



AGENDA

NOTE: In the case of non-members, this agenda is for information only

- Committee** - **CABINET**
- Date & Time** - TUESDAY, 7TH MAY, 2013 AT 9.30 AM
- Venue** - NORFOLK ROOM, THE CONFERENCE SUITE, ELIZABETH HOUSE, DEREHAM

Members of the Committee requiring further information, or with specific questions, are asked to raise these with the appropriate officer at least two working days before the meeting. If the information requested is available, this will be provided, and reported to Committee.

The Cabinet

Mr J.W. Nunn (Chairman)	Mr M.A. Kiddle-Morris
Mr M. A. Wassell (Vice-Chairman)	Mr I. Sherwood
Councillor E. Gould	Mr W.H.C. Smith
Mrs L.S. Turner	

PERSONS ATTENDING THE MEETING ARE REQUESTED TO TURN OFF MOBILE TELEPHONES

Member Services
Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke,
Dereham Norfolk, NR19 1EE

Date: Friday, 26 April 2013

**PART A - ITEMS OPEN TO THE
PUBLIC**

	<u>Page(s)</u> <u>herewith</u>
1. <u>MINUTES</u> To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2013.	1 - 10
2. <u>APOLOGIES</u> To receive apologies for absence.	
3. <u>URGENT BUSINESS</u> To note whether the Chairman proposes to accept any item as urgent business, pursuant to Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
4. <u>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</u> Members are no longer required to declare personal or prejudicial interests but are to declare any new Disclosable Pecuniary Interests that are not currently included in the Register of Interests. Members are reminded that under the Code of Conduct they are not to participate and must leave the room, for the whole of an agenda item to which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest. In the interests of transparency, Members may also wish to declare any other interests they have in relation to an agenda item, that support the Nolan principles detailed within the Code of Conduct.	
5. <u>NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING</u> To note the names of any non-members who wish to address the meeting.	
6. <u>CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)</u>	
7. <u>CAPITAL OUT-TURN 2012/13</u> Report of Michael Wassell, Executive Member for Finance & Democratic Services.	11 - 17
8. <u>DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY</u> Report of Ian Sherwood, Executive Member for Performance & Business Development.	18 - 39
9. <u>ANGLIA REVENUES AND BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP</u> Report of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 14 March 2013.	40 - 56

10. **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL (FOR INFORMATION)**

To note the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2013.

11. **NEXT MEETING**

To note that the date of the next meeting of Cabinet will be held on 18 June 2013 at 9.30am in the Norfolk Room.

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herewith

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BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

CABINET

**Held on Tuesday, 26 March 2013 at 9.30 am in
Norfolk Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr J.W. Nunn (Chairman)	Mr M.A. Kiddle-Morris
Mr M. A. Wassell (Vice-Chairman)	Mr I. Sherwood
Mrs L.S. Turner	Mr W.H.C. Smith

Also Present

Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mrs L.H. Monument
Mr J.P. Cowen	Mr M J Nairn
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mrs J A North
Mr T. J. Jermy	Mr M. S. Robinson
Mr A.P. Joel	Mr F.J. Sharpe
Mrs E. M. Jolly	Mrs P.A. Spencer
Mrs S.M. Matthews	

In Attendance

Dominic Chessum	- Joint Marketing & Communications Team Leader
Paul Jackson	- Planning Manager
Robert Walker	- Assistant Director of Commissioning
Julie Britton	- Senior Committee Officer
David Spencer	- Joint Deputy Planning Manager
Natalie Beal	- Planning Policy Officer (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council)
Stephen James	- PFI Monitoring & Strategic Sports Officer
Phil Mileham	- Planning Policy Team Leader (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council)
Martin Pendlebury	- Director of Planning & Business Manager*
Sarah Robertson	- Planning Policy Officer (Capita Symonds for Breckland Council)
Trevor Holden	- Interim Chief Executive

Action By

23/13 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2013 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Action By

24/13 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

An apology for absence was received from Elizabeth Gould.

25/13 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 5)

Mesdames E Jolly, S Matthews, L Monument, J North and P Spencer and Messrs G Bambridge, P Cowen, P Duigan, T Jermy, A Joel, M Nairn, M Robinson and F Sharpe.

26/13 LOCAL PLAN WORKING GROUP (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The Executive Member for Internal Services had observed that this was the fifth revision of the timetable for the Local Plan.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Local Plan Working Group meeting held on 6 March 2013 be adopted.

27/13 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI) (AGENDA ITEM 8)

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was a Council policy setting out how the community would be involved in the production of planning policy documents and determination of planning applications.

The Executive Member for Assets & Strategic Development reported that there had been many changes to planning regulations since the adoption of the previous SCI in 2006. There was also a new piece of legislation under the Localism Act called 'Duty to Co-operate' which required all Local Planning Authorities and other organisations to engage with each other on strategic planning matters.

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission said that this document had already been included on the Commission's Work Programme for the meeting on 6 June 2013. He stated that this 'Duty to Co-operate' was all very well but the efforts to persuade these statutory bodies to attend Overview & Scrutiny Commission's meetings to discuss planning matters such as infrastructure had not been successful. The Executive Member for Assets & Strategic Development totally agreed with the aforementioned comments but Council's now had a statutory duty to demonstrate that efforts had been made to consult. In response to a question about what could be done if all efforts to engage with these organisations failed, the Chief Executive stated that this area had not been tested in law therefore it would be interesting to see how this proceeds.

Options

- (1) Cabinet approves the content of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for consultation between 2 April and 3rd May 2013;

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- (2) Cabinet approves the SCI but considers it should not be consulted on and should move to adoption at the next available Full Council meeting (23 May 2013);
- (3) Cabinet approves the SCI but requests a longer consultation period; or
- (4) Cabinet rejects the content of the SCI and requests further amendments and reconsideration.

Reasons

The Statement of Community Involvement meets the requirements of the regulations, and reflected existing practices as well as setting out clearly how the Council would engage with communities and stakeholders on development management decisions and planning policy. The SCI had been set out in a logical manner, with the use of plain English to make it accessible.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the content of the Statement of Community Involvement be approved; and
- (2) authority to commence the public consultation between 2nd April and 3rd May 2013 be approved.

28/13 BRECKLAND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY - PRELIMINARY DRAFT CHARGING SCHEDULE AND VIABILITY ASSESSMENT (AGENDA ITEM 9)

The purpose of the report was for Members to consider the findings of the CIL viability assessment, and review the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule and agree this for a period of public consultation.

As this had been a very complicated piece of calculation that the Planning Policy Team had put together, the Executive Member for Assets & Strategic Development had asked the Planning Policy Team to provide a small presentation to Members which described the viability of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

The Planning Policy Team Leader presumed that everyone knew what CIL was; however, for those who did not, he explained that a CIL represented a tax on new development over 100sqm and was intended to produce a fairer system for the funding of community infrastructure than the existing use of Section 106 Agreements. Furthermore, the role and use of such Agreements was being scaled back through national planning regulations which would come into effect from April 2014. Due to these changes to the S106 process the production and implementation of a CIL for Breckland Council had become imperative.

The approach taken in the viability assessment was to consider a range of notional development scenarios that aimed to demonstrate whether there were variances in viability across the district for particular land uses. This approach was in accordance with best practice and had been

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adopted in other Local Authority CIL viability assessments that were further progressed through the process. The viability of the scenarios had been assessed using the residual valuation method.

The extent of any changes in viability across the District could warrant multiple zones or charges per different types of development. Some areas, for example in London, just one CIL was being charged. For Breckland, there was evidence that a single rate could not be introduced due to the viability differences between residential and other commercial developments. The variations across Breckland had been particularly notable for the approach to residential development which had been characterised by a number of different sales value areas. This had been confirmed in the latest viability assessment from a review of residential sales data supplied from the Council's Hometrack system. This had established that when looking solely at sales values there were, in effect, three residential zones in Breckland. The first zone included the market town of Attleborough and the majority of rural parishes within the District. These had the highest residential sales values within the District and consequently, proposals would result in a greater overall development value. The second residential sales value zone included the market towns of Dereham, Swaffham and Watton plus a number of the rural parishes to the west of Dereham. The third, was Thetford. Residential sales values within the town (for all property types) were lower than seen in the rest of the District.

From April 2014, local authorities would not be able to pool any more than five planning obligations for projects or specific types of infrastructure. Therefore, the implementation of CIL would provide that flexibility in the pooling and spending of monies from development and could be spent on any identified infrastructure need, unlike S106 Agreements which required a direct link between the development and any infrastructure project.

There would be CIL exemptions, all affordable housing, structures into which people did not go (for the purposes of inspecting or maintaining machinery), redevelopments that did not result in a net increase in floorspace and development for charitable purposes.

The Department for Communities and Local Government released guidance in January 2013 for Local Authorities on the level of CIL receipts which would be payable to the local community. Parishes without a Neighbourhood Plan would receive 15% of the CIL receipt which is capped at £100 per dwelling and for those who had adopted such a Plan would receive 25% of the CIL receipt and would not be capped. Currently, in Breckland, there were no adopted Neighbourhood Plans.

The Planning Policy Officer then took Members through the various scenarios via a presentation and highlighted the viability assessment's findings which had all been tested against Breckland's Policy requirements. These scenarios indicated that there were certain forms of development across the District that could support a CIL charge such as retail superstores outside town centre boundaries, residential care homes, holiday accommodation and hotels.

Councillor Monument queried the rate per square metre quoted in the table on page 55 of the agenda and the figure that had been shown on

Action By

the presentation – the figures were different and she asked for an explanation. The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that this figure was about what the market was actually doing at the time, based on different percentages.

In concluding the presentation, the S106 Agreement slide was shown which highlighted that S106 monies could still be charged in the urban extensions of Attleborough and Thetford.

A draft Breckland Infrastructure list was then tabled at the meeting that brought together the infrastructure requirements of development in the Breckland District and indicated the estimated cost and how that item of infrastructure would be funded.

The Executive Member for Assets & Strategic Development drew Members' attention to paragraph 4.2 of the report that highlighted the level of funding arising from CIL based on the conclusions of the viability assessment. This highlighted a slight increase in the total infrastructure cost within the District to £233million. However, the main difference was the cost of infrastructure which the Council expected to come forward through S106 Agreements on the identified urban extensions (mentioned above) which had risen to £195million. Committed public and utility company funding of £15.2million had also been identified, leaving a funding gap of £22.3million for infrastructure. CIL could generate £9.09million gross based on the expected level of growth; therefore, there was likely to remain a funding gap of £13.21million. This funding gap could be increased due to a meaningful proportion of the money raised from CIL going to local parishes.

Referring to the 25% payable if a Parish had a Neighbourhood Plan in place, Councillor North asked if the same percentage amount would be payable if a S106 Agreement was entered into for the urban extension. In response, Members were informed that this would not be the case but if other developments in Attleborough came forward these could be charged CIL which would allow for the meaningful proportion to be passed to the community. The Executive Member for Assets & Strategic Development explained that the S106 monies were solely for infrastructure within the urban extension. For the proposed relief road it would be better to go down the S106 route. The 25% CIL monies were not ring-fenced but must still be used for infrastructure purposes within the town.

Councillor Bambridge raised a number of concerns. Firstly, in reference to the CIL charging zones in his Ward areas, he did not consider it to be fair that some areas could charge for CIL and others could not. Secondly, he felt it was wrong that some commercial development did not attract any CIL, and his last point was in relation to the way that this had all been calculated on notional schemes and felt that it should have been calculated on an historical scheme. The Executive Member for Assets & Strategic Development stated that the Inspectors were looking for CIL not to interfere with any development. He further advised that Breckland Council would likely fall foul of 'state aid' rules if the £60sqm was artificially reduced to zero. Councillor Bambridge said that he had no problem with the £60sqm it was the zero rate that he objected to.

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The Chairman picked up on the aforementioned point about different CIL rates in neighbouring villages and asked how Members would go about explaining this to their parishes. The Planning Policy Team Leader stated that the zones had been derived using information from Breckland's Hometrack system. Additional information could emerge and would be looked at through the consultation process. Picking up on the point about commercial rates, it was explained that *bumping along* on a low CIL would discourage the majority of commercial developments proposed in the district which was an approach not supported by the CIL Regulations. Councillor Bambridge asked if he was correct in thinking that if a CIL rate was set for an area it could, over time, be adjusted but if there was a zero CIL rate this could not. Members were informed that CIL rates would be reconsidered after a period of three years following implementation unless something major triggered an earlier review. There would have to be a complete review to change the figures.

The Vice-Chairman raised three points; the first was in relation to development costs, the second was how holiday accommodation had been defined, and the third was in relation to the charging zones in the parishes of Watton and Carbrooke. In response to the first point, the Planning Policy Team Leader explained how the development costs had been reached. Referring to the second point, it was noted that the definition of holiday accommodation were those proposals, subject to a legal agreement, limiting occupation, and in response to the final point, in relation to Carbrooke and Watton, Members were informed that it was very difficult to get meaningful data from much smaller areas from the hometrack system due to small sample sizes but with more evidence coming forward there could be further refinement.

The Joint Deputy Planning Manager advised that dialogue had been had with the development industry to inform the process.

Referring to the map on page 53 of the report which highlighted the fact that most of the CIL contribution would be coming from certain areas in Breckland, the Executive Member for Internal Services took this to imply that these areas would be paying for development in others. The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that CIL receipts could go into a single pot so parishes could ask for such monies if specific infrastructure needs had been identified even if CIL was not being levied on development in their area. It was reminded that CIL broke the link between where the development took place and where monies were spent. The Executive Member for Assets & Strategic Development reminded Members that the size of a development in rural areas would not be more than 10/15 houses and therefore could attract a S106. The Executive Member for Internal Services also asked what would happen if a development was on the border of a non CIL area and a chargeable CIL area. Members were informed that a line had to be drawn somewhere and were reminded of the evidence gathered from the Hometrack system. Members were further reminded of it being about fairness and movement of monies. The Joint Deputy Planning Manager stated that CIL was effectively a charge on land values.

The Chairman asked who paid for CIL. Members were informed that the developer would be liable for the charge but if the developer fell into liquidation, the liability would then fall to the landowner.

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A question was asked about whether there would be a requirement for extra staff. It was explained that under the CIL regime, Breckland Council would be the charging authority and could recoup up to 5% of the CIL revenues to cover the cost of administering CIL.

The Overview & Scrutiny Commission Chairman thought this was a very difficult document for everyone to understand and he felt that it was going to raise far more questions than anticipated. There were a number of issues that bothered him. Firstly, Breckland had always been encouraged to create a better environment for people to live and work but now, in his opinion, the quality of new developments would be reduced. Good quality materials cost more and the sensitivity analysis could have a serious effect on visual characteristics. Features such as ground water, rain water harvesting were going to be key for future designs. He also had concerns about developers' contingency levels being set at 2½% and the right of appeal that could stifle developments. He knew that these points could not be resolved forthwith but should be taken into perspective going forward. The Executive Member for Assets & Strategic Development agreed that many of the above points would be raised during the consultation process. The Planning Manager said that the consultation would be key and shared a number of the aforementioned concerns particularly about where the boundaries should be drawn; however, on occasion difficult decisions had to be made based on evidence. What alternative did Breckland have if it did not move forward with this? There had to be boundaries and unfortunately, some parishes would be disenfranchised but if anyone could come up with a better solution from the consultation he would be very interested.

Councillor Duigan thought that the whole CIL process was very complicated and would be difficult to explain to the public.

Councillor Jolly asked at what point CIL would be applied. She also asked about the review process. If there happened to be a change in property values, the basis that Breckland had based the CIL would become less defensible, particularly as a review would not be a quick process and the consequence could be that the white land areas depicted on the map could go up in value and the green areas could go down. The Planning Policy Team Leader explained that the payment of CIL would be triggered by a developer when given intent on a proposal. In response to the second question, Members were informed that CIL could be reviewed but that robust evidence would be needed to justify any amended rates in the future.

In response to a further question in relation to liability on cross-border developments, Members were informed that it would depend on where the main proportion of development lied.

Other questions asked related to whether CIL was charged on acreage or per square metre and if payment of CIL was expected within 60 days from commencement of development. It was noted that CIL was charged on the square metre and on net floor space; however, if a building was pulled down and rebuilt CIL would only be charged on any extra square metres gained above the original. In response to the latter, the Joint Deputy Planning Manager advised that a draft payment policy had been put

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forward but an incremental approach would perhaps be required for the collection of CIL. The Planning Policy Team Leader advised that the draft instalment policy may need to be revisited, depending on the outcome of the consultation process which could include lower initial payment thresholds. He reminded Members that there was a balance to be struck in terms of the impact on developers versus the desirability of generating funding into the CIL 'pot' to fund infrastructure in the early years after implementation.

Members were reminded that parish/town councils would be notified this week of a drop-in session on 23 April 2013. All would be invited to attend.

Councillor Monument highlighted the following anomalies within the CIL document:

- Pages 59 and 61 – date query
- Page 72 – section 4.11 – the sentence was incomplete and she suggested that the following words be added:*the CIL to be a fair policy.*
- Page 82, item 4 had subsection (b) twice.
- Page 82, item 5 – any formula should have an equals sign.
- Page 82 – suggestion to have a calculation as an example.
- Page 89 bottom of page – the word practise should be practice.

Referring to the aforementioned drop-in session, Councillor Monument did not think that the date provided gave the parishes enough time. Members were informed that the Planning Policy Team would ensure that all parishes would be contacted by the end of the week.

The Chairman asked if Members were happy that this document went out to consultation. It was agreed that the document needed to be more user friendly with worked up examples and a glossary needed to be added to the front. It was further agreed that further Member briefings were required.

The timelines were explained.

The Overview & Scrutiny Commission Chairman thought that the CIL document required a very clear timetable and needed to be tidied up and made more legible. If the Council was expecting a meaningful conversation then the document needed to be made much clearer with a simple summary so that everyone understood the context of this document.

The Chief Executive asked if all Members had been fully briefed, if not, the briefing sessions needed to be held before the consultation began so that Members could champion this for Breckland Council. He therefore felt that the publication of a timetable would be useful.

Changes to the recommendation were put forward and agreed.

Options

- (1) To consider the PDCS, Viability Assessment and Infrastructure funding paper and agree it to be released for consultation.

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- (2) Not to approve the PDCS, Viability Assessment and Infrastructure funding paper for consultation.

Reasons

It was recommended that Option 1 of the report be endorsed which would allow consultation to be carried out on the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule. This option would allow the Council to further progress the implementation of a CIL for the District.

It was important to progress CIL to enable the Council to have a mechanism in place to secure funding from multiple development after 1st April 2014 (the date on which S106 agreements would be called back). However, once implemented the CIL Charging Schedule would need to be kept under review, and it was recommended that a post adoption timeframe of 3 years be used which would establish whether there were any significant changes in the development market or other events which could affect viability in the district.

Endorsing Option 2 of the report would have two impacts. The first could be to effectively cease the preparation of CIL and rely on S106 agreements (with limitations post April 2014). However, in agreeing option 2, the Council could delay the consultation on CIL in order to commission further research or evidence to cover a greater range of scenarios. Whilst this might be a reasonable option, it was considered that any further evidence could still conclude that other forms of development were not viable.

RESOLVED that subject to further Member briefing sessions being held prior to the public consultation, and subject to the approval of the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council, the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule, Viability Assessment, draft Infrastructure List and Infrastructure Funding Paper be agreed for public consultation.

29/13 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 10)

The arrangements for the next meeting on Tuesday, 7 May 2013 at 9.30am in the Norfolk Room were noted.

30/13 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (AGENDA ITEM 11)

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

31/13 PFI BENCHMARKING (AGENDA ITEM 12)

The PFI Monitoring & Strategic Sports Officer presented the report which sought delegated authority to accept or reject the Benchmark figures and to agree any changes to Service Specification and whether to go through

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the Market Test process as described in the report.

Members' questions were invited.

The Chief Executive asked for a slight amendment to the recommendation to accord with the general provisions of delegation.

Options

See report.

Reasons

To allow the Council to meet its contractual obligations as described in Schedule 18 Part 1 'Benchmarking Procedure' of the Project Agreement.

To establish if refinancing the agreement would deliver financial benefits.

RESOLVED that authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Executive Member for Localism, Community & Environmental Services for the decision to:

- (1) accept or reject the Benchmark figures;
- (2) agree any changes to Service Specification; and
- (3) whether to go through the Market Test process as described in the report.

The meeting closed at 11.10 am

CHAIRMAN

BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL**Report of Michael Wassell, Executive Member for Finance and Democratic Services****To: Cabinet - 7 May 2013****(Author: Mark Finch, Assistant Director Finance)****Subject: Capital Programme Outturn Report 2012-13**

Purpose: This report sets out the outturn position of Breckland's capital programme for 2012/13. It shows the outturn on capital schemes in the 2012-13 capital programme, along with the resources used to fund the capital programme.

Recommendation(s):

To recommend to Full Council that:

The final capital budget, outturn position and funding for 2012-13 and the capital budget and funding for the revised 2013-14 capital programme as detailed in Appendix A and B are approved.

1. BACKGROUND

Capital investment plays a key role in helping the Council to achieve its long term objectives. This report shows the out-turn position on capital schemes in the 2012/13 Capital Programme along with the resources used to fund the programme.

Capital Programme

The table below shows the final budget for the Capital Programme for 2012/13 following supplementary approvals compared to the original estimate of £5,741,010.

Amendments to the programme (including some budget carry over to 2013/14) have previously been reported to Cabinet and approved by Council plus there have been new approvals during the year culminating in a revised estimate of £3,770,474.

Portfolio	Original Budget		Final Budget	
	Value of schemes	No. of schemes	Value of schemes	No. of schemes
Place and Governance	254,895	10*	456,758	8*
Commissioning	5,486,115	29	3,313,716	31
Total	5,741,010	39	3,770,474	39

* Match funding schemes shown as individual projects

The following table shows the out-turn position of £2,017,180, an under-spend of £1,753,294 against the final budget.

	Value of Schemes	Outturn	Variance
	£	£	£
Place and Governance	456,758	238,529	218,229
Commissioning	3,313,716	1,778,651	1,535,065
Total	3,770,474	2,017,180	1,753,294

Appendix A provides more detail on the budget, virements and actual spend.

Capital Programme Funding

The following table details the original and final funding figures for the capital programme.

Funding type	Original budget £	Final budget £	Final out-turn £
Capital reserves	4,672,891	2,220,789	719,217
Revenue Funding	-	-	-
Specific grants	974,890	1,182,812	931,090
PFI prepayment	-	201,863	201,863
Reserve			
Specific Reserves	93,229	165,010	165,010
Total	5,741,010	3,770,474	2,017,180

Appendix B provides more detail on how the 2012/13 capital programme is proposed to be funded. The grant funding not applied will be carried forward to 2013/14.

Request for variation to the 2013/14 Capital programme

A detailed summary showing the expected outturn is attached at **Appendix A**. This also details the request to carry over £1,618,451 from 2012/13 to 2013/14. The balance of £134,843 is a saving against the 2012/13 capital programme. Against each project is a narrative detailing why a request to carry over funding is being made. This report requests that the final budget, outturn position and funding for 2012/13 and the budget and funding for the revised 2013/14 capital programme is approved.

Where funding has not already been released, schemes will require suitable business cases to be prepared which will be evaluated at an Executive Briefing or by the appropriate Committee.

It is recommended that the increase in value of the 2013/14 capital programme of £1,618,451 is financed from available capital funding as follows:

Capital reserves	£1,386,805
Specific Grants	£231,646
Specific Reserves	£0
Total	£1,618,451

Should any of the schemes highlighted in Appendix A not receive approval to be included in the 2013/14 capital programme, the figures would be adjusted downwards and should the final outturn be amended as a result of the final accounts process, figures will also be adjusted.

Capital Receipts Out-turn

The original estimate for capital receipts was £865,000. However, the actual receipts for 2012/13 were £142,000. Income from sales of land and property are shown below:

	£
Sale of 11a Roman Way	£72,000
Sandringham Way, Swaffham	£70,000
*Total	£142,000

*A further £104,000 is expected from Right to Buy Receipts.

Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

The table below shows the CFR which is a Prudential Indicator and shows the underlying need to borrow. Based on the expected position at the end of 2012/13, the CFR position is as per the table below. It shows that at the end of 2014/15, unless additional receipts are generated there is a shortfall in funding of £79,000. As indicated in the budget report to Council, a full review of spend and expected receipts will take place in 2013/14 to ensure the capital programme remains affordable.

Summary of Estimated Capital Resources

Resources	2012/13 (£'000s)	2013/14 (£'000s)	2014/15 (£'000s)	2015/16 (£'000s)
Opening CFR	(2,540)	(1,963)	6,996	9,208
Movement in year	577	8,959	2,212	835
CFR as per prudential code	(1,963)	6,996	9,208	10,043
PFI Liability	(9,492)	(9,315)	(9,129)	(8,933)
Underlying Borrowing requirement	(11,455)	(2,319)	79	1,110

2. OPTIONS

To recommend to Full Council that the final capital budget, outturn position and funding for 2012/13 and the capital budget and funding for the revised 2013/14 Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix A and B are approved.

To make changes to Appendix A and B before recommending to Full Council that the final capital budget, outturn position and funding for 2012/13 and the capital budget and funding for the revised 2013/14 Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix A and B are approved.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation will ensure the capital programme for 2013/14 is amended along with the necessary funding.

4. EXPECTED BENEFITS

The final out-turn position represents the Council's performance against budget for the last year and therefore there is no expected benefit from this in the future. By approving the revised 2013/14 Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix A and B, this will ensure the Council can deliver its planned capital projects.

5. IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Legal - None

5.2 Risks – I have completed the risk management questionnaire and I can confirm that risk has been given careful consideration and that there are no significant risks identified associated with the information in this report

5.3 Financial – The report is of a financial nature and the financial implications are included within the report

- 5.4 **Timescales** – This report reports on 2012-13 performance and revised budget for 2013-14.
- 5.5 **Equality and Diversity** - None
- 5.6 **Stakeholders / Consultation** – Budget holders have been consulted on their out-turn against budgets and the reasons behind any major variances and also for any requests relating to carry over requests.
- 5.7 **Contracts** – See Appendix A for contractual arrangements against individual schemes
- 5.8 **Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998** - None
- 5.9 **Other** - None

6. WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED

Background papers:- *None*

Lead Contact Officer

Name/Post: Margaret Bailey/Senior Accountant

Telephone Number: 01362 656218

Email: margaret.bailey@breckland.gov.uk

Director/Officer who will be attending the Meeting

Name/Post: Mark Finch/Assistant Director Finance

Key decision

This is a key decision

Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix A – Capital programme outturn 2012/13 and budget carry over

Appendix B – Capital financing 2012/13

APPENDIX A

PROJECT	category(see key)	Final 2012/13 budget	Actual spend	2012/13 (under)/overspend	Unspent amount requested to be carried over	Original budget 2013/14	Proposed new budget 2013/14	Notes
Commissioning - Funding released								
Victory Park, Aitborough	P	-	-	-	-	18,207	18,207	Budget carried over to 13/14 as agreed by Cabinet 04/09/2012
Asset Management Plan	P	84,479	86,449	1,970	-	230,000	230,000	2013-14 budget required to support Asset Management Plan. Condition surveys identified 2.3m spend required over 10 yr period (£30k per annum)
Street Lighting	P	-	-	-	-	789,057	789,057	Budget carried over to 13/14 as agreed by Cabinet 04/09/2012. Options for delivery are being explored.
Elizabeth House	P	10,943	10,943	-	-	-	-	Virement from Street lighting approved to fund final retention sum
Skate Park Land	P	20,000	-	(20,000)	20,000	-	20,000	Request to carry over budget to 2013/14. Project is now being led by Thetford Town Council. A decision on how the project will proceed is expected in May. Until then, this budget is required in case land still needs to be released from the PFI contract.
Scamling Watermeadows bridge repairs	P	22,000	4,180.00	(17,820)	17,820	-	17,820	Request to carry over balance of budget to 2013/14 to enable a tender exercise in Q1 of 2013/14 with works completed by Q4 2013/14
Three lagged bridge Thetford Riverside	P	2,000	-	(2,000)	2,000	21,000	23,000	Request to carry over budget to 2013/14. This was for initial tender costs which will now take place in Q2 of 2013/14 with works completed by Q4 2013/14
Adoption of roads	P	10,000	-	(10,000)	10,000	15,000	25,000	Request to carry over budget to 2013/14 (increasing 2013/14 budget to 25k). This was for initial consultant tender/contract mgmt costs which will now take place in Q1 of 2013/14.
Transfer of Play areas - Swaffham	P	60,275	60,275	-	-	-	-	Scheme complete
Transfer of Play Areas - Thetford	P	-	-	-	-	174,270	174,270	Budget still required but project delayed. Cabinet 12/02/2013 agreed to carry funding over to 2013/14
Transfer of Play areas - Aitborough	P	80,961	80,961	-	-	-	-	Scheme complete
Transfer of Play Areas to Town Councils - Watton	P	22,136	22,136	-	-	-	-	Scheme complete
Transfer of Play Areas to Town Councils - Dereham	P	-	-	-	-	121,700	121,700	Budget carried over to 13/14 as agreed by Cabinet 04/09/2012
Anchor Hotel demolition	P	110,000	40,537	(69,463)	69,463	-	69,463	Request to carry budget over to 2013/14. Project is delayed because a specification with English heritage is not agreed and further consultation on landscaping design is required.
St Mary the Less	G	-	(7,821)	(7,821)	-	-	-	This is an adjustment in respect of 2012-13 spend
Disabled Facilities Grants/Re-able	G	839,711	821,434	(18,277)	-	673,000	673,000	Funding of 100k received 2012-13 from Flagship in addition to DCLG grant
Decent Homes Grants inc enhancement grants & loans/restore	G	250,000	145,921	(104,079)	104,079	150,000	254,079	Request to carry over balance of budget to 2013/14. Spend is demand led and fully funded so no cost implications but budget still required.
John Room House Conversion	P	27,360	27,360	-	-	-	-	Scheme complete
Affordable Housing	G	500,000	-	(500,000)	500,000	250,000	750,000	Request to carry over budget to 13/14. £250K has been committed to the delivery of a permanent Gypsy and traveller site along the A11 corridor. Potential commitment of £149K to Havebury Housing Association to assist with the development of the Goods Shed at Thetford station and possible additional costs associated with Swayne Close.
Planning and Building Control - TLC & GEODSYS	I	6,119	-	(6,119)	-	-	-	Spend was no longer eligible to be capitalised and has therefore been transferred to revenue
Planning and Building Control	I	108,823	120,100	11,277	(11,277)	-	(11,277)	Overspend covered by additional contribution below. Request to carry over the balance of budget to 2013/14 as final spend will not take place until 2013/14
Planning and Building Control - additional Capita contribution	I	20,000	-	(20,000)	20,000	-	20,000	
Environmental Health Review	I	325,960	16,048	(309,912)	309,912	-	309,912	Request to carry over balance of budget into 2013/14. The project is behind schedule but there is a separate Project Board who have been kept informed and are managing the issues. Spend will now take place in 2013/14.
S 106 (Watton)	G	66,781	66,781	-	-	-	-	Scheme complete
S106 (Swanton Morey)	G	5,000	5,000	-	-	-	-	Scheme complete
Air Quality/Noise Monitoring	I	50,000	23,516	(26,484)	26,484	-	26,484	Funding is committed but details are being finalised so request carry over of balance of budget to 2013/14
Customer Services Centre Telephony - Dereham	I	20,165	-	(20,165)	20,165	-	20,165	Funding is committed but not spent. Request to carry over the balance of the budget to 2013/14.

PROJECT	category (see key)	Final 2012/13 budget	Actual spend	2012/13 (under)/overspend	Unspent amount requested to be carried over	Original budget 2013/14	Proposed new budget 2013/14	Notes
VMA Ware	I	178	-	(178)	-	-	-	-£20,000 was vired into unapproved strategy budget for future initiatives in conjunction with NCC.
LAGAN Upgrade	I	7,255	-	(7,255)	7,255	-	7,255	Request to carry over budget to 2013/14 for Customer Services work. Awaiting details - if the nature of the work is not capital, funding will be returned to the ICT Strategy budget and charged to revenue (subject to approval)
Govt Connect Phase 3	I	5,054	-	(5,054)	-	-	-	Spend was no longer eligible to be capitalised and has therefore been transferred to revenue
Disaster Recovery	I	40,777	13,595	(27,182)	27,182	-	27,182	Request to carry over budget to 2013/14 for Customer Services work. Awaiting details - if the nature of the work is not capital, funding will be returned to the ICT Strategy budget and charged to revenue (subject to approval)
Telephony VOIP - Thetford	I	8,291	8,927	636	-	-	-	There is a "cash back" deal for old switches to bring net spend within budget but income is revenue leaving an overspend on capital
BDC & ICTNCC shared service infrastructure	I	143,547	-	(143,547)	143,547	-	143,547	Project will now be implemented between April 2013 and August 2013. Request to carry over balance of budget to 2013/14.
ARP Waveney and Suffolk Coastal ICT	I	241,418	232,309	(9,109)	9,109	-	9,109	Request to carry budget over to 2013/14 as project is not yet complete. The budget is 100% funded by external contributions.
ARP Licences	I	100,000	-	(100,000)	-	-	-	Budget no longer required - alternative solution approved by Joint Committee.
Car Parks Re-surfacing	P	-	-	-	-	136,000	136,000	Budget carried over to 2013/14 as agreed by Cabinet 12/02/2013. New profile was agreed of 1.36k per annum
Funding not yet released								
ICT Strategy Projects	I	124,483	-	(124,483)	124,483	100,000	224,483	Request to carry over balance of budget to 2013/14 to support BDC/NCC shared service initiatives
Integra e series and attachment manager	I	-	-	-	-	33,000	33,000	
Riverside Regeneration	P	-	-	-	-	6,000,000	6,000,000	Budget carried over to 13/14 as agreed by Cabinet 04/09/2012. Discussions continue with NCC re delivery of the project.
Total Commissioning		3,313,716	1,778,651	(1,535,065)	1,400,222	8,711,234	10,111,456	
Place and Governance								
Match Funded Projects - unallocated budget	G	166,812	-	(166,812)	166,812	100,000	266,812	Funding available for future match funding applications. Request to carry balance of budget over to 2013/14 which will increase 2013/14 budget to £266,812
Match Funded Project - Eccles Garnier Hall	G	2,369	-	(2,369)	2,369	-	2,369	Balance of budget still required. Request to carry over the remaining budget to 2013/14
Match Funding Project - Bawdeswell village hall ext	G	7,936	-	(7,936)	7,936	-	7,936	Balance of budget still required. Request to carry over the remaining budget
Match Funding Project - North Elmham Village Green	G	20,000	20,000	-	-	-	-	Scheme complete
Match Funding Project - Swanton Morley Kitchen	G	9,657	9,657	-	-	-	-	Scheme complete
Match Funding Project - East Harling Recreation Facilities	G	8,121	7,009	(1,112)	1,112	-	1,112	Balance of budget still required. Request to carry over the remaining budget to 2013/14
Match Funding Project - Westacre Theatre	G	20,000	-	(20,000)	20,000	-	20,000	Request to carry this budget over to 2013/14 as project has not yet started
Match Funding Project - Shipdham Church	G	20,000	-	(20,000)	20,000	-	20,000	Request to carry this budget over to 2013/14 as project has not yet started
Roof replacement joint use agreement	P	-	-	-	-	60,000	60,000	
PFI 2012-13 additions	P	201,863	201,863	-	-	-	-	This is a year end adjustment and represents capital spend embedded in the PFI contract arrangements.
Total Place and Governance		456,758	238,529	(218,229)	218,229	160,000	378,229	
Grand Total		3,770,474	2,017,180	(1,753,294)	1,618,451	8,871,234	10,489,685	

Key: P = Property (Land & Buildings), I = ICT & Organisational Change, G = Capital Grants

PROJECT	2012/13 Final budget	Outturn	Capital Reserve	Revenue contributions	PFI prepayment reserve	Grants	S106	Commuted sums
Commissioning - Funding Released								
Asset Management Plan	84,479	86,449	86,449					
Elizabeth House	10,943	10,943	10,943					
Skate Park Land	20,000	-						
Scarning Watermeadows bridge repairs	22,000	4,180	4,180					
Three legged bridge Theiford Riverside	2,000	-						
Adoption of roads	10,000	-						
Transfer of Play areas - Swaffham	60,275	60,275	30,442					29,833
Transfer of Play areas - Attleborough	80,961	80,961	17,565					63,396
Transfer of Play Areas to Town Councils - Watton	22,136	22,136	22,136					
Anchor Hotel demolition	110,000	40,537	40,537					
St Mary the Less	-	(7,821)	(7,821)					
Disabled Facilities Grants/Re-able	839,711	821,434	288,574			532,860		
Decent Homes Grants inc enhancement grants & loans/restore	250,000	145,921				145,921		
John Room House Conversion	27,360	27,360	27,360					
Affordable Housing	500,000	-						
Planning and Building Control – TLC & GEODSYS	6,119	-						
Planning and Building Control	108,823	100,100	100,100					
Planning and Building Control - additional Capita contribution	20,000	20,000				20,000		
Environmental Health Review	325,960	16,048	16,048					
S 106 (Watton)	66,781	66,781					66,781	
S106 (Swanton Morley)	5,000	5,000					5,000	
Air Quality/Noise Monitoring	50,000	23,516	23,516					
Customer Services Centre Telephony - Dereham	20,165	-						
VM Ware	178	-						
LAGAN Upgrade	7,255	-						
Govt Connect Phase 3	5,054	-						
Disaster Recovery	40,777	13,595	13,595					
Telephony VOIP - Theiford	8,291	8,927	8,927					
BDC & ICT NCC shared service infrastructure	143,547	-						
ARP Waveney and Suffolk Coastal ICT	241,418	232,309				232,309		
ARP Licences	100,000	-						
Funding not yet released								
ICT Strategy Projects	124,483	-						
Total Commissioning	3,313,716	1,778,651	682,551			931,090	71,781	93,229
Place and Governance								
Match Funded Projects - unallocated budget	166,812	-						
Match Funded Project - Eccles Garner Hall	2,369	-						
Match Funding Project - Bawdeswell village hall ext	7,936	-						
Match Funding Project - North Elmham Village Green	20,000	20,000	20,000					
Match Funding Project - Swanton Morley Kitchen	9,657	9,657	9,657					
Match Funding Project - East Harling Recreation Facilities	8,121	7,009	7,009					
Match Funding Project - Westacre Theatre	20,000	-						
Match Funding Project - Shipdham Church	20,000	-						
PFI 2012-13 additions	201,863	201,863			201,863			
Total Place and Governance	456,758	238,529	36,666		201,863			
Grand Total	3,770,474	2,017,180	719,217		201,863	931,090	71,781	93,229

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

Report of: Ian Sherwood, Executive Member for Performance & Business Development

To: Cabinet - 7 May 2013
Council - 23 May 2013

(Author: Dominic Chessum – Joint Communications Team Leader)

Subject: Breckland Digital Communications Strategy

Purpose: To seek approval for the Breckland Digital Communications Strategy and implement associated actions.

Recommendations:

- a) To adopt the Breckland Digital Communications Strategy and associated action plan
- b) To approve the creation of a 'digital newsroom' for the Council as detailed within this report
- c) Rule out webcasting at this time due to annual costs.
- d) To cease design, production and distribution of the Council magazine, 'Voice' with immediate effect and realise financial savings to help reduce overall council spend and reallocated staff time associated with magazine to development of digital communications.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The advent of new technology and the rapid public adoption of social media has resulted in a plethora of new communications channels opening up and becoming mainstream in recent years.
- 1.2 This paradigm shift has meant communications teams in both the public and private sectors have had to begin a process of fundamentally rethinking how they operate. From the roles and skills needed within the team and the tools needed to

do the job to the methods used to ensure consistency of message and engage with the public, all are having to be analysed, rethought and then gradually reworked and changed.

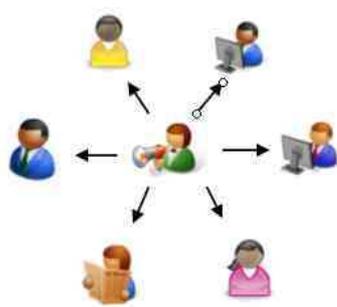
- 1.3 This is a process of adopting new technology and skills, changing working practices and instigating cultural and organisational change. It is likely to continue in perpetuity.

2. DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

- 2.1 It is for this reason that the Communications Team Leader has developed a Digital Communications Strategy for the council. This should ensure that all the opportunities presented by digital communications are explored by the council and exploited where appropriate.
- 2.2 The guiding principles behind the development of the strategy are those contained in the strategy produced by the Government Digital Service (GDS) which is available at <http://publications.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/digital/strategy/>
- 2.3 The focus on “digital by default” is one which not only applies to transactional services but also to communications and is one which the government is increasingly keen for all authorities to apply.
- 2.4 Appendix 1 proposes the Digital Communications Strategy for the Council and includes an action plan for implantation. Members will note that the final action is to continue research and development as technology and social media opportunities arise. It should be recognised that whilst this strategy sets an environment for adopting digital and social media as a communications tool, the area is constantly shifting and developing and further actions and improvements will need to be brought forward on a case by case basis.
- 2.5 The Digital Communications Strategy proposes a number of actions in relation to developing Breckland Council’s digital communication channels including:
 - Introduction of a digital newsroom
 - Consideration of webcasting facilities
 - Cessation of the Council’s magazine, ‘Voice’
- 2.6 Each element detailed below is able to be implemented independently, however, should be considered as interlinked.

3. DIGITAL NEWSROOM

- 3.1 While the council’s Digital Communications Strategy will involve several work streams a key part of it will be a shift in the way we communicate with the public from one where we proactively send out good news and react to bad news to a more conversational style (see image below).



Proactive / reactive model

move to



Conversational Model

- 3.2 Key to achieving this move from the proactive / reactive model to the conversational model is the creation of a 'digital press office'. This is an essentially an open, networked and social space which publishes digital information in an accessible way and allows it to be easily retransmitted by others.
- 3.3 The newsroom no longer distinguishes between new and old media, public and press. It works using digital links rather than copy content, thus ensuring the latest version of all news is always available no matter when it was originally distributed.
- 3.4 As well as helping the council move more easily to a conversational style, the 'digital press office' also has the added advantage of making it much easier to get relevant content to more hyper-local print and digital media, such as parish magazines and the new Breckland View website, on a regular basis. It is anticipated that it will go some way to increasing the council's offline reach. In essence, while the council would be moving towards getting more of its messages out online, the digital newsroom may in fact increase replication of council communications offline in local magazines, thus catering more effectively for the digitally excluded on a more comprehensive, cheaper and regular basis.
- 3.5 However it is developed and hosted the digital newsroom will comply with the council's security needs given that no confidential information or information which is not intended to be published will be placed on the domain.
- 3.6 Content will be linked back to the main council website where necessary via Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds. This single copy, single point of issue system will help ensure consistency of message.
- 3.7 The newsroom will also draw on and embed content such as video and audio posted by the council on various social media sites. In this way hosting costs can be kept to a minimum.
- 3.8 The cost development, implementation and ongoing costs for the digital newsroom can be found by re-profiling aspects of the current communications budget.

4. **WEBCASTING**

- 4.1 Breckland Council's Digital Communications Strategy will commit the council to exploring all communications opportunities presented by advances in technology. One such opportunity is webcasting.
- 4.2 The potential is now there to broadcast the proceedings of Council and other meetings live over the internet. This in turn has the potential to increase democratic engagement and public understanding of the council and its services by enabling more people to witness at first hand the council's decision making processes.
- 4.3 Many councils across the country, including our partner council South Holland, now use webcasting.
- 4.4 Webcasting has many advantages but both it and its primary objective of engaging more members of the public in the democratic process should be placed in the wider context of the council's Digital Communications Strategy. This is a substantial amount of money to spend on a service which is only likely to be accessed by a small proportion of the population and there is an option not to webcast meetings but to use the one off saving from Voice to help develop other digital services, as detailed in the Digital Strategy. These services have the potential to have far greater overall reach than webcasting alone and will fulfil the same ambition of increasing democratic engagement and public understanding of the council and the services it provides.

5. COUNCIL MAGAZINE – 'VOICE'

- 5.1 Breckland Council has produced its residents' magazine 'Voice' for a number of years.
- 5.2 The purpose of the magazine is to provide a regular and direct form of communication with residents to ensure they remain informed as to the operation of the council and the services it provides.
- 5.3 Where as previously a printed periodical was arguably the only way of ensuring regular and direct effective communication with residents, digital communication platforms mean that this is no longer the case.
- 5.4 The magazine is expensive to design, print and deliver with the original budget for the financial year 2012/13 being £84,000. The budget set for 2013/ 14 is less at £42,000 due to a reduction in the number of issues. It also takes a significant amount of officer resource during the weeks of production. There is also a significant time delay between collation of material, production and distribution of the magazine.
- 5.5 Digital communication channels offer a new and instantaneous way in which to communicate directly with residents. Combined with the digital newsroom which has the potential to increase the council's reach in print media it is now feasible to consider the cessation of the council magazine, take the allocated budget as savings and reallocate the officer time previously used to create voice to develop other digital channels.

5.6 The council magazine came bottom of the priorities placed on a number of council products and services during the recent Could we? Should we? public consultation.

6. OPTIONS

6.1 As this report details a range of interlinked initiatives, there are a number of options available to be considered and each initiative can be considered in isolation.

6.2 Digital Strategy

Option 1: To adopt the Breckland Digital Communications Strategy and associated action plan

Option 2: Do nothing

6.3 Digital Newsroom

Option 1: Approve the creation of a 'digital newsroom' for the Council.

Option 2: Do nothing

6.4 Webcasting

Option 1: To rule out webcasting at this time due to annual costs but agree money set aside for initial first year of webcasting be used as a one off investment into developing other digital services at the council

Option 2: To rule out webcasting at this time due to annual costs and take money set aside for initial first year of webcasting as savings

Option 3: To agree the principle of webcasting and ask officers to procure the best value for money service. Agree to use the savings from Voice to finance the first year of webcasting and created a budget within the Democratic Services directorate to finance future years.

Option 4: Do nothing

6.5 Voice

Option 1: Cease design, production and distribution of the Council magazine, 'Voice' with immediate effect and realise the savings budgeted for and reallocated staff time associated with magazine to development of digital communications.

Option 2: Reduce the number of issues of Voice per year

Option 3: Retain current levels of production of the Voice per year

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

7.1 Adoption of the digital strategy will ensure the council explores and, where deemed appropriate, exploits all the opportunities which emerging digital technologies present. Each recommendation detailed within this report supports the shift towards increased use of digital technology for communication with the aim of increasing speed and quality of communication whilst minimising costs.

8. EXPECTED BENEFITS

8.1 Digital Strategy

- Greater public understanding of the council, its operations and services, and greater public engagement in the democratic process.

8.2 Digital Newsroom

- The creation of a digital newsroom will be a central pillar in enabling the council's Digital Strategy.
- It will enable the Council to adapt to cope with modern methods of communication and make use of all the communications channels open to it.
- It has the potential to increase the reach of the council's communications.

8.3 Webcasting

- While webcasting does have the potential to increase democratic engagement and public understanding of the council and the services it provides, it is a considerable expense. Using the money set aside for the first year of this project to invest in other digital services will enable the communications team to achieve the same ends but through a more comprehensive range of projects which will have far greater public reach than webcasting alone. It will also mean no budget allocation will need to be made for webcasting in future years.

8.4 Voice

- Organisational savings
- Freeing up of staff time
- Shift towards more immediate form of direct communication with residents.

9. IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Staffing

9.1.1 Changes to working practices and the cessation of the council magazine will create enough staff resource to ensure the implementation of the digital communications strategy for the benefit of the council.

9.2 Legal

9.2.1 All legal matters such as data protection will be considered during the design and any procurement processes linked to the initiatives detailed within this report.

9.3 Risks

9.3.1 The risk implications of this report have been considered and the following risks have been identified:

9.3.2 Digital Strategy

- Due care will be given to the risks inherent within each individual project should the strategy be approved
- The risk of enabling the public to leave comments of the strategy is mitigated against by their comments being moderated prior to publication.
- As this is a public site hosted externally no sensitive data will be stored upon it

9.3.3 Digital Newsroom

- Release of information – Same mitigation as with any form of publication undertaken by Communications team
- Technical down time will be detailed within the contract
- Increasing costs in future – Dealt with by contract and simple product using open source software so possibility of transferring provider should costs rise substantially
- Public access to internet - County Council broadband campaign should do much to increase access

9.3.4 Webcasting

- Due care will be given to the risks inherent in webcasting should it be approved. This will be addressed through training and appropriate procedures.
- The risks contained within the digital strategy will be considered on a project by project basis.
- Not undertaking poses a risk in that the council is not making use of a communication channel available to it, however, this will be mitigated by the use of other channels.

9.3.5 Voice

- Due care will be taken to ensure we continue to promote events being run by the council effectively.
- The digital newsroom will go some way to ensuring those who primary form of council information was the magazine remain informed.

9.4 Financial

9.4.1 Digital Strategy

- The full financial implications of each additional project will be considered as they are investigated. Due consideration will always be given to budgetary constraints and value for money.

9.4.2 Digital Newsroom

- The cost of newsroom, including creation, hosting and training of staff is as yet not known but it is not expected to be in excess of £3,000 per annum. This can be found by reprofiling the existing communications budget and reducing spend on hired services.

9.4.3 Webcasting

- Adopting webcasting would place an ongoing financial commitment upon the council
- The communications team has asked for three quotes from three separate companies. While one company did not provide a quote the two quotes received ranged from £11,900 to £27,540 per annum. It is likely the cheaper quote would adequately cater for our needs and represent best value for money.
- Savings made through keeping the production and distribution costs of Voice magazine to a minimum over the past year are able to finance the purchase and operation of a webcasting system for the first year, however, this purchase is likely to place an ongoing annual financial commitment upon the council which a budget would have to be created for.

9.4.4 Voice

- The cessation of the council magazine will mean the whole budget of £86,000 has the potential to be taken as savings.
- Staffing resource currently used for the magazine can be redeployed to ensure maximum benefit to the council from the implementation of the digital communications strategy.

9.5 Contracts

- 9.5.1 If the recommendations of this report are approved, there is the potential that one contract required to develop the online provision and training required for the digital newsroom. The costs of this are details in the financial section of this report.

9.6 Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998:

- 9.6.1 The implications of this report have been considered and in the opinion of the report writer there are none.

10. WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED

All Wards are potentially affected by the outcome of this report.

Background papers:-

Lead Contact Officer

Name/Post: Dominic Chessum, Joint Communications Team Leader
Telephone Number: 07827 843 349
Email: dominic.chessum@breckland-sholland.gov.uk

Key Decision: No

Exempt Decision: No

Appendices attached to this report: Digital Communications Strategy
Digital Communications Strategy Action Plan

Breckland Digital Communication Strategy



March 2013

Vision

The advent of new technology and the rapid public adoption of social media has resulted in a plethora of new digital communications opportunities opening up and becoming mainstream in recent years.

This paradigm shift has meant organisations in both the public and private sectors have had to begin a process of fundamentally re-thinking how they communicate. From the roles and skills needed within communications teams and the tools needed to do the job to the methods used to ensure effective public understanding and engagement, all are having to be analysed, re-thought and then gradually reworked and changed.

This is not just a process of adopting new technology and skills, it is a process of cultural and organisational change which is likely to be ongoing for some years, if indeed, given the exponential rate at which technology is developing, it ever stops.

The key drivers for this adoption are to enhance the experience of residents in their interactions with the council and to realise the efficiencies and cost savings which digital technology offers the organisation.

For the purposes of this document digital means any form of technology, from computer systems and programmes to social media, which has the potential to be utilised by residents, the council or both groups in order to communicate.

In setting up the [Government Digital Service \(GDS\)](#) within the Cabinet Office the Government has sent a clear signal that it sees the migration of people to digital as a key target. It has called this process of migration “digital by default” and describes it as follows in its [Government Digital Strategy](#)

“By digital by default, we mean digital services that are so straightforward and convenient that all those who can use them will choose to do so whilst those who can’t are not excluded.”

Encapsulated in this sentence is much of what we aim to achieve in terms of communications at Breckland Council. We aim to make the digital communications opportunities we create of such a standard that they are adopted by choice by the majority of officers, members and the public. We will, however, always ensure that members of the public whose first choice is not digital are not disadvantaged in any way.

In summary, the vision for Breckland Council’s Digital Communications Strategy is,

“To make digital communications the format of choice, enhancing the experience of residents, and realising efficiencies for all.”

Aims

The aim of the Digital Strategy is to ensure the council does not miss any of the opportunities presented by advances in digital communications.

It aims to ensure the maximum benefit for both residents and the organisation as follows:

Residents

- Make the council's services more publicly accessible
- Further improve transparency
- Enhance the customer experience
- Enable more regular and proactive public interaction with members and officers
- Make interacting with the council easier

Organisation

- Develop more efficient and streamlined communications practices
- Enhance the officer and member working experience
- Streamline flow of information
- Enhance learning and knowledge gathering to enable further improvements
- Achieve potential efficiencies and costs savings

These aims will be achieved by a series of projects which are detailed in the next chapter.

Projects

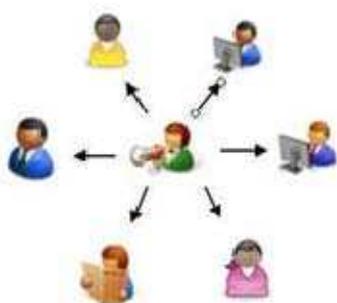
Please note that an action plan detailing how these project will be implemented can be found at the end of this document (Appendix A).

Social Media Development

Social media is fundamentally changing the way and speed people communicate and share information. As a council, social media offers us a whole new range of platforms and channels through which we can communicate with the public.

Channels such as Twitter and Facebook have moved rapidly from being niche to mainstream and with this has come opportunities but also obligations. Though there will always be some whose preference is for traditional channels of communication, and for whom, as explained in the vision section, we will continue to cater for using traditional methods, there are now many whose main way of receiving, collating and digesting information is through social media. It is their communication method of preference and there is an expectation from them that the council caters for this.

With this in mind, the way the council conducts its communications has moved rapidly from one where social media was viewed as an optional extra to one where it is an integral part of our communications strategy. In order to achieve this we are changing the model by which we communicate to the public. As these two diagrams explain, we are moving from a model where we simply put messages out to the public to one of much greater interaction.



Traditional model of communications

- sending out key messages with no interaction or feedback.



The new method of communications
– entering into conversations about the messages we put out.

This new conversational model is far more effective in enabling us to disseminate our information, correct misinformation and have constant feedback on how the public perceive the council is performing. It works best when social media is used in conjunction with the digital newsroom detailed below.

Responsibility for the corporate social media channels lies with the council's Communications Team. The team reviews its social media output, the way it utilises social media and the channels it uses on a regular basis.

As the council's use of social media has developed, specific projects run by various teams within the council have also set up their own social media pages. These are operated by the individual teams in consultation with, and under guidance from, the Communications Team from whom they must first seek approval. This strategy aims to further enhance this model and develop the number of services who are using social media to interact directly with residents. In order to mitigate against any risks associated with this model, a set of guidelines will be developed which will also serve to protect both the officers and the council in this circumstance (see next section).

Social Media guidelines

Councils across the country find themselves at various points on the journey towards giving staff full access to digital communication channels and enabling them to use social media in the course of their work. As this happens there remains a responsibility to ensure adequate protections are in place for both the council and staff.

Digital communication channels have the potential to create a blurring of the lines between personal and work life. Safeguards are therefore needed for two key reasons. Firstly, they protect both the staff and the organisation because if staff are made aware of the issue and the grey areas, the risks are reduced. Secondly, when staff feel empowered, enabled, confident and

secure in their use of social media, this is when the full potential of the use of these digital channels can be harnessed.

But the above is only half the equation. Digital channels offer new ways in which the public can interact with the council and its officers. For the full potential of this to be utilised, just as staff must feel empowered, enabled, confident and secure in their use of digital communication channels so must the public.

The public must also understand the terms on which the council is engaging with them through social media. What they can expect from the council and the behaviour the council expects from them.

A single set of publicly accessible guidelines will be created which encompasses all the above. All staff using social media for council purposes will be expected to sign up to the guideline and will receive training as required.

Digital Newsroom

The shift in the communications model the council is using is detailed in the social media section of this document. In essence it is a move from a way of communicating where we proactively send out good news and react to bad news, to a more conversational style.

Key to achieving this conversational model is the creation of an online 'digital press office'. This is essentially an open, networked and social space which publishes digital information in an accessible way and allows it to be easily re-transmitted by others.

The newsroom no longer distinguishes between new and old media, public and press. It works using digital links rather than copy content, thus ensuring the latest version of all news is always available no matter when it was originally distributed.

As well as helping the council move more easily to a conversational style, the 'digital press office' also has the added advantage of making it much easier to get relevant content to more hyperlocal media, such as parish magazines, on a regular basis. As a result of this it is anticipated that it will go some way to increasing the council's offline reach. In essence, while the council would be moving towards getting more of its messages out online, the digital newsroom may in fact increase replication of council communications offline in local magazines, thus catering more effectively for the digitally excluded on a more comprehensive, cheaper and regular basis and fulfilling the criteria set out in the Digital by Default statement in the vision section of this document.

The digital newsroom itself can be created in a number of ways but essentially, where needed, content will be linked back to the main council website via Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds. This single copy, single point of issue system will help ensure consistency of message.

The newsroom will also draw on and embed content such as video and audio posted by the council on various social media sites. In this way hosting costs can be kept to a minimum.

Details of how the Digital Newsroom will be implemented can be found in the action plan (Appendix A).

Email

Email is now a long ago integrated part of working practice for most people and, although it has its drawbacks, it can still be a powerful communications tool when used correctly.

Breckland Council already successfully uses email as a method of answering queries from the public from its customer contact centre and the addition of a digital newsroom would also offer the media, the public, members and officers an opportunity to sign up to have news release drop directly into their inbox among its other syndication methods.

While externally the way the council uses email is comprehensive and effective, internally policies and procedures require revision.

1. A new standard email signature and out of office reply template needs to be developed and adopted by all.
2. A new policy on the distribution of 'all staff' emails needs to be developed and adopted.
3. Training on the effective and efficient use of email needs to be given to staff.

The Communications Team will undertake the first two aspects of this work and will liaise with Human Resources Team regarding the third. The team will also looking at various options for enhancing the look of some important email communications using several different products.

Websites

Breckland Council's website was redeveloped in 2010 and went live in January 2011.

Since then responsibility for the website had been transferred from Communications Service to Customer Services, a decision based on the premise that although the external website is a powerful method of communication it, in essence, a customer service tool. Use of the website is consistent and growing.

Currently the council makes use of a bought-in product called Gov Delivery to alert customers who sign up when changes are made to specific topic areas on the website. With other methods of delivering a similar service available the annual subscription to this product will be reviewed.

While the main website will remain a repository of information about the council and its services and the front page of this site a key communications tool, in the future the council will increasingly look to create mini-sites for specific purposes.

These will generally be for a single issue or purpose and they will generally be built using Wordpress or similar free tools at little or no expense to the council other than officer time. They will invariably link from and to the main site in some way. Aspects of these single use and quick to establish sites can be integrated into the digital newsroom and create a good platform for good viral social media coverage. Their effectiveness makes single issue basis makes then quick, efficient and effective and as only public information is displayed on them there is little risk.

Intranets

The intranet at Breckland was developed some years ago and is now somewhat antiquated and the information on it out of date in many places.

While fit for purpose at the time of creation thought on the purpose and use of intranets in recent years has moved on somewhat.

The intranet at Breckland is essentially an internal website which contains information relevant to council officers. There is interactivity in places but it is minimal and poorly used.

The council also operates [The Place](#) as a secure area for senior managers and members of the Key Officer Group (KOGs) to post information and interact with each other.

Creating a successor to the current intranet is far from being a priority for the council but in time thought must be given as to the requirements of the council as it moves forward. ICT will need to lead this project with input from Communications.

Webcasting

The potential is now there to broadcast the proceedings of Council and other meetings live over the internet. This in turn has the potential to increase democratic engagement and public understanding of the council and its services by enabling more people to witness at first hand the council's decision making processes.

Many councils across the country, including our partner council South Holland District Council, now regularly use webcasting. While it has many advantages, both it and its primary objective of engaging more members of the public in the democratic process should be placed in the wider context of the council's Digital Communications Strategy.

Webcasting is a substantial amount of money to spend on a service which is only likely to be accessed by a small proportion of the population. The development of other digital services has the potential to have far greater overall reach than webcasting alone and will fulfil the same ambition of increasing democratic engagement and public understanding of the council and the services it provides.

In the current economic climate it is not prudent therefore to procure a webcasting system, however, the usefulness of this system should not be discounted and this decision will be kept under review.

Publications

Breckland Council has produced its residents' magazine 'Voice' for a number of years with the purpose of providing a regular and direct form of communication with residents to ensure they remain informed as to the operation of the council and the services it provides.

Whereas previously a printed periodical was arguably the only way of ensuring regular and direct effective communication with residents, digital communication platforms mean that this is no longer the case.

The magazine is relatively expensive to design, print and deliver with the original budget for the financial year 2012/13 being £84,000. It also takes a significant amount of officer resource during the weeks of production.

The time delay between collation of material, production and distribution of the magazine is also an issue.

Digital communication channels offer a new and instantaneous way in which to communicate directly with residents. Combined with the digital newsroom which has the potential to increase the council's reach in print media it is now feasible to consider the cessation of the council magazine, take the allocated budget as savings and reallocate the officer time previously used to create voice to develop other digital channels.

Digital development and research

As detailed at the beginning of this strategy, technology is developing at an exponential rate and no one knows what may be around the corner. This strategy aims to endorse continuous development and improvement within the way we communicate internally and with our residents, therefore it should be recognised that the recommended actions within this strategy will only be the starting point.

A key role for the Communications Team will be to continue to monitor and research new and innovative developments and opportunities within technology and communications that may have positive benefits to the council and its resident. The Communications Team will continue to identify opportunities as they arise and bring these forward on a case by case basis for consideration.

Breckland Council

Digital Communications Strategy Action Plan (Appendix A)

Date last updated: 12 March 2013

Area of work	Output	Service Area	Accountable Officer	Lead Officer	Action required	Deadline	Status	R A G
1	Social Media Development	Communications	Dominic Chessum	Pam Sayle	Review existing corporate social media channels Assess if new corporate social media channels need to be adopted	July 2013 July 2013	Ongoing – recurs every 6 months. Ongoing – recurs every 6 months.	
2	Social Media Guidelines	Communications / HR	Dominic Chessum	Dominic Chessum	Create guidelines Officer Training	August 2013		
3	Digital Newsroom	Communications	Dominic Chessum	Dominic Chessum	Seek approval for the creation of digital newsroom Procure contractor to develop digital newsroom Implement digital newsroom	May 2013 June 2013 Sept 2013		
4	Email	Communications / HR	Dominic Chessum	Dominic Chessum	Create new universal email signature and out of office Create universal email policy Training on effective use of email	March 2013 April 2013 TBA	Completed	

Area of work	Output	Service Area	Account able Officer	Lead Officer	Action required	Deadline	Status	R A G
5	Website	Customer Services	Dylan Powles	Dylan Powles	Ensure website meets ongoing needs Review procurement of Gov Delivery ????	Ongoing March 2013	Ongoing Report gone to CMT	
7	Intranets	ICT / Communications	Kevin Rump	Kevin Rump	Develop new solution to organisation needs currently catered for by intranet Decide on whether to implement webcasting	???	???	
8	Webcasting	Communications / Member services	Dominic Chessum	Dominic Chessum	Decision on whether to implement webcasting	May 2013	Ongoing – will be reviewed annually	
9	Council magazine	Communications	Dominic Chessum	Dominic Chessum	Decision on future of council magazine Further reports for decisions where required.	May 2013 Ongoing	Ongoing – dependent on decisions of council n/a	
9	Research and Development	Communications / other services where relevant	Dominic Chessum	Dominic Chessum	New opportunities brought forward on a case by case basis			

BRECKLAND COUNCIL PROFORMA B
(CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUDGETS)

FROM: Mandy Ashton (Senior Accountant – Revenues & Projects)

THIS PROFORMA PROVIDES THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS
IN RESPECT OF THE ATTACHED REPORT

REPORT: Digital Communications Strategy
REPORT DATE: 26th March 2013

Revenue	£ Year 1 2013/14	£ Year 2 2014/15	£ Year 3 2015/16	£ Year 4 2016/17	£ Year 5 2017/18
Digital Newsroom – Set up	3,000	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Digital Newsroom – Further development (maximum)	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Cessation of Voice	(44,210)	(45,360)	(46,720)	(48,170)	(49,660)
Total Revenue	(38,210)	(42,360)	(43,720)	(45,170)	(46,660)

Funding required:		Considered by:	Date:
Total capital cost	£nil	Exec	01/04/13
Revenue saving	See above	Cabinet	07/05/13
		Council	26/05/13

Financial Services Comments

This report seeks to approve the Digital Communications Strategy which includes action points detailed in the table above.

Efficiencies for the cessation of Voice form part of the “Could we should we” consultation. If this proposed saving is used to fund other areas there will be less scope for the full savings to be realised in the “Could we should we” project.

Financial Risk

Should the proposal to cease the production of voice be rejected and the other options approved an increase to the budget from 2013/14 and future years will need to be approved. This will increase the Council’s efficiency target in the future. If committee approve web casting the saving will be reduced further.

This PB is valid for 3 months from PB date	If this PB is not longer required please advise Finance	If there are changes to the original report it may invalidate this document, it must be reviewed by Finance.
15/04/2013	Page 1 of 1	C:\Documents and Settings\dchessum\Desktop\Dom's Working Folder\Reports\Digital Communications Strategy\Digital Communications Strategy - second

BRECKLAND COUNCIL
FOREST HEATH DISTRICT COUNCIL
EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

ANGLIA REVENUES AND BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE

Held on Thursday, 14 March 2013 at 2.00 pm in the
Level 5 Meeting Room, Breckland House, St Nicholas Street, Thetford IP24
1BT

PRESENT

Mr P.D. Claussen	Mr W.H.C. Smith
Mr R. Everitt (Chairman)	Mr N Roman (Substitute Member)
Mr P Moakes	Mr J Waters (Substitute Member)
Mr D A Ray	

In Attendance

Lucy Burt	- Fraud & Visits Team Manager (ARP)
Mark Finch	- Assistant Director of Finance (BDC)
John Hill	- Chief Executive (ECDC)
Sharon Jones	- Head of Shared Service (ARP)
Rod Urquhart	- Operations Manager (ARP)
Robert Walker	- Assistant Director of Commissioning (BDC)
Liz Watts	- Director (SEBC&FHDC)
Helen McAleer	- Senior Committee Officer (BDC)

6/13 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

It was noted that TUPE should be in capital letters with only one 'e' in the penultimate paragraph of page four.

Subject to that amendment the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7/13 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Ambrose-Smith, Mr Edwards and Mr Millar.

Mr Roman and Mr Waters were present as Substitute Members.

8/13 FRAUD (STANDING ITEM) (AGENDA ITEM 5)

The Fraud & Visits Team Manager was present for this item and presented the report which updated Members on recent work for each authority and compared the sanctions during the past quarter to the same quarter the previous year.

Action By

Action By

There were no significant changes. The slight reduction for East Cambs District Council had been caused by some on-going, labour intensive cases.

Mr Smith asked what the acronym HUMINT stood for and was advised that it was human intelligence (feedback from an informant).

The Chairman thanked the officer for a good report. The item was noted.

9/13 PERFORMANCE REPORT (STANDING ITEM) (AGENDA ITEM 6)

(a) Operational Performance

The February performance report was tabled by the Operations Manager.

Members' attention was drawn to the Welfare Reform information events noted under key achievements. There had also been training sessions and letters had been sent to all affected people warning them about the changes. It had been a busy month.

The Chairman asked whether people seemed to be aware of the forthcoming changes and was advised that it varied. A lot of work had been done with the Housing Associations to reach their tenants. Benefit letters would be sent out in the next week and the number of phone calls received following that would be an indication of how well people understood the changes. There had already been a lot of queries from letting agents regarding the technical changes. The effect on customers would only be fully understood once the changes had been implemented.

The Head of Shared Service noted that they had contacted people by letter warning them of the changes, but that they were not able to advise them what their new benefits would be. Letters regarding the changes to Housing Benefits had not been sent yet in an attempt to spread the load.

The Operations Manager went on to advise Members that training sessions had been held for staff for Business Rates Retention, on negotiation techniques, etc, to try to ensure maximum yield.

He then moved on to the performance spreadsheets which had been set out in a new style. The red indicator for Breckland was attributed to issues with the ICT infrastructure and the fact that three members of staff had moved on.

The Forest Heath amber for Benefits was due to the same reasons. The Council Tax amber was due to the debt shift caused by people moving into properties at the start of the year and having to pay three months worth of Council Tax on the new

Action By

property, having often already paid for the full year on their previous property.

The East Cambs red for National Non-Domestic Rates collection was also caused by a debt shift and every effort was being made to hit the end of year target.

Some Members queried the format and struggled to understand how the targets for each quarter, divided by four, did not equate to the target for the year. The Operations Manager explained that the target differed throughout the year due to changes in workload and the way in which some items of work (such as the year end mass upload) were dealt with. It was confirmed that the figures were moving in the right direction.

The Chief Executive (ECDC) noted that one of the recommendations in the Strategic Review was to improve the presentation of information.

The Chairman asked whether it would be worth the Committee receiving comparative information on the number of complaints each authority received.

The Director (SEBC & FHDC) suggested that the Operational Improvement Board should look into that.

Mr Claussen asked what impact had been noticed now that Benefits were paid directly to claimants and the Head of Shared Service said it had had a significant effect on Social Landlords with collection rates reduced to about 92% from 99%. She suspected that Council Tax collection would be affected too. Another issue was the change to Benefits regarding the number of bedrooms in a property. A meeting had been held with Social Landlords and the smaller ones were really concerned that they might have to make difficult decisions in future about who they could house.

The Head of Shared Service had brought those concerns to the attention of the DWP during a visit they had made to the ARP the previous week.

The report was noted.

(b) **Financial Performance**

The Assistant Director of Finance (BDC) noted that they were still forecasting an underspend although that would be partly off-set by reduced income and postage budget increases. Both of those areas had been reflected in the next year's budget.

The report was noted.

10/13 BUDGET DETAILS (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The Chairman had requested this item on the agenda as there were some items which required clarification.

The subscriptions for BDC were £12,000 but for FHDC only £70 he asked why there was such a big difference and the Assistant Director of Finance (BDC) explained that each Partner Authority formulated their budget based on the number of staff they were employing. All direct costs formed part of the ARP core budget through Breckland Council's books. That also explained the difference in HR costs.

The amount for stationery seemed very large considering that it did not include postage costs. The Operations Manager explained that they were legally required to send out lots of letters, including reminders, final notices and summonses. The volumes were in excess of one million pages annually, including explanatory leaflets that had to be sent with letters.

E-Billing was used but the take-up levels were not good. They were currently in touch with a software supplier to improve that service, which would also have a knock on effect of reducing the number of queries coming through other channels.

He went on to explain the breakdown of the subscriptions paid which were in three key areas: National Anti-Fraud Network, which saved money by giving access to information; the Institute of Rating & Valuation, a professional body; and CIPFA – the rates for which had been driven down by the power of having six authorities.

The Director (SEBC & FHDC) noted that as part of the Operational Board's performance management they would have benchmarking data on admin costs at other authorities which would be really useful in determining whether the Partnership was getting value for money.

The item was noted.

11/13 ADDITIONAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING 2013/14 (AGENDA ITEM 8)

The Operations Manager presented the report which advised Members of the amount of additional funding received through various funding streams from the DWP and the CLG to implement changes to the benefits regime. The report detailed where the funding was to be spent.

The funding would cover the cost for software upgrades, changes to the website and leaflets and additional staffing to deal with the increasing caseload. The details were set out at Appendix A to the report.

Action By

It was also proposed in the report that power be delegated to the S151 Officers and the Operational Improvement Board to deal with future spending of additional funding to streamline the process. Details would be reported to the Joint Committee quarterly.

In response to a question Mr Moakes was advised that over 90% of claims were dealt with over the phone.

Mr Smith pointed out some discrepancies in the figures in the current report and that at Agenda Item 9. It was explained that the reports had been written at different times and the more up to date figures were in the telephony report.

Mr Smith also asked whether the new staff would be experienced or would require training and was advised that it was the intention to move experienced staff from within the organisation and back-fill their posts and train internally.

Finally Mr Smith said it was to the credit of the finance department that they drew attention to the risk of the Partnership becoming dependent on the additional funding. The Chairman agreed and wondered what the liabilities would be if the funding ran out.

The Operations Manager advised that the new posts would all be fixed term contracts with no liabilities.

Mr Ray noted a change in the terminology from Local Council Tax Support Scheme to Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme and asked which was correct.

The Head of Shared Service explained that although the DWP had originally called it the Local Council Tax Support Scheme Central Government had changed it to the Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the report was noted;
- (2) the payments necessary from the Partner Authorities to Breckland Council be approved;
- (3) the appointment of the fully funded temporary staff by Breckland Council be approved;
- (4) the delegation to the Partner S151 officers and the Operational Improvement Board to consider and agree any future spending in respect of additional funding be approved;
- (5) the additional funding be reported within the quarterly financial performance report in future; and
- (6) any surplus of funding be retained by the Partner Authorities in the agreed gain / cost share ration.

12/13 TELEPHONE RECORDING POLICY (AGENDA ITEM 9)

The Operations Manager presented the report which sought approval for further integration of the Benefit Claim automation process.

To provide a complete service it was necessary to have the telephony to record a claimant's declaration. That recording would be admissible in a court of law. Members were asked to approve the Policy and delegate authority to the Operational Improvement Board to bring in any necessary amendments and changes when the best software option had been chosen.

Mr Ray pointed out some typographical/grammatical errors which would be corrected.

Subject to those amendments it was **RESOLVED** that:

- (1) the report was noted;
- (2) the Telephone claims recording policy be approved; and
- (3) the delegation to the Operational Improvement Board for any subsequent changes, in line with other ARP Policies be approved.

13/13 WELFARE REFORM (STANDING ITEM)(AGENDA ITEM 10)

The Head of Shared Service provided a verbal update. She had attended several meetings with the DWP about the framework for partnership working with Local Authorities. More information would be available in October. They would be looking at Local Authorities and Partners working with vulnerable people; those who did not have English as a first language; those with literacy problems; those with drug/alcohol problems, etc. Such people would not be sent electronic notifications.

The Universal Credit pilot did not take account of the Local Council Tax Support scheme and the Head of Shared Service had heard some rumours about bringing it into Universal Credit. There was also talk of removing Local Council Tax Support in two to three years.

There were still lots of details to resolve.

14/13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 12)

It was suggested that the pre-meetings for Members only should be reduced to 30 minutes and that the meetings could then commence at 1.30pm.

RESOLVED that future meetings would commence at 1.30pm following a 30 minute pre-meeting for Members only

(at which a light lunch would be available).

15/13 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 13)

The arrangements for the Annual Meeting to be held on 13 June 2013 (commencing at 1.30pm) in the Level 5 Meeting Room, Breckland House, Thetford, were noted.

16/13 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (AGENDA ITEM 14)

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

17/13 STRATEGIC REVIEW (AGENDA ITEM 15)

The Operations Manager and Head of Shared Service left the room whilst this item was discussed.

The Chief Executive presented the report which was a joint effort of the Operational Improvement Board (OIB). The appendices to the report would be updated at each meeting. The recommendations identified where decisions were needed.

The Director (SEBC & FHDC) drew attention to the timetable on the final page.

Final outline business cases would be presented to the September meeting with options.

Mr Ray thanked the OIB for making a good start on implementing the recommendations and setting a good timescale.

Details of the proposals were discussed.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the draft Implementation Plan at Appendix 1 of the report be agreed and the progress outlined at Appendix 2 be noted;
- (2) the draft Job Profile and Person Specification for the new post of Head of Service, together with a draft management structure and outline recruitment and selection timetable (Appendix 3) be endorsed;
- (3) officers be authorised to finalise the new management structure for consultation and recruit as appropriate; and
- (4) officers be instructed, in accordance with the Implementation Plan, to bring forward proposals to the

	<u>Action By</u>
June meeting, specifically:	
i. update on the outline business case for the two preferred governance models;	
ii. update on management restructuring following consultation;	
iii. scope of works for shared support services; and	
iv. improvements to ARP's Performance Management Framework including the introduction of a balanced scorecard.	

The meeting closed at 3.55 pm

CHAIRMAN



Performance Report

As at 28 February 2013

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1. Foreword

Breckland Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Forest Heath District Council & St Edmundsbury District Council work together to provide their Revenues and Benefits services through the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP). This partnership was the first of its kind, being in operation since 2003.

We have an agreement in principle with Waveney and Suffolk Coastal councils to join the partnership in April 2012.

Because of this history the Partnership is both nationally & internationally renowned & has won many accolades such as Beacon Status, Local Government efficiency & innovation awards. We have also hosted a number of successful open days where other organisations can come & see the ARP experience.

Through the partnership the authorities provide consistently high performance with high customer focus for those who use our service and for every current and future partner with whom we work. Rigorous processes produce the highest standards of performance and regular monitoring of results ensures that continuous improvements are achieved.

ARP's primary focus is service delivery within the Revenues & Benefits arena but because of the partnership's unique position it is also in demand for consultancy, training & resilience services to other Local Authorities, private companies & external agencies.

The Partnership seeks to grow by providing high standards of service across a broader partnership base, whilst improving the income of the Partnership and thus reducing the overall cost of service provision to the Partner Authorities.

In 2006 a trading arm was created to enable a full range of services offered as part of a procurement process and as a result of the high demand for our services. This company ARPT Ltd offers a range of services to Local Government and its website can be accessed by the following URL link. <http://www.arptrading.co.uk>

Questions relating to this document should be directed to:

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or

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Anglia Revenues Partnership
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2. Key Achievements

This month's key achievements include.

Benefit news

- Training Officers have ensured that Customer Service teams in all host authorities and all ARP staff are well equipped to give clear information to customers about the April changes for Welfare Reforms, Local Council Tax Scheme and Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
- Welfare Reform information events were held in each of the ARP areas (Dereham, Ely, West Suffolk House, Mildenhall and Thetford) because the changes in benefits were so wide-ranging this year. Over 150 staff from host authorities and other agencies, who have the same customers but perform differing functions, attended to discuss ways of jointly working and helping customers as much as possible. Discussion included:
 - Social Fund changes
 - Room restrictions
 - Local Council Tax Reduction
 - Future changes to Disability Living Allowance (DWP) to Personal Independence Payments (PIP) (delivered by DWP)
- Council tax changes were also covered in the Welfare Reform meetings and this was the main reason for having meetings in all the host authority areas to cover the varying Council Tax schemes. Feedback on the all the meetings was extremely positive and ideas expressed at the meetings was used to enhance the letters.
- Over 400 stakeholders and customer service staff attended Welfare Reform and Council Tax Reduction in. DWP did presentations Welfare Rights at Thetford Been well received.
- Letters have been sent to all customers (known at the time to be affected by the changes), informing them of how their Housing benefit will be affected by the changes and Council Tax customers who will then have 8.5% of their liability to pay.
- Automatic transfer of new e-claims into the Academy system is now up and running. For the time being this will apply to self service (check boxed) forms only but will be rolled out to telephone claims in due course.
- Reasons for not so good performance – ICT or on the other sheet?

Revenue Collection

- Letters have been sent to customers who may be affected by the discount and exemption changes.
- The training officers have ensured that ARP staff and Customer Service teams are well equipped to give clear information to customers about the changes to discounts and exemptions.
- Revenues staff from ARP, including Waveney and Suffolk Coastal, have had refresher training on Completion notices to ensure income is maximised.
- Annual billing is complete for EC, that being the first council to set it's tax base.
- Relevant staff have been trained on Business rate retention.

Projects

- The Printing & Mailing Tenders are being checked for compliance.

- Business rate bills are now to be produced through Proprint which will make future amendments easier and cheaper.

3. Complaints

Complaints are recorded separately by each partner authority as part of their complaints & compliments policy's.

4. Performance Measurement

The primary monthly measures of performance shown in this report are the National & Local Performance Indicators. An annual target is set within the Partnership's annual Service Plan that is to be achieved by the end of March each year. A monthly profiled target is estimated to give a meaningful monthly measure of progress towards these targets.

Colour coding

If performance is on target against the target this is highlighted in Green
If performance is slightly below target it is highlighted in Amber
Performance significantly underachieving is highlighted in Red.

Breckland Council		Actual		Target		YTD				February 11/12		Status
NI	Description	2010/11	2011/12	Annual 2012-13	Annual 2012-13	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	February 11/12	February 11/12	
181	Days taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit new claims & changes	5.50	7.16	7	7	12	10	9	7	7.05	7.05	L
LPI	Description	2010/11	2011/12	Annual 2012-13	Annual 2012-13	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	February 11/12	February 11/12	
BEN1	Benefit Take up (The current Benefit Caseload)	11189	11595	11900	11900	11825	11850	11875	11900	11797	11797	J
BEN2	Accuracy in Processing	100.00%	100.00%	99.70%	99.70%	99.70%	99.70%	99.70%	99.70%	100.00%	100.00%	J
CTAX1	Collection of Council Tax	98.14%	98.21%	98.40%	98.40%	99.75%	96.75%	84.50%	98.40%	96.28%	96.28%	J
CTAX2	% of Payers paying by Electronic Methods	N/a	89.86%	85.00%	85.00%	80.00%	82.50%	85.00%	85.00%	88.25%	88.25%	J
CTAX3	% Collected of Original Council Tax debt	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	29.75%	56.75%	84.50%	98.40%	97.04%	97.04%	J
NDR1	Collection of Business Rates	99.24%	98.45%	99.20%	99.20%	28.60%	61.50%	88.00%	99.20%	97.85%	97.85%	J
NDR2	% of Eligible Businesses claiming Small Business Rate Relief	99.13%	98.23%	99.00%	99.00%	90.00%	93.00%	96.00%	99.00%	98.62%	98.62%	J
OPAY1	Collection of Overpayments (Excluding Fraud)	63.80%	71.82%	67.00%	67.00%	55.00%	60.00%	65.00%	67.00%	69.56%	69.56%	J
OPAY2	LA Error and admin delay Overpayments raised in the period as a % of total correct benefits paid	0.21%	0.23%	0.45%	0.45%	0.45%	0.45%	0.45%	0.45%	0.23%	0.23%	J
OPAY3	In Year Value of Fraud Overpayments raised	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	£132,535	£132,535	J
KI	Key Indicator Description	%	%	Arrears @ 31 Mar	Arrears @ 31 Mar	Current Position	Current Position	Reduction	Reduction	February 11/12	February 11/12	
CTK1	% reduction in Previous Year's Council Tax Arrears	N/a	N/a	1,072,209	1,072,209	462,444	56.87%	56.87%	56.87%	45.89%	45.89%	J
CTK2	% reduction in all Years Council Tax Arrears	N/a	N/a	3,707,827	3,707,827	2,758,253	25.61%	25.61%	25.61%	21.94%	21.94%	J
NDR1	% reduction in Previous Year's Business Rates Arrears	N/a	N/a	453,848	453,848	104,748	76.92%	76.92%	76.92%	13.68%	13.68%	J
NDK2	% reduction in all Years Business Rates Arrears	N/a	N/a	744,722	744,722	255,663	65.67%	65.67%	65.67%	28.33%	28.33%	J
KI	Changes to the collection fund	Properties @ 31 Mar	Properties @ 31 Mar	Current Position	Current Position	Band D @ 31 Mar	Current Position	Current Position	Current Position	February 11/12	February 11/12	
CTK4	Changes in Council Tax Properties / Band D Taxbase equivalents	57,602	57,602	57,865	57,865	43,538	44,126	44,126	44,126	43571	43571	J

Key notes

There have been performance issues due to the change over in ICT Infrastructure, which have had an adverse effect on our Business Processes, this combined with an increase in the number of changes received from claimants has contributed to the over target year to date figure. During Feb 3 Benefits Officers left the partnership and recruitment to these posts has commenced. Despite these issues The monthly performance figure for Feb 13 is 7.78 days

OPAY1

By minimising the levels of Local Authority Benefit Overpayments the Local Authority will get an additional amount of subsidy income, as a reward for accuracy in processing changes.

Forest Heath		Actual		Target		YTD				February 11/12		Status
NI	Description	2010/11	2011/12	Annual 2012-13	Actual	Annual 2012-13	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	February 11/12	
181	Days taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit new claims & changes	5.67	7.95	7			12	10	9	7	9.77	K
LPI	Description	2010/11	2011/12	Annual 2012-13	Actual	Actual Feb 13	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	February 11/12	
BEN1	Benefit Take up (The current Benefit Caseload)	4540	4810	5000		5136	4925	4950	4975	5000	4933	J
BEN2	Accuracy in Processing	100.00%	100.00%	99.70%		Not complete	99.70%	99.70%	99.70%	99.70%	100.00%	J
CTAX1	Collection of Council Tax	96.94%	97.05%	98.00%		95.28%	29.75%	56.75%	84.00%	98.00%	95.37%	K
CTAX2	% of Payers paying by Electronic Methods	N/a	87.33%	85.00%		97.81%	80.00%	82.50%	85.00%	85.00%	86.19%	J
CTAX3	% Collected of Original Council Tax debt	N/a	N/a	98.00%		94.72%	29.75%	56.75%	84.00%	98.00%	94.81%	J
NDR1	Collection of Business Rates	98.29%	97.49%	98.40%		98.24%	28.60%	58.50%	86.70%	98.40%	96.97%	J
NDR2	% of Eligible Businesses claiming Small Business Rate Relief	99.18%	96.96%	99.00%		98.71%	90.00%	93.00%	96.00%	99.00%	96.99%	J
OPAY1	Collection of Overpayments (Excluding Fraud)	63.80%	60.24%	67.00%		78.65%	55.00%	60.00%	65.00%	67.00%	59.35%	J
OPAY2	LA Error and admin delay Overpayments raised in the period as a % of total correct benefits paid	0.21%	0.23%	0.45%		0.25%	0.45%	0.45%	0.45%	0.45%	0.23%	J
OPAY3	In Year Value of Fraud Overpayments raised	N/a	N/a	N/a		£150,385	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	£15,906.13	J
KI	Key Indicator Description	%	%	Arrears @ 31 Mar	%	Current Position	Current Position	Reduction	Reduction	Current Position	February 11/12	
CTK1	% reduction in Previous Year's Council Tax Arrears	N/a	N/a	736,831		301,953		59.02%			45.86%	J
CTK2	% reduction in all Years Council Tax Arrears	N/a	N/a	2,236,798		1,531,312		31.54%			24.57%	J
NDR1	% reduction in Previous Year's Business Rates Arrears	N/a	N/a	342,617		76,335		77.72%			67.07%	J
NDR2	% reduction in all Years Business Rates Arrears	N/a	N/a	496,886		196,518		60.45%			56.87%	J
KI	Changes to the collection fund	Properties @ 31 Mar	Current Position	Current Position	Band D @ 31 Mar	Current Position	February 11/12					
CTK4	Changes in Council Tax Properties / Band D Taxbase equivalents	28,419		28764		18,190		18375			18028	J

Key notes

NI181 There have been performance issues due to the change over in ICT Infrastructure, which have had an adverse effect on our Business Processes, this combined with an increase in the number of changes received from claimants has contributed to the over target year to date figure. During Feb 3 Benefits Officers left the partnership and recruitment to these posts has commenced. Despite these issues The monthly performance figure for Feb 13 is 7.74 days

CTAX1 There has been a shift of circa 1.8% of the net collectable debit from Apr - Jan which is now due in Feb / Mar. However all efforts are being made to pursue all outstanding debts.

OPAY1 By minimising the levels of Local Authority Benefit Overpayments the Local Authority will get an additional amount of subsidy income, as a reward for accuracy in processing changes.

NDR2 There has been a steady increase in the numbers of Businesses not claiming this relief. The team is undertaking an uptake drive to ensure the end of year target is met.

East Cambs		Actual	Actual	Target	2011/12				2012-13				Status
NI	Description	2010/11	2011/12	Annual 2012-13	YTD	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	February 11/12	February 11/12	February 11/12	Status
181	Days taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit new claims & changes	5.25	7.61	7	8.51	12	10	9	7	7.59	7.59	7.59	K
LPI	Description	2010/11	2011/12	Annual 2012-13	Actual Feb 13	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	February 11/12	February 11/12	February 11/12	J
BEN1	Benefit Take up (The current Benefit Caseload)	5378	5636	5700	5751	5625	5650	5675	5700	5638	5638	5638	J
BEN2	Accuracy in Processing	100.00%	100.00%	99.70%	Not complete	99.70%	99.70%	99.70%	99.70%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	J
CTAX1	Collection of Council Tax	98.80%	98.68%	98.80%	98.01%	31.00%	59.40%	87.75%	98.80%	98.03%	98.03%	98.03%	J
CTAX2	% of Payers paying by Electronic Methods	N/a	86.15%	85.00%	86.25%	80.00%	82.50%	85.00%	85.00%	79.42%	79.42%	79.42%	J
CTAX3	% Collected of Original Council Tax debt	N/a	N/a	98.80%	98.50%	31.00%	59.40%	87.75%	98.80%	98.47%	98.47%	98.47%	J
NDR1	Collection of Business Rates	99.47%	98.06%	99.00%	97.47%	30.60%	59.30%	87.40%	99.00%	98.31%	98.31%	98.31%	L
NDR2	% of Eligible Businesses claiming Small Business Rate Relief	99.18%	96.98%	99.00%	98.82%	90.00%	93.00%	95.00%	99.00%	96.77%	96.77%	96.77%	J
OPAY1	Collection of Overpayments (Excluding Fraud)	73.24%	71.93%	67.00%	73.55%	55.00%	60.00%	65.00%	67.00%	73.06%	73.06%	73.06%	J
OPAY2	LA Error and admin delay Overpayments raised in the period as a % of total correct benefits paid	0.21%	0.17%	0.45%	0.33%	0.45%	0.45%	0.45%	0.45%	0.16%	0.16%	0.16%	J
OPAY3	In Year Value of Fraud Overpayments raised	N/a	N/a	N/a	£96,590	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	£105,971	£105,971	£105,971	J
KI	Key Indicator Description	%	%	Arrears @ 31 Mar	Current Position	Current Position	Current Position	Reduction	Reduction	February 11/12	February 11/12	February 11/12	J
CTK1	% reduction in Previous Year's Council Tax Arrears	N/a	N/a	476,060	215,179	215,179		54.80%	54.80%	48.00%	48.00%	48.00%	J
CTK2	% reduction in all Years Council Tax Arrears	N/a	N/a	1,972,442	1,475,978	1,475,978		25.17%	25.17%	21.80%	21.80%	21.80%	J
NDR1	% reduction in Previous Year's Business Rates Arrears	N/a	N/a	335,800	51,948	51,948		84.53%	84.53%	55.40%	55.40%	55.40%	J
NDR2	% reduction in all Years Business Rates Arrears	N/a	N/a	459,343	126,916	126,916		72.37%	72.37%	50.45%	50.45%	50.45%	J
KI	Changes to the collection fund	Properties @ 31 Mar	Properties @ 31 Mar	Current Position	Band D @ 31 Mar	Band D @ 31 Mar	Current Position	Current Position	Current Position	February 11/12	February 11/12	February 11/12	J
CTK4	Changes in Council Tax Properties / Band D Taxbase equivalents	35,923	36200	36200	30,001	30,001	30615	30615	30615	30082	30082	30082	J

Key notes

NI181 There have been performance issues due to the change over in ICT Infrastructure, which have had an adverse effect on our Business Processes, this combined with an increase in the number of changes received from claimants has contributed to the over target year to date figure. During Feb 3 Benefits Officers left the partnership and recruitment to these posts has commenced. Despite these issues The monthly performance figure for Feb 13 is 3.03 days

NDR1 There has been a shift of circa 1.5% of the net collectable debit from Apr - Jan which is now due in Feb / Mar. However all efforts are being made to pursue all outstanding debts.

OPAY1 By minimising the levels of Local Authority Benefit Overpayments the Local Authority will get an additional amount of subsidy income, as a reward for accuracy in processing changes.

St Edmundsbury		Actual	Actual	Target	Actual				Target				Status
NI	Description	2010/11	2011/12	Annual 2012-13	YTD	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	February 11/12	February 11/12	February 11/12	Status
181	Days taken to process Housing Benefit / Council Tax Benefit new claims & changes (inc Bulk Uploads)	12.69	12.74	9	9.54	12	10	9	9	9.51	9.51	9.51	K
LPI	Description	2010/11	2011/12	Annual 2012-13	Actual Feb 13	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	February 11/12	February 11/12	February 11/12	
BEN1	Benefit Take up (The current Benefit Caseload)	N/a	8196	8300	8424	8225	8250	8275	8300	8213	8213	8213	J
BEN2	Accuracy in Processing	N/A	100.00%	99.70%	Not Complete	99.70%	99.70%	99.70%	99.70%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	J
CTAX1	Collection of Council Tax	98.53%	98.40%	98.50%	97.87%	30.40%	58.70%	87.30%	98.50%	97.70%	97.70%	97.70%	J
CTAX2	% of Payers paying by Electronic Methods	N/a	86.15%	85.00%	86.25%	80.00%	82.50%	85.00%	85.00%	84.59%	84.59%	84.59%	J
CTAX3	% Collected of Original Council Tax debt	N/a	N/a	N/a	98.83%	30.40%	58.70%	87.30%	98.50%	99.14%	99.14%	99.14%	K
NDR1	Collection of Business Rates	98.14%	97.88%	98.50%	97.65%	29.40%	59.50%	87.20%	98.50%	97.52%	97.52%	97.52%	J
NDR2	% of Eligible Businesses claiming Small Business Rate Relief	N/a	94.58%	99.00%	99.32%	90.00%	93.00%	95.00%	99.00%	89.60%	89.60%	89.60%	J
OPAY1	Collection of Overpayments (Excluding Fraud)	63.80%	73.25%	65.00%	95.55%	55.00%	60.00%	65.00%	65.00%	72.79%	72.79%	72.79%	J
OPAY2	LA Error and admin delay Overpayments raised in the period as a % of total correct benefits paid	N/a	N/a	0.45%	0.27%	0.45%	0.45%	0.45%	0.45%	1.59%	1.59%	1.59%	J
OPAY3	In Year Value of Fraud Overpayments raised	N/a	£120,442.00	N/A	£163,594	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	£58,318.70	£58,318.70	£58,318.70	J
KI	Key Indicator Description	%	%	Arrears @ 31 Mar	Current Position	Current Position	Reduction	Reduction	Reduction	February 11/12	February 11/12	February 11/12	
CTK4	% reduction in Previous Year's Council Tax Arrears	N/a	N/a	886,687	371,344	371,344	58.12%	58.12%	25.14%	25.14%	25.14%	25.14%	J
CTK2	% reduction in all Years Council Tax Arrears	N/a	N/a	2,851,790	2,015,074	2,015,074	29.34%	29.34%	25.79%	25.79%	25.79%	25.79%	J
NDK1	% reduction in Previous Year's Business Rates Arrears	N/a	N/a	892,352	194,354	194,354	78.22%	78.22%	55.16%	55.16%	55.16%	55.16%	J
NDK2	% reduction in all Years Business Rates Arrears	N/a	N/a	1,705,643	491,907	491,907	71.16%	71.16%	49.38%	49.38%	49.38%	49.38%	J
KI	Changes to the collection fund	Properties @ 31 Mar	Properties @ 31 Mar	Current Position	Band D @ 31 Mar	Band D @ 31 Mar	Current Position	Current Position	Current Position	February 11/12	February 11/12	February 11/12	
CTK4	Changes in Council Tax Properties / Band D Taxbase equivalents	46,952	46,952	47053	38033	38033	38567	38567	38114	38114	38114	38114	J

KPI

NI181

There have been performance issues due to the change over in ICT Infrastructure, which have had an adverse effect on our Business Processes, this combined with an increase in the number of changes received from claimants has contributed to the over target year to date figure. During Feb 3 Benefits Officers left the partnership and recruitment to these posts has commenced. Despite these issues The monthly performance figure for Feb 13 is 7.09 days

OPAY1

By minimising the levels of Local Authority Benefit Overpayments the Local Authority will get an additional amount of subsidy income, as a reward for accuracy in processing changes.

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL

**Held on Wednesday, 3 April 2013 at 10.00 am in
Norfolk Room, Conference Suite, Breckland Council, Elizabeth House,
Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr M J Nairn	Mr K.S. Gilbert
Mr T R Carter (Chairman)	Mr M. S. Robinson
Mr S.G. Bambridge	

In Attendance

Helen McAleer	- Senior Committee Officer
Leanne Neave	- Member Trainer
Mark Stokes	- Deputy Chief Executive

Action By

7/13 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2013 were confirmed as a correct record.

8/13 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Jermy.

9/13 MEMBER / OFFICER PLEDGE (AGENDA ITEM 6)

The Deputy Chief Executive was present for this item.

He noted that the draft pledge had seen a lot of discussion and from comments made at previous meetings he suggested that under the heading 'Case Handling' the third bullet point should be removed or amended as it added no value.

With regard to the meaning of 'important' which had been the subject of much discussion at the previous meeting he drew Members' attention to the first three paragraphs of the pledge which he thought made clear what Members needed to be informed about. He suggested that the final sentence be amended to read:

*It is important that members are fully informed about **all** matters on which they may be required to make decisions or which affect their wards **to support them in their community leadership role.***

Action By

Members supported that amendment and gave consideration to the removal of the bullet point. After some discussion it was agreed that it should be retained, but amended to read:

*Where a trend is occurring within a ward – eg a **number** of complaints about a specific issue*

The amended version was **AGREED**.

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that Managers had already seen the Pledge. Now that the final version had been agreed the Training Team would work to ensure that all Officers were aware of it.

The Member Trainer advised that she had recently run a course on Political Awareness which had been very well received. The Pledge linked well with that training and would be included as part of the induction for new staff as well as being rolled out to all Officers.

Mr Robinson noted that it would be useful for new Members too.

10/13 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING (AGENDA ITEM 7)

10 .a Finance Report

The Member Trainer asked Members to note the figures for the 2012/13 budget which showed the balance as at 21 March. There were a few items outstanding which amounted to a couple of hundred pounds, which had resulted in about £4,000 being left in the budget on 31 March 2013. The new budget for 2013/14 was £17,500.

The Chairman noted that the budget had reduced despite more having been spent on training in 2012/13. The aim was to use the Breckland Training Service more in future to try to reduce spend. He asked if the remaining budget had been carried over and was advised that it had not.

It was pointed out that three Members had attended Leadership training which was unusual.

The Chairman was aware that three people had applied for the Planning Summer School which would cost about £2,500. There had been three Planning Advisory Service events in the last eight months and they had been excellent and free, yet they had not been attended by the people that wanted to go on the paid for course. He thought that people should attend free courses when they were relevant.

Action By

Mr Bambridge agreed entirely. He suggested that the Planning Advisory Service should be formally invited to visit the Council to give one of their free courses.

Mr Robinson suggested, and it was agreed, that a formal request should be made to the Portfolio Holder. It would provide a free day's training for Members of a public facing Committee which dealt with contentious issues.

Mr Gilbert asked if there would be a charge if Members were trained by the Breckland Training Service and it was confirmed that the training would be free.

The Member Trainer advised that the training programme would be primarily provided by herself and the Training and Development Manager, not by the Breckland Training Service.

The report was noted.

10 .b **Training Feedback**

Feedback sheets from the Social Media Training course were tabled for noting.

10 .c **Training Programme 2013**

The Member Trainer told the Panel that Self-Assessment Questionnaires had been filled out by 43 Members and five more were needed to meet the 90% target. The 10 outstanding Members had been e-mailed a reminder.

The Chairman said that he would contact the Deputy Leader and ask him to mention the matter at the next Council meeting.

From the 43 responses received a training programme had been drawn up. Options had been provided and Members were asked to choose the most suitable option. The draft programme was tabled.

Members looked at the Training Programme and agreed the following options:

Chairing Meetings

There was discussion on the merits of using David McGrath as a trainer. It was acknowledged that he had a great deal of experience and being an ex-Councillor had a clear understanding of matters from a Councillor's perspective, but weighed against that was the cost of his services.

It was suggested that Councillors from other authorities could be invited and charged for the training to cover the costs.

The Member Trainer pointed out that the Town & Parish Councils

Action By

had been charged to attend training but the money had not been put back into the Member Training budget.

Decision: Options 1 and 3 agreed and Option 2 agreed subject to enough places being booked.

Public Speaking

Town and Parish Councillors should be invited to the course to recoup some of the costs. Other Local Authorities could also be invited. It was felt there was scope to review the rate charged for training depending on the subject matter.

Decision: Option 1 agreed.

Communicating effectively with my ward / Dealing with complex issues / Working with Town & Parish Councils

It was suggested that the three topics could be combined in one training session.

Mr Robinson was keen for new Councillors to be mentored to help develop their roles as community leaders. The Chairman agreed and asked for that to be put on a future agenda.

Decision: The three courses to be run as a combined event.

Leanne
Neave

Social Media

This course had already been run at South Holland and was a hands-on experience, focussing on all areas of interest.

Decision: Option 1 agreed.

Holding Ward Surgeries

Decision: Agreed to hold this subject in reserve as it might be covered by the Social Media course and/or the Communicating effectively training sessions.

E-mail

There was not enough interest in this to run a course. However, it was suggested that some Members needed more basic ICT training and that was an area that needed to be resolved.

Decision: Option 1 agreed. Individual one-to-one sessions would be held.

Computer – Word / Excel / PowerPoint

Mr Bambridge suggested that schools would be willing to give Councillors basic training. Mr Robinson thought that Councillors should be signposted to free training opportunities.

Decision: Basic Word training only to be provided and would include training in the layout of letters, etc.

Time Management

The Chairman requested that the course should encompass Work / Life balance.

Decision: Option 1 agreed.

Dealing with the media / interview skills

Action By

Decision: Option 1, 2 and 3 agreed together with additional video interview training on successful completion of all three steps.

Officer / Member relationship

Although only one Member had signed up for the topic it was thought that there might be others that were not confident in their relationship with officers.

Decision: Option 1 agreed.

11/13 TOWN & PARISH COUNCIL FORUM (AGENDA ITEM 8)

Members were updated on the preparations for the next Town & Parish Council Forum which would take place on Tuesday 21 May at Elizabeth House in Dereham.

Invitations had been issued to all Clerks of Town and Parish Councils and to all District Councillors. The invitations had been sent on 26 March 2013 and to date 12 Parishes and five District Councillors had responded. Reminders would be sent out on 7 May 2013.

Agenda topics so far were:

- Code of Conduct / Standards
- Local Development Plan
- Training available for Parishes

The Clerks had been asked to put forward any other topics they would be interested in, as had the Shared Management Team.

12/13 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 9)

The arrangements for the next meeting on 30 May 2013 were noted.

The meeting closed at 11.45 am

CHAIRMAN