

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

COUNCIL

**Held on Thursday, 14 November 2013 at 10.00 am in the
Anglia Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mrs S Armes	Mr M.A. Kiddle-Morris
Mr S. Askew	Mr R.G. Kybird (Vice-Chairman)
Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mr K. Martin
Mr W.P. Borrett	Mrs S.M. Matthews
Councillor C Bowes	Mrs K. Millbank
Mr A.J. Byrne	Mrs L.H. Monument
Mrs B Canham	Mr T F C Monument
Mr C G Carter	Mr M J Nairn
Mr T R Carter	Mrs J A North
Councillor M. Chapman-Allen	Mr J.W. Nunn
Mr C. S. Clark	Mr R. R. Richmond
Mr P.D. Claussen (Chairman)	Mr W. R. J. Richmond
Mr J.P. Cowen	Mr M. S. Robinson
Mr P R W Darby	Mr J.D. Rogers
Mr R.W. Duffield	Mr B. Rose
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mr F.J. Sharpe
Mr K.S. Gilbert	Mr I. Sherwood
Mr R.F. Goreham	Mr B J Skull
Councillor E. Gould	Mr W.H.C. Smith
Mr S R Green	Mrs P.A. Spencer
Mrs D.K.R. Irving	Mr A.C. Stasiak
Mr T. J. Jermy	Mrs L.S. Turner
Mr A.P. Joel	Mr M. A. Wassell
Mrs E. M. Jolly	Mr N.C. Wilkin
Mr C.R. Jordan	

In Attendance

Julie Britton	- Senior Committee Officer
Lucy Burt	- Fraud & Visits Team Manager
Paul Corney	- Head of ARP
Helen McAleer	- Senior Committee Officer
Leanne Neave	- Member Trainer
Geoff Rivers	- Interim Chief Executive

90/13 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

Two spelling mistakes to the new Chief Executive's name in the resolution on page 6 were pointed out. Subject to those being amended the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Action By

91/13 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Childerhouse, Lamb, Pettitt, Steward and Williams.

92/13 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 3)

The Vice-Chairman commented on the YMCA AGM and Annual Celebration which he had attended. It had been a most impressive event with a number of presentations. He would put a copy of the YMCA's Annual Report in the Members' Room.

93/13 CABINET MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 5)

(a) Environmental Services Organisational and Services Review (Minute No 83/13)

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the implementation of the restructure of Environmental Services within both Breckland District Council and South Holland District Council as detailed in the report be approved; including
 - a) the provision of the senior management capacity for Environmental Services via the appointment of a Corporate/Strategic Manager; jointly shared between the two Authorities. Officers are requested to investigate further and report back on the most appropriate organisational structure/service arrangements to be managed by this position taking into account the potential synergies, weaknesses noted within paragraphs 1.19-1.20 of the report;
 - b) the further sharing of posts namely the proposed Senior Environmental Services Officer and Senior Waste & Recycling Services Officer;
- 2) the Environmental Services Statement of Purposes at paragraph 1.7 of the report be agreed; and
- 3) the headline improvements as at paragraphs 1.33-1.35 of the report be agreed.

(b) Town/Parish Council Localised Council Tax Grant (Minute No 84/13)

With reference to the final sentence in the fourth paragraph on page 14 the Leader of the Labour Group invited the Chairman to Thetford to see the efficiencies they had made.

Action By

- (c) Calendar of Meetings 2014/15 (Minute No 86/13)

RESOLVED that the Schedule of Council and Committee meetings for 2014-15 be approved, subject to any changes made by the Constitution Review.

- (d) Adoption

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 29 October 2013 be adopted.

94/13 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION (AGENDA ITEM 6)

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission meeting held on 17 October 2013 be adopted.

95/13 PLANNING COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 7)

- 95 .a Confirmed Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 30 September 2013.

- (a) Proposed Changes to Delegated Arrangements in light of the introduction of the Planning Guarantee (Minute No 100/13)

RESOLVED that the Council's Delegated Arrangements be amended as set out in the Minute.

- (b) Adoption

RESOLVED that the confirmed Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 30 September 2013 be adopted.

- 95 .b Unconfirmed Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 28 October 2013

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 28 October 2013 be adopted.

96/13 GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 8)

- (a) Living Wage (Minute No 54/13)

The Leader of the Labour Group said that he was very pleased that the principle of applying the Living Wage was making progress. However, as the recommendation had originally been presented to Council on 4 July 2013 he asked for the award to be backdated to then.

The Chief Executive agreed to look into the matter and the increase would be paid from 4 July if costs were not prohibitive.

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Councillor Smith advised that he had been tasked with looking into the remuneration package for all staff. That review would include the Living Wage. Papers were being prepared.

Councillor Goreham suggested that Members should vote on an amended proposal but after further discussion it was confirmed that he and the Leader of the Labour Group were happy for the Chief Executive to deal with the matter.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the Living Wage should be considered as part of the general review of remuneration being carried out by HR; and
- (2) the five staff currently being paid below the Living Wage should each receive a one-off payment to bring their salary for the current financial year up to £14,374.

(b) Adoption

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 16 October 2013 be adopted.

97/13 LICENSING COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 9)

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 9 October 2013 be adopted.

98/13 ANGLIA REVENUES & BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP - CELEBRATING SUCCESS (AGENDA ITEM 11)

The Chairman told Members that it was important to understand the journey of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership (ARP) which had been formed at a time when the Council was officially the third worst in the Country for dealing with Benefits; taking up to three months to determine claims.

At that time he had been an Executive Member and the Leader (Councillor Jordan) had tasked him with improving things. In 2003 the Council had started a partnership with Forest Heath District Council; who were marginally better at handling Benefits claims. They had worked together to provide an acceptable service for customers. In the process they had come to make year-on-year savings of over £2million and achieved Beacon Status. The Chairman was very proud of what had been done.

One of the original Officers involved in the ARP had recently been re-employed. He was the right person to take the ARP on to the next stage of its journey. The Chairman introduced Paul Corney, Head of

Action By

ARP to Members.

Mr Corney said he was extremely happy to be rejoining the ARP which had been the first partnership in the country for Revenues and Benefits. It was still a National leader, helping to deliver excellence for customers as well as savings. Officers had been invited to the meeting to celebrate an example of excellence and he introduced Lucy Burt, Fraud & Visits Team Manager.

Ms Burt said the celebration was for winning the Institute of Revenues Valuation and Rating (IRRV) Excellence in Fraud award – which was a team award. She introduced three other members of the team who were in attendance: Katie Mills, Shirley Brimelow and Neil Oxbury, and then gave Members a short presentation.

The award process, which was open to all Local Authorities in England and Wales, involved a submission, shortlisting, inspection and then an awards dinner.

The ARP's submission had highlighted the additional challenges they faced, being four teams working as one to achieve targets for four different Councils across three County boundaries.

The fraud world was constantly changing and the Partnership had evolved to keep abreast of those changes.

The four authorities covered a large area and the fraud team worked with lots of different departments and agencies including the Police and the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) requiring the development of many diverse working relationships.

Team members had significant qualifications and experience and those skills were shared. The investigations and interviews were divided amongst the team members and the system worked very well.

They constantly reviewed their working practice and were very proactive in their approach, showing the public that fraud would not be tolerated. They had adopted new technology and reviewed their visiting function. Investigations were targeted to ensure they were productive, had value and provided good publicity. Everything was 'risk scored' and support mechanisms were in place. Even in cases where it was decided that prosecution was not in the public interest, the customer was advised that the ARP were aware of what they were doing. The main aim was to protect the public purse throughout all the departments of the Council on behalf of the Audit Office.

Some recent cases that had received good publicity were highlighted. Both had been successfully prosecuted. That did not always mean that all monies were recovered but the publicity acted as a deterrent to others.

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It had been a very useful exercise putting together the submission as it had provided an opportunity to take a step back and look at the way they worked. It had been particularly satisfying to discover how very well the system was working. They were smart working and multi-functional and a very good team which is why they had won the award. Ms Burt held up the award for Members to see.

The Fraud Team received generous applause from Members. The Chairman hoped that they had felt it worthwhile to invite the team in to celebrate their success and to show that Members were supporting them.

Ms Burt said that was a good point. During the inspection process it had been highlighted that there was an anti-fraud culture throughout the organisation which came from the top and was driven by Members.

The Chairman thanked Ms Burt for her presentation and congratulated the whole team on their achievements.

99/13 MEMBER / OFFICER PLEDGE (AGENDA ITEM 12)

The Member Trainer gave a brief update on the Member/Officer Pledge which had been drawn up by the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and the Member Development Panel.

The aim of the Pledge was to empower Councillors as community leaders. Sessions had been held with all staff in July to inform them of the importance of making Members aware of any issues that were happening in their Wards. Staff had been encouraged to notify Members of problems and good news stories. Some things might still slip through the net and there would be things that Members heard about before Officers. In those cases, Members were asked to make Officers aware of the issues.

A copy of the Pledge was attached to the Agenda and if Members had any questions they should be directed to either CMT or the Training Team.

Councillor Kybird noted that the Pledge should refer to *Town* and Parish Councils.

The Chief Executive reiterated that the whole purpose of the Pledge was to ensure that Members were not taken by surprise by something happening in their Ward. Sometimes it was difficult for back-bench Members to keep in touch with the Council and this was a way to try to keep them included and informed and to keep a two-way dialogue open.

The meeting closed at 10.40 am

CHAIRMAN