

# Public Document Pack



Ian Vargeson – Democratic Services Manager  
General Enquiries: Telephone No. 01362 656870  
Committee Services Fax No. 01362 690821  
DX 45058 Dereham

To The Chairman and Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission

Our Ref: EMW/L.3.1

Contact: Elaine Wilkes

All other Members of the Council – for information

Direct Dial: 01362 656354

E-mail: elaine.wilkes@breckland.gov.uk

Date 29 October 2007

## AGENDA SUPPLEMENT

Dear Sir/Madam,

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION - THURSDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2007

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

Item No	Report Title	Page Nos
3.	<b><u>Urgent Business</u></b>  With the agreement of the Chairman, to consider the following item of urgent business pursuant to Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
a)	<b><u>Draft Value for Money Strategy</u></b>  Presentation by the Chief Accountant on the attached draft Value for Money Strategy. The reason for the urgency is to enable the document to meet a required deadline for approval through the current Committee cycle.	41 - 49
8.	<b><u>Review of the Provision of the Pest and Dog Control Service</u></b>  Supplementary information paper to the report of the Operations Manager (Environment).	50
9	a) <b><u>Panel 1 - Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2007</u></b>	51 - 61
9	c) <b><u>Panel 3 - Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2007</u></b>	62 - 70

Yours faithfully

*Elaine Wilkes*

Senior Committee Officer

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**Breckland Council, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham, Norfolk NR19 1EE**

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## Value for Money Strategy

### 1 Executive Summary

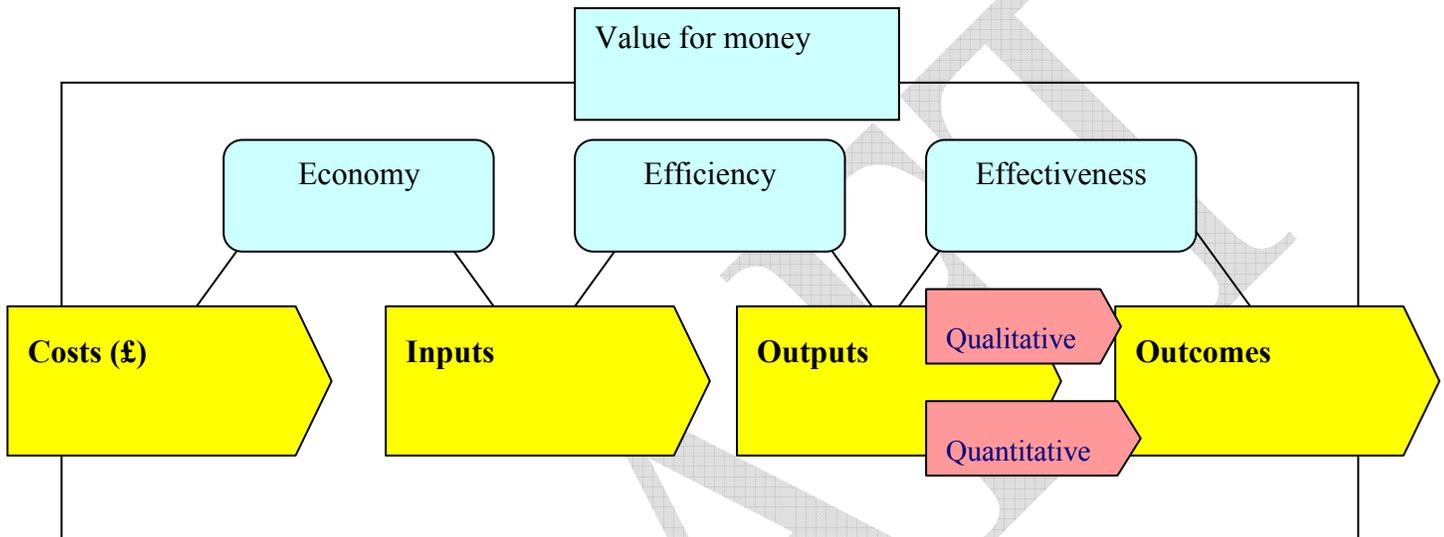
- 1.1 Breckland Council is determined to deliver good value for money. The main reason is to ensure that we provide the best possible outcomes for the people of Breckland
- 1.2 Value for Money is part of good management. It is about achieving the best possible outcomes, for the whole community, relative to the level of resources required to achieve those outcomes. *Value for money is achieved when a service produces the required outcomes in the most efficient and effective way, and at a reasonable cost*
- 1.3 To help to improve the achievement of Value for Money the Council has identified a number of steps that together form the basis of this Strategy. In summary, these steps are as follows:
- We need to become an organisation where people better understand what value for money is, how it can be measured and how they can help to achieve it.
  - We require specific actions that will enable us to identify value for money improvements across as many of our services as possible
  - We must be able to demonstrate that we are achieving these improvements in value for money.

### 2 What is Value for Money?

- 2.1 Value for money is achieved when a service produces the required outcomes in the most effective way, and at a reasonable cost.
- 2.2 Judging whether we are receiving or providing value for money can be difficult, whether we are a purchaser or a provider of goods or services. This may be particularly the case for public bodies where policy aims need to reflect the differing needs of our communities. However, there is a series of tests that can be applied to help us focus our attention on delivering good value for money.
- 2.3 The most important test is to confirm that the service is meeting a real need and providing at least some of our customers with a real benefit. If it does not do this, the service will not represent value for money no matter how cheaply or efficiently it is run.
- 2.4 Conversely, services that are appreciated by customers will not represent good value for money if they cost more than they need to, if they are provided inefficiently or they are not affordable.
- 2.5 Achieving value for money depends on getting all these elements right. The Audit Commission describes this in terms of the relationship between economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Economy** is the price paid for what goes into providing the service – for example, the cost per hour of care workers; the rent per square metre of accommodation. This will clearly affect the final cost of the service.
  - **Efficiency** is a measure of productivity – how much you get out in relation to what is put in. For example, the number of people visited per home care worker per week; kilometres of road maintained per £1,000 spent. This will determine how much of a service can be provided for a given

level of investment and again will clearly affect the final cost of the service, or the volume of service that can be delivered for a set level of expenditure.

- **Effectiveness** is a measure of the outcomes achieved and can be quantitative or qualitative. For example, the number of people prevented by home care services from needing residential care would be a quantitative measure of the effectiveness of the home care service. Satisfaction levels among older people with their independence and quality of life would be a qualitative measure of the effectiveness of the service.



2.6 So value for money is high when there is an optimal balance between all three of these elements – relatively low costs, high productivity and the achievement of outcomes which are of real benefit to people in Breckland.

### 3 The Current Position and Why Value for Money is Important

3.1 For some Council services, we believe that we already provide excellent value for money. In some areas we know that we have to improve value for money and we are working to deliver the improvements. For some of our services, we are not clear enough about whether our current service delivery represents value for money or not. This combination of circumstances is fundamental in informing our approach to value for money.

3.2 Providing good value for money is important for the following reasons:

- It enables us to provide the best possible level of services and achieve the best possible outcomes for our customers within a set level of expenditure
- It helps us to achieve a balanced medium term financial position without precipitous short-term management actions
- It helps to demonstrate our accountability to the people of Breckland
- It helps to generate a sense of pride amongst employees

- It demonstrates to Government and our external assessors that we are spending public money in an effective way
- It enables us to make a positive contribution to the view of Local Government as a model of good practice.

3.3 For these reasons one of our nine Corporate Objectives is "To ensure organisational effectiveness"

3.4 The Government's Comprehensive Performance Assessment framework for measuring the performance of Local Government now includes value for money as one of the key areas of review. Our external assessment by the Audit Commission in 2005 led to a score of 2 out of 4. This defined our performance as "adequate", meaning that the council was providing value for money but that there was scope for improvement. A further review was conducted in 2007. We are currently awaiting a score and feedback from this review. This strategy's action plan will be amended to take account of the findings.

3.5 The government has recently published its Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR 2007), supported by guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government entitled 'Delivering Value for Money in Local Government: Meeting the challenge of. This sets out the government's agenda for achieving 3% cashable savings across the local government sector. It is therefore vital for Breckland to achieve these savings if it is to find the resources necessary to pay for new government initiatives that are not funded by the new local government settlement.

3.6 Many of the components required to deliver value for money are already in place within the Council. We have a Community Plan and Corporate Plan that set out what we want to achieve and a Medium Term Financial Strategy and budget setting process that provide a framework for making resource allocation decisions.

3.7 In addition, we have well-established performance and financial management frameworks, including project management and service redesign best practice models, effective partnership working relationships in a number of areas, and significant member and employee development programmes. Nevertheless, we need to do more to demonstrate that we are delivering value for money in some areas or explain why some of our service costs are higher than average.

#### **4 Value for Money Objectives**

4.1 We need to become an organisation where everyone understands what value for money is:

- The Council's approach to value for money needs to be clearly set down
- Elected members need to be aware of their role in supporting the delivery of value for money
- Managers at all levels need to have the skills and the information required to enable them to deliver value for money,
- All employees should be aware of the contribution they can, and should, make in delivering value for money as part of their routine activities and have the opportunity to influence how this is achieved
- Fundamentally the Council must be an organisation which promotes a culture of continuous improvement, and in which seeking value for money in the delivery of services is the norm.

We require specific actions that will enable us to improve value for money across as many of our services as possible:

- Appropriate resources need to be made available to create the capacity for the Council to deliver the value for money agenda
- There should be key individuals across the Council who are responsible for acting as catalysts for achieving value for money
- We need to identify actions that will deliver value for money across the short, medium and long terms
- Programmes of value for money reviews should be very focused with clear terms of reference. They should first target those areas of greatest potential benefit, for instance high cost and lower performing services
- The Council should continue to allocate its resources to the areas of highest priority.
- We must be able to demonstrate that we are achieving these improvements in value for money:
- We need a more systematic approach to setting service standards, reviewing service outcomes, and comparing costs and outputs and how they change over time
- Indicators should be set which measure what is important to us
- Targets should be realistic but stretching
- Our policy and performance framework should provide the facility to demonstrate that we are implementing the outcomes from an active value for money service review programme
- Our Medium Term Financial Strategy should be instrumental in determining the scale of the financial savings required through improved value for money and should demonstrably capture the cashable savings achieved

4.4 We will also seek to satisfy all the Audit Commission's criteria for judging value for money in the Key Lines of Enquiry

## **5 A Revised Approach to Value for Money**

5.1 The Council aims to take the following steps:

- A systematic approach to delivering value for money, backed by a corporate Value for Money Strategy
- The establishment of a small Value for Money Team
- The identification of Value for Money Champions in each portfolio who will provide a clear lead in Portfolio's, and form a Corporate Value for Money Steering Group
- A clear and understandable definition of value for money
- Develop a methodology for the production of VFM profiles, reviews of services, and identification of VFM improvements
- The identification of a rolling programme of value for money reviews
- Implement the quick wins identified by the Business Improvement Team.

- 5.2 Making judgements about the value for money of local authority services is complex. There are important questions to ask about the degree of need, numbers of people served, equality considerations, the benefit to a community as a whole, which sometimes make the judgement difficult. These judgements need to take non financial benefits into account in an explicit and robust way. For example, the value of a particular service might be described in terms of its accessibility, its responsiveness, its flexibility in reacting to customer needs and its outcomes, as well as its cost.
- 5.3 The Council is adopting a more systematic approach to these issues. An analytical framework is being developed which will be used to produce value for money service profiles which will identify opportunities for improvements in value for money. These will be supplemented by other specific key activities as outlined in the next section. Together these will move the Council closer towards being an organisation where we achieve optimum value for money across all services.
- 5.4 This work is underpinned by a small number of value for money activities and principles which are set out below:
- To integrate value for money principles within existing performance management, planning, review and scrutiny processes and to link them to the delivery of our Annual Efficiency targets
  - To benchmark the Council's performance against that of organisations in the public, private and voluntary sector where appropriate, and against industry standard benchmarks
  - To adopt recognised good practice where this is relevant to delivering service improvements and meeting the needs of people of Breckland
  - To promote a culture of continuous improvement.
  - To train and develop managers and help them fulfil their obligation to achieve value for money for the Council as an integral part of their work
  - To take into account full long-term costs and benefits, not just immediate costs
  - To allow for local policy choices (within a national policy context) about priorities and standards of service in value for money judgements. This reflects the fact that there is an affordability issue for the Council as a whole as it makes choices about its policies and standards of service.
  - Costs alone do not reflect value. The service outcomes required by the Council are of prime importance and need to be taken into account in arriving at value for money judgements.

## **6 Key Actions in Achieving Value for Money**

- 6.1 There are a number of areas where positive actions will help to improve our level of performance in terms of delivering value for money:
- To develop a common understanding of what is meant by value for money and develop an overarching value for money strategy.
  - A definition of value for money is set out in section one of this strategy. This provides the context for our corporate value for money approach.
  - Concentrate harder on the identification of the standards of service we desire and on the evaluation of the outcomes derived from our services, which will enable us to refocus our approach to service improvement
- 6.2 This work will be tackled through the production of value for money service profiles.

- Stage One – clarifying the objectives of particular services, the standards and levels of service desired and the outcomes which are being sought
  - Stage Two - bringing performance and financial information for the service together, including comparative cost and performance data (such as the information provided by BVPIs and the Audit Commission's Value for Money Profiles). A best practice benchmarking database will be developed to support these activities. This consolidated information will help the Council to gain a better understanding of the "shape of a service" (understanding how well the service is meeting its objectives in as broad a sense as possible, including the inter-relationships and linkages between services). This wider perspective is crucial to a full appreciation of service outcomes. Stage two will result in the identification of potential value for money improvements.
  - Stage Three - determining the focus of a formal value for money review. Depending upon the potential improvements identified in stage two, reviews will be scoped to concentrate on:
    - The contribution to corporate objectives
    - The volume and standards provided
    - The cost of service provision
    - The service quality
- 6.3 The Value for Money Team will scope these reviews, identify the resources and skills needed to carry them out and monitor progress. Significant reviews may need some external consultancy support, and will be carried out on an invest-to-save basis. Their prioritisation will be determined by the outcome of the service profiles, which will include cross cutting reviews. Information gathered during phase 1 of project CREATE and other benchmarking exercises will be used to inform these reviews.
- 6.4 We need to use this to improve our approach to target setting, and to use this process more effectively to determine resource allocation, in a way which recognises that affordability across the Council as a whole is a key issue
- 6.5 It is proposed to develop a training programme which will specifically address the development of target setting as this is fundamental to the specification of service objectives and the assessment of the resources needed to achieve them.
- 6.6 Responsibility for improving value for money lies with all employees. Managers are responsible for awareness of good practice in their own area of operation and ensuring that this is followed appropriately. All employees are being encouraged to seek to improve value for money and bring to their manager's attention any opportunities for improvement. In order to deliver this, value for money principles are being integrated within our existing service planning and review framework. The Annual Delivery Plan and Service Delivery Plans will include specific actions to deliver value for money improvements.
- 6.7 We particularly need to ensure that whole life costing principles and option appraisals are a key part of making investment decisions in our capital programme. We are improving our processes for making capital spending decisions and these will be incorporated into Capital Programme setting for 2008/2009 in accordance with our Capital Strategy.
- 6.8 Our corporate procurement activity will maintain a strong focus on delivering value for money. Resources are being concentrated on partnership approaches, and targeting categories of spend that represent the largest value and/or most scope for saving. The Council has made significant progress in reviewing its procurement activities to ensure it meets the requirements of the National Procurement Strategy, and is setting procurement savings targets to reflect the outcome of our procurement activity.

We will need to continue to focus on the benefits brought about by effective procurement practices when the National Procurement Strategy is superseded by the National Sustainable Procurement Action Plan.

- 6.9 There are existing teams within the Council that can contribute significantly to the achievement of value for money. The Business Improvement Team will work to improve services to customers by redesigning business processes.
- 6.10 We need to improve the relationship between our performance reporting and financial reporting, since this contributes to the measurement of value for money.
- 6.11 The Council has adopted a robust approach to integrate performance management, risk management, financial planning and monitoring information, to provide a sharper focus for value for money.
- 6.12 We need to confirm the principle of switching resources from low priority areas. The Government's review of public sector efficiency "*Efficiency Review: Releasing Resources to the Front Line*" (the Gershon Review) focused on the objective of releasing resources into front line services that meet the public's highest priorities. This will result in Members and senior officers, through the Star Chamber process making some difficult decisions about reducing the level of service or changing the way we deliver services in some areas.
- 6.13 We need to give greater prominence to demonstrating the delivery of value for money in many of our reports to Members. Public reports should contain specific references to demonstrating value for money. This will ensure that consideration of outputs and outcomes, and business case justification, options appraisal, whole life costing, benchmarking and comparative analysis, are dealt with whenever key decisions are taken. The Management Team and Head of Financial Services will take a lead in ensuring that these issues are being considered.
- 6.14 We need to further develop the awareness and skills of managers on ways to improve the value for money offered by the services they manage, and provide training for Members on how to evaluate the benefits gained from our expenditure and assess and challenge the value for money provided.
- 6.15 The Chief Accountant, in conjunction with the Business Improvement Team and the Performance Team will focus on the following key areas of responsibility:
  - Develop a Value for Money Strategy and framework
  - Raise awareness of value for money across the council
  - Research and promote good practice
  - Devise and co-ordinate a rolling programme of reviews within and across portfolios
  - Co-ordinate work to achieve Gershon savings
  - Assist in the preparation of key reports and recommendations to ensure that the value for money dimension is properly reflected.

High-level Value for Money Champions, drawn from senior managers of each portfolio, will support the Value for Money Team. Their role will include:

- Advise on the annual value for money review programme
- Ensure close liaison with other relevant groups

- Lead or take part in cross cutting service reviews or reviews in other Portfolios
- Show a clear lead on value for money
- Ensure that knowledge and understanding of value for money is cascaded through the Portfolio
- Be involved at an early stage of all new revenue and capital spending proposals and ensure that these are based on a sound business case which reflects the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Capital Strategy
- Produce quarterly progress report on value for money as part of the performance management process.

## **7 Demonstrating that we are achieving value for money**

- 7.1 The steps outlined below will move us towards being an organisation where we can demonstrate that we are achieving value for money.
- 7.2 The development of the scrutiny function to undertake a challenging role on value for money. It is proposed that the relevant Panel includes within its future work programme an action to specifically look at value for money issues, initially through monitoring the delivery of this strategy, and that all Scrutiny Panels are charged with the task of challenging the value for money dimension to reports they receive.
- 7.3 Developing a reporting and review programme linked to service planning and performance monitoring. The three times per year Annual Efficiency Statement returns from the previous comprehensive spending review are going to be replaced by a single National Indicator to ensure that local government delivers the 3% savings required by the CSR 2007. Details of the new regime are yet to be published, but Breckland will need to develop a process to ensure that it sets targets, identifies efficiencies and monitors and reports progress in order to achieve the national target.

**Breckland Council – Value for Money Strategy****Action Plan**

<b>Action</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Lead</b>
Establish a small Value for Money Team	W/e 2/11/2007	Chief Accountant
Identify VFM Champions in each portfolio	W/e 2/11/2007	Chief Accountant
Devise a methodology for the production of VFM profiles, reviews of services, and the identification of VFM improvements	W/e 9/11/2007	Chief Accountant
Implement a training programme to develop a common understanding of VFM and the process	30/11/2007	Chief Accountant
Start the programme of reviews, setting targets and monitoring progress	December 2007	Chief Accountant

**BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 1 NOVEMBER 2007**

**REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS MANAGER (ENVIRONMENT)**

**(Author: Mike Wheatley Head of Environmental Health, in conjunction with Andrew Grimley, Principal Environmental Health Officer)**

**THE PROVISION OF THE PEST AND DOG CONTROL SERVICE**

**Supplementary Information to be tabled at Meeting**

The original report was drafted following consultation with DEFRA who have been negotiating changes to Section 68 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. This Section has the effect of removing statutory duties for stray dogs from the police and making local authorities solely responsible. Delay has been due to the national debate about funding for these duties and how much funding will be taken from the police and given to local authorities.

On 22 October, last week, DEFRA confirmed that Section 68 will come into force on 6 April 2008, local authorities are the sole statutory authority dealing with stray dogs and funding of £4 million will be given in the RSG to local authorities to provide an out of office hours stray dog service. If this is £4 million is spread evenly across local authorities in the country, it would equate to around £9,750.

The 12 page stray dog guidance received on 22 October has changed direction from the original consultations with DEFRA. They now only insist that every local authority provide the same out of hours service (from 6 April 2008) as is currently provided by the police: to provide facilities to accept stray dogs from the public out of office hours but not provide a stray dog collection service out of office hours. Breckland will, of course, retain its existing duty to collect stray dogs from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday.

I am currently consulting with neighbouring councils (some have not yet received the DEFRA letter and guidance) who are now reviewing and reconsidering their stray dog service options in the light of this new DEFRA direction.

Breckland's dog and pest services still require reviewing and the report remains appropriate to deal with the new statutory requirements. However, I would draw your attention to the following points with regard to the report submitted with the agenda.

Paragraph 1.1 'is not defined' should now read 'has been laid down in DEFRA guidance'.

Paragraph 1.1 The last sentence should read 'The police will lose their responsibility on 6 April 2008'.

Paragraph 4.1 Dog Control  
The words 'are likely to' should now read 'will'.

Second sentence, replace 'if' with 'when'; 'collected ... to end of paragraph' with 'accepted into council care out of office hours'.

Paragraph 5.1 Table, fifth row, replace 'collection' with 'reception'.

Paragraph 6.2 'Likely to come in 2008' should now read 'commencing 6 April 2008'.

**BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

**At a Meeting of the**

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PANEL 1**

**Held on Tuesday, 23 October 2007 at 10.00 am in  
Anglia Room, Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham**

**PRESENT**

Mr J.D. Rogers (Chairman)	Mr K. Martin
Mr R.P. Childerhouse	Mrs P.A. Spencer
Mr A.P. Joel (Vice-Chairman)	Mrs L.S. Turner

**Also Present**

Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mrs D.K.R. Irving
Mr W.P. Borrett	Mr R. Kemp
Councillor Claire Bowes	Mr M.A. Kiddle-Morris
Mr A.J. Byrne	Mr J.P. Labouchere
Mr J.P. Cowen	Mr B. Rose
Mr P.S. Francis	Mrs A.L. Steward
Mrs S.R. Howard-Alpe	

**In Attendance**

Mark Broughton	- Scrutiny Officer
Sam Hubbard	- Planning Policy Assistant
Ray Johnson	- Acting Operations Manager (Commercial Services)
Andrea Long	- Environmental Planning Manager
Darryl Smith	- Principal Housing Officer (Strategy and Enabling)
David Spencer	- Principal Planning Policy Officer
Nick Vass Bowen	- Senior Planning Policy Officer (Growth Point)
Elaine Wilkes	- Senior Committee Officer

**Action By**

**64/07 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**65/07 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr I. Monson, Mr P. Duigan, Mrs M. Chapman-Allen and Mrs P. Quadling.

**66/07 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

The following declarations in regard to agenda item 6 were made:

- Mr S.G. Bambridge – Personal interest from professional interest in LDF
- Mr J.P. Cowen – Personal interest as Architect in practice in relation to LDF and planning matters
- Councillor C. Bowes – Personal interest as owns land in Watton
- Mr R. Childerhouse – Personal interest as family are landowners in the district

**Action By**

- Mr J.R. Rogers – Personal & prejudicial interest in relation to LDF matters relating to Carbrooke
- Mr J.P. Labouchere – Personal interest as landowner in North Elmham
- Mr W.P. Borrett – Personal interest as business company has made representations in regard to the LDF
- Mr A. Byrne – Personal interest as property owner in Snetterton

**67/07 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING**

The following members were in attendance for agenda item 6:

Mr S.G. Bambridge  
Mr W.P. Borrett  
Councillor Claire Bowes  
Mr A.J. Byrne  
Mr J.P. Cowen  
Mr P.S. Francis  
Mrs S.R. Howard-Alpe  
Mrs D.K.R. Irving  
Mr R. Kemp  
Mr M.A. Kiddle-Morris  
Mr J.P. Labouchere  
Mr B. Rose  
Mrs A.L. Steward – Executive Member (Planning & Housing)

**68/07 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (LDF): BRECKLAND CORE STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (DPD) - PREFERRED POLICY OPTIONS CONSULTATION (AGENDA ITEM 6)**

The Environmental Planning Manager introduced the report, which was to go forward to Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> November for approval to consult on a series of Preferred Policy Options (Reg. 26) for the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document that would form part of the Local Development Framework (LDF).

The Options had been devised following extensive community and stakeholder consultation during 2005 and 2007.

The proposed consultation period would run for a minimum period of six weeks and the results would be reported back to members in due course, prior to submitting a final document to the Government later in 2008.

Members' views were being sought on the Core Strategy and suggested Preferred Policy Options, which would form the Council's broad overarching strategy for the next 20 years.

The report set out the background and policy framework against which the Core Strategy and policies were being developed, which had to be consistent with the Statement of Community Involvement, together with details of the consultations undertaken to date; the background to the preferred policy options (Reg. 26)

**Action By**

and sustainability appraisal, as well as the tests of soundness against which the policies would be examined by the Planning Inspectorate.

The life of the Development Plan had been extended from 2021 to 2026 to take in the new Government guidance under PPS3 for a 15 year land supply for housing; this proposal had been consulted on and agreed previously.

Copies of the supporting documents folders were circulated to members at the meeting. Members were asked to retain their copies of all documents for reference purposes at succeeding meetings.

Consideration was then given to the following elements of the Development Plan, as outlined in the Executive Summary for Members (Appendix 2 of the report) and detailed in Appendix 3 (Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Preferred Options 2007). The debate took the form of members' comments, questions and answers, the main points arising from which are summarised as follows:

**Spatial Vision for Breckland to 2026**

- Delivery of the aims under the Spatial Vision would flow through the wider strategic objectives and core policies contained in Appendix 3, which had been drafted and designed to deliver the strategy. Added to this, delivery went beyond sole issues of land use within Breckland; it had to be balanced with consideration by the other authorities and agencies that had responsibility for delivery of certain elements of the strategy.
- Of the target for delivery of 19,000 new homes in the period to 2026, existing allocations (including those completed and with existing planning permission) totalled some 10,841, which meant that the requirements for new sites amounted to approximately 11,000. Of these, 6,000 were targeted for Thetford and the remaining 5,000 targeted in the remainder of the district.
- Concern was raised that the 'Green Agenda' was not sufficiently embedded within the core strategy and its policies. It was explained that additional and more detailed information in relation to this would be given and considered as part of the submission of the Development Control Policies.
- Sustainability
  - There was a feeling that rural communities could be put at a disadvantage from the apparent emphasis being given to the five towns.
  - There needed to be opportunities for people to live and work in the rural villages. What level of commercial growth was being allowed for?

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- Notwithstanding national policy, a view was strongly put that for rural Breckland, the motor car had to be seen as the only sustainable mode of transport.
- Public transport was also a fundamental issue for rural communities.
- How was a sustainable village defined?

In response, it was stated that the definition of sustainability in the Breckland context was well evidenced in the document and the issue of sustainable modes of transport would be considered as part of the consideration of the detailed policies. However, it had to be recognised that it was difficult to relate national policy on sustainability to the local area, particularly in an area as rural as Breckland. Notwithstanding this, the opportunity was being taken, where possible, to push out the boundaries in that respect in the policies, for example on local service centres, parking, barn conversions, etc. and that where needs were shown and backed by evidence, these were included in the document.

The fundamental question of public transport in the rural areas was recognised. In this connection, the role of local services centres would impinge on that of other service providers, to ensure service provision was maintained. Use of the objectives of the LDF was to ensure as many people as possible live close to where they can access services and the overall distances travelled to access services are reduced.

There was no formal definition for sustainable villages and decisions on village guidelines had not yet been determined.

- o Employment
  - Key role of A11 corridor and the ratio between houses and jobs for Attleborough over the life of the plan in comparison to Thetford.
- o Housing
  - A concern was raised that the figures for housing after those for the towns were deducted appeared to leave a shortage for service centres and that the Council could find itself trying to accommodate some 700 units per annum across the rural villages to meet the overall housing target; while some hamlets could accommodate small numbers of units, others had no further capacity.

**Spatial Strategy**

**Attleborough and Thetford**

- o Employment
  - The figures for new jobs for Attleborough were questioned. A member considered that these would equate to 70 per annum rather than the 200-300 stated.

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- While there were very specific figures for retail floor space, the spatial strategy for Attleborough contained no specifics for the industrial park or further space. How much was zoned or what was needed in Attleborough to achieve the Spatial Strategy?
- There was reference to a new business park for Thetford but employment specifics appeared vague.
- Economic growth needed to be well balanced and related to the towns.
- There was insufficient indication on specific land releases in the economic plan.
- The existence of a good railway line with links to Norwich and Cambridge would influence the area as a commuter belt.

Regarding Thetford, it was explained that there was a lot more work to be undertaken in regard to the Growth Point Programme. At this stage, the strategy gave broad job figures and the further work would take this forward to translate the space requirements, needs and deliverables through the Thetford Area Action Plan.

It was clarified that the employment figure for Attleborough was some 70 jobs per annum, bearing in mind this was net job growth, allowing for restructuring within the economy.

Employment figures should be treated very much as minimum net figures. There would be some flexibility and flux in net jobs growth coming out of consultations with agencies and employers, which would need to be translated into specific land releases. It was considered that there could be significant additional land release in Snetterton and Attleborough. More detail would also come forward at the site specifics stage.

- o Infrastructure
  - There was a strong concern about the ability to deliver the LDF given the constraints from lack of infrastructure for transport, drainage/sewerage capacity, schools and power. It was felt there were serious inconsistencies in the plan in this regard, with implications for all the towns and employment. It was felt the Council should be the driver behind the utilities and other infrastructure agencies/providers in enabling delivery of the plan.
  - How could utilities providers be persuaded to put in infrastructure ahead of development?
  - Firms would not commit themselves to an area unless all facilities were in place. Without the basic infrastructure, economic development would be constrained.

Infrastructure was one of the key issues for the District. It needed to keep pace and there was a high interaction with providers. There were emerging constraints which needed to be worked through; if not, problems would be exacerbated. From the LDF dialogue, it was made known to providers where the needs for infrastructure were and where they needed to match their capital

**Action By**

programmes to those needs, e.g. schools, drainage, etc. The Council was working with them to ensure facilities could be phased in at the right places and at the right times.

A bid for funding for infrastructure to support the Thetford Growth Point Programme had been made and work was being done to identify gaps in infrastructure, particularly regarding funding, which was a complex area. The Government promoted developer contributions.

There were a number of operators in key utility areas and there were differing regulatory provisions governing their funding of schemes.

While there were critical issues, they were not considered to be insurmountable and an implementation and monitoring framework was being introduced, which would flag up infrastructure issues, risk and contingencies etc.

Other than continuing to work with the utility companies and other infrastructure providers to secure provision of services, the alternatives appeared to be either to not grant planning permissions until the required infrastructure was in place, or to force the issue by granting all applications – this would not be (e.g. Anglian Water) without risk in terms of exacerbating existing infrastructure deficits.

It was recognised that commercial companies would not commit themselves to moving to an area until infrastructure was in place.

It was acknowledged there were difficulties in Snetterton regarding energy capacity and the power infrastructure there. The Council was working with developers to secure a solution.

Dereham/Swaffham/Watton

- Infrastructure
  - The housing target for Dereham equated to 59 houses per annum and this was felt to fall well short of what was needed but further growth was being constrained by the lack of High School facilities. A larger site was needed with capacity for growth over the life of the plan.
  - There appeared to be a serious mismatch between targets for jobs and houses in Dereham.
  - There needed to be new solutions on schools provision in Dereham, which were at capacity. The situation was similar for Watton. The Education Authority needed to actively respond to the District's plan.
  - Dereham was certain to grow further so the issues of schools and sewage treatment works needed to be addressed and other providers needed to have a strategy for that growth. The Council needed to be more proactive in seeking a strategic commitment from other service providers both for Dereham and generally.

**Action By**

- Growth forecasts were based on historical formula. Population growth had expanded significantly from migrant workers coming into the area which would affect existing forecasts.
- Could Section 106 Agreements be used as an option for developer contributions towards overall infrastructure needs? Was there a set tariff for developer contributions for schools development?
- o Employment
  - Dereham attracted customers from outside the district, including from Norwich and Fakenham. The town therefore needed to be recognised as a service centre for the area outside Breckland.

In regard to the infrastructure at Dereham, it was explained that the constraints were linked to the fact that the High Schools were at maximum capacity. Both sites were landlocked with no room for further expansion. The solution was for greater town growth or to relocate an existing school to a new site where expansion could be factored in. There were difficulties with both options. The plan recognised the limits which would be subject to regular review during the life of the plan to take account of any changes.

The issue of an imbalance between employment/retail growth over homes in Dereham was a very local specific response to the factors affecting the town, including the growth in the commuting public. Also, Dereham had built up a retail offer and further retail development would build on this for the town and its surrounding villages.

Affordable housing delivery was a key issue in the whole LDF. A balance was needed. Around 1200 new homes per annum were required to meet total affordable housing requirements over the next five years; the Council was currently working to the overall 760 houses per annum in the Regional Plan. The issues regarding deliverability were recognised.

Regarding schools, funding came from new housing developments but was retrospective, i.e. the houses had to be built first. Current policy did not allow the County Council to borrow funding for schools.

There had been a lot of dialogue over the schools issue for Dereham. A new high school would require 6000 new homes to be built which would have to come from the overall housing allocation in the plan.

However, the issue of sewage capacity in the town was a significant factor. The current sewage treatment works was at capacity and Anglia Water had nothing in their current programme to remedy the situation. Development of more than 1000 homes would require a new sewage treatment works to be built. It had to be recognised that there was a duty on the Council not to exacerbate an existing problem area.

**Action By**

Capacity was a known factor from Norfolk County Council forecasts. The Core Strategy and development policies were setting markers and raising the issues with providers that needed to be resolved before the end of the plan period, which would be subject to review during the life of the plan.

Developer contributions for sewage treatment works and certain other facilities were not permissible under current regulations.

There was no blanket tariff for Section 106 Agreements. Contributions differed based on varies needs criteria. Breckland would shortly be reviewing its Section 106 policy.

The current County Council formula for schools development was 25 pupils per 100 houses for primary schools and 14 pupils per 100 houses for secondary schools. It was felt these figures might be reduced in the future.

**Service Centre Villages/Rural Settlements**

- Rural Settlements
  - There was a case to enable development in rural villages and settlements for people who live and work there.
  - Social housing should not be constrained to the towns; if affordable/social housing was not provided in rural communities, local people would be forced to move out.
  - Affordable housing should not simply be interpreted as meaning social housing. There were other options for providing rented accommodation. There needed to be flexibility for this in the villages. The policy appeared to put a focus on social housing only.
  - The need for families to be able to move from smaller to larger houses in their local community also had to be taken into account.
  - The need for personal choice also had to be available; not all people on low incomes wanted to live in towns.
  - Care was needed in the use of the term “infilling” and the policy to protect the form and character of an area. All infilling would affect the form and character of its surrounds. It might be more useful to define areas where development was not wanted.

The policy regarding rural settlements would not strike out or preclude development in rural areas but recognised the need for there to be balanced development, allowing for affordable housing to meet need and for legitimate business development in a rural location.

Away from service centre villages, settlement boundaries would include scope for development but on a scale to recognise the surroundings and character of the area.

It was considered that the policy did meet what was wanted but it was accepted that the wording of the policy could be clearer. The

**Action By**

question of development criteria would be determined under the development control policies.

It was agreed there was a range of affordable housing options. The greatest need identified from the Housing Needs Survey was for rented / shared-ownership housing.

The Housing Needs Survey was a district-wide survey which identified a need for smaller units overall and that there was a need across the whole district for affordable/low cost housing. This sometimes conflicted with a parish council's view. There were also difficulties in matching needs with accessibility and sustainability issues. Housing through the open market was unlikely to help those in need of affordable/low cost housing.

- Service Centres
  - Would settlement boundaries be amended to allow for infilling in support of protecting existing centres?
  - A member questioned that the original candidate list of local service centres included Bawdeswell but that this was not included as a proposed service centre.
  - How would protection of service centres be achieved, given there were factors over which the Council had no control, e.g. post offices?
  - An unknown factor was where people would want to live in the future. When looking at the A11 corridor, there was housing need along this route but most of the villages served by it were not earmarked for growth.
  - On the provision for new jobs, there was a figure of 1500 for the rural areas but there was no reference to rural industrial estates, which could give a huge potential.

So far as the issue of settlement boundaries was concerned, there was a need for a debate about the need for them and their purpose. If they were to be retained, there would be opportunities to look at them when considering the site specific policies.

So far as the proposed list of service centres in the Strategy was concerned, this reflected the views of the Panel as part of the earlier consultation but ultimately it would be for members, through the Cabinet, to determine if the list of villages was right or needed to be amended.

The Strategy aimed to seek to protect service centres and was designed to give a positive approach to enable the Council to do what it could to sustain or maintain service provision in the rural areas.

As well as promoting the A11 corridor through a range of options, it provided for a key service centre at Harling, together with other centres at Old Buckenham and Banham, together with other villages where there would be opportunities for growth. The Strategy aimed to provide for a range of places where growth could or would take place.

**Action By**

**Core Policies**

**CP1 Housing**

A member expressed the view that while he could see how the District target 40% affordable homes on developments fitted the larger villages and towns, he did not see that it would help provision in the smaller villages and questioned whether it would be possible to have a specific policy to address this point.

It was explained that the current local plan applied this target to developments of 25 or more houses in towns and 5 in the villages. The LDF proposed that the target be applied to developments of three or more dwellings and it was aimed that this would apply to both towns and villages for consistency.

Other members desired to see a greater mix of the range, size and conditions of housing in the towns and villages. It was suggested development in the towns should provide for more 'executive'-type houses, as it was felt there was a current over-development of same type/blocks of housing (Thetford was quoted as an example).

In response, it was stated that the range of documents through the LDF offered a number of ways to tackle specific sites. So far as Thetford was concerned, specific policies would be determined through the emerging Area Action Plan and Allocations document, based on evidence of need and site specific policies would dictate the mix.

**CP2 Gypsies and Travellers**

The requirement on Councils to provide sites for Gypsies and travellers was acknowledged.

**CP3 Employment**

The Environmental Planning Manager reported one amendment to the policy to include identification of land to the south of Weeting.

It was explained that the policy was designed very much around protecting existing employment sites.

A member commented that in supporting rural areas there needed to be more flexibility to meet local needs. Another member hoped that the plan did not limit development in rural areas to those specifically named areas.

**- Due to time constraints, the meeting was adjourned at this point, to be reconvened at the next scheduled meeting on 8 November 2007 -**

**69/07 WORK PROGRAMME**

Item deferred to the next meeting.

**Action By**

**70/07 NEXT MEETING**

The arrangements for the next meeting on 8 November 2007 were noted. The meeting would conclude the adjourned items from agenda item 6 (Minute 68/07 above) and would consider the second part of the Preferred Options: Development Control Policies.

The meeting closed at 1.00 pm

CHAIRMAN

**BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

**At a Meeting of the**

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PANEL 3**

**Held on Tuesday, 16 October 2007 at 10.15 am in  
Thetford Town Council, King Street, Thetford**

**PRESENT**

Mr R.G. Kybird (Chairman)	Mr R. Kemp
Mrs S.R. Howard-Alpe (Vice-Chairman)	Mr J.P. Labouchere
Mr G.P. Balaam	Mr B. Rose
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mr M. Spencer
Mrs D.K.R. Irving	

**In Attendance**

Anita Brennan	- Strategic Housing Manager
Mark Broughton	- Scrutiny Officer
Sian Harland	- Senior Committee Officer
Stephen McGrath	- Principal Committee Officer
Martin Seymour	- Health Improvement Officer

**Action By**

**44/07 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**45/07 APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Mr F.J. Sharpe.

**46/07 IMPACT OF THE REORGANISATION ON THE NEW PRIMARY CARE TRUSTS**

Tara-Studholme Lyons, Assistant Director, Norfolk Primary Care Trust was in attendance to give Members a presentation on the impact of the reorganisation on the new Primary Care Trusts.

The Norfolk Primary Care Trust (PCT) was an amalgam of five Primary Care Trust covering six local authority areas.

According to National Guidance the functions of a Primary Care Trust was to:-

- engage with the local population to improve health and well-being.
- commission a comprehensive and equitable range of high quality, responsive and efficient services, within allocated resources, across all service sectors.

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- directly provide high quality responsive and efficient services where this gives best-value.

The priorities for the NHS for 2007/2008 would be to:

- gain financial stability.
- achieve a maximum of an 18 week wait milestone.
- reduce rate of healthcare acquired infections.
- reduce health inequalities and promote health and well-being.

In the context of the Norfolk PCT the priorities for 2007/2008 would be firstly to become financially stable in order to gain a license to operate which would allow the PCT to commission its own services. Three out of the five PCTs had a deficit and this, in its entirety, amounted to £40 million which had to be re-paid. It was noted that the way in which the PCT was funded was complicated but it was moving towards getting a larger proportion of funding equal to its demography.

The PCT would re-invigorate Partnerships and Joint Working to improve health and well-being; develop services responsive to local need; consider "health" in its widest sense and offer opportunities for public/patient engagement.

Progress in implementing Practice Based Commissioning (PBC) would be accelerated and GP surgeries were fully engaged and were embracing the commissioning agenda.

Obviously, managing demand and increasing efficiency were areas which were constantly under review.

There was a Provider Section of the PCT and this was kept separate from the Commissioning Section. Although the Provider Section would be able to bid for contracts to provide services.

There were six Assistant Directors: four worked with locality briefs; one working with mental health, children and the elderly and one working with elective care.

With regard to engaging with local stakeholders Members suggested that the Norfolk PCT could use Breckland Voice to target Breckland residents. Ten issues were sent out each year to every household within the Breckland district.

In relation to commissioning service the Norfolk PCT would be looking towards private companies such as Boots and Lloyds. This would be to improve primary care; such as improving weekend access to services. However, it was made clear that what was national guidance was not always appropriate for local needs.

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With regard to ensuring that Members were kept up-to-date with issues facing the Board it was noted that the Norfolk PCT Board minutes were available on-line on the Norfolk PCT website. However, for information at grass roots level there was a Clinical Executive Committee and a Committee for Practice Based Commissioning. It was not clear whether these papers were in the public domain. It was agreed that the Scrutiny Officer would investigate what minutes regarding the work of the Norfolk PCT were available in the public domain and, if so, where they could be found.

Members discussed consultation processes and it was noted that although Patient Participation meetings were set-up they may not be the best consultative group. Using Breckland Voice would target a whole community.

Traditionally the PCTs had not been good at consultation and by working in partnership with other organisations this would improve comprehensive engagement by working with neighbourhoods which provided a community focus. Although the PCTs had mainly focussed on reactive health services it would start to focus on providing proactive services to improve health and wellbeing to prevent people from becoming unwell.

**RESOLVED** that

- (1) the information be noted.
- (2) the Scrutiny Officer inform Members before the next meeting of Panel 3 which of the Norfolk PCT minutes are in the public domain and where they can be found.

**Mark  
Broughton**

**47/07 HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PLAN – MONITORING**

The Strategic Housing Manager presented progress against the delivery of the Housing Improvement Plan and requested that Members agree the recommendation for future reporting.

Breckland had been awarded the Homelessness Regional Champion status as a result of the huge improvement the Team had made in relation to this service area. The award meant that Breckland's Housing Team would peer review other local authorities for improvement.

As well as the above Breckland's approach to Black, Minority and Ethnic Groups had been seen as one of the leaders following the work commissioned in relation to these Groups.

Members were informed that progress against the targets contained within the plan had been consistent since its adoption despite pressure on the team to respond to other national and local targets not contained within the plan itself. The Team had responded well to the challenges and the majority of targets had been met. Several targets were still in progress and Members were informed of the progress as follows:-

**Action By**

Migration of Housing Service into Customer Contact Centre

It was believed that this would happen in the future as part of the Strategic Alliance discussions and proposed increase in the capacity of the Contact Centre, however no date had yet been set for migration. The benefits of migrating the housing service were thought to be that better signposting of clients with generic housing enquiries could take place, freeing up the professional officer time. Enquiries relating to homelessness would however still need to be put straight through to the Housing Team due to the vulnerable nature of the client group. The Council would want to avoid inadvertently operating a 'gatekeeping' approach to telephone calls which could deter those that needed the help most from seeking guidance.

Diversity/BME Issues

Breckland had led a Norfolk and Waveney Wide consultation on BME issues with a concentration on migrant worker issues. The results of that consultation could be viewed at the next meeting of Panel 3. An Action Plan would be developed from the results of that consultation and to raise the profile of migrant workers.

It was hoped that the consultation would dispel myths around BME Groups within Norfolk; such as the perception that there was a high number of asylum seekers and illegal immigrants within Norfolk. However, it was noted that the Government was looking to disperse these Groups around Britain to avoid a concentration within urban areas.

Affordable Housing Policies/Approach

Within Breckland developers were requested to provide 30% of affordable homes within a development. Officers working on the Local Development Framework (LDF) were working towards the maximisation of affordable housing within the District and it was intended to increase that percentage.

The Housing Market Assessment from July 2004 stated that the need in Breckland for social rented and low cost home ownership units was 600 per year. That had now increased to 900 per year and the Council needed to have a realistic approach and investigate ways to improve delivery year on year to provide that housing need.

Breckland would be bidding for government funding and had been successful in the past. At present Breckland did not have any internal budgets set aside for additional affordable housing provision as per other local authorities. The Housing Team were seeking to rectify this position with a bid to Star Chamber. It was also suggested that the Breckland's Policy not to transfer land to Registered Social Landlord at nil cost should be reviewed.

**Action By**

Members were informed that although developments, which included an element of affordable housing, were coming through Development Control Committee the Council could not dictate when those properties would be built. It was hoped that 100 units would be built this year which was an increase of 20 compared to the previous year.

In response to the proportion of housing being built in towns as opposed to rural sites the Strategic Housing Manager stated that it was mainly windfall sites in urban areas coming forward at the moment as they were awaiting the adoption of the new local plan, but that in future allocated sites contained within the LDF would facilitate a better spread across the District. There needed to be a more strategic approach to providing housing by taking the commuted sum provided by a developer and spending 80% of that sum on the site but investing 20% in the rural parishes.

As the issue of affordable housing would be discussed in conjunction with the LDF in the near future the Panel requested a Plan of the District showing the housing need within each area. This information was contained within the Housing Needs Assessment and this could be broken down into sub-areas which would include the towns and the rural areas.

The Strategic Housing Manager added that in parallel to the LDF and the Housing Needs Assessment there would be a review of the Allocations Policy. This would be open to a wide consultation and it was hoped that housing people with a local connection would be high on the agenda.

**Norfolk Wide Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy**

Members were advised that Supporting People was a Social Services Fund which supported people in their own homes; £17million was distributed per year. Breckland Council sat on the Commissioning Board which decided how that funding was split between all the councils within Norfolk. Floating Support provided assistance for people to remain in their own homes avoiding the need to enter a care home.

Supporting People improved the quality of care people received as it allowed the customer to choose that support.

One success story was the Domestic Violence Refuge which had been funded from a grant awarded at a regional level. Attracting such grant funding was an on-going task for the Team.

**Strategic Approach to the Provisions of Temporary Accommodation**

When the Audit Commission first assessed the Housing Team there were a number of families and young people being housed in Bed and Breakfast Accommodation in Great Yarmouth and other locations outside of the Breckland District. This was considered to be unacceptable. Since the inspection, Girling House had been re-developed to provide temporary accommodation and there were plans to re-develop John Roome House to provide this type of accommodation over the coming year. The Team had been working with Bed and Breakfast providers

**Action By**

within Breckland to temporarily house people within the District. To house people in the District meant that they could stay within their community which would enable them to help themselves more by keeping their jobs and not uprooting children to a different school etc.

A scheme to mediate between families and young people had been established, to try to heal relationships and allow young people to stay at home, in some cases this had meant the Council making payments to parents to keep their children at home. If the child was still evicted this still represented a saving to Council budgets.

The hostel in Thetford housed young people on a temporary basis and recently this has led to a spate of anti-social behaviour. This had demonstrated that the staffing cover was at present inappropriate and needs to be addressed as part of the redevelopment. There also needed to be a protocol with Social Services to provide guidance on which duties each would provide a service. It was felt that 16/17 year olds were still vulnerable children and as such needed to be supported. Housing was not always the solution for young adults and this issue needed to be tackled.

Further to the above for young people entering the hostel, work was in progress to introduce a system whereby they would have to sign-up to a behavioural contract and if their behaviour had systematically been considered anti-social or they had been involved in criminal activity they would not be given any further support from Breckland Council.

There were further problems in providing housing for young adults and this included Registered Social Landlords being unwilling to provide them with a tenancy and Breckland would not act as a guarantor.

As a way forward the Housing Team were bidding for National Lottery funding in order to provide supported accommodation for young people which would provide housing, life skills, access to education and then hopefully access to work and ultimately independence.

Members queried the affect of the government's plans to extend compulsory full-time education to 18 years old. In response the Strategic Housing Manager stated that within some households 16 year olds were required to work in order to provide the household with additional income. There would still be expulsions and families requiring the Council re-home their children when they became 16. The Housing Team had started to talk to school pupils regarding the role of the Council and what they can and can't expect the Council to do in the event of them becoming homeless. Specialist mediation firms had been used to provide assistance to families with young adults, but attendance at such schemes was not compulsory. The Government's Policy for dealing with families with such issues was likely to change and that if a family did not engage with the Council the Housing Application for the young person would not be accepted.

Members suggested that information regarding the housing of young people could be put in Breckland Voice. The Strategic Housing Manager stated that this had been done in previous editions.

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**Private Sector Housing Strategy**

There was work being undertaken around Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO) to improve the delivery of the Council services.

The Warm Front Scheme had been implemented to help families facing fuel poverty.

Further work would be undertaken with the private sector to reduce homelessness figures.

The Grants and Loans Scheme would be reviewed to consider introducing a scheme to release equity to owner occupiers to enable them to fund their own repair scheme. Assistance would be given to those people who wished to downsize to a smaller property thus releasing larger houses onto the housing market.

All of these schemes would be collated into one document to provide easy access to information regarding private sector housing.

Further to the above the Strategic Housing Manager added that new legislation had been introduced on 1 April 2007 regarding deposits paid to Landlords by Tenants. Any deposits received must be paid to an Independent Body who would keep that deposit until the Tenant wished to vacate the property. If the Tenant had kept to the tenancy agreement the Landlord would then request that the deposit be released. If, however, the Landlord did not follow this protocol they would be taken to court to request release of the deposit.

Members stated that sometimes there was a problem with the tenancy agreement whereby the Tenant may not have kept the property in good order. In response the Strategic Housing Manager informed the Panel that as well as a Landlords' Pack the Team were working towards producing a Tenants' Pack.

**RESOLVED** that

- (1) progress against the Housing Improvement Plan and the matters arising be noted;
- (2) progress be reviewed against any outstanding items in April 2008; and
- (3) the Strategic Housing Manager provide all Members with a map showing the areas of housing need in accordance with the Housing Needs Assessment, preferably by 22 October 2007;
- (4) progress on young people's hostels and partnership working be made available;
- (5) progress on the Young Persons Homelessness Forum be made available; and

**Anita  
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Brennan**

**Action By**

- (6) priority be given to work being undertaken in relation to Section 106 agreements and how commuted sums could be spent in the future.

**48/07 THETFORD HEALTHY LIVING CENTRE**

Members had been given the opportunity to visit the Healthy Living Centre, Thetford. Whilst discussing the issues with their guide, Marilyn Boulton, they came to the following conclusions:

- The person responsible for the Travel Plan had only just been made aware that this Plan formed part of their duties. This person was the Business and Performance Manager and Members agreed that they should be invited to attend a meeting of the Panel, in 3 months, to provide further information regarding the monitoring of the Travel Plan.
- There was an urgent need for an ambulance turning bay to ensure that the Centre was being used to its optimum level. At present ambulances could not pick-up or drop-off as there was no safe access or egress for an ambulance.
- There was a need to provide local signage to the Centre and this needed to be subject to an urgent review as it was not clear to those visiting the Centre where it was situated. Members were informed that patients were coming in from well outside the district as Papworth Hospital held clinics at the Centre.

**RECOMMEND** that

- (1) the Overview and Scrutiny Commission support the need for a turning bay for ambulances at the Health Living Centre, Thetford; and
- (2) the Overview and Scrutiny Commission support the need to provide adequate signage on the highway for the Healthy Living Centre, Thetford.

**49/07 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Scrutiny Officer circulated the latest Work Programme for Policy Development and Review Panel 3.

The Panel considered dates of future meetings and agreed that the principle of rotating Panel meetings around the district continue. In relation to a meeting in January 2008 it was

**RESOLVED** that a meeting of Panel 3 be held on 11 January 2008 at 10.00 am in the Norfolk Room, Elizabeth House, Dereham.

**Action By**

**50/07 NEXT MEETING**

That the next meeting of the Policy Development and Review Panel 3 be held on Tuesday, 27 November 2007 at 10.00 am in the Norfolk Room, Elizabeth House, Dereham.

The meeting closed at 12.45 pm

CHAIRMAN