

Public Document Pack

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

CABINET

Held on Tuesday, 8 January 2008 at 9.30 am in
Norfolk Room, Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham

PRESENT

Mr J.W. Nunn (Chairman)	Lady Fisher
Mr S. Askew	Mr W.H.C. Smith
Mr P.D. Claussen	Mrs A.L. Steward

Also Present

Mr J.P. Cowen	Mrs D.K.R. Irving
Mr R.F. Goreham	Mr D.S. Myers
Mrs T. Hewett	

In Attendance

Mark Finch	- Chief Accountant
Trevor Holden	- Chief Executive
Ray Johnson	- Asset Manager
Tim Leader	- Deputy Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer
Mary Palmer	- Marketing & Communications Manager
Mark Stokes	- Strategic Director (Services)
Ian Vargeson	- Democratic Services Manager

Action By

1/08 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The minutes of the meetings held on 20 November 2007 and 3 December 2007 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

2/08 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

An apology for absence was received from Mr A. Stasiak.

3/08 DECLARATION OF INTEREST (AGENDA ITEM 3)

Mr P. Cowen declared a personal interest in items 7 and 8 (Minute No. 154 and 155) the nature of which related to his profession as an architect.

4/08 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 5)

Messrs P. Cowen, R. Goreham, D. Myers and Mesdames T. Hewett and D. Irving.

Action By

5/08 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY) (AGENDA ITEM 6)

The Chairman introduced Mr P. Calkin who had been appointed as the Strategic Director of Transformation.

Mr Calkin advised Members that he had been previously employed at Kirklees Council and before that had been a specialist in business turnaround.

6/08 PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL BUSINESS CASE (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The Strategic Director of Transformation presented a report which updated Members on progress towards trading Planning and Building Control Services and made a number of initial recommendations for approval pending a further detailed report on the way forward.

Members agreed that by becoming a Trading Council Breckland could draw-in income and expand its services to the public without putting pressure on council tax.

The reason for setting up a wholly owned company to deliver services back to the Council was not solely to enable trading of Planning and Building Control services. It would provide a catalyst for the cultural and operational changes needed to facilitate a platform for trading and to give an identity to Planning and Building Control that would support a commercial approach to business, with detailed service specifications in place between the Council and the new company.

A Member stated that as the functions of planning were stipulated by statutory obligations there needed to be a strict regime in place to regulate the service post trading. Further to this the Member queried whether the public would be aware of the difference in service provision.

In response the Chief Executive drew Members' attention to recommendation 8.1.4 which advised that a further report would be presented to Members in two months detailing the proposal.

Performance Indicators were already in place for the Planning Service and these would still be regularly monitored.

The ARP Trading Limited (ARPT), the trading arm of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership, was an example of a successful trading service. The performance and productivity standards of that service were regularly monitored. The ARPT was a model to which other trading companies could aspire.

Members were advised that bringing together Planning and Building Control would provide a better service to the public as it would mean one point of contact.

Action By

The options available to Members were as follows:-

- (1) Agree that a full options report be submitted within 2 months but that the initial recommendations listed were approved
- (2) Not agree that a full options report be submitted within 2 months or that the initial recommendations were approved.
- (3) Members consider what revised information they required to clarify actions moving forward

The reason for the recommendation was to ensure that all options had been explored and that there was ownership and accountability for delivery.

RECOMMEND that the Council

- (1) approve delegated authority to the Chief Executive to agree specifications;
- (2) approve delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader to deal with the administrative arrangements in respect of setting up the company, including the name, appointment of Secretary and the Board and other such administrative arrangements; and
- (3) approve that a report be submitted to Council within 2 months to report progress on options and recommend a way forward having allowed the new Strategic Director of Transformation time to consider the options fully.

7/08 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY UPDATE (AGENDA ITEM 8)

The Strategic Director of Transformation presented the report which recommended an addition to the Council's existing Procurement Strategy to incorporate a Sustainable Procurement Policy to comply with the targets emanating from the Sustainable Procurement National Action Plan and to complement the Environmental Strategy for the Council, which was out for consultation at the present time.

Members supported the recommendation as it would inform local people and businesses on how to conduct business with the Council. Contractors would be judged on their experiences and skills rather than whether they could successfully complete the Council's forms.

Two options were made available to Members. The first option was to approve the recommendations to facilitate delivery of the National Sustainable Procurement Action Plan and achievement of a level 3 in the required timescale. The second option was not to approve the recommendations and therefore not be able to facilitate delivery of the National Sustainable Procurement Action Plan and achievement of a level 3 in the required timescale

Action By

The reasons for the recommendation were as follows:-

- (1) Appointing a Member Sustainable Procurement Champion would ensure that the Sustainability Agenda in terms of procurement would be represented at Council.
- (2) Adopting the two overarching Procurement Aims as the Procurement Sustainability Principles for the Council. These would be reviewed when the National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy was launched (this strategy was the successor to the National Procurement Strategy and was due to be launched imminently).
- (3) Adopting the Sustainable Procurement Policy at Appendix C as an addendum to the current Procurement Strategy until the national Improvement and Efficiency Strategy was launched.

RECOMMEND that the Council

- (1) agree that the two overarching Procurement Aims for the Council be the Procurement Sustainability Principles supported by the Green Purchasing Policy at Appendix B of the report and that these be included as an addendum to the existing Procurement Strategy;
- (2) adopt the Sustainable Procurement Policy at Appendix C of the report as an addendum to the current Procurement Strategy; and
- (3) appoint Mr W. H. C. Smith as the Sustainable Procurement Champion.

8/08 HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION - ADDITIONAL LICENSING SCHEME (AGENDA ITEM 9)

The Strategic Housing Manager recommended that Members adopt new discretionary powers under the Housing Act 2004 for dealing with housing enforcement. The powers would be used in conjunction with the previously adopted mandatory provisions. Use of the discretionary powers would be essential in enabling the Council to meet the objectives in the Housing Improvement Programme.

Members supported the scheme as it would improve housing conditions across the District and ensure health and safety standards were maintained.

It was noted that Breckland was the first Local Authority to submit such a scheme to the Secretary of State.

With regard to options Cabinet had already confirmed its intent to apply an Additional HMO Licensing Scheme. (Cabinet Minute 71/06). However, should Cabinet wish to rescind that decision then the risks would be loss of income, uncontrolled spread of HMOs, HMO residents at risk due to poor housing conditions, HMOs controlled by persons not considered to be "fit and proper" to manage such properties, increased workload for

Action By

officers, reduced ability to deal expediently with failures in management or compliance with enforcement notices.

The reasons for the recommendations were as follows:

- (1) During their Housing Inspection the Audit Commission confirmed their opinion that an Additional Licensing Scheme would help control the issues arising from the exponential growth of HMOs in the Council's area.
- (2) The Additional Scheme would apply the licensing and management conditions to all HMOs not currently covered by such legislation and would help control nuisances and anti-social behaviour associated with individual HMOs. Households living in HMOs would benefit directly from improved health, safety and welfare provision.
- (3) The administration of the scheme would be self financing through the fees raised.

RESOLVED that the Additional Houses in Multiple Occupation Licensing Scheme be submitted to the Secretary of State for approval.

**Gordon
Partridge**

9/08 SECOND HOMES COUNCIL TAX MONIES FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING SCHEME IN YAXHAM (AGENDA ITEM 10)

The Principal Housing Officer (Strategy and Enabling) sought Cabinet approval for the use of the Second Homes Council Tax monies allocated to Breckland to be spent on a Housing Project in Yaxham for 5 affordable units.

The project would deliver a new concept in eco homes called Green Gauge Housing, which would achieve the highest energy efficiency level of excellent. The system would combine modern methods of construction with sustainable materials. The homes would incorporate renewable energy provisions, thus benefiting the tenant through reduced fuel bills. Other initiatives included rainwater harvesting with collection to be used for washing machines and toilets.

Members welcomed the scheme as it embraced the green agenda and should be the standard of all housing. Further to this the scheme took account of whole life costing providing housing which would cut future energy costs and water consumption.

Two options were made available to Members. The first option was to agree to allocate the resources against the project which would begin on site immediately and be delivered by summer 2008. The second option was not to agree the allocation of resources to the project and consider other options for the use of resources; although this course of action would limit the resources available to the project and affect the deliverability of the scheme.

Action By

The reasons for the recommendation were as follows:

- (1) The resources had been sitting with the County Council for 2 years and were at risk of being used for other purposes. The resources had levied in match funding from the Housing Corporation and The Housing Association itself which would be lost if the shortage of funding was not met.
- (2) Housing was a strategic priority for the Council and this proposal would meet the housing improvement targets the Council had for the Strategic Housing Function.
- (3) The Council had a role to meet the housing needs of its community which had been identified through the Housing Needs survey (2007) and Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2007). There was a shortfall of 964 affordable housing units a year for the next 5 years.
- (4) In this particular sub area, which Yaxham fell within, there was a shortfall of 81 units per year for the next 5 years.
- (5) The Housing Corporation assessed stringent value for money of schemes when allocating funding; this process took into account a weighting for match funding or free land. This scheme was approved by the Housing Corporation because of the opportunity to maximise a match funding opportunity with the second homes resources. If this funding was not available the Housing Corporation would look to reallocate the grant provided; there was no guarantee this would be reallocated in Breckland.

RESOLVED that the use of second homes funding for the delivery of affordable housing in the parish of Yaxham be approved subject to:

**Darryl
Smith**

- (a) a funding agreement being in place between the registered social landlord and Breckland Council detailing full requirements and conditions;
- (b) payment of grant to be made once all conditions of the funding agreement had been met;
- (c) grant payments be monitored by the grant funding team in Finance; and
- (d) other funding being confirmed.

10/08 THE USE OF COMMUTED SUMS FROM S106 AGREEMENTS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING (AGENDA ITEM 11)

The Principal Housing Officer (Strategy and Enabling) sought Members' approval for the use of commuted sums which were received for affordable housing from Section 106 agreements attached to planning consents.

Action By

A Member queried whether the Local Ward Member was approached to consider where the monies could be best spent within the location.

Members were advised that a Section 106 Officer had been appointed by the Council and would be working with Ward Members and Town and Parish Councils.

With regard to ensuring that developers follow a building standard such as the Green Gauge Housing in Yaxham the Deputy Chief Executive advised that each Section 106 had to be negotiated with the developer and it would be difficult to enforce such standards.

The Leader advised that the standards and criteria for housing built within the District would be set out within the Local Development Framework.

The options available to Members were as follows:-

- (1) To operate within the existing Finance Procedure Rules every scheme funded by a commuted sum be presented to Cabinet for approval.
- (2) To allow the delegation of authority for the use of the resources to be made by the Executive Member in consultation with the Strategic Director.
- (3) To allow the Section 106 funds to be spent within the terms of the legal agreement by the Strategic Housing Team without reference to Cabinet or the Executive Member.
- (4) To operate within the existing Finance Procedure Rules every scheme funded by a commuted sum be presented to Cabinet for approval.

The reasons for the recommendation were as follows:-

- (1) To allow the delegation of authority for the use of the resources to be made by the Executive Member in consultation with the Strategic Director.
- (2) To allow the Section 106 funds to be spent within the terms of the legal agreement by the Strategic Housing Team without reference to Cabinet or the Executive Member.
- (3) The use of the Section 106 monies had already been agreed through the signing of the legal agreement between the Council and the other parties involved. The Council were unable to use the monies for any other purpose.
- (4) Allocating the resources through a delegated decision with the Executive Member, in consultation with the Strategic Director and Section 151 Officer, would retain the financial controls of proper management of the funds but allow the flexibility of use in terms of the timing of when the monies were used.

Action By

RESOLVED that the allocation of commuted sums from Section 106 agreements made under delegated authority by the Executive Member for Environment and Housing in consultation with the Strategic Director be approved subject to:

**Darryl
Smith**

- (e) schemes identified being appraised to support Breckland's housing strategy;
- (f) a funding agreement being put in place between the registered social landlord and Breckland Council detailing full requirements and conditions;
- (g) payment of grant to be made once all conditions of the funding agreement had been met;
- (h) grant payments being monitored by the grant funding team in Finance; and
- (i) other funding being confirmed.

11/08 BRITISH GAS - COUNCIL TAX INITIATIVE (AGENDA ITEM 12)

The Strategic Housing Manager informed Members that the British Gas Council Tax Initiative (BGCTI) was a partnership programme between British Gas and local authorities which used a cashback incentive to encourage owner occupiers to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

The Local Authority was responsible for promotion of the scheme and this would be done by articles in Breckland Voice and by including a leaflet in the council tax mailout for maximum impact.

Members were advised that the scheme was aimed at households that did not receive any form of benefit and paid full council tax. Furthermore the households did not need to be customers of British Gas. However, Members raised concerns that those households with a different energy supplier from British Gas may receive unwanted solicitations to change supplier.

In response the Strategic Housing Manager advised that British Gas was a reputable supplier and received excellent publicity and positive promotion from the scheme.

The options were either to join or not join the British Gas Council Tax Initiative.

The reasons for the recommendation were as follows:-

- (1) Whilst there were many grant and cashback schemes to encourage householders to improve energy efficiency most required the applicants to be in receipt of some form of benefit. Every additional household that carried out such works contributed to Breckland achieving its targets under the Home Energy Conservation Act and PSA 7 for decent homes. Breckland could demonstrate leadership in

Action By

tackling climate change and partnership working. All energy savings would help to ameliorate the effects of climate change.

- (2) Households would benefit directly from the £75 cashback and from longer term savings on their energy bills. The effect on Breckland was largely fiscally neutral.

RESOLVED that Breckland Council join the British Gas Council Tax Initiative.

**Anita
Brennan**

**12/08 AN ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY FOR BRECKLAND COUNCIL
(AGENDA ITEM 13)**

The Strategic Director of Services presented the report which focused on the draft Environmental Strategy for Breckland Council which identified 3 key priorities being:-

- Tackling Climate Change
- Protecting the Natural Environment and Resources
- Improving the Local Environment

Members' approval was sought to recommend that a consultation process be undertaken to engage with its key partners to support and develop the strategy and thus move it forward.

The Chairman for the Overview and Scrutiny Commission stated that the Commission felt that this was a serious issue and any recommendation which came forward to Cabinet would have the support of all Members.

Two options were made available to Members: either approve the Environmental Strategy and commence a consultation or not approve the Strategy.

The reasons for the recommendation were as follows:-

- (1) The Strategy met the Corporate Objectives of the Council.
- (2) To develop an integrated environmental strategy, working together with key partners to improve the quality of life for the people who live and work in the Breckland District both now and in the future.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the draft Environmental Strategy be approved;
- (2) the consultation process proceed;
- (3) the revised Strategy and Action Plan be reported back to Cabinet in April; and
- (4) the Council sign-up to the Nottingham Declaration as detailed in Appendix 2 of the Environmental Strategy.

**Steve
Wilde**

Action By

13/08 STRATEGY TO HELP FIGHT FRAUD AND CORRUPTION (AGENDA ITEM 14)

The Executive Member for the Cabinet Office advised Members that Breckland Council was committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability in order to ensure the proper use of public funds. The, substantially, updated Strategy to Help Fight Fraud and Corruption established the Council's objectives in this respect and detailed the cohesive framework that had been developed to effectively manage the risks associated with fraud and corruption involving staff, Members or third parties.

The new Audit Committee would introduce new mechanisms to support the Overview and Scrutiny Commission's commitment to openness, probity and accountability.

Further to the above a Whistleblowing Policy would be incorporated into the document to support the Strategy.

Two options were made available to Members: to either recommend or not recommend that Council adopts the Strategy.

The reason for the recommendation was that the Strategy would provide a clear framework to be followed where fraud or corruption was suspected or detected

RECOMMEND that the Council approve the Anti Fraud and Corruption Strategy.

14/08 ESTIMATES 2008 - 2009 (AGENDA ITEM 15)

The Executive Member for the Cabinet Office presented a report which set out Breckland's proposed future spending plans, including the Star Chamber recommendations. Cabinet was requested to consider the estimates and Breckland's proposed council tax for 2008-2009 and make a recommendation for approval.

The aim was to improve services whilst maintaining a balanced budget without placing pressure on council tax. The proposed council tax for a Band D property was £61.98 per year. It was felt this provided good value for all the services provided by Breckland.

A Member queried statements made with regard to the CCTV budget and the impact the vacancy factor of 3% on staff establishment budget would have on employees. Any income from commercial property should be re-invested to build the Council's property portfolio.

In response Members were advised that in future savings, relating to schemes such as the CCTV project, would not be taken until those savings had been realised therefore ceasing the practice of spending anticipated savings. This would provide an open and true budget picture to enable accurate accounting.

Action By

With regard to the staffing vacancy factor this would not affect the manning profile of the Council. In the first year this saving would be put into reserves but not in subsequent years.

In relation to commercial property any income would be re-invested.

The Chief Executive thanked the Chief Accountant together with his team for producing a robust budget options.

The options were as follows:-

- (1) Consider the recommendations of the Star Chamber and the projects to be incorporated into the base budget.
- (2) Adopt the six-year budget plan and recommend to Council the band D Council Tax for 2008-09.
- (3) Amend the Star Chamber recommendations and budget and put alternative proposals to Council.

The reason for the recommendation was that approval of the estimates and precept form the basis for the calculation of the Council Tax for each band of property that was required to be formally approved for 2008-2009.

RECOMMEND that the Council be recommended to:

- (1) approve the revised estimates for 2007-08, which includes the elements raised by the key issues;
- (2) approve the estimates for 2008-09, which includes the elements raised by the key issues; and
- (3) set the Council Tax for a band D property in 2008-09 at £61.98

15/08 CODE OF GOVERNANCE (AGENDA ITEM 16)

The Executive Member for the Cabinet Office informed Members the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) had developed a revised framework for corporate governance in local authorities, was published in July 2007, entitled 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'.

It was proposed that the Council adopted a new Code of Governance which followed the principles outlined in that guidance.

The guidelines outlined six core principles of good governance which were:-

- to focus on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.
- Members and Officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.

Action By

- promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.
- taking informed and transparent decisions which were subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.
- developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective.
- engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

It envisaged that the Audit Committee would discuss those issues as outlined above.

By approving the Code the Council would be adopting best practice through providing a framework for dealing with issues in a clear and accountable way.

RECOMMEND that the Council adopt the Code of Governance.

16/08 WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY (AGENDA ITEM 17)

The Executive Member for the Cabinet Office presented the Whistleblowing Policy which provided Members, employees and other stakeholders with an explanation and instruction of how Breckland would deal with serious or sensitive concerns regarding inappropriate behaviour. It replaced the previous 'confidential reporting code' and would complement the Strategy to Help Fight Fraud and Corruption.

The Chief Accountant informed Members that following consultation with the Local Joint Consultative Committee the Staff Side had recommended amendments, to which Cabinet Members agreed and were detailed as follows:-

- (a) that paragraph 3.2 be amended to read "an employee has a duty to report, when certain or even reasonably aware of, an occurrence included in the above list of disclosures".
- (b) that paragraph 9.3 – the Council encourage the Trade Unions to support any member of staff who raises a concern with them – should be deleted as superfluous. Trade Unions would support their Members; it would be unrealistic to expect them necessarily to support any unaffiliated member of staff.
- (c) that in the section on Guidance for Managers (page 19 of the Report) it was noted that the officer to be informed of the original notification details where no further action was considered necessary would be the Monitoring Officer.

The options were either to recommend or not recommend the policy to Council for approval

Action By

The reason for the recommendation was that the Policy would set out the way the Council would deal with concerns about inappropriate behaviour

RECOMMEND that subject to approval by the General Purposes Committee on 30 January 2008 the Council approve the Whistleblowing Policy with the following amendments:

- (a) that paragraph 3.2 be amended to read “an employee has a duty to report, when certain or even reasonably aware of, an occurrence included in the above list of disclosures”.
- (b) that paragraph 9.3 – the Council encourage the Trade Unions to support any member of staff who raises a concern with them – should be deleted as superfluous.
- (c) that in the section on Guidance for Managers (page 19 of the Report) it was noted that the officer to be informed.

17/08 MEMBER WEB PAGES (AGENDA ITEM 18)

The Executive Member for the Cabinet Office presented a report which requested that Members decide whether they wished to publish information directly onto their web pages and approve the Member Web Page User Acceptance Policy.

A Member stated that any information added to the Member Web Pages must be kept up-to-date. Members must comply with the User Acceptance Policy and the sites should be monitored accordingly. Training should be made available to Members not only on the web pages but on the Mod.gov system.

In response Members were advised that a common sense approach would be taken when monitoring the websites. Further to this, training would be provided for all Members.

The options available to Members were as follows:-

- (1) That Members publish information directly to their own web pages and sign the Breckland User Acceptance Policy to enable them to publish information directly on to the Member Web Pages.

Members must be aware, when publishing information directly on to the Member Web Pages, of the protocols contained within the User Acceptance Policy as they may put themselves at risk of complaints if they did not follow the advice contained therein.

- (2) That Members do not publish information directly to their own web pages and submit all data to the relevant officer for publication.

The reason for the recommendations were that Member Web Pages were a useful tool for Members to disseminate information in a quick and efficient manner whether they publish the information themselves or submit the information for editing before publication. The Member Web

Pages would assist the Council in gaining the East of England Regional Assembly Charter on Elected Member Development and Training.

RESOLVED that Members be permitted to publish information directly to the Member Web Pages subject to signing the Breckland User Acceptance Policy.

18/08 REFERENCES FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

The Built Environment - Protection and Listing: Shadwell Park

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission requested that Members support the consideration of the restoration of Shadwell Park, a listed building which had fallen into a state of disrepair.

The Monitoring Officer stated that as enforcement action had been imposed on owners any review should be carefully considered and should not be undertaken until the timescales for the enforcement action had lapsed.

RESOLVED that the matter be considered in full by the Overview and Scrutiny Commission subject to the advice of the Monitoring Officer.

(a) Survey on Alcohol Related Anti-Social Behaviour in Breckland

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission Chairman requested that Members support the recommendation in order to assess the levels of alcohol related anti-social behaviour within Breckland.

RESOLVED that agreement be given to the production of a form for issue through "Voice" to all Breckland residents to complete, requesting them to give their location and whether they suffered from alcohol related anti-social behaviour and include the type of anti-social behaviour which was occurring.

(b) Research Findings and Development of a Black and Minority Ethnic Strategy for Housing

The Overview and Scrutiny Commission Chairman informed Members that Policy Development and Review Panel 3 had requested that the BME figures be monitored in order to ensure that communities were sufficiently resourced to deal with their populations.

Members were advised that although the Council should consider the diversity issue and the impact of that on services as the BME figures were a small subset of a wider group they would not offer any tangible evidence.

Members agreed with this advice but felt that the BME figures should still be monitored but not used for resource purposes.

Action By

Sian
Harland

Andrew
Gayton,
Mark
Broughton

Mark
Broughton
, Martin
Seymour

RESOLVED that regular monitoring of the Black, Minority Ethnic populations be undertaken.

Action By

**Mark
Broughton
, Darryl
Smith**

(c) **Report into the District Elections 2007**

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission presented the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group which had been established to conduct a review into the District Elections.

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission had concurred with the Group's conclusions and it was noted that the majority of the remedies were already in place.

The Chief Executive felt that to retain the "traditional" count centre layout may restrict any future election requirements. Members agreed that the recommendation should be amended but that the layout should still be set out to ensure transparency of procedures.

RESOLVED that

- (1) if only one count centre is to be used then more than one team of officials should be deployed to log in ballot boxes and consideration should be given to providing adequate shelter for persons queuing to deposit boxes;
- (2) a thorough review of polling staff should be undertaken before the next elections in order to ensure that only fully capable people are employed on election duties;
- (3) new and inexperienced presiding officers should not be employed at busy polling stations or stations where joint elections are being held;
- (4) better lighting should be provided at the polling station in Attleborough Town Hall if this venue is to be used as a polling station in future;
- (5) the Council should not work with partners in elections in future unless with proven ability;
- (6) tried and trusted printers be used to ensure that a good standard product is used which is fit for purpose;
- (7) until such time as the technology is fully tried, tested and satisfactory, the Council should continue to operate manual counts at future elections unless the Council were directed to use e-counting by central government;
- (8) the count centre layout will ensure transparency of procedures and allow agents and candidates to properly scrutinise the proceedings;

**Ian
Vargeson,
Mark
Broughton**

Action By

(9) officers be asked to try and improve the facilities (e.g. catering, chairs) for candidates at the count, as these were inadequate on 3 May; and

(10) channels of communication between election officials and candidates/polling agents at the count be improved.

19/08 ANGLIA REVENUES AND BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP (AGENDA ITEM 20)

The minutes of the meeting of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership held on 20 December 2007 were noted.

20/08 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 21)

The next meeting of the Cabinet would be held on Tuesday, 12 February 2008 at 9.30 am.

21/08 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (AGENDA ITEM 22)

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 items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

22/08 RELEASE OF FUNDS FOR AN EXTENSION TO A PROPERTY IN SWAFFHAM (AGENDA ITEM 23)

The Asset Manager presented the report which detailed an application to release funds to extend an existing facility on the EcoTech Business Park in Swaffham.

The options and reasons for the recommendations made available to Members were detailed in the report.

RESOLVED that

(1) the amount indicated in the report plus VAT be released to extend an existing facility on the EcoTech Business Park in Swaffham, both as an investment opportunity for the Council and to enable an existing company to expand and remain within the Breckland District; and

(2) that an exception to standing orders be granted based on:

Part 4 Standing Orders
4B Contract Standing Orders
Part A – General
Item 2 (a)..... Specialist services from one contractor for which no reasonably satisfactory alternative is available

**Ray
Johnson**

23/08 REQUEST FOR AN EXCEPTION TO CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS
(AGENDA ITEM 24)

The Strategic Director of Transformation presented a report which requested an exception to Standing Order 55 in respect of 4B Contract Standing Orders, Part C contracts over £75,000.

The options and reasons for the recommendations made available to Members were detailed in the report.

RESOLVED that

- (1) an exception to standing orders under Standing Order 55 be approved in respect of 4B Contract Standing Orders, Part C contracts over £75,000 to continue the employment of a consultant;
- (2) Prior to commissioning any work with the consultant that the Chief Executive and/or Deputy Chief Executive approve the work;
- (3) The outcomes of any work are evaluated by the relevant Cabinet Portfolio Holder.

Action By

**Paul
Calkin**

The meeting closed at 11.25 am

CHAIRMAN