

# Public Document Pack

## BRECKLAND COUNCIL

### At a Meeting of the

### CABINET

Held on Tuesday, 2 March 2010 at 9.30 am in  
Norfolk Room, The Committee Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham

#### PRESENT

Mr J.W. Nunn (Chairman)	Lady Fisher
Mr W.H.C. Smith	Mrs T. Hewett
Mr S. Askew	Mr M.A. Kiddle-Morris
Mr P.D. Claussen	

#### Also Present

Mr J.P. Labouchere	Councillor Claire Bowes
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#### In Attendance

Julie Britton	- Senior Committee Officer
Mandy Ashton	- Revenue and Projects Team Leader
Stephen McGrath	- Member Services Manager
Mark Stokes	- Deputy Chief Executive
John Chinnery	- Solicitor & Standards Consultant
Anita Brennan	- Assistant Director - Environmental Health & Housing
Monica Coffey	- Customer Services Manager
Robert Walker	- Director of Community Services
Andrew Grimley	- Principal Environmental Health Officer
Zoe Footer	- Land Management Officer
Trevor Holden	- Chief Executive
Maxine O'Mahony	- Director of Organisational Development
Stephen James	- Policy and Performance Manager
Robert Leigh	- Marketing and Communications Manager

#### Action By

#### **10/10 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2010 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **11/10 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr P Cowen and Mr R Goreham.

#### **12/10 DECLARATION OF INTEREST (AGENDA ITEM 4)**

Lady Fisher declared a personal interest in Agenda item 11 due to her being a Board Member of the YMCA.

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**13/10 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 5)**

Mrs C Bowes and Mr J Labouchere.

**14/10 REVIEW OF CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRES - ATTLEBOROUGH, SWAFFHAM AND WATTON (AGENDA ITEM 7)**

The report set out the performance, types of enquiries, level of demand and operating hours for the Customer Service Centres in Attleborough, Swaffham and Watton. The report also highlighted the average cost of each transaction which had been calculated by dividing the overall cost per day by the overall daily average number of visits.

The Executive Member for the Environmental Well-Being and Customer Contact Portfolio explained that 70% of the visits were linked to Housing & Council Tax Benefits, ranging from enquiries and assisting with the completion of application forms. Other services provided were bus pass applications and photocopying necessary documentation.

Leaflets, explaining what was on offer at the Service Centres were circulated.

The Customer Service Manager provided details of how the information had been gathered and provided an analysis of how the three Service Centres operated.

The leased space from Wayland Partnership for the Customer Service Centre in Watton was the least used but the most expensive.

The average cost of the centres in Dereham and Thetford were highlighted and Members were reminded that the overall cost of the Dereham Centre would decrease once the relocation to the Breckland Business Centre from Michael Chaplin House had taken place.

The Vice-Chairman thanked the Customer Service Manager and the ICT staff for the work they had done on this longstanding project. He felt that this had been a very useful six month exercise and welcomed the report to Cabinet as it demonstrated to the public how these decisions had been reached based upon the research carried out. He felt that it was important to pursue the service centre initiative as it put a Breckland presence in all towns and provided value to the public. He was pleased that the Housing Team had a committed slot in the Attleborough Centre and hoped that this would be extended to all towns.

In response to a question about whether the Police were going to have some involvement, Members were informed that the Police had decided that they could make great savings in-house before contemplating a shared service. There were no further moves as yet.

With regard to satisfaction levels, the Customer Service Manager stated that satisfactions levels for these centres were at 98%.

The Chief Executive supported the aforementioned comments and

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mentioned that these services would fit in with the Total Place Agenda. This Agenda was a programme to test new approaches to efficient use of resources and service improvement in local areas which Breckland Council was taking forward as a pilot through the Regional Improvement Partnership.

In response to a question about how and if the Customer Service Centre were publicised, Members were informed that various forms were used including advertising the service in Breckland Voice, through Parish magazines and pamphlets, in libraries and also on the back of all letters that are sent out through the Contact Centre. Posters had also been created.

**Monica Coffey**

The report was noted.

**15/10 MATCH FUNDING GRANT PANEL REPORT - ROUND 3 (AGENDA ITEM 8)**

The Director of Community Services presented the report which summarised the funding recommendations that had been made by the Grant Panel for Funding (Round 3) which had been held on 18 December 2009.

Garboldisham Cricket Club was growing in membership and popularity but with the existing facilities the club was limited to playing only one game of cricket at a time. This funding would enable the club to double the size of its pavilion and provide increased changing facilities; therefore, allowing more junior games to take place and an opportunity to develop women's and girls cricket. The project had full support from the local community.

Weeting Parish Council had requested £11,700 of Capital Match Funding to provide new play facilities in the village for under 12s. The project had full support from the local community including the local Ward Member.

The Butterfly Conservation Trust had requested a grant of £15,064 towards the restoration of heathland habitat and to recruit and train local volunteers as 'Champions' to help conserve and promote interest in the area's unique wildlife. However, as the project provided limited evidence of community need and with concerns about sustainability, Members were being asked to reject the Match Funding application.

The Executive Member for the Communities & Benefits Portfolio was pleased to recommend both the Garboldisham Cricket Club and the Weeting Playland applications to Cabinet for approval.

The Vice-Chairman was dismayed that the Council felt unable to support the Butterfly Conservation Trust and asked how the scores had been derived. He further asked if the applicant could re-apply following an unsuccessful application. In response, Members were informed that the criterion for Match Funding applications was under review. As far as the latter question was concerned, officers would work with unsuccessful applicants and assist them in making a stronger proposal.

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Referring to Bully of OZ, one of the grants already awarded to Scarning Primary School under the Activity and Gifted & Talented Grant schemes, a Member asked if this type of activity should be the direct responsibility of the local education department. Members were informed that this particular grant took children out of school to pre-school establishments.

**Options**

1. To approve individual match funding applications for the full amount requested.
2. To award individual match funding applications at a lesser amount.
3. To reject individual match funding applications.

**Reasons**

To support Garboldisham Cricket Club and Weeting Playland Match Funding applications for the following reasons:

1. Both met Council priorities.
2. Creates positive activities for young people in the district.
3. Each project has shown strong and clear evidence of community need.

To reject Norfolk Brecks Heathland Restoration for the following reasons:

1. Match Funding has competitive rounds with limited resources.
2. The project provided limited evidence of community need.

**Garboldisham Cricket Club**

**RESOLVED** that the Capital Match Funding application of £20,000 to contribute towards the provision of an extension to the existing cricket club pavilion be approved, subject to:

- 1) a maximum sum of £20,000 or 19% of the cost of the project whichever is the lower;
- 2) confirmation of the total cost of the project; and
- 3) the balance of all other funding being confirmed.

**Weeting Playland**

**RESOLVED** that the Capital Match Funding application of £11,700 to provide new play facilities in the village for the under 12s as detailed in the report be approved, subject to:

- 1) a maximum of £11,700 or 29% of the cost of the project whichever is the lower;
- 2) confirmation of the total cost of the project; and

**Catherine  
Lang**

**Action By**

3) the balance of all other funding being confirmed.

**Norfolk Brecks Heathland Restoration Project**

**RESOLVED** that the Match Funding application of £15,064 towards the restoration of heathland habitat be refused.

**16/10 WAYLAND COMMUNITY RADIO: ALLOCATION OF BRECKLAND COUNCIL'S AREA BASED GRANT (AGENDA ITEM 9)**

The Director of Community Services presented the report that proposed the release of £24,000 to Wayland Community Radio from Breckland Council's Area Based Grant settlement for 2008-11.

Wayland Community Radio was a high profile community project that was getting national recognition for the quality of its community broadcasting. The radio station worked proactively with young people and had programmes and initiatives that were particularly targeted at the over 65s and migrant communities.

The project was supported by a team of volunteers that each committed up to 10 hours per week to manage and operate the radio station.

The funding, if approved, would provide important financial support and would demonstrate the Authority's commitment to delivering community cohesion and addressing the poor score on National Indicator 1 (percentage of people who believed people from different backgrounds got on well together in their local area).

The Executive Member for the Communities and Benefits Portfolio reminded Members that 30 young people to date had been taught the necessary skills around broadcasting. A number of Breckland Officers had already been interviewed on the station and Richard Wills, Breckland Council's Pride Coordinator, had a weekly slot.

The Executive Member for the Communications and Corporate Services Portfolio wholeheartedly supported the recommendation as it was another important method of communication for the Council.

In response to a question about how many foreign languages were catered for at the station, Members were informed that two foreign language shows were held once a week and were mostly for the Portuguese and Polish communities. These particular broadcasts were basically about pointing them in the right direction for services.

The Vice-Chairman said that the Council needed to ensure that whilst the differences in migrant communities were recognised it was still important to have integration.

The Chief Executive agreed with the aforementioned point of view and advised that the Audit Commission had stated that this type of work should be tested to ensure that such integration was indeed happening. This method of communication by the radio station would provide a bridge

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and a stepping stone towards community cohesion.

**Options**

To approve or not approve a one-off grant of £24,000 to Wayland Community Radio funded from Breckland Council's Area Based Grant settlement for 2008-11.

**Reasons**

Wayland Community Radio was an established community project that provided an important service to isolated rural communities in Watton and the surrounding areas. It provided a service for all communities but had programmes and initiatives that were particularly targeted at young people, over 65s and migrant communities (foreign language speakers). The approval of grant funding for Wayland Community Radio (from Breckland Council's Area Based Grant allocation 2008-2011) would provide important financial support for a local community project and would demonstrate the Authority's commitment to delivering community cohesion and addressing the poor score on National Indicator 1 (percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area).

**RESOLVED** that a one-off grant of £24,000 to Wayland Community Radio funded from Breckland Council's Area Based Grant settlement for 2008-11 be approved.

**Robert Walker**

**17/10 CONSTITUTION UPDATE (AGENDA ITEM 10)**

The Consultant Solicitor presented the report which recommended amendments to the Council's Constitution as contained in Appendix A of the report.

The proposed amendments were explained (see paragraph 3.2 of the report).

The Vice-Chairman asked for the meaning of paragraph D1.22(b) of the Constitution on page 39 of the report which referred to the power of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission (O&SC) – "to refer its function to review or scrutinise the decision to full Council". He also referred to the suggested corrections – "his/her" at paragraph C4.6 which had not been incorporated further down the page on page 39 of the report under E1 and asked that this be corrected. In response to the first question, Members were informed that it simply meant that the O&SC had the power to pass a decision to full Council to scrutinise; as far as the latter was concerned, the wording would be amended.

**Options**

To agree or not agree to the update, or parts of it.

**Reasons**

The recommendation contained in the report was commended to Members to ensure the Council's constitution was up-to-date, lawful and

promoted the effective and efficient discharge of the authority's functions.

**Recommend** to Council that the amendments to the Constitution contained in Appendix A of the Cabinet report be adopted subject to paragraph E1 being amended to replace the terms "his" and "him" with "his/her".

**18/10 PROCUREMENT OF HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES FOR JOHN ROOM HOUSE, THETFORD (AGENDA ITEM 11)**

The Assistant Director for Environmental Health & Housing presented the report.

Cabinet was being asked to note that an assessment process was taking place for the appointment of a contractor for the housing management of John Room House, the Council's homeless persons' hostel, alongside a tendering process for housing support services led by Norfolk County Council Supporting People.

A further report containing the successful tenderer would be presented to the next Cabinet meeting.

The Vice-Chairman paid credit to all the Officers and Members involved in this project, who several years ago, had made housing their first priority.

**Options**

To accept the information about the progress of the assessment.

**Reasons**

To accept the information about the progress of the assessment.

**RESOLVED** that the assessment process for housing management and housing support services for John Room House be noted and accepted.

**19/10 REQUEST FOR THE RELEASE OF RESTRICTIVE COVENANT(S) AT THE OAKLANDS, SWAFFHAM (AGENDA ITEM 12)**

The Executive Member for the Economic and Commercial Services Portfolio presented the report.

Cabinet's approval was sought to release the restrictive covenants affecting the garage forecourt at The Oaklands in Swaffham at nil consideration, to enable the redevelopment of the site to accommodate four two bed dwellings with associated parking. Peddars Way Housing Association had advised that, if approved, the proceeds of the sales would be recycled in the development of social housing and associated facilities within the Breckland district.

The Executive Member for the Planning, Health & Housing Portfolio felt that the Council's contribution towards this project should have been highlighted.

**Action By**

**John  
Chinnery,  
Stephen  
McGrath**

**John  
Walker**

**Action By**

The Chairman supported the covenant's release as it reinforced the fact that the Council was bringing forward more affordable housing at every opportunity.

The recommendations at paragraph 2.1 of the report were explained.

**Option 1**

To release the restrictive covenant on the Peddars Way Housing Association's title (transfer dated 30 March 1993) at nil consideration, in favour of Breckland District Council stating that "subject to Clause 7, in respect of any part of the Property described in Parts III, IV, V and VI of Schedule A (garages, garage forecourts, off street parking areas and amenity areas) not to develop or redevelop that part of the Property and not to permit the same to be used as other than garages, parking areas, amenity areas, respectively, serving residential dwellings".

To agree that the capital receipts of developing the land at The Oaklands in Swaffham be recycled in development of social housing or associated facilities within the Breckland District.

**Option 2**

To release the restrictive covenant on the Peddars Way Housing Association's title (transfer dated March 1993) at or above the District Valuer's valuation, in favour of Breckland District Council stating that "subject to Clause 7, in respect of any part of the Property described in Parts III, IV, V and VI of Schedule A (garages, garage forecourts, off street parking areas and amenity areas) not to develop or redevelop that part of the Property and not to permit the same to be used as other than garages, parking areas, amenity areas, respectively, serving residential dwellings".

**Option 3**

Not to release the covenant(s).

**Reasons**

The redevelopment of this garage forecourt will support the housing need in the town of Swaffham.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the covenant(s) affecting the garage forecourt (as shown red on the plan attached to the report) at The Oaklands in Swaffham be released, at nil consideration; and
- 2) the capital receipt of developing the land at The Oaklands in Swaffham be recycled in development of social housing or associated facilities within the Breckland District be agreed.

**Zoe Footer**

**Action By**

**20/10 DEFRA FUNDING - LAND AT RUTHERFORD WAY, THETFORD  
(AGENDA ITEM 13)**

The Executive Member for the Economic & Commercial Services Portfolio presented the report which sought Cabinet's approval to apply for DEFRA funding of £53,445.00 through the Contaminated Land Capital Grants Programme. If successful, it would enable the Property Services Manager, in conjunction with the Contaminated Land Officers, to spend the DEFRA grant money on additional site investigation on land at the former landfill site at Rutherford Way, Thetford.

The Principal Environmental Health Officer was available to provide Members with any further background information if required.

**Option 1**

Apply for DEFRA funds.

**Option 2**

Request that the Council pay in full for the site investigations.

**Option 3**

Do nothing.

**Reasons**

DEFRA funding would reduce or remove the financial burden on the Council and enable the Property Services Manager/Contaminated Land Officer to continue with investigations through Part 2A and to start investigations on a further site designated as 'high risk'.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the request to apply for the amount of £53,445.00 of DEFRA funding be approved; and
- 2) the Property Services Manager be permitted access to any resulting grant funding to enable the Contaminated Land Officers to carry out their duties in accordance with Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

**Kay  
Wilcox,  
Anthony  
Wright**

**21/10 GOVERNANCE AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT -  
QUARTER 3 (AGENDA ITEM 14)**

The Performance Manager presented the Governance and Performance Report for Quarter 3.

The report had been structured into four themed sections:

- Managing finances
- Managing performance

**Action By**

- Governing the Council; and
- Managing resources

Executive summaries for each of these four themes were as follows:

**Managing finances**

The table at the bottom of page 69 of the report for the end of Quarter 3 reflected an overall overspend of £26,375 for the Council (this was due to the adjustment to the budget figure of 176k with the removal of ARP forecasted under-spend). The following page of the report detailed how a percentage of this under-spend would be returned to the budget (circa 116k).

Income shown on page 70 of the document showed two shortfall areas; these were consistent with figures presented previously in this report.

In terms of Treasury Management on page 71, both measures, of actual income and percentage interest remained better than targeted.

The Capital Programme report on page 72 requested approval of a virement £54,130.

Additional virements were requested for approval on page 73 of the report, these figures reflected the latest forecasts of spend and income and ensured that reported budget performance remained updated.

**Managing performance**

The managing performance section, starting on page 74, tracked the Council's performance. All variances to planned targets and milestones had been covered in more detail through the report. Additional areas of delivery were also reflected in the Managing Performance section.

In terms of complaints, the Council had seen another fall during Quarter 3 with 8 received compared to 20 the previous quarter. This had been partly due to the way compliments were now measured and categorised; however, additional information on 'informal' or stage 1 complaints was now being collected on the Lagan system which should be ready for inclusion in the Quarter 4 report.

Page 97 of the report considered the performance of the Council's contracts and began with Serco. Serco had seen a continued fall in the number of complaints received with 91 received in Quarter 3 in comparison to 125 received during Quarter 2.

Satisfaction had risen for waste collection and fallen marginally for streets and also grounds maintenance.

In terms of the PFI leisure centres, Thetford had seen a fall in satisfaction levels - now at 75%, this had been mainly due to the condition of the changing rooms. This had been rectified with penalty charges being incurred by Parkwood.

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Dereham had seen another rise in satisfaction with levels being up at 91%.

Capita performance remained high, NI 157c (Major Applications) fell below target of 66% but this had been due to historical applications already in the system.

The Anglia Revenues Partnership remained challenged by increased demand due to the economic climate although performance remained high. Time taken to process housing benefit and council tax benefit had now improved to be better than targeted which was a turnaround on the last Quarter's performance.

**Governing the Council**

The Council's risks were managed through the Audit Committee and these had been highlighted on page 107 onwards. The report also detailed the scores resulting from the recent inspection by the Audit Commission; full reports had been appended at the end of the report.

**Managing resources**

Finally, in terms of how the Council managed its resources, an underspend of £133,897 was forecast for the year end position and that was against the 94.1% level.

The Council had continued to see lower than targeted absence levels with 5.20 days per employee being recorded against a target of 5.63. This was significantly lower than at the same point for the previous two years. Additionally, recent informal benchmarking activity showed the Council was performing significantly better against the majority of councils in its CIPFA benchmarking group.

At the end of report recent statistics relating to crime, health and the economy were displayed as well as the Council's Annual Audit and Inspection Letter and Organisational Assessment.

The Performance Manager was happy to take Members through these matters or simply answer any questions.

The Executive Member for the Environmental Well-Being and Customer Contact Portfolio thanked all the staff who had assisted with the Clean & Green project by carrying out a litter pick-up. In one hour, over 15 bags of rubbish were collected. She felt that more should be done to encourage the public to dispose of their litter sensibly.

The Vice-Chairman was pleased with the fall in the number of complaints as it showed that services had improved. He asked about the satisfaction results. Members were informed that the satisfactions levels from the Place Survey placed the Council 66<sup>th</sup> out of 201 District Councils and had been placed in the top quartile for residents' views of the council delivering value for money.

The Vice-Chairman was, however, disappointed that the Council's

**Action By**

performance had been marked down to two out of four, even though extremely good people sat on the Council's Audit Committee which he held in high regard. He understood that the Executive Board was soon to meet with the Audit Commission to discuss these concerns and to hopefully build some bridges. He asked where the Council had been positioned the last time the Audit Commission had presented its information on performance. Members were informed that when the Commission had last used the basket of indicators, Breckland Council was the 13<sup>th</sup> most improved Council over the previous three years and that it had 45% of its Performance Indicators in the Top Quartile; which was 10% higher than the average district.

The Vice-Chairman had also been very disappointed that there had been no mention of the fact that Breckland Council charged the lowest District Council Tax in the Country and he valued the forthcoming meeting with the Audit Commission to talk these matters through.

Members felt that the 0% Council Tax increase should have been recognised in a better way.

The Audit Commission's fees were highlighted and it was asked why they were so high this time in comparison to last year. Members were informed that it was for the additional work that had progressed through the process.

The Executive Member for the Communities and Benefits Portfolio agreed with all the aforementioned points raised by the Vice-Chairman and asked what the Commission had said about managing performance. In response, the Performance Manager advised that the Council was clear about the levels of performance required and that a careful check on progress was maintained throughout the year to ensure that most targets were met.

The Leader of the Council asked what comments the Audit Commission had made about our Use of Resources assessment. Members were advised that the Commission had stated that overall the quality of services was better than in other councils without costing more. An unqualified conclusion stating the Council had proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources was given and that the council maintained sound financial health and delivered value for money supported by an effective efficiency programme.

The Executive Member for the Planning, Health and Housing Portfolio asked how many Cabinet Members had met with the Audit Commission. He further asked if an agreement had been reached for this forthcoming meeting and whether it would be in public. It was noted that the Audit Commission had met with Officers as well as a number of non-Executive Members and the Audit Commission had agreed to the meeting. Whether it should be held in public or not would have to be checked. The Vice-Chairman was aware and had been surprised that the Audit Commission had not spoken to Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission or with the Audit Committee Chairman whose job it was to hold the Executive to account.

**Action By**

Options

See report.

Reasons

See report.

**Recommend** to Council that:

- 1) the variations to the Capital programme as shown on page 7 of the Governance and Performance report be approved;
- 2) the new 2009/10 budget of £6,899,569 be agreed;
- 3) the virements and supplementary virements as listed on page 8 of the Governance and Performance report be approved.

**Stephen  
James**

**22/10 DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA DEVELOPMENT (AGENDA ITEM 15)**

The Marketing and Communications Manager presented the report.

He pointed out that Dominic Chessum, the new Marketing and Communications Officer, and the report author had already become a very valuable member of the Team.

Members were familiar with the report as it had been presented to a previous Executive Board meeting. Since that meeting, Members were informed that Twitter had attracted a further 20 million members; therefore, it was important for Breckland Council to embrace such social media.

The movement of budget totalling £36,500 from ICT to Communications formed part of the recommendations and would allow the Council to develop its website and would also allow a new governance structure to be developed.

The investment represented value for money as it could result in more enquiries being dealt with online rather than through the Contact Centre. It also demonstrated wider communication with residents and offered opportunities for more people across wider demographic groups to influence decisions and engage with the Council.

The Executive Member for the Communications and Corporate Services Portfolio drew Members' attention to paragraph 3.8.3 of the report. He felt that the Council had a duty to the public to make these improvements as the current website was very outdated. He hoped that the recommendations would be supported.

In response to a question, it was noted that there would be training sessions set up for Members on how to use the new website. The Marketing & Communications Manager asked if Dominic Chessum would be allowed to present the report to full Council so that all Members were

**Annalisa  
Graziano**

**Action By**

aware that training sessions would be forthcoming.

The Vice-Chairman thanked the Communications Team and ICT for all their hard work. He felt that this had been a very positive report and looked forward to the exciting and interesting times ahead. He did point out, however, that there were many people in Breckland, particularly the older generation, that still preferred something to read such as Breckland Voice (even though this publication needed to be updated). He asked if there would be any need to increase staffing levels in the Marketing & Communications Team. Members were informed that there was no additional scope for extra staff at this stage.

**Option 1**

1. The council agrees to the full scale redevelopment of the website and the development and implementation a social media strategy.
2. The council adopts both working statements set out above.
3. The social media strategy will include the development of a forum to be hosted on the council website, the council developing a presence on various social media sites and introducing blogs and other forms of social media into its communications strategy. It will also include the development of policies on staff usage which will promote the idea of key staff using social media as part of their job.
4. A new governance structure is put in place to ensure the website is kept current and any issue arising from social media are dealt with quickly.
5. The continuous maintenance of their section of the website is made part of the monthly governance for each department / service area.
6. A budget of £25,000 is reallocated from the £150,000 which currently lies within ICT to redevelop of the website.
7. A budget of £4,500 reallocated from the £150,000 which currently lies within ICT to enable the website to be Browsealoud enabled for three years.
8. A budget of £7,000 is reallocated from the £150,000 which currently lies within ICT to enable the purchase of a year long subscription to a social media monitoring tool. Further years will be funded from the Communications budget.

**Option 2**

9. The council agrees to a full scale redevelopment of the website but chooses not to pursue the development of a social media strategy.
10. The council adopts the working statement for the website.
11. A new governance structure is put in place to ensure the website is kept current and any issue arising from social media are dealt with quickly.
12. The continuous maintenance of their section of the website is

**Action By**

made part of the monthly governance form.

13. A budget of £25,000 from a source yet to be identified is allocated to the redevelopment of the website.
14. Plans for the creation of a forum on the council website are abandoned.

**Option 3**

1. The council chooses to do nothing.
2. Plans for the redevelopment of the website, the development and implementation of a social media strategy, the creation of a forum on the council are abandoned.

**Reasons**

The website was by far the cheapest form of interaction with customers open to the council and its potential should be fully exploited to maximise the benefit and cost savings it offers. In order to do this a new website needs to be developed which was more user friendly and was trusted by customers as a way of interacting with the Council. To encourage greater usage and trust in the site a new governance structure must be set up to ensure it was kept up to date. This governance structure and its desired outcome of ensuring the website was kept up to date and not left disappointing users, must be backed up by incorporation into each departments; monthly governance form corporate targets to ensure the default system of operation was a success and not a failure. Utilising products such as Browsealound would ensure the greatest number of people possible were able to use the website as a first point of contact with the Council.

Social media was an increasingly important aspect of modern communications and a tool which almost all forward thinking organisations were now looking to harness. Conversations regarding the Council and its services would inevitably go on in the social media sphere regardless of whether the Council chose to inhabit it or not. However, if the Council chose not to develop a social media strategy it would be unable to influence those conversations in any way and was likely to be unaware of most of them. Social media also provided an opportunity to interact with individuals, be they citizens, MPs, policy makers or others of influence, in a direct manner which no other medium allowed for. It allowed the Council to deliver key messages direct to key audiences as never before. The likelihood was that the use of social media would only grow in the coming years as more people take up its use and its application expands and importance grows. If Breckland Council was to be proactive in harnessing the power of social media then a social media monitoring tool was invaluable in ensuring that its launch and continuing use of social media was a success.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the allocation of £36,500 from within the existing ICT budget for the creation of a new council website and the development and implementation of a social media strategy and all the necessary programmes and consultants for both be approved;

**Dominic  
Chessum**

**Action By**

- 2) the development of a new governance structure and adding the updating of the website to the monthly governance form for each department be agreed.

**23/10 REFERENCE FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION (AGENDA ITEM 16)**

See recommendations below.

**24/10 COMMUNITY FORA (AGENDA ITEM 16A)**

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission had received a very comprehensive report from the Task & Finish Group set up to examine the existing Community Fora and associated Task Forces within Breckland and inform their future roll out across the District.

The Executive Member for the Planning, Health & Housing Portfolio felt that what was being proposed would not be appropriate for the future and was a little premature given the impending changes required through the Total Place agenda.

The Vice-Chairman agreed with the aforementioned comment. The Council had already gone through considerable change and he felt that this Task Force model should be held back for the foreseeable future.

The Chairman believed that Members should be given the opportunity, if they so chose, to set a Task Force up for the remaining market towns. He proposed that it should be at the discretion of the appropriate Ward Members.

**Options**

- 1) To approve the recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Commission.
- 2) Not to approve the recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Commission.

**Reasons**

See report.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the existing Task Force model be rolled out to the three remaining market towns at the discretion of the appropriate Ward Members;
- 2) it be at the discretion of the Task Force or District Council as to whether to include representatives of parish councils in their respective hinterlands on their Community Forum;
- 3) Breckland-led Community Fora goes hand-in-hand primarily with the Task Force; if this was not possible, then a Town Council-led

**Stephen  
McGrath,  
Robert  
Walker**

**Action By**

Community Forum be instigated instead;

- 4) Breckland Council actively liaise with Norfolk Constabulary to streamline the Groups and Fora utilised for community engagement in order to clarify roles and avoid duplication of effort and resources;
- 5) a wider range of public partner agencies be invited to Breckland's Town and Parish Council Forum event e.g. Police, PCT, Fire Service etc;
- 6) the Task Force seeks to be member-led;
- 7) a representative from the relevant area partnership be added to the list of partner agencies on the Task Force; and
- 8) existing arrangements relating to voting and budgets be retained as part of the model.

**25/10 DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF GUIDELINES (AGENDA ITEM 16B)**

The Overview & Scrutiny Commission had considered a detailed report from the Task & Finish Group that had been set up to review the guidelines used to determine the granting of discretionary rate relief to organisations.

The Vice-Chairman stated that Councillor Goreham had discussed the report with him and had been content with the recommendations on the proviso that the discretionary rate relief cases be periodically reviewed.

**Options**

- 1) To approve the recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Commission.
- 2) Not to approve the recommendations from the Overview & Scrutiny Commission.

**Reasons**

See report.

**RESOLVED** that:

- a) the following changes be incorporated into the guidelines for determining the granting of discretionary rate relief:
  - 1) to give advice to appropriate organisations to seek Community Amateur Sports Club or charitable status;
  - 2) the rate relief cap be set at £2,000;
  - 3) the current practice of offering only 50% rate relief to clubs with bars be reaffirmed;

**Mark  
Finch, Rod  
Urquhart**

**Action By**

- 4) any national charity to receive the 80% mandatory relief only;
  - 5) the recommendation of the local Member be sought on 'exceptional cases' be reviewed by the Executive Member;
  - 6) the importance of formal consultation with the local Member in all cases be reaffirmed;
  - 7) discretionary rate relief cases be reviewed annually and the principles of the policy every three years; and
- b) any money saved from the above proposed changes be reinvested into economic regeneration.

**26/10 INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ACCREDITATION (AGENDA ITEM 16C)**

The Overview & Scrutiny Commission had considered a report outlining the Council's progress towards accreditation to the Investors in People standard.

The Member Services Manager read out the recommendations from the Local Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 24 February 2010.

Councillor John Labouchere was in attendance for this item and wholeheartedly supported the recommendations. He was the only Member that had attended all the IIP meetings and he urged other Members to become more involved.

The Chairman pointed out that all Members were formally part of the process through the Member Development Programme but agreed that appropriate membership for these IIP meetings should be sought.

**Options**

- 1) To approve the recommendation from the Overview & Scrutiny Commission.
- 2) Not to approve the recommendation from the Overview & Scrutiny Commission.

**Reasons**

See report.

**RESOLVED** that Breckland Council be put forward for Investors in People accreditation in March 2010 and the process be taken on to Phase Two.

**27/10 BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE: 5 JANUARY 2010 (AGENDA ITEM 17)**

Members were informed that the Working Group, facilitated by Adam Colby, the Council's Senior Business Improvement Officer had been held the previous day.

**Lucy  
Powles**

**Action By**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Business Improvement Sub-Committee meeting held on 5 January 2010 be adopted.

**28/10 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 18)**

The next meeting of the Cabinet would be held on Tuesday, 13 April 2010 at 9.30am in the Norfolk Room, Elizabeth House, Dereham.

The meeting closed at 11.00 am

CHAIRMAN