

**BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

**At a Meeting of the**

**COUNCIL**

**Held on Thursday, 2 August 2007 at 10.30 am in  
The Anglia Room, Committee Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

**PRESENT**

Mr P.S. Francis (Chairman)	Mr R. Kemp
Mr S. Askew	Mr M.A. Kiddle-Morris
Mr G.P. Balaam	Mr R.G. Kybird
Mrs J. Ball	Mr J.P. Labouchere (Vice-Chairman)
Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mr T.J. Lamb
Mr W.P. Borrett	Mr K. Martin
Councillor Claire Bowes	Mrs S.M. Matthews
Mr A.J. Byrne	Mrs K. Millbank
Mrs M.P. Chapman-Allen	Mr I.A.C. Monson
Mr R.P. Childerhouse	Mrs L.H. Monument
Mr P.D. Claussen	Mr D.G. Mortimer
Mr J.P. Cowen	Mr J.W. Nunn
Mr R.W. Duffield	Mrs P. Quadling
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mr J.D. Rogers
Lady Fisher	Mr B. Rose
Mr K.S. Gilbert	Mr F.J. Sharpe
Mr R.F. Goreham	Mr I. Sherwood
Mrs T. Hewett	Mr W.H.C. Smith
Mr P.J. Hewett	Mr A.C. Stasiak
Mrs S.R. Howard-Alpe	Mrs A.L. Steward
Mrs D.K.R. Irving	Mr N.C. Wilkin
Mr A.P. Joel	Mr D.R. Williams J.P.
Mr C.R. Jordan	

**In Attendance**

Michael Horn	- Head of Legal Services
Trevor Holden	- Chief Executive
Steve Knights	- Revenues Strategic Manager & Acting Operations Manager (Community/Environment)
Ray Johnson	- Acting Operations Manager (Commercial Services)
Keith Stevens	- Acting Business Transformation Director
Ian Vargeson	- Democratic Services Manager
Julie Britton	- Committee Services Officer

**83/07 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**84/07 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Chapman-Allen, Mr M Fanthorpe, Elizabeth Gould, Mr J Gretton, Mr M Griffin, Mr D Myers, Mr M Spencer, Mrs P Spencer and Mrs L Turner.

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**85/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (AGENDA ITEM 3)**

The following declarations were made:

Messrs W Smith and P Claussen declared a personal interest in Cabinet Minute No. 79/07 of the meeting held on 18 June 2007 as non-executive directors of the ARP. Mr Smith and Mr Claussen remained in the room whilst this item was being discussed.

Mr A Stasiak declared a prejudicial interest in Development Control Committee Minute No. 120/07(h) of the meeting held on 23 July 2007 as it was his own application.

Mr P Cowen declared a personal interest in Cabinet Minute No. 85/07 of the meeting held on 17 July 2007 the nature of which related to his connection with providing architectural services.

Lady K Fisher declared a personal interest in the following items:

- Council Minute No. 78/07(b)(ii) (Cabinet Minute No. 68/07 of the meeting held on 15 June 2007) the nature of which related to the ownership of land in the Thetford area;
- Cabinet Minute No. 95/07 of the meeting held on 17 July 2007 by virtue of her connection with agricultural businesses; and
- Council Agenda item 7(a) for the reason that her children attended Thetford Grammar School.

Mr T Lamb declared a personal interest in Council Agenda item 7(a) for the reason that he was a governor of Thetford Grammar School.

Mr R Kybird declared a personal interest in the following items:

- Council Agenda item 7(a) as an ex-officio member of Thetford Grammar School; and
- Overview and Scrutiny Commission Minute No. 74/07 of the meeting held on 5 July 2007 by virtue of him being Mayor of Thetford Town Council which was an applicant for the Lottery bid.

Mr S Askew, Mr J W Nunn and Mrs A Steward declared a personal interest in Minute No. 95/07 of the Cabinet meeting held on 17 July 2007 the nature of which related to their connection with agricultural businesses.

Mr P Francis and Mrs S Howard-Alpe declared a personal interest in Development Control Committee Minute No. 120/07(h) of the meeting held on 23 July 2007. The nature of their interest related to them being political colleagues of the applicant.

Mr J Rogers declared a personal interest in Minute No. 120/07(i) of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 23 July 2007 for the reason that he knew the applicant.

**86/07 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 4)**

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The following announcements were made:

- The Chairman introduced the recently appointed Chief Executive Mr Trevor Holden. The Members joined the Chairman in welcoming Mr Holden to Breckland and to his first full Council meeting. A letter had been received from Mr Keith Davis, the former interim Chief Executive wishing the Council continued success in the future; particularly with regard to the challenging year ahead with the implementation of the Government's recent White Paper. Members extended their thanks to Mr Davis whose undivided support and help during his time with Breckland Council had been greatly appreciated.
- A special welcome was extended to members of the Thetford Youth Council who had been invited to attend the meeting. The Chairman was pleased to announce that Breckland Council had recently agreed to fund and support young people in Breckland via the Strategic Framework at its Cabinet meeting held on 17 July 2007. The Youth Council had been awarded £500 from Breckland to improve their club and fund new equipment.
- Members were informed that Mr Tim Leader had been appointed as the Council's new Deputy Chief Executive. Mr Leader had a wealth of experience in local government, working as a barrister and senior manager in South Holland Council in Lincolnshire and before that at King's Lynn. Mr Leader would commence his employment once he had served his three months notice.
- Breckland's Planning Department had been awarded more than £250,000 from Government Funds for maintaining their performance against high national standards. Grants were only paid if linked to continued high levels of performance. The sum of £251,437 had been the highest overall grant paid to a Norfolk Authority. The funding was from the Government's Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) and was provided to enhance local planning services. Congratulations were extended to the Council's Planning Team.
- The Council's Economic Development Team had won The Academy for Sustainable Communities (ASC) 'Creating the Future Award for rural communities'. Breckland had shown how small rural communities could be helped and supported by committed and inspiring leadership and by engaging local communities through genuine partnerships. The Council extended their praise to the Economic Development Team.
- A follow up report from Ipsos MORI had demonstrated that Breckland Council had bucked the trend of falling satisfaction with an increase of 11% and had been listed

as 8<sup>th</sup> out of 370 in the list of 'Councils improving Most over Time'. Congratulations were conveyed to the Communications Team.

- The Chairman thanked all those who had attended his Reception on 27 July 2007. He also extended his thanks to Sue Allen, secretary to the Chairman, for her assistance in the necessary arrangements. He was pleased to announce that £750 had been raised from the raffle in aid of the Children's Hospice in Quidenham and he thanked everyone for their generosity.

A list of engagements attended by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman was tabled, for the period 26 June to 1 August 2007, which included:

<u>Chairman</u>		
<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Host</u>
27 June	Tea	President of Royal Norfolk Show, Sir Nicholas Bacon Bt
27 June	Reception	Chairman of Norfolk County Council, Mr Michael Carttiss, and Station Manager BBC Radio Norfolk, Mr David Clayton
20 June	Reception and Civic Performance of Seaside Special 2007	Chairman of Norfolk County Council, Councillors Mrs Barbara McGoun
4 July	Fourth of July Spectacular	RAF Mildenhall
5 July	At home	The High Sheriff of Norfolk and The Countess of Romney
8 July	Annual Civic Service	His Worship the Mayor and Madam Mayoress of Great Yarmouth, Councillor and Mrs Paul Garrod
10 July	Royal Garden Party	
12 July	Summer Evening	NSPCC, West Norfolk, Kings Lynn & Wisbech
19 July	Annual General Meeting	Homestart Breckland
22 July	Dereham Civic Service	Mayor of Dereham, Councillor John Gretton
22 July	Civic Service	The Mayor of Watton, Councillor Keith Gilbert
27 July	Breckland Council Chairman Reception	

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29 July	Charity Event with the FA Cup <b><u>Vice-Chairman</u></b>	
14 July	Lord Mayor's Celebrations - Reception	Lord Mayor of Norwich, Councillor Roy Blower, and Sheriff, Nick Williams

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**87/07 COMMITTEE MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 5)**

**(a) Cabinet**

**(i) Cabinet: 18 June 2007**

Members were reminded that the recommendation at Cabinet Minute No. 79/07 had been accepted by Council on 26 June 2007.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18 June 2007 be adopted.

**(ii) Cabinet: 17 July 2007**

**a) Dereham Town Centre Development (Phase 2) –  
Compulsory Purchase Matter (Minute No. 85/07)**

A Member queried the need for the Council to be involved if it had no financial interest in the redevelopment. He asked if the Council had ever used its statutory powers to acquire land other than for itself in the past. The Member was advised that the Council had not applied this practice for the past 15 years; however, a piece of legislative practice had been included so that both parties would be treated fairly. An independent arbitrator would be used to ensure that a fair price was paid for the said land. The Order would complete the re-development and thus contribute to the commercial growth of the town.

**b) Match Funding Progress Report as at 31 March  
2007 (Minute No. 87/07)**

The Executive Member for the Cabinet Office hoped that the Council would continue to support this initiative. He informed Members that the match funding scheme had been a great success. For every £1 of Breckland revenue match funding a further £14 had been invested and for every £1 of Breckland capital match funding a further £15 had been invested in the Breckland and Norfolk area. The total amount of Breckland revenue funding together with the total capital value of Breckland's capital

projects were highlighted.

c) Social Inclusion Strategy (Minute No. 88/07)

The Executive Member for the Cabinet Office asked Members to endorse the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Social Inclusion Strategy for Breckland. He recognised that there was still much to be done to address social exclusion in Breckland, and that LSP partners needed to work together to achieve this. Social exclusion affects vulnerable deprived and isolated people across the District. The consultation had highlighted families at risk such as those suffering with mental health domestic violence or relationship problems. The strategy would build on Breckland's successful record of supporting local communities. Congratulations were conveyed to the Team for all their hard work on this matter.

**RESOLVED** that the LSP Social Inclusion Strategy for Breckland be endorsed.

d) Young People in Breckland – Strategic Framework (Minute No. 91/07)

The Democratic Services Manager advised that Cabinet had recommended that Councillor D Irving be appointed Young People Champion.

**RESOLVED** that

- (1) a District Forum be developed that engages Young People in the work of the District Council;
- (2) Mrs D Irving be appointed the lead elected member as Young People Champion; and
- (3) a revised planning formula through the Local Development Framework (LDF) be considered to ensure that the new housing development contributed appropriately to good quality open space and play provision.

e) Transfer of Public Conveniences to Town Councils (Minute No. 94/07)

The Democratic Services Manager pointed out that part (1) of the resolution should read "the freehold of the toilet blocks listed in clause 4.4 of the report be transferred to the relevant Town Councils, together with the lump sum of £275,000 apart from Thetford who would receive **an additional** £85,000". This amendment would be ratified at the next Cabinet meeting.

A Member had concerns with regard to the deadline

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date that the Town Councils had been given to accept the transfer of the toilets. He stated that the breakdown of costs requested by Watton Town Council had only recently been received, and he asked for the deadline to be extended so that the Town Council had an opportunity to discuss these costings in greater detail. Another Member questioned part (2) of the resolution, which stated that "if the Town Councils did not accept the toilets on the terms set out in option 1 of the report, the toilet block would be closed and boarded up on 1 October 2007"; he felt that this authority should have a more flexible timescale for all the market towns.

In response to a question concerning the play areas (Min No. 93/07), the Leader advised that since the issue of the new White Paper, Town could apply for match funding after transfer. If a Town decided not to take them over, the play areas would then be wound down and revert to open space. As far as the toilets were concerned, the Leader was aware that negotiations with the Town Councils were continuing and the deadline of the 1<sup>st</sup> October would not strictly be adhered to; however, if it was made clear from the negotiations that a Town Council did not want to take on the responsibility, that toilet block would inevitably close and be boarded up by that date. A Member was concerned that a number of towns could end up without any public toilet facilities. Members were reminded that it was not a statutory duty for District Councils to provide public toilets, the White Paper supported all assets, including public toilets and playing fields, being given back to the towns and parishes. Breckland Council had offered £275,000 to each of the Town Councils to take over responsibility for the toilets; however, the funding did not necessitate the toilet block being kept open as the Town Council could use the money to provide cafes etc in the vicinity with funds to open their toilets up to the public. Schemes such as this would eliminate anti social behaviour and would also provide cleaner facilities.

- f) Reference from the Overview and Scrutiny Commission – Watton Horse Fair (Minute No. 96/07 (b))

A Member thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Commission for discussing the issue at such length; however, he felt that the problems which this event attracted were escalating. The horse fair had totally outgrown the site which was adjacent to Wayland Wood (a Site of Special Scientific Interest), that resulted in a loss of visitors as the access to the Wood was closed to visitors during the week of the fair. The Member highlighted the definition of a

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caravan site, in planning terms, and felt that planning permission should be required for holding an event such as this in the future. In the interim, and as there was another horse fair being held in September, he asked for assurance that the event be closely monitored so that greater evidence of breaches of planning and other laws could be collected.

The Chairman asked the Solicitor for his advice on the matter and Members were informed that evidence to date suggested that the use of the land did not require planning permission.

**RESOLVED** that the Ward Representatives for Watton and the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Commission be appointed to meet the organisers of the Watton Horse Fair, and the Police, at the next liaison meeting, to raise the question of whether an alternative location can be found for the Fair and to encourage the organisers to provide better animal welfare, public sanitation and other health welfare facilities.

g) Adoption

**RESOLVED** that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 17 July 2007 be adopted.

(b) Overview and Scrutiny Commission

i) Review of Breckland Council's CCTV System (Minute No. 75/07)

A Member expressed doubts about the usefulness of CCTV systems as, in his opinion, they never provided the necessary evidence when required. He asked if there was any real advantage in the Council continuing to support this review to which other Members disagreed. The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission pointed out that the Member should have either attended the Overview and Scrutiny Commission meeting where a very thorough debate had been held on the matter, or read the paper that had been provided by the Acting Operations Manager for Community Services. Another Member was thankful that the CCTV systems were in place, as without these, the crime and disorder incidents would not have been reduced.

ii) Adoption

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission meeting held on 5 July 2007 be adopted.

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**(c) Development Control Committee**

i) Development Control Committee: 2 July 2007

**RESOLVED** that the confirmed Minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 2 July 2007 be adopted.

ii) Development Control Committee: 23 July 2007

1) Item 16 of the Schedule of Applications – Carbrooke (Minute No. 120/07(i))

A Member was assured that the letters he had requested had been sent to the relevant parties.

2) Adoption

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 23 July 2007 be adopted.

**(d) General Purposes Committee**

i) Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Minute No. 41/07)

A Member urged all Councillors to make contributions to the debate for consideration by the Working Group.

ii) Community Safety – Domestic Violence and Hate Crime Co-ordinator (Minute No. 46/07)

The Chairman of the General Purposes Committee informed Members that he had now received sufficient information from the Safer Communities Manager to enable him to support the required two posts. The matter would be discussed in full at the General Purposes Committee on 8 August 2007.

iii) Adoption

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 4 July 2007 be adopted.

**(e) Appeals Committee**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Appeals Committee meeting held on 11 July 2007 be adopted.

(f) Standards Committee

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 12 July 2007 be adopted.

**88/07 STRATEGIC ALLIANCE (STANDING ITEM) (AGENDA ITEM 6)**

The Business Transformation Director was in attendance and provided Members with a presentation that outlined the different phases that the Council was involved in with the Strategic Alliance.

The Strategic Alliance focused on putting customers first and delivering excellent, affordable services, through:

- Business Transformation – the re-engineering of services to deliver customer-focused efficiencies.
- Platform Building – partnerships with the private and public sectors,
- Trading – selling expertise.

(A copy of the presentation is attached to these Minutes for information).

Members were informed that a report with a recommendation would be presented to the next meeting of the Full Council.

At the end of the presentation questions were invited.

A Member wondered whether the Strategic Alliance could be implemented in part as there were a few services that did not require serious funding. In response, Members were informed that the Transformation Champions had come up with a number of improved suggestions and he would be discussing the best way to move forward on these matters with the Executive Support Member.

In response to a question, the Business Transformation Director assured Members that Phase 1 had incorporated a robust business plan to take forward to Phase 2.

A Member asked whether the Strategic Alliance process had been re-assessed since it was first agreed. The Chief Executive informed the Council that this had been one of the questions that he had first asked on his recent arrival. He had been wholly content with the review that the Council had achieved entering into Phase 2 and he anticipated that Phase 3-Trading- would have the desired outcome.

The Executive Member for Strategic Alliance thanked the Business Transformation Manager for his sterling work. He was pleased that the Council was moving forward into Phase 2. Phase 2 would involve much more detailed negotiations and he assured

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Members that much of the risk element would be shared with the Council's partner Capita.

(a) Nominations for Committee and Other Seats (Agenda item 7)

**RESOLVED** that the following changes be noted:

a) Development Control Committee

Alec Byrne to replace Kate Millbank

b) General Purposes Committee

Shirley Matthews to replace Theresa Hewett

(b) Representatives on Outside Bodies 2007-08: Thetford Grammar School Charity

**RESOLVED** that Derek Mortimer be reappointed as the Breckland Representative.

**89/07 THETFORD YOUTH COUNCIL (ADDITIONAL ITEM)**

At the end of the meeting Tory Hill, the Chairman of Thetford Youth Council, thanked Members for the invitation to attend Full Council. He also thanked Members for accepting the application for the Youth Grant.

Members were reminded that a buffet lunch had been provided for the Youth Council and for Members who were attending the Risk Management Training at 1.00pm.

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The meeting closed at 12.00 pm

CHAIRMAN