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BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday, 17 July 2013 at 10.00 am in
Norfolk Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham

PRESENT

Mr P.J. Duigan (Chairman)	Mrs S.M. Matthews
Mr T R Carter (Vice-Chairman)	Mr B J Skull
Councillor M. Chapman-Allen	Mrs A.L. Steward
Mr C. S. Clark	Mr D.R. Williams JP
Mr R.F. Goreham	

Also Present

Mr T. J. Jermy	Mrs L.S. Turner
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In Attendance

Sue Daniels	- Electoral Services Manager
Sue Daniels	- Electoral Services Manager
Helen McAleer	- Senior Committee Officer
Dale Robinson	- Interim Environmental Services Manager
Robert Walker	- Assistant Director of Commissioning

35/13 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Goreham to the Committee.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

36/13 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bambridge, Councillor Borrett and Councillor Stasiak.

37/13 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 5)

Councillor Jermy and Councillor Turner were in attendance.

38/13 LOCAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE : 11 JULY 2013 (AGENDA ITEM 6)

The two recommendations in the Minutes would be taken into

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consideration when the relevant Agenda Items were discussed.

Members discussed the reference to the provision of a defibrillator at the Council's offices. It was clarified that the proposal would be reviewed by the Health & Safety Committee. Following the comments made that review would include an investigation of possible funding assistance from the British Heart Foundation and training of nominated officers within the Council to use the equipment.

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the meeting of the Local Joint Consultative Committee held on 11 July 2013 be adopted.

**Teresa
Smith**

39/13 MERTON PARISH COUNCIL (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The Electoral Services Manager presented the report which sought approval to issue a Section 91 Order and to delegate powers to the Deputy Chief Executive for future Section 91 Orders.

The Order was required as Merton Parish Council were inquorate and unable to function. The Order would give the Council powers to appoint, on a temporary basis, sufficient Councillors to enable the Parish Council to carry out its work.

It was clarified that powers could be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive without reference to full Council.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the issue of an Order under Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972, in order to appoint a suitable number of temporary councillors to ensure that Merton Parish Council was quorate, be approved;
- (2) delegated authority be granted to the Deputy Chief Executive to make Orders under Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972 in the event that a similar action was required in the future; and
- (3) the appointment of the electors detailed in the report as temporary Councillors be approved.

40/13 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - WEASENHAM ALL SAINTS AND WEASENHAM ST PETER PARISH COUNCILS (AGENDA ITEM 8)

The Electoral Services Manager presented the report which sought a Community Governance Review for the parishes of Weasenham All Saints and Weasenham St Peter as the two Parish Councils wished to merge.

It was felt that the merger would promote community cohesion and

that the two villages would be better served by having on Parish Council for both. If the Review was approved a final report would be presented to the Committee before going to full Council.

Councillor Steward asked when the villagers would be engaged and was advised that consultation would commence on 6 November and all residents would be consulted.

Councillor Carter thought that most villagers would support the merger.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Community Governance Review for the parishes of Weasenham All Saints and Weasenham St Peter be approved; and
- (2) the Deputy Chief Executive be granted delegated powers to carry out the Community Governance Review.

41/13 LIVING WAGE (AGENDA ITEM 9)

The Assistant Director for Commissioning presented the report which considered the Motion referred by full Council on 11 April 2013. He asked Members to accept a small amendment to take the word 'all' out of the first part of the recommendation.

The Living Wage was an hourly rate set independently. The current rate for all areas outside London was £7.45 per hour. It was noted that the current minimum wage was £6.19 per hour – which would rise to £6.31 per hour in October. Supporters of the Living Wage claimed that it was an investment that made sound business sense.

To become an accredited Living Wage employer the rate needed to be applied to all directly employed staff and to all sub-contracted staff. It was not proposed to apply for accreditation.

The Council had six employees being paid below the Living Wage. They were employed by the Contact Centre and the ARP. The total cost to the Council of increasing the rate for those six employees was about £3,500 per year which equated to a very small percentage of the Council's pay line.

Although the Council did not have an incremental pay scheme the old Grading system was still in place. If the Living Wage was adopted Grade 12 would become redundant and the minimum rate for Grade 11 would need to be increased.

Councillor Turner asked whether future apprenticeships might be affected and was advised that they would not as they were paid through an apprenticeship scheme.

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Councillor Carter asked what the Council would have to do to apply the rate to sub-contracted staff. It was explained that there was no intention currently to extend the scheme to sub-contracted staff as contracts had already been negotiated and the terms agreed. The implications had not been researched and the costings were not known. The Council might seek to encourage sub-contractors to employ at the Living Wage rate during future contract negotiations but the Officer's opinion was that the Council should not seek accreditation at this stage.

Councillor Jermy was very pleased with what he described as a well written and clear report. He was also pleased that the Council had so few low-paid staff. Adopting the Living Wage would send the message that the Council supported a fair rate of pay.

Councillor Steward was concerned that accreditation had been mentioned in the report when there was no intention to apply for it. However, other Members felt that all options should be reflected in the report.

She also asked whether South Holland would be adopting the Living Wage. It was pointed out that they were a separate Council but the Assistant Director for Commissioning said he would be happy to discuss the matter with them.

The Chairman asked if paying the ARP employees the Living Wage would have any knock-on effect on other authorities. He was advised that the change would only apply to ARP staff directly employed by Breckland.

Councillor Carter asked what other local authorities were paying the Living Wage and also asked if the annual review meant that the Council might not continue to do so.

The Assistant Director for Commissioning advised that Norwich City Council was a Living Wage Employer, but he was not aware if any other Norfolk authorities were paying the Living Wage. The annual review was to assess the financial implications as the Living Wage rate was reviewed annually.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND TO CABINET AND COUNCIL
that:

- (1) the current Living Wage be applied to directly employed staff with immediate effect; and
- (2) that any uplift in the Living Wage 'rate' is reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process.

42/13 SECONDMENT (AGENDA ITEM 10)

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

43/13 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 11)

The arrangements for the next meeting on 16 October 2013 at 10.00am in the Norfolk Room were noted.

44/13 EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC (AGENDA ITEM 12)

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

45/13 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES REVIEW (AGENDA ITEM 13)

The Interim Environmental Services Manager presented the report. He explained that it was a joint report to both Breckland and South Holland and that some findings were the same for both and some were specific to each authority.

He advised Members of a small change to the first line of the recommendation to read 'To approve the consultation on the restructure ...'. The results of the consultation would be reported back to the LJCC in September and to the General Purposes Committee in October.

The review had looked at the future pressures on the service; what was going well and what was not; the manner of management; and whether duties were aligned to priorities.

An analysis of the findings was set out and a three pronged approach to dealing with the issues was explained.

The restructuring proposals represented a précis of the information which had been provided to the Portfolio Holders. They had been shown four options and had chosen Option 2 which was attached at Appendix 2 of the report.

The review would result in savings, but that had not been its primary purpose. The difference in the figures at Table 1 in the report and the Proforma B were explained.

Councillor Steward asked whether there would be a high risk of slippage regarding contract management and was advised that the current process could be improved by undertaking audits. However, the public soon made the Council aware if standards slipped.

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Councillor Carter congratulated the Service Manager on his well presented and clear report.

RESOLVED that the consultation on the restructure of Environmental Services within both Breckland DC and South Holland DC, as detailed in the report, be approved.

The meeting closed at 10.54 am

CHAIRMAN