

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

COUNCIL

**Held on Thursday, 12 April 2012 at 10.30 am in the
Anglia Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mrs S Armes	Mr T.J. Lamb
Mr S. Askew	Mr K. Martin
Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mrs S.M. Matthews
Councillor C Bowes	Mrs K. Millbank
Mr A.J. Byrne	Mrs L.H. Monument
Mr C G Carter	Mr T F C Monument
Mr T R Carter	Mrs J A North
Mr R.P. Childerhouse	Mr J.W. Nunn
Mr C. S. Clark	Mrs P. Quadling
Mr P.D. Claussen	Mr R. R. Richmond
Mr J.P. Cowen	Mr W. R. J. Richmond
Mr P R W Darby	Mr M. S. Robinson
Mr R.W. Duffield	Mr J.D. Rogers
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mr S. J. F. Rogers
Mr B J English	Mr B. Rose
Lady Fisher	Mr F.J. Sharpe
Councillor E. Gould	Mr I. Sherwood
Mr S R Green	Mr W.H.C. Smith
Mrs D.K.R. Irving	Mrs P.A. Spencer
Mr T. J. Jermy	Mr A.C. Stasiak
Mr A.P. Joel	Mrs A.L. Steward
Mrs E. M. Jolly	Mrs L.S. Turner
Mr C.R. Jordan	Mr M. A. Wassell
Mr M.A. Kiddle-Morris	Mr N.C. Wilkin (Chairman)
Mr R.G. Kybird	Mr D.R. Williams JP

Also Present

Mr M.D. Eveling JP - Chairman, Standards Committee

In Attendance

Julie Britton - Senior Committee Officer
Terry Huggins - Chief Executive
Helen McAleer - Senior Committee Officer

34/12 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

34 .a 23 February 2012

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Action By

Action By

34 .b 9 March 2012

The Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 9 March 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

35/12 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr B Borrett, Mr K Gilbert, Mr R Goreham and Mr B Skull.

36/12 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 3)

The Chairman asked Members to stand in silent reflection for a few moments in memory of two former Members of the Council; Mrs Southgate, a dedicated Member who had represented All Saints Ward who had died some weeks ago, and Mr Roy Rudling, a previous Chairman of the Council and former colleague of many in the room who had died suddenly the previous week.

Following the moment's silence the Chairman recalled that he had been partnered with Roy when he first joined the Council and had learnt a lot from him. Roy had thrived on debate. He had been instrumental in the Council's housing stock transfer and also extremely involved in the sale of the Attleborough Offices. He had represented Watton, but he had championed the cause of even the smallest Parishes.

Mr Rudling's funeral would be held on Monday 23 April 2012 at 11.00am in Watton Church.

Moving on to a happier topic, the Chairman encouraged Members to support a Charity Fashion Show to be held on Friday 11 May in Attleborough in aid of Macmillan Cancer. Tickets were available from Councillor Martin.

Finally he reminded Members of the Charity tandem ride that he and the Leader of the Council would be undertaking. Again he encouraged all Members to support the event which would visit all five market towns. Donations could be made via <https://www.justgiving.com/Nigel-Wilkin>.

37/12 DECLARATION OF INTEREST (AGENDA ITEM 4)

Lady Fisher declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 7 (Minute No. 26/12 of the Planning Minutes) regarding the site visit held on 12 March on land at Thetford and Croxton where her husband's family owned land.

Mr P Claussen and Mr W Smith declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 5 (Minute No. 54/12 of the Cabinet Minutes) by virtue of them both being non-executive directors of the Anglia

Revenues & Partnership Trading Board.

Mrs Jolly declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 7 (Minute No. 30/12(b)) by virtue of her being related to the applicant.

Action By

38/12 CABINET MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 5)

- 1) Attendance Report – Mrs P Quadling (Minute No. 43/12)

RESOLVED not to remove Mrs P Quadling from the General Purposes Committee for the remainder of the Council year.

- 2) Breckland Council ICT Strategy 2012/2014 (Minute No. 45/12)

RESOLVED that the ICT Strategy for 2012/2014 be adopted.

- 3) Capital Programme 2011/12 – Request to Carry Over Funding to 2012/13 (Minute No. 46/12)

The first sentence of the third and fourth paragraph was amended to read: “The Overview & Scrutiny Commission Vice-Chairman.....”

- 4) Reference from the Standards Committee (Minute No. 51/12)

The Leader of the Opposition was concerned that in the face of fundamental changes the Council had no clear path ahead. He implored Members to continue to utilise the existing expertise of the Standards Committee.

The Leader of the Council responded saying that the Council would continue to have a Code of Conduct and would appoint an Independent Person who would work with the Monitoring Officer on complaints. There would also be some sort of Standards Committee although it might be attached to an existing Committee such as Appeals or Audit. That would be decided at the Council meeting in May.

The Leader felt that the existing system used a ‘sledgehammer to crack a nut’ and cost a lot of money dealing with many vexatious items with little outcome.

- 5) Report Housing Register Contract Review (Minute No. 54/12)

RESOLVED that the recommendations as listed in the report be approved.

- 6) Adoption

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 27 March 2012 be adopted.

39/12 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION (AGENDA ITEM 6)

1) Housing Task & Finish Group (Minute No 36/12(a))

The Leader of the Opposition referred to a report in the local press and asked if it was official Council policy to reduce the social housing requirement in the Thetford Area Action Plan (TAAP). He wished to register his concern if that was the case as it would change the intentions of the Growth Plan and could lead to Thetford becoming a two tier town.

The Leader of the Council acknowledged that the press had reported comments made by him at a Business Breakfast. He had made those comments because of his concerns about the two tier possibility.

Lady Fisher left the room at this point due to her prejudicial interest.

The Leader of the Council explained that he had discussed lowering the Social Housing target and using the money from developers to refurbish the existing housing estates in Thetford instead. There had been several planning applications recently where the Social Housing requirement had been reduced because Officers and the District Valuer had advised that they were likely to be approved on appeal if refused. The Council wanted to get as much social housing as possible but there had to be a balance between achieving that and getting no development at all.

An Independent Member thought that large developers were using the viability argument to drive a coach and horses through the Council's policy.

A Member pointed out that when the policies had been set there had been a different economic climate. More houses were needed now, but less were being built because development wasn't financially viable. If the Council wanted houses to be built it had to have policies that were fit for purpose.

The Chairman of the Planning Committee clarified that the District Valuer was independent and assessed applications individually. The Council was achieving about 25% affordable housing compared to only 12% in other areas, so it was doing fairly well. She also mentioned that where lower affordable housing limits were being approved it was with the proviso that if house prices went up the developers would have to return to the Committee to renegotiate the requirements.

Action By

The Leader of the Opposition pointed out that the TAAP was the blueprint for the next 20 years and the standard needed to be set now for when the recession was over.

Lady Fisher returned to the room.

2) Work Programme (Minute No 41/12)

The Leader of the Opposition suggested that the Council should ask the Overview & Scrutiny Commission to review the full Council format. At South Holland, Members were allowed time at the start of the meeting to ask questions on matters not on the agenda. He thought that might be something that could be considered for Breckland.

3) Adoption

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission meeting held on 15 March 2012 be adopted.

40/12 PLANNING COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 7)

RESOLVED that the now confirmed Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 12 March 2012 be adopted.

41/12 GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 8)

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 7 March 2012 be adopted.

42/12 APPEALS COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 9)

RESOLVED that the now confirmed Minutes of the Appeals Committee meeting held on 22 February 2012 be adopted.

43/12 AUDIT COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 10)

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 23 March 2012 be adopted.

44/12 STANDARDS COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 11)

1) Next Meeting (Minute No 20/12)

The Chairman of the Standards Committee drew attention to a change to the date of the next meeting which would now be held on 24 April 2012. All Members were welcome to attend.

Action By

2) Adoption

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 21 February 2012 be adopted.

45/12 MOVING THETFORD FORWARD BOARD (AGENDA ITEM 12)

1) Riverside Regeneration Project (Minute No 47/12)

A Thetford Member was concerned that if work started as planned there would be no bus station for 18 months.

The Leader of the Council said that Norfolk County Council was aware of that and provision was in place.

2) Adoption

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Moving Thetford Forward Board meeting held on 24 February 2012 be adopted.

46/12 YOUTH COUNCIL MINUTES (FOR INFORMATION)(AGENDA ITEM 13)

Three members of the Youth Council were in attendance to see the workings of full Council. They were introduced and welcomed by the Chairman.

The Minutes of the Youth Council meeting held on 28 February 2012 were noted.

47/12 NOMINATIONS FOR COMMITTEE AND OTHER SEATS (AGENDA ITEM 14)

None.

The meeting closed at 11.10 am

CHAIRMAN