

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

COUNCIL

**Held on Thursday, 27 October 2016 at 10.00 am in the
Anglia Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr T J Ashby	Mr K. Martin
Mr S Askew	Mrs S.M. Matthews
Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mrs K. Millbank (Vice-Chairman)
Mrs E J Bishop	Mrs L.H. Monument
Mr W.P. Borrett (Chairman)	Mr T F C Monument
Mr R. F. W. Brame	Mr J Newton
Councillor M. Chapman-Allen	Mr J.W. Nunn
Mr S H Chapman-Allen	Mr R. R. Richmond
Mr H. E. J. Clarke	Mr W. R. J. Richmond
Mr P.D. Claussen	Mr M. S. Robinson
Mr J.P. Cowen	Mr J.D. Rogers
Mr D M Crawford	Mr F.J. Sharpe
Mr P. R. W. Darby	Mr I. Sherwood
Mr P. M. M. Dimoglou	Mr W.H.C. Smith
Mr R.W. Duffield	Mr M Taylor
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mrs L.S. Turner
Mr K.S. Gilbert	Mr M. A. Wassell
Mrs J. Hollis	Mrs A M Webb
Mr T. J. Jermy	Mr N.C. Wilkin
Mr A.P. Joel	Mr P S Wilkinson

In Attendance

Ross Bangs	- Housing Manager
Julie Britton	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Suzanne Jones	- Interim Executive Director Commercialisation and s151 Officer
Helen McAleer	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Mark Stinson	- Executive Manager Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer BDC)
Rob Walker	- Executive Director Place

119/16 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

120/16 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bowes, C Carter, T Carter, Gould, Hewett, Jolly, Nairn, Oliver and Stasiak.

121/16 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (AGENDA ITEM 3)

No declarations were made.

122/16 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 4)

The Chairman's engagement list had been tabled. He noted that the Royal British

Action By

Legion were running a 'Count them in' campaign. Currently forces personnel were not identified in the census questions and District Councils were being asked to support the campaign by requesting that that information be included in future. Members confirmed their support and the Leader agreed to pursue the matter on their behalf.

123/16 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 5)

The Leader of the Council gave a brief update on the following subjects:

Thetford Riverside was virtually complete. The first restaurant had been leased and would be opening in the New Year. The cinema was opening on 2 December 2016. The project was a strong catalyst for regeneration in the district.

The Corporate Plan was about to be reviewed and all Members were asked to engage in that process.

With the Council having voted out of the Devolution process it was important to strengthen links with other partners. The Leader had attended a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) event attended by many businesses located along the A11.

Dereham Leisure Centre was offering a free weekly swim to grandparents accompanied by a child to encourage use of their facilities. The Council was running the Breckland Fit Families project working with children and parents through schools and this was very successful. Currently it was focussed on the towns but it was hoped that it could be rolled out over the whole district in future.

The Council needed to work with the Education Authority to ensure that school leavers in the district were aware of the jobs that were available. Too many were leaving to work elsewhere and one of the pre-requisites for encouraging businesses into the district was to have staff available.

Councillor Jermy said that Thetford Members were working hard to get the public to embrace the Riverside development. He asked if litter bins would be provided and raised concerns about the state of the three-legged bridge and its lack of disabled access. He noted that local Members and the Greater Thetford Development Partnership were not being consulted or kept informed about such matters.

The Leader confirmed that litter bins would be provided. The three-legged bridge was not part of the project but the Portfolio Holder was investigating ways that it could be improved as a good link across the river was needed.

The Executive Member for Growth & Commercialisation agreed that some things still needed to be sorted including the bridge and where the bins should be placed. Signage and car parking were issues linked to traffic flow around Thetford and he hoped that in future there would be a system to identify which car parks were full and signpost others with spaces.

Councillor Crawford asked if the grandparent scheme would operate in Thetford as well. He was advised that the business case for that was being assessed. He went on to say that he had fought against the Riverside project for six years, but he had been wrong and he now supported it, as he could already see the positive impact it was making.

Councillor Taylor was worried that anti-social behaviour could spoil the Riverside project. He had already received complaints from the hotel about local youths. The police had no resources and limited powers. He asked if the Council would introduce a Public Protection Order to increase the powers of the police in dealing with such issues.

The Leader confirmed that the Council would work with the police to do all it could to address anti-social behaviour problems.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Crawford for his intervention. It was good to know that what the Council had produced was appreciated.

124/16 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE UNDER STANDING ORDER NO 6 (AGENDA ITEM 6)

No questions on notice had been received.

125/16 QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE UNDER STANDING ORDER NO 7 (AGENDA ITEM 7)

Councillor Gilbert asked the Leader to arrange a meeting with the appropriate people (Watton Town Councillors, Ward Representatives and Parkwood Leisure) to seek a resolution to the serious Watton Sports Centre problems.

The Leader noted that the Council had helped the Sports Centre before with significant grant funding. They had also been offered help with their business plan. He agreed to work to get a new meeting set up.

Councillor Clarke asked either the Executive Member for Growth or Governance to explain the decision making powers of the Local Plan Working Group (LPWG).

The Leader explained that the LPWG was a sub-group of Cabinet and, so far as he was aware, it had no specific delegations to make decisions. It made recommendations to Cabinet.

The Executive Manager for Governance explained that the answer depended on the Terms of Reference of the LPWG, and he undertook to review these and confirm the position after the meeting.

Councillor Newton asked the Executive Member for Growth & Commercialisation about the three-legged bridge in Thetford. It did not meet disabled access requirements due to its steep incline which made it difficult for people with pushchairs or those using disability scooters or wheelchairs. He asked if a dropped kerb could be introduced which would help such people at the exit of the bridge and he also asked why the surfacing of the footpath was incomplete.

The Leader of the Council asked Members to maintain the positive message about the project. There were lots of historical issues in Thetford and he recognised the need to improve the bridge.

The Executive Member for Growth & Commercialisation agreed. There were a number of aspects out-with the project. Part of the footpath was not within the site. A dropped kerb was needed and officers were in discussions to tweak the scheme.

Councillor Jermy noted that the Executive Member for Growth was not present again. He had raised the issue of void rates and the time it took to re-let properties

at the July meeting. He had been told by the Executive Director for Place that an action plan would be requested from Flagship Housing. At the Scrutiny meeting in September Flagship Housing had confirmed that their properties remained empty for one month between lets. He asked what pressure was being applied to address that.

The Executive Director for Place was disappointed. He had been given different information at the strategic meeting with Flagship managers. He would take the issue up with them and provide Members with an update.

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Councillor Wilkin said that a scoping exercise was underway regarding a possible increase in size of the Necton Power Station. The decision would be made by the Secretary of State, the Council was just a consultee. He asked for assurance that the Council would do all it could to seek major traffic improvements to the A47.

The Leader confirmed that the Council would give all the support that it could.

Councillor Webb had been contacted by constituents who had tried to make on-line representations for the Local Plan consultation, but had been 'timed out' and their comments had been lost. She asked if the time for inputting comments could be extended to two hours.

The Executive Member for People & Information had been unaware of the problem and would try to get the extension – although it was noted that the consultation period expired in four days.

126/16 CABINET MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 8)

1) Increasing supply of market rented housing (Minute No 107/16)

The Executive Member for Growth & Commercialisation asked for it to be put on record that he would be seeking an amendment to the Minute on this item. The thrust of the discussion had been about investment and diversification and he would raise this at the next Cabinet meeting.

2) Adoption

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 11 October 2016 be adopted.

127/16 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION (AGENDA ITEM 9)

1) Presentation from Anglian Water (Minute No 58/16)

Councillor Gilbert had been surprised to find that Anglian Water were not statutory consultees in the planning process. He asked if there was anything that could be done to change that.

The Executive Member for Growth & Commercialisation suggested lobbying the MP for Watton as he was the Head of the Government's Policy Unit.

Councillor Wassell noted that Anglian Water were statutory consultees for the Local Plan.

2) Housing Allocation Policy (Minute No 61/16)

Members were advised that the recommendation would be moved under Agenda Item 13.

3) Adoption

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission meeting held on 1 September 2016 be adopted.

128/16 PLANNING COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 10)

RESOLVED that the confirmed Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 19 September 2016 be adopted.

129/16 GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 11)

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Governance & Audit Committee meeting held on 2 September 2016 be adopted.

130/16 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL (AGENDA ITEM 12)

1) Councillor Development Programme (Minute No 42/16)

Councillor Gilbert congratulated Officers on the events they had arranged for Local Democracy Week and said there had been very good involvement with young people.

2) Adoption

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Member Development Panel meeting held on 8 September 2016 be adopted.

131/16 HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY (AGENDA ITEM 13)

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented the report which had been discussed at the Overview and Scrutiny Commission meeting on 1 September 2016 and they had resolved to support the recommendation.

The Housing Manager explained the proposed changes to the process and gave the headline figures and explained that the Housing Allocations Policy would need to change in order to support the proposed new ways of working.

Councillor Jermy was grateful to the Officers for revising the report which was now a lot better. However, he would be voting against the recommendation because he still had significant concerns about the resources and capacity of the Housing Team in Breckland. There was also the major issue of the district having good employment but very low wage ratio. He noted that this was another report that the Executive Member for Growth was not at the meeting to present.

The Executive Member for Growth & Commercialisation agreed that there was a low level wage economy but said that the Cabinet was looking at ways to improve the base line wages through such projects as the Riverside Re-development, the Thetford Urban Extension which was targeting higher quality jobs and by bringing power to Snetterton to encourage more jobs.

RESOLVED that the proposed change to the Housing Allocations Policy be

approved.

132/16 SHARED EMERGENCY PLANNING OFFICER (AGENDA ITEM 14)

The Executive Member for Place (Health Lead) presented the report. The emergency planning service was currently provided by Norfolk County Council and with the increasing need to deal with a variety of emergency situations (such as flash flooding, dangerous structures, policing incidents, etc.) it was felt that the Council should have its own in-house service.

The Executive Director for Place clarified that the proposal was not for a shared post – a similar report would be presented to South Holland for a separate emergency planning officer there.

The proposal would increase the establishment by one FTE and would bring emergency planning under the direct control of the Council. The Council would continue to be an active partner of the Norfolk Resilience Forum.

Councillor Duigan welcomed the proposal and hoped it would mean closer contact with the Dereham Town Council emergency officer.

RESOLVED that the establishment be increased and an Emergency Planning Officer (Grade 8) post be created.

133/16 NOMINATIONS FOR COMMITTEE AND OTHER SEATS (AGENDA ITEM 15)

The Council had received two new requests for representatives on Outside Body organisations.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Peter Wilkinson be appointed as Outside Body Representative to Restorative Approaches in Norfolk; and
- 2) Lynda Turner be appointed as Outside Body Representative to the Norfolk Parking Partnership Joint Committee.

It was further **RESOLVED** that Stephen Askew be appointed as Outside Body Representative to the East Harling Internal Drainage Board replacing Ellen Jolly who had resigned from that post.

134/16 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION (AGENDA ITEM 16)

None.

135/16 ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT (AGENDA ITEM 17)

None.

136/16 EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC (AGENDA ITEM 18)

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 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

137/16 SERVICE REVIEWS

138/16 DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

The Executive Manager – Governance introduced the report which related to the staffing structure of the Democratic Services Team which had been reviewed as part of the organisational design strand of the Transformation Programme.

The report sought approval to a proposed structure that would be fit for purpose in a modern local authority. In addition to a revised staffing structure various service improvements and cost savings would be implemented.

DECISION

That Council approves the revised staffing structure for the Democratic Services Team as detailed in the report and authorises Officers to proceed with implementing the new structure.

139/16 HOUSING SERVICES

The Executive Director of Place introduced the report which related to the staffing structure of the Housing Services team which had been reviewed as part of the organisational design strand of the Transformation Programme.

The report sought approval to a proposed structure that would be fit for purpose in a modern local authority. In addition to a revised staffing structure various service improvements and cost savings would be implemented.

The review did not result in any reduction to frontline services.

DECISION

That Council approves the revised staffing structure for the Housing Services Team as detailed in the report and authorises Officers to proceed with implementing the new structure.

139 .a Communities, Environmental Services

The Executive Director of Place introduced the report which related to the staffing structure of the Communities and Environmental Services Team which had been reviewed as part of the organisational design strand of the Transformation Programme.

The report sought approval to a proposed structure that would be fit for purpose in a modern local authority. In addition to a revised staffing structure various service improvements and cost savings would be implemented.

In response to member questions, it was confirmed that the structure made provision for effective contract management.

DECISION

That Council approves the revised staffing structure for the Communities and Environmental Services team as detailed in the report and authorises Officers to proceed with implementing the new structure.

The meeting closed at 11.30 am

CHAIRMAN