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BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PANEL 3

Held on Tuesday, 12 June 2007 at 10.00 am in
Gallery Bar, Watton Sports Hall, Watton

PRESENT

Mr R.G. Kybird (Chairman)	Mr R. Kemp
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mr J.P. Labouchere
Mrs D.K.R. Irving	Mr M. Spencer

Also Present

Miss K. Webber-Walton

In Attendance

Laura Apps-Green	- Community Development Officer
Anita Brennan	- Strategic Housing Manager
Mark Broughton	- Scrutiny Officer
Sian Hall	- Senior Committee Officer
Martin Seymour	- Health Improvement Officer
Robert Walker	- LSP Officer
Kirsty Webber-Walton	- Walking for Health Co-ordinator

24/07 MINUTES

- (a) Affordable Housing Thresholds Site Viability Study – January 2007
(Minute No. 21/07 (d))

Members sought clarification on the viability of contractors providing 40% of affordable housing on every site regardless of the number of houses planned.

In response the Strategic Housing Manager stated that the viability study would be written into the Local Development Framework (LDF) and decisions would be made on a site by site basis. Panel 1 were in the process of discussing the housing issue in more detail in relation to the LDF and housing were always in consultation with planning regarding this issue.

- (b) Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2007 and the Joint Minutes Panel 1 held on 6 March 2007 with confirmed and signed as a correct record.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2007 and the Joint Minutes of Policy Development and Review Panel 1 and 3 held on 6 March 2007 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

25/07 APOLOGIES

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Apologies for absence were received from Mrs S. R. Howard-Alpe, Mr F. J. Sharpe and Mr B. Rose.

26/07 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the following item (Minute No. 27/07) of business on the grounds they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12a to the Act.

27/07 URGENT BUSINESS

(a) **Breckland Housing Register – Award of Contract**

The Chairman had agreed to take this item as urgent business. The reason for the urgency was to ensure that Members of the Panel had the opportunity to discuss the award of the Breckland Housing Register contract before it was presented to Cabinet on 18 June 2007.

The Strategic Housing Manager presented the report, which explained that the initial expressions of interest in the detailed specification had materialised into two full tenders. A stringent evaluation process had taken place, the results of which were reported. The circulated pro forma b, which had identified and explained various areas addressed during the evaluation process, referred to a budget shortfall over the five years of the proposed contract, the funding for which needed to be allocated via the Star Chamber process. It was also pointed out that, in order to align with the six year rolling budget, the service would need to be maintained beyond year five of the contract and, if accepted, it was proposed that a full review take place in year three to ascertain marketing opportunities and associated efficiencies.

The options available were to award the five year contract to administer the Housing Register and introduce a Choice Based Lettings Scheme on behalf of the Council be awarded to the preferred tenderer identified through evaluation, i.e. ARP Trading Ltd, or not to award the contract. The tender submitted by ARP Trading scored more highly through the evaluation process than the other tender and, although not the most competitive tender in terms of cost, it had demonstrated a more appropriate approach to service delivery, it represented the lowest levels of risk and was more innovative in that it would provide the Council with more opportunities to deliver cashable and non cashable savings during the period of the contract.

Members requested that a progress report on the improvement of the management of the Housing Register be provided six months after the contract had been awarded and that a representative from the successful contractor be present at that meeting.

RECOMMEND that Overview and Scrutiny recommend to Cabinet that

- (1) the contract to administer the Housing Register and introduce a Choice Based Lettings Scheme on behalf of Breckland Council be awarded to ARP Trading Ltd;
- (2) a five year contract term be awarded to 2012, at a cost of

- £1,328,093.00; and
- (3) a comprehensive review be undertaken in year three of the contract into the future options for delivery of the service.

RESOLVED that a progress report on the management of the Housing Register be provide six months after the contract had been awarded and that a representative from the successful contractor be available at that meeting.

28/07 BIG LOTTERY CHILDREN'S PLAY

The Community Development Officer submitted a report which outlined the development of a Breckland Play Strategy and the potential for bringing £238,000 of external lottery funding into the district.

There were four key requirements which needed to be met to enable an application to the Big Lottery for funding. These were:-

- The Setting up of a Play Partnership

This had been done successfully under the auspices of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). Key stakeholders were invited to be part of the Forum in September 2006. Representatives on the Forum included: Police, Breckland Council, Norfolk Rural Community Council, Primary Care Trust, Sure Start Thetford, Voluntary Youth Services, Planning Policy, Equalities and elected member.

- The Development of a Portfolio of Projects in the District

These projects had to be agreed and endorsed by the Play Forum and should be evenly spread across the district.

- Formal Application to the Big Lottery

The deadline for the application would be 10 September 2007. The application for the £238,000 had to be made by the district council. The community development team was leading on the application and would be responsible for monitoring the projects, managing spend and working in partnership with delivery groups to implement the projects in the portfolio.

- Development of a Breckland Play Strategy

This was developed in partnership and endorsed by both Breckland Council and the LSP Play Forum.

Following a number of workshops research as shown that young people wanted:-

- Adventurous challenging play that involved some risk.
- Clean play areas with bins, somewhere to sit with dog restrictions.

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- To feel safe from other people – design would be an important factor.
- Accessible play opportunities somewhere where they could reach by foot or bicycle.

With regard to whether the bid would be successful the Local Strategic Partnership Officer stated the bids had been designed to satisfy the Lottery Bid Form and there was a balance between the urban and rural areas. There was good evidence base for the project bids as each area involved had been subject to a village appraisal. If a bid was not successful there were a small number of reserve bids which would be put forward if the lottery felt that a project would not be viable. It was noted that each project had been carefully tailored to the area.

In response to queries regarding further play provision, especially for the 14-17 year old age range, the Community Development Officer stated that the lottery bid formed part of a longer, broader strategy which would cover a five year period and would contain action plans for the future of play provision within Breckland.

Concern was raised with regard to the sale of school playing fields which had occurred in recent years. In response the Health Improvement Officer stated that Sport England was a statutory consultee for any matters relating to school play areas.

With regard to the figures relating to the health of Breckland residents the Members requested that the Norfolk Primary Care Trust Epidemiologist would attend a future meeting to discuss the information relating to health trends in Breckland.

The Strategy had been produced in consultation with the Planning Policy Team and therefore the information regarding play areas would be contained within the Local Development Framework.

Members queried whether toilet facilities would be provided as part of the projects and were informed that as one of the objectives of the projects was to make play accessible those using the play areas should be close enough to their homes. Further to this as funding was limited the majority proportion of that funding would be spent on the actual play equipment.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend that the Cabinet adopts the Play Strategy and approves the submission of a bid tot the Big Lottery Fund for the sum of £238,000.

29/07 HEALTH IMPROVEMENT WORK PROGRAMME

The Health Improvement Officer provided a general overview of the progress made within regard to the Health Improvement Work Programme.

With regard to the Exercise Referral Scheme negotiations were in progress to establish a local scheme in North Elham. Members suggested that in order to increase the knowledge of the scheme posters should be put in the British Heart Foundation shops.

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Teenage Health Clinics had been established in Dereham, Swaffham and Thetford and it was hoped that a clinic would be launched in Watton.

A Father's Day event had been organised to develop parenting skills through encouraging active play.

The Health Improvement Officer gave a presentation on the Walking for Health Scheme.

As the Scheme had been so successful and a Walking Co-ordinator had been employed through the keystone partnership to manage and expand the scheme. Although in order to expand the scheme volunteers would be needed to lead the walks. All volunteers were given training which included first aid training.

Members agreed that it would be interesting to determine the health benefits of gardening and working on allotments. The Health Improvement Officer stated that an allotment scheme had been set-up in Fenland to help young parents grow their own vegetables.

The Walking Co-ordinator stated that the scheme was always being promoted and would be targeted at a number of different groups in the future to enable social inclusion.

RESOLVED that the information be noted.

30/07 WORK PROGRAMME AND FUTURE MEETINGS

The Scrutiny Officer took Members through the work programme and meeting schedule, as detailed in the report. The following changes to the work programme were noted:-

- Monitoring of the Homeless Strategy would be deferred until September 2007.
- Add BVPI 166 regarding Pest Control

31/07 NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of Policy Development and Review Panel 3 would be held on 10 July 2007 both at 10.00 a.m.

The meeting closed at 12.30 pm

CHAIRMAN