

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

COUNCIL

**Held on Thursday, 24 February 2011 at 10.30 am in the
Anglia Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr S. Askew	Mr J.P. Labouchere
Mr G.P. Balaam	Mr K. Martin
Mrs J. Ball	Mrs S.M. Matthews
Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mr I.A.C. Monson
Mr W.P. Borrett	Mrs L.H. Monument (Chairman)
Mr A.J. Byrne	Mr D.G. Mortimer
Mr P.D. Claussen	Mr J.W. Nunn
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mrs P. Quadling
Lady Fisher	Mr J.D. Rogers
Mr R.F. Goreham	Mr S. J. F. Rogers
Councillor E. Gould	Mr B. Rose
Mr J.R. Gretton	Mr F.J. Sharpe
Mr M.J. Griffin	Mr W.H.C. Smith
Mrs T. Hewett	Mr A.C. Stasiak
Mrs D.K.R. Irving	Mrs A.L. Steward
Mr C.R. Jordan	Mrs L.S. Turner
Mr M.A. Kiddle-Morris	Mr N.C. Wilkin (Vice-Chairman)
Mr R.G. Kybird	

In Attendance

Mark Finch	- Head of Finance
Mark Stokes	- Deputy Chief Executive
Stephen McGrath	- Member Services Manager
Julie Britton	- Senior Committee Officer
Sharon Jones	- Strategic Partnership Manager (ARP)
Robert Walker	- Director - Community Services
David Spencer	- Principal Planning Policy Officer (Capita Symonds for Breckland)
Maxine O'Mahony	- Director of Corporate Resources
Phil Mileham	- Senior Planning Policy Officer (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council)
Robert Leigh	- Assistant Director, Communications and Communities
Keith Eccles	- Building Control & Development Services Manager (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council)
Terry Huggins	- Chief Executive
Kevin Ward	- Growth Programme Manager
Rory Ringer	- Elections and Scrutiny Manager

20/11 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Mesdames C. Bowes, M. Chapman-Allen, K. Millbank, P. Spencer and Messrs S. Chapman-Allen, R. Childerhouse, P. Cowen, R. Duffield, M. Fanthorpe, P. Francis, P. Hewett, A. Joel, R. Kemp, T. Lamb, I. Sherwood and M. Spencer.

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21/11 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 3)

Members were made aware that Cllr R Kemp had been involved in an accident at home and was quite poorly. A get well card was circulated for Members to sign if they so wished.

The Chairman, on behalf of all Members, wished Mr Kemp a speedy recovery.

Engagements List – Chairman
27th January, 2011 to Wednesday 23rd February, 2011

Date	Event	Host
13 Feb 2011	Civic Service	Chairman of South Norfolk Council, Councillor Jeremy Savage

Engagements List – Vice-Chairman
27th January, 2011 to Wednesday 23rd February, 2011

Date	Event	Host
27 Jan 2010	Official Opening of Priory Group's new care home for older people in Carbrooke	Priory Group
21 Feb 2011	Chinese New Year Auction and Buffet	Lord Mayor of Norwich, Councillor Tom Dylan, and the Sheriff, Charles Barratt

22/11 PETITION - ATTLEBOROUGH COMMUNITY TEAM (AGENDA ITEM 4)

The Member Services Manager explained that the Local Government, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 placed a statutory duty on all authorities to establish a scheme for receiving and responding to petitions, including a facility for on-line petitions. The current Breckland Scheme had been adopted by the Council on 24 June 2010.

The scheme stated that if a Council received a petition containing at least 1500 signatures it must be debated by Full Council.

The current procedure allowed the petition organiser five minutes to present the petition. It then had to be discussed by the Council for a maximum of 15 minutes.

Such a petition had been presented to the Leader of the Council on 26 January 2011 by the Attleborough Community Team (ACT) asking the Council to stop unsustainable development within the town of Attleborough and requesting an undertaking from the Council on a

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number of issues, namely:

- a commitment from all the Council's Elected Representatives that the current shortfalls were addressed before any more significant development took place;
- a commitment that any action plans identified how the new development would contribute to the overall improvement for all residents; and
- proper consultation on any proposals for the town and its surroundings.

Group Captain Middleton was in attendance and thanked Members for giving him the opportunity to address the Council. Over 3300 signatures had been collected by the Attleborough Community Team; 358 of those signatures had been collected in Old Buckenham alone.

Group Captain Middleton commenced his address by re-stating exactly what it was that ACT was trying to achieve.

To ensure that any expansion in Attleborough would provide a sustainable, integrated and cohesive community supported by local jobs and appropriate leisure, health, educational, security and transport facilities, all within an environment that maintained and enhanced the quality of life of its inhabitants.

The petition had been born out of a concern that the proposals for the additional 4500 homes in Attleborough, put forward in the Core Strategy, would not meet this aim and would overwhelm the existing infrastructure and population in the town and surrounding communities. ACT's fears had been re-enforced, as since 2001 over 600 homes had been built or approved for construction in Attleborough, without any meaningful developer contributions for improvements to traffic congestion, infrastructure or employment, not forgetting the significant planning applications pending.

Through the petition, ACT was seeking three things.

Firstly, a commitment from all Attleborough's Elected Representatives that the current shortfalls would be addressed before any more significant development took place. Attleborough and the local community were short of infrastructure and other key services because there had been a failure to provide them alongside housing developments in the past. Group Captain Middleton pointed out that these shortcomings had been acknowledged by Cllr Nunn, the Leader of Breckland Council, in both the radio interview and press articles that covered the handing in of the petition. However, it was felt, just to say, as he had, that infrastructure would be provided alongside new development was not sufficient; the Leader and ACT owed it to the current population to address the shortfalls before any new development took place.

Secondly, ACT was seeking a commitment that action plans demonstrated how the new development would contribute to an overall improvement for all residents. A fundamental problem in the

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town was the road system and yet only now was a Transport Study being undertaken - after the first ASHAAP consultation had closed. There was no evidence that employers wanted to come to Attleborough to provide the numbers of jobs proposed in the plan, and the financial burden on developers for education, energy, sewerage, roads, community facilities etc, when coupled with the high proportion of social and small residential units, would seriously jeopardise delivery of the new developments, let alone improve the lives of all residents. The town had to be planned for the people who lived there to drive the economy and it needed to be properly integrated.

Thirdly, ACT was seeking a proper consultation on any proposals for the town and its surroundings. Cllr Nunn had stated that, in the spirit of localism, the town would be involved in deciding how many houses should be built. The draft Action Plan did not provide this opportunity. ACT welcomed the Council's initiative to hold more meaningful and real engagement with all key stakeholders in the community and would wait to see what form this would take. The support received should convince the Council that ACT should be one of those stakeholders.

ACT had always tried to be positive in its approach to any development but it knew its town and the problems that needed to be addressed. As over 3300 people from Attleborough, Old Buckenham, Besthorpe and other local communities had shown by signing the petition, the community wanted these problems to be solved before any more development took place and had asked to be fully involved in determining the future of the town.

The Leader, William Nunn, thanked ACT for the time and effort that it had put in gathering so many signatures. He drew attention to the fact that Breckland Council had applied for Vanguard Status for Attleborough which would give more power to the local community to shape the future planning of the town.

He mentioned the Integrated Development Plan document which had recently been approved by Cabinet and agreed that adhoc development was not the way forward. With this in mind, the Chief Executive was asked to write to the Secretary of State to stop any further development in the town until proper plans for infrastructure was put in place.

The Deputy Leader said that it was very important that the views of the residents were heard. He had lived in Attleborough for 30 years and understood the problems that the town had and agreed with the points raised by Group Captain Middleton particularly in relation to consultation. He assured ACT that the Council would commit to widen its consultation methods in future and that the recent consultation held for the past 2/3 weeks would be forwarded to ACT.

Cllr Byrne highlighted the commitments made by the Attleborough Councillors at the last Election which was for no further development in the Buckenham area. This commitment still remained.

Cllr S Rogers asked if the Council could designate ACT as being one of the consultation bodies on the Attleborough and Snetterton Heath

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**Councillor
Adrian Stasiak**

Area Action Plan (ASHAAP). The Deputy Leader felt that this would be a way forward and informed the Council that he would put this proposal forward to Members of the Attleborough Task Force meeting on the 1st March.

Cllr Labouchere asked if ACT had any other ideas for improvements for the town going forward apart from the traffic problems. In response, Group Captain Middleton advised that ACT had put forward its ideas in response to ASHAAP particularly in relation to the schools that were all currently situated in the northeast corner of Attleborough which people had to travel to that ultimately caused traffic congestion. He felt that ideas on how the schools could be moved around needed to be looked at. The surgeries in the town were also at full capacity, social services were under stress and there were not enough leisure facilities for a growing town in comparison to others. Attleborough, in his opinion, had an infrastructure of a large village and was well behind in the times.

Cllr Martin felt that the infrastructure had to be ahead of any new developments. He agreed that road problems had increased over the years and the only answer was to build a relief road.

Cllr Borrett thought it encouraging seeing communities getting together and asked Group Captain Middleton if ACT had a formal membership and what its aim was. In response, Members were informed that ACT had an informal membership and did not have a constitution but it did have a data base for people to sign up to. The Group was just about residents coming together who wanted to work alongside the Town and District Council. As far as the latter question was concerned, the aim of ACT was to develop the town in a sustainable way and look after the residents.

The Executive Member for the Corporate Development and Performance Portfolio represented a neighbouring Ward and felt that what ever happened in Attleborough would have an affect on the hinterlands. He felt that if ACT became a formal Group it should incorporate the views of the surrounding villages.

Members were informed that Norfolk County Council would also have to be included.

Cllr Gretton asked Group Captain Middleton if he felt the railway should be developed as this, in his opinion, was an advantage to Attleborough in comparison to other towns. In response, Group Captain Middleton said the railway line was a definite bonus but it had its drawbacks as it had been built through the middle of the town. However, he felt that the traffic problems the railway line caused could be alleviated by a slip road or a roundabout. He highlighted the fact that ACT was having discussions with Network Rail.

Referring to the consultation process, and bearing in mind there had been open days, questionnaires to every household, and now the involvement of ATLAS which was welcomed, the Executive Member for Corporate Resources asked what other types of consultation did ACT suggest.

Group Captain Middleton stated that the few people that had attended the Open Events etc had found the consultation questionnaires incomprehensible and he was sure that the Officers involved must have found it quite disheartening at the lack of attendance. He offered ACT's services for any future consultations.

The Deputy Leader said that consultation had to start somewhere. There were 3000 people currently on the housing waiting list of which 800 had requested Attleborough; therefore, the power situation was vital for the employment earmarked for Snetterton which was crucial for Attleborough's growth. He was excited by the duelling of the A11 and stated that everyone was 'singing from the same song sheet' but were working in different ways.

The Chairman asked for the discussion to be concluded by considering the three options put forward by ACT.

The Leader proposed that the Council support the aims of ACT by designating it as a consultee through the planning process. He further felt that a letter should be sent to the Secretary of State asking that development in Attleborough should cease until proper plans for infrastructure were in place and a further letter be sent to Norfolk County Council about the appropriate siting of future schools.

The aforementioned proposals were seconded, and accordingly it was:

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the aims of ACT be supported;
- 2) ACT be designated as a consultee through the planning process;
- 3) the Chief Executive write a letter to the Secretary of State requesting that development ceases until proper plans for infrastructure were in place; and
- 4) a letter be sent to Norfolk County Council about the siting of future schools in the town.

Group Captain Middleton thanked the Council for listening to his address and hoped that ACT and Breckland could work together in future.

The Leader thanked Group Captain Middleton for the way he presented his case as he was now aware of the depth of feeling from the people of Attleborough.

The Chairman felt that the whole debate had been worthwhile.

23/11 COUNCIL TAX 2011-2012 (AGENDA ITEM 5)

The Executive Member for Corporate Resources introduced the report.

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**David
Spencer, Keith
Eccles**

Terry Huggins

Terry Huggins

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He was pleased to announce that following some high level lobbying with the Department for Communities & Local Government by Breckland's Leader and the Leader of South Holland, the final settlement had increased from what had been previously advised. The overall increase in settlement was £217,356 which included a transition grant of £208,153. Therefore, it was no longer necessary to draw from the Council's Reserves to balance the budget. Breckland Council was mindful of providing quality services at an affordable cost and would continue to seek new opportunities and methods to continue to improve efficiency.

As was explained at the Council meeting on 27 January 2011, the Council Tax had been frozen for 2011/12. Norfolk County Council and the Police had also confirmed the freeze.

Breckland continued to have the lowest Council Tax in the country with Band D properties at £64.05.

Being the collecting authority, on behalf of the Police Authority and Norfolk County Council, it was also Breckland's responsibility to set the overall Council Tax to enable the authority to send out the bills. While the overall Council Tax invoice reflected the total from these authorities, it was worth noting that Breckland Council's share was less than 5% of the total bill.

The Head of Finance stated that when the estimates were originally approved the Council had only received the draft settlement from Government. Subsequently, the final settlement had increased by over £217,000. This meant that Breckland would no longer need to draw on its General Fund. Other than that the budget would remain the same as previously approved.

The amounts to be charged as a Special Expense for the provision of public lighting services for the four parishes were highlighted.

The formal Council Tax resolutions had been set out in section 3.4 of the report. Approval of the resolutions would enable the Council Tax bills to be issued.

There were a number of appendices attached to support the resolutions. Appendix C highlighted the Breckland element plus the Parish element of the Council Tax for 2011/12, shown for each Parish and for each Valuation Band.

The Opposition Leader had no doubt in his mind that the Government was cutting everything far too quickly and was picking on local government as a 'scape goat'. There were authorities all over the country having to deal with meagre settlements. He felt that with all these cuts there was bound to be diminution in service provision and the vulnerable and the needy would be the ones to suffer the most.

Cllr Borrett felt that the opinions made by the Opposition Leader were quite in appropriate as none of the points raised had anything to do with the budget.

The Leader stated that Breckland Council had gone to great lengths

to retain the lowest Council Tax. He agreed that drastic cuts have had to be made nationally given the state of public finances but in terms of the vulnerable and the needy Norfolk County Council was doing all it could to help. Likewise, Breckland Council was not about to cut services.

As a retiring Member, Cllr Labouchere had been very proud to work for such a credible Council. He congratulated the financial wizards behind the setting of the budget as they had achieved what he and his fellow Councillors had set out in their Manifesto. He also congratulated the Leader on running such a successful Council that invested wisely. He felt that everyone involved deserved a pat on the back and once again thanked the Leader and his Cabinet.

Subject to two abstentions, it was:

RESOLVED that

- 1) the formal Council Tax resolutions for 2011/12 be approved;
- 2) the Special Expenses for 2011-2012, as set in paragraph 3.3 of the report, be approved;
- 3) it be noted that the Council has calculated the following amounts for the year 2011-2012 in accordance with regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-
 - a) £43,248.32 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 as amended by Statutory Instruments 2003/3012 & 2003/3181 made under the Local Government Act 2003, as its Council Tax base for the year;
 - b) the figures shown in **Appendix A** to the report, being the amounts calculated by the Council in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its Council Tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.
- 4) the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2011-2012 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 as amended:-
 - a) £75,300,760 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) to (e) of the Act;
 - b) £60,776,573 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set in Section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the Act;
 - c) £14,524,187 being the amount by which the

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Mark Finch

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		aggregate at 4(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 4(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year;
d)	£9,369,325	being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its general fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant, increased by the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its collection fund to its general fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (council tax surplus);
e)	£119.19	being the amount at 4(c) above less the amount at 4(d) above, all divided by the amount at 3(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year;
f)	£2,384,807	being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act;
g)	£64.05	being the amount at 4(e) above less the result given by dividing the amount of 4(f) above by the amount at 3(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its areas to which no special item relates;
h)		the figures shown in Appendix B to the report, being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 4(g) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate;
i)		the figures shown in Appendix C to the report, being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 4(g) and 4(h) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act as the amounts to be taken into

account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

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- 5) it be noted that for the year 2011-2012 the Norfolk County Council and Police Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

	Norfolk County Council	Police Authority
Band A	£763.38	£127.44
Band B	£890.61	£148.68
Band C	£1017.84	£169.92
Band D	£1,145.07	£191.16
Band E	£1,399.53	£233.64
Band F	£1,653.99	£276.12
Band G	£1,908.45	£318.60
Band H	£2,290.14	£382.32

- 6) that having calculated the aggregate in each case the amounts at 4(i) and 5 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts shown in **Appendix D** to the report, as the amount of Council Tax for 2011-2012 of the categories of dwellings shown.

24/11 DELEGATION TO NAMED OFFICERS (AGENDA ITEM 6)

The report sought a formal resolution to update the named Officers in respect of certain aspects of financial administration delegated to Officers.

RESOLVED that the revised delegated authority, as set out at paragraph 3.3.1 of the report, be approved.

Sharon Jones

25/11 NOMINATIONS FOR COMMITTEE AND OTHER SEATS (AGENDA ITEM 7)

None.

The meeting closed at 11.20 am

CHAIRMAN