

Questions with Notice under Standing Order No. 6 – Full Council, 8 July 2021.

QUESTION 1:

Cllr Jermy to Executive Member for Waste & Environment, Cllr Bambridge & Cllr Suggitt, Executive Member for Planning, Leisure & Contracts:

There have been dozens of concerns raised about the Serco contract across Thetford and in other parts of the district. Initially it was concerns about the frequency of street litter bin emptying, then the widespread use of weedkiller and the haphazard approach to grounds maintenance with the continuation of the shredding of litter before mowing, the frequency of mowing and the leftover grass cuttings on pavements.

Concerns are currently raised with a variety of officers and also members of the Cabinet, these concerns can be difficult to track with a clear picture not easily obtainable. Would the Cabinet Member support the establishment of a clear reporting process for concerns about Serco's performance, perhaps with the creation of a new, dedicated email address for Councillors?

RESPONSE:

Thank you, Cllr Jermy, for your question. Many thanks also for taking the time to report issues within your Ward so that they can be rectified quickly.

As you are aware the new Serco contract went live in April 2021 and was the start of our tri-partite agreement with North Norfolk District Council and Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council.

Some of the problems you have experienced at commencement reflect the complexity of contract mobilisation but also the unprecedented weather we were experiencing, more litter being left and delays in the delivery of new modern equipment.

We have good evidence that Serco are taking these issues seriously and are responding to the concerns that are being raised.

Regarding the reporting process, this already exists through our REPORT IT function, and I would encourage you and all Members to continue to use it. If a matter requires escalation this can be done through the Council's team at environmentalservices@breckland.gov.uk and ultimately through the relevant Assistant Director (Riana Rudland) or Portfolio Holder.

QUESTION 2:

Cllr Atterwill to the Leader:

Can the Leader confirm if the 'Shop Appy' App is still live, being updated and being actively promoted by this Council? In addition to this can he please confirm the total cost incurred by the council for this project from inception to the present day, what was the project's specific aims and how have the outcomes been measured in an effort to ensure best value for money?

RESPONSE:

Thank you for your question. I am answering as they were addressed, but also responding on behalf of the Cabinet Member responsible, Councillor Claussen.

Shop Appy is no longer displaying independent retail shops within Breckland, following the end of the three-year commissioned project.

The investment into the project was £86,953 (which includes the ShopAppy SLA, management and implementation, town subscriptions at reduced costs for 3 years, and separate direct marketing and campaigns).

Breckland Council entered the partnership with ShopAppy, to help raise the profile of independent shops, high streets, and market towns within the Breckland area by using their e-commerce website.

The primary purpose of the project was to drive awareness of local independent shops, increase physical footfall to the shops featured on the app, and finally promoting the opportunity for online purchases by visitors to the app and the creation of a digital high street.

The measurable outcomes from the project were:

103 retailers signed up to the scheme to give an online presence (Attleborough 21, Dereham 24, Swaffham 35, Thetford 15 and Watton 8).

Following direct marketing and media campaigns (displaying videos of our independent retailers):

- 136,847 YouTube video views. Top 3 = Precious Bear, Cranks Bikes and Curry With Love
- 53,212 video views on social channels (Top 3 – Vogue, Myhills and Precious Bear
- 40,837 banner impressions
- 7440 Facebook full video plays
- 1740 Instagram videos through to completion
- 37,496 Instagram impression
- 189,717 Facebook and Instagram impressions

Learning from the project has been key in informing our future approach. With the benefit of this and extensive engagement with businesses over the pandemic and into the recovery periods, we have been able to develop our “Digital Breckland” and “Digital High Streets” programme, which is further helping local businesses to adapt and develop their own solutions for e-commerce.

QUESTION 3:

Clr Atterwill to the Leader:

Can the Leader confirm if the ‘Breckworld’ App is still live, being updated and being actively promoted by this Council? In addition to this can he please confirm the total cost incurred by the council for this project from inception to the present day, what was the project’s specific aims and how have the outcomes been measured in an effort to ensure best value for money?

RESPONSE:

Thank you for your question. I am answering as they were addressed, but also responding on behalf of the Cabinet Member responsible, Councillor Claussen.

The BreckWorld App is still live, and part of the Council’s plans for continuing to support businesses. As part of wider recovery plans, there is a planned refresh of the app and content for the upcoming holiday season.

We are aware the app is currently experiencing some technical issues (due to a separate video streaming company), which the suppliers development team are currently rectifying.

The investment into the project was £83,640 (which includes App development across Android & IOS as well as marketing).

The project's aims were to promote some of the best local attractions within the District to increase footfall and the visitor economy, using state of the art digital technologies.

To date there has been 3,270 IOS downloads and 1,720 Android downloads with 3,569 active unique users. The 360 Virtual Reality Videos in the BreckWorld app have totalled in excess of 50,000 unique views.

Question 4:

Cllr Atterwill to the Leader:

The Leader recently attended the opening of a new timber building located at the entrance to HMP Wayland. The building is to be used as a visitor search facility to provide privacy for visitors whilst searches are being carried out. Can the Leader please confirm the amount of the financial contribution made by Breckland Council and in addition can he please advise why this facility was not provided and paid for by the Ministry of Justice and how in his view a facility to search visitors to a prison fits in with Breckland Council's 'Inspiring Communities' programme?

Response:

Thank you for your question. I am answering as they were addressed, but also responding on behalf of the Cabinet Member responsible, Councillor Webb.

Breckland Council funded HMP Wayland £10,000 towards the visitor search facility.

The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 required that tackling crime should be undertaken in partnership across key local organisations. In particular, Section 17 required that without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it, it shall be the duty of each authority to which this section applied to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area.

It is likely the supply of drugs into HMP Wayland is linked to wider drug crimes, not least through County Lines.

QUESTION 5:

Cllr Atterwill to the Leader:

This Council recently announced a programme to provide training for 250 mental health volunteers in the district. I very much welcome this important initiative but in terms of the implementation of this programme can the Leader advise how he will ensure that these 250 volunteers will be located across the district to ensure that all wards have access to this voluntary support when they need it?

RESPONSE:

This programme is in ongoing design in collaboration with our project partners Norfolk and Waveney Mind and Wellbeing Norfolk and Waveney, ahead of fully launching in September 2021.

The Communities team is currently inviting all Breckland based community groups, organisations and small businesses to come forward and express their interest in joining this network of volunteers by emailing through to them to community@breckland.gov.uk, as per the instructions on the council the website <https://www.breckland.gov.uk/article/16712/Mental-Health> .

Whilst it is to be expected that the location of these trained community champions will initially be dependent upon where such community interest exists. Following this, and by means of ensuring that all Breckland areas fully understand the opportunity that is being presented, the Communities team as part of the Inspiring Communities programme will be offering to visit all Parish Councils to speak with them about the initiative and how they can access the opportunity to get their residents involved (from September onwards).

Thereafter, regular monitoring of recruitment to the programme will be undertaken to see where gaps exist, followed by a targeting of those areas underrepresented for future recruitment.

QUESTION 6:

Cllr Atterwill to the Executive Member for Property & Projects, Cllr Hewett:

As I continue to research the history of the Green Britain Centre at Swaffham (Formerly known as Eco tech), I have found that this was originally funded at a cost of £12.5 Million.

The makeup of this figure is as follows:-

European Challenge (objective 5b) -	£2,000,000
Regional Development Commission Rural Challenge	£1,000,000
Breckland Council	£1,500,000
Private Sector	£8,000,000

Can the Executive member for Commercial Property confirm that when the Green Britain Centre is sold, Breckland Council will have received a positive cash return on its 25 year investment in this asset?

RESPONSE:

As Portfolio Holder I have been in communication with Cllr Atterwill since January 2021, and wrote further to Cllr Atterwill in March 2021 to outline the detail of costs versus income resulting from the property based on the available retained records held by the Council. That information was commercially sensitive as it was linked to a planned disposal, but does not accord with the costs identified above.

Breckland Council and the wider district taxpayer has received a positive return on its 25-year investment in the GBC through the provision of a unique property providing community outputs fulfilling the original aims of the purpose of the property. But the property was never intended as an “investment” and as such its performance should not be assessed as such.

The aim of the provision of the building was to provide a property that could generate community and social outputs and to enable that to occur the property was let to the occupier for a peppercorn rent for 25 years to support this. Therefore, the property was not held by the Council as an investment or to create a financial return.

Market conditions have determined the value of the sale price following the decision to dispose of the property after the property became unexpectedly void. The disposal proceeds should realise a positive

cash return as outlined in the information supplied to Cllr Atterwill in March. Moreover, the wider community benefits to Swaffham can now continue resulting from further economic development and employment opportunities to the local community.

QUESTION 7:

Cllr Clarke to the Executive Member for Housing, Health & Communities, Cllr Webb:

Provision of Public Toilets – Dereham Town Centre

Background

The recent abolition of non-domestic rates, levied on public toilets is to be welcomed, and is intended to encourage and sustain such provision. Currently there is only one set of small toilets in Dereham, in a less than ideal location, maintained by Dereham Town Council. The continued operation of these has never been under threat by the burden of these rates, as far as DTC is concerned.

The main and larger toilets, situated in the Cowper Road /Georges Road –off the car park, were set up and operated by Breckland originally as a District wide facility. Whilst they have been closed for many years, the recent demolition, has generated considerable public interest and comment which suggests the need for additional and new toilets. This is borne out by – priorities agreed by DTC Cllrs; a priority from “About Dereham “ , and has featured in the “ We Made It” discussions with Hatch consultants in the Dereham pilot. This has confirmed the reliance on Dereham for many services, but for which no levy or precept or contribution is provided by those areas outside Dereham.

The focus on Market Towns, and here in Dereham – with agreement on attracting out of town visitors; heritage; a hub for those outside Dereham (villages), it is appropriate that a facility able to have a wider District service is re-established and demonstrates a real practical commitment to Dereham. It does require commitment though from those with the powers to do this - and includes District and County.

- 1) Will the Leader/ Cabinet member for Assets/ and or Market Towns commit to re-establishing such a facility in Dereham again, in a suitable, central location?
- 2) Will the Leader/Cabinet member undertake a public survey – residents, businesses, visitors, -out of town, and parishes on establishing new toilets?
- 3) Will the Leader/Cabinet member include under Q1 an option of “pay as you go “to generate some revenue?
- 4) Will the Leader/Cabinet member postpone any permanent alterations to the Cowper Road car park, (location of old toilets) until discussions and consultations on re configuration of the Town Centre have been conclude?
- 5) Will the Leader /Cabinet member confirm the costs of the planned refurbishment of Cowper Road Car park and consider postponing this and allocating funds to toilet provision?
- 6) Will the Leader/Cabinet member make a commitment wholly /or in part to fund new toilet provision?
- 7) What has been the total cost paid in non-Domestic rates on the disused toilets from closure by BDC to the date of abolition of NDR?
- 8) What is the cost of demolition of the former toilets?
- 9) What is the gross cost of installing additional car park spaces (works + rates will apply to the extra spaces)
- 10) What is the cost of the Cowper Road car park refurbishment?

RESPONSE:

- 1) Will the Leader/ Cabinet member for Assets/ and or Market Towns commit to re-establishing such a facility in Dereham again, in a suitable, central location?

There is currently no agreed programme for the Council to provide or install toilet facilities in any market town. This follows a decision in 2007 when it was decided that toilet provision would be better serviced

by the Town Councils who were better placed to provide the provision that was suitable to the individual town's local needs. The toilet facilities provided by the Council were at that time transferred to the Town Council's along with a significant, relevant commuted sum to maintain and operate toilet facilities according to the needs of each town.

- 2) Will the Leader/Cabinet member undertake a public survey – residents, businesses, visitors, -out of town, and parishes on establishing new toilets?

As per Question 1 there is no agreed programme for the Council to provide or install toilet facilities. Therefore, there is no planned activity to undertake a public survey. We are however working with our consultants, Hatch, who are developing the town delivery plans through extensive public consultation which will help inform whether toilet facilities or any other facilities are required to meet the growth needs of each town.

- 3) Will the Leader/Cabinet member include under Q1 an option of “pay as you go” to generate some revenue?

As per Question 1 – with no agreed programme for the Council to provide or install toilet facilities there is no option to include this suggestion at this time. This is an option that is also available to other public and private entities should they believe there is a viable commercial return.

- 4) Will the Leader/Cabinet member postpone any permanent alterations to the Cowper Road car park, (location of old toilets) until discussions and consultations on re configuration of the Town Centre have been conclude?

The car park surface is now in poor condition and the Council should protect its liability and fulfil delivery of the car park renewal programme which has seen most of the car parks across the district refurbished and re-surfaced to minimise ongoing reactive repair and minimise safety issues.

- 5) Will the Leader /Cabinet member confirm the costs of the planned refurbishment of Cowper Road Car park and consider postponing this and allocating funds to toilet provision?

The works are yet to be tendered and the cost is dependent on the specification. The works will be carried out to a suitable specification and standard and in line with the Council's Capital Programme. The procurement of the works is due to start in Q2 2021/22.

- 6) Will the Leader/Cabinet member make a commitment wholly /or in part to fund new toilet provision?

As per Question 1 there is currently no agreed programme for the Council to provide or install toilet facilities in any market town. This follows a decision in 2007 when it was decided that toilet provision would be better serviced by the Town Councils who were better placed to provide the provision that was suitable to the individual town's local needs. The toilet facilities provided by the Council were at that time transferred to the Town Council's along with a significant, relevant commuted sum to maintain and operate toilet facilities according to the needs of each town.

- 7) What has been the total cost paid in non-Domestic rates on the disused toilets from closure by BDC to the date of abolition of NDR?

From 2008 to 2021 the NDR cost has been £32,320.

- 8) What is the cost of demolition of the former toilets?

The final actual cost is yet to be finalised given the very recent completion of the works. The budget available to complete the demolition is £11,000 as agreed in the delegated decision published on 22 March 2021.

- 9) What is the gross cost of installing additional car park spaces (works + rates will apply to the extra spaces)

The cost to reinstate the footprint of the derelict building that has been removed into parking bays is c.£4,160. The final rates calculation from the valuation office for the business rates costs is outstanding but this is considered to be c.£400 per annum.

- 10) What is the cost of the Cowper Road car park refurbishment?

As per See Question 5) - the works are yet to be tendered the cost is dependent on specification. The works will be carried out to a suitable specification and standard and in line with the Council's Capital Programme.

Breckland Council's agreed position over the last 14 years since toilet provision in the five market towns were transferred to them is that the town councils, not the district council, are best placed to identify local services and facilities based on an individual town's growth and needs. As a District we look at the wider needs for our residents which are not immediately serviced by our towns, such as our work on homelessness and vulnerability. And in turn we then partner strategically with others to identify County or regional services that can help in our overall ambition to allow our residents and businesses to thrive.

QUESTION 8:

Clr Clarke to the Executive Member for Waste and Environment, Cllr Gordon Bambridge:

Sandy Lane Play area /Park, Dereham

Background

In my ward, Withburga there is only one play area managed and operated by BDC, in Sandy Lane , including a large area of grassland . The area adjoining the road (Sandy Lane), includes a small area running the length of the "park", a "ransom "strip, of land not in the ownership of Breckland as this was not registered when the land was acquired.

The Play area has recently been inspected and has been locked up as some play equipment may be unsafe / need replacing, following an inspection by BDC. The amount of "equipment "is very small – a climbing frame, and slide, and nearby just one seat.

There is ample space to expand this facility – including additional seating which would benefit the area which adjoins woodland, and also make better use of the area as a "park "potentially, not just as a play area, but for residents generally.

- 1) When was the play equipment first installed?
- 2) Has the equipment been replaced or upgraded at any time since installation?
- 3) When was it last formally inspected and at what frequency?
- 4) Will BDC undertake a survey about improving these facilities with residents, families and others?
- 5) Will BDC expedite the issue of the ransom strip, so that ownership of the entire land area can be discussed with potentially interested parties, once this is resolved? (e.g Dereham Town Council)

RESPONSE:

- 1) When was the play equipment first installed?

The equipment was installed circa. 20 years ago.

2) Has the equipment been replaced or upgraded at any time since installation?

In 2017, the safety surface was completely replaced, along with the swing seats, the seats on the springer and the spring closing system on the gate and maintenance work was carried out to the slide. Only routine maintenance has been required since.

3) When was it last formally inspected and at what frequency?

Weekly inspections are undertaken by Serco and Zurich Insurance inspect the area annually. The most recent annual inspection was carried out on 25th June 2021.

4) Will BDC undertake a survey about improving these facilities with residents, families and others?

We are willing to work with Dereham Town Council to understand the specific needs of the residents in this area to inform the future of this facility.

5) Will BDC expedite the issue of the ransom strip, so that ownership of the entire land area can be discussed with potentially interested parties, once this is resolved? (e.g Dereham Town Council)

The ownership of the strip of land does not need to be resolved to enable a transfer of this site for its intended use as an equipped play area. Any party that this land is transferred to is able to take the land with the same benefits and rights that the current owner (the Council) currently has i.e. access rights to the site for the continued use as an equipped play area. This is on the basis that the party that acquires the land continues to use it for its current use. The site is therefore still available to be transferred to the Town Council on this basis under the original aims of the Play Area Transfers project with the relevant commuted sum without the need to take any action regarding the strip of land.

QUESTION 9:

Cllr Birt to the Executive Member for Property & Projects, Cllr Hewett:

In a report 'year in review' to May's meeting of Swaffham Town Council, cabinet member Cllr Ian Sherwood repeated a policy statement about the proceeds of the sale of *The Green Britain Centre*

"With the income from the sale being reinvested in Swaffham for Sports and Leisure provision."

I submitted a written question at the January Council meeting addressed to Cllr Hewett after he made a very similar statement; that question was not fully answered but the published reply stated that only spending below £100,000 could be delegated to Cabinet.

Noting Cllr Atterwill's written question which made reference to an original investment in *The Green Britain Centre* being in the region of £12.5m, are the proceeds from the sale really less than £100,000 (less than 1%) to permit Cabinet delegation?

My original question from 21 Jan 2021 meeting still requires a full reply and is thus repeated:

- If the original investment was made with collective Breckland money, why should any future reinvestment only be made in Swaffham?
- Would such a policy limit achieving 'best value' for Breckland residents as a whole?
- Is justification and approval by a vote of Council required before such a policy is enacted?

RESPONSE:

The original questions on notice raised by Cllr Birt prior to the Council meeting on 21 January 2021 were answered as required and are published at the following location:

<https://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=117&MId=4627>

The answers provided in January for the Council meeting in January relate to the same questions raised here. The answer provided in January was as follows:

“A decision of Council is required to allocate reserves totalling over £100,000. Values less than this are delegated to Cabinet (£68,000 - £100,000) and officers (less than £68,000). No decision has been made on the allocation of the capital receipt from the sale of the Green Britain Centre. Indeed, the Council is yet to receive the said receipt. It should be noted that the Council has been successful in attracting a new business and employer to this site and the town at a challenging time. The development of the Green Britain Centre and its use for over 20 years has provided Swaffham with a local attraction, which has supported the visitor and wider economy of Swaffham. With the unfortunate withdrawal of the tenant - using it for that purpose - those benefits have reduced for the town. If the Council deemed it appropriate to do so and balanced against other priorities, they could allocate some or part of the funding.”

Since the above answer was provided the Council’s budget including the Capital Programme for 2021/22 has been approved at Council on 25 February 2021.

QUESTION 10:

Cllr Birt to the Executive Member for Customer, Digital & Performance, Cllr Robinson:

On 2 June I was notified that ‘a decision by ICT Manager has been published: Worksmart Booking System OD17 21.’

Upon inspection, I found the Companies House record of what I believed to be the company named in the decision notice, OccupEye Ltd (FM:Systems). This company had not filed accounts since 2019 and were about to be struck off.

I immediately informed the decision-making and executive officer and asked for a due diligence check. I received no response other than an out-of-office reply. It is unfortunate that I find it necessary to use this forum to pose a number of questions:

- Did I correctly identify the contact recipient on the Companies House register?
- Was a due diligence check performed prior to the decision announcement?
- Was the contract awarded to OccupEye Ltd (FM:Systems)?
- What measures are in place to ensure contracts are only awarded to fully compliant businesses?

RESPONSE:

OccupEye Limited is a small, dynamic business producing impressive software that closely met the needs of the WorkSmart initiative. In line with national guidance (Procurement Policy Note (PPN) [8/16](#): Standard Selection Questionnaire (SQ)) we adopted a self-certification process for all tendered as part of the tender process, and as the contract awarded to OccupEye Limited was well below the threshold for services in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 checks were limited on that self-certification basis.

After awarding the contract to OccupEye as best reflecting the needs of the council, a notice was served in the London Gazette indicating an intention to remove the company from the Companies House register due to late filing of accounts. We were aware of changes in ownership of the company and alterations of

filing dates, but the notice was served after the contract had been awarded. We were also aware of the ambition of the guidance (which specifically focus on new or entrepreneurial business) meaning that any checks needed to be balanced to the value of the contract, and in line with the proportionality principle in PPN 8/16 meaning that checks would be limited. Finally, we also were aware of the notice independently of Cllr Birt's observation but nonetheless were grateful for his diligence in bringing this to our attention.

OccupEye have since been taken off the "removals list" (the strike off action was discontinued as at 10 June) and understand their accounts will be filed very shortly. We have communicated with them to understand the reasons for late filing, and are happy to work with them moving forward, and in serving the contract that has been awarded to them. That said, and despite of the current 2015 guidance we have enhanced our standard supplier questionnaire further to make sure that our approach, particularly for smaller or more local businesses that may not have clearly defined compliance processes in place, balances support for those businesses and transparent due diligence. Where any concerns are highlighted, these will be investigated further before any contracts are awarded, small or otherwise.

QUESTION 11:

Cllr Birt to the Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Economic Development & Growth, Cllr Clausen:

At the 25-February Council meeting I asked a question without notice about the *New Homes Bonus*, as noted in the minutes I was content to receive a written reply.

At the 8 April Council meeting I asked when I was to get a reply as none had yet been received. The leader explained he had seen sight of the response and said he "will ensure it is passed on to you". The leader claimed "it may have gone to a different email address because you refuse to use Breckland equipment".

I still have not seen the response so this written question is in two distinct parts:

1. I repeat the original question in order to receive a publicly accessible response:
How much money had been collected in *New Homes Bonus* over the last 10-years in Carbrooke, Saham Toney and Watton?
2. The CEO invited me to return council IT equipment in 2019 after an officer admitted it was being actively monitored, so why would the original answer be sent to an unreadable email account?

RESPONSE:

Please find below the content of an email sent to Cllr Birt on 5 March 2021 following the Council meeting on the 25 February 2021.

Following on from the last full council which was held on the 25 February 2021 please find below the details to the New Homes Bonus.

New Homes Bonus Payments from Carbrooke Tax base changes

Background

New Homes Bonus (NHB) is calculated using the CTB1 Forms submitted October each year:

- *Number of dwellings on the valuation list Less the number of demolished dwellings. Compared to the same number the previous year. An increase creates NHB award, a decrease reduces the NHB award.*

- The number of dwellings that are classed as empty & have been empty for more than 6 months. Compared to the same number the previous year. A decrease creates NHB award, an increase reduces the NHB award.

This is based on the overall tax base changes and is not separated out by Parish, therefore the parish is simply contributing to the overall, sometimes in a positive way & sometimes negatively. It would not be fair to allocate NHB directly to parishes as some parishes would be a negative value.

NHB is only paid where the net increase is above the 'deadweight' percentage which is currently 0.4%. The deadweight took effect from 2017-18. The net increase above the deadweight is paid at the national average Band D Council Tax and Breckland receive 80% of the total. There is also a reward of £350 per property which is classed as affordable and Breckland receive 80% of this. In previous years there were legacy payment for future years (4 years in total), but this ended in 2020-21 and payments are now one year only with 2021-22 expected to be the final year of NHB.

There are many reasons for tax bases to change, so increases & decreases are not purely due to new homes being built. Tax bases go up or down for changes to Single Person Discounts occupations, LCTS occupations, etc. So NHB is not purely paid/reduced on new build homes.

The money to fund NHB originally came from reducing the RSG paid to local authorities, so it was topsliced from general Government funding to LA's, therefore it is reasonable to use NHB to fund general services (as RSG is used for), however at Breckland the NHB is currently set aside in the Inclusive Growth reserve for use on specific projects.

Carbrooke

Because we do not hold the NHB data by parish we have had to manually go back through years of records to piece together this information and have only been able to go back over 6 years. We also don't hold the affordable housing NHB element by parish so cannot include this.

Therefore, it is important to note that the numbers below are only an **indicative contribution** as, in practice, the NHB paid above the deadweight percentage is based on the overall tax base movement across Breckland, not the individual parish.

	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17
Year 6	0	0	23,984	23,984	23,984	23,984
Year 7	0	3,259	3,259	3,259	3,259	0
Year 8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Year 9	34,923	34,923	34,923	0	0	0
Year 10	0	29,423	0	0	0	0
Year 11	18,305	0	0	0	0	0
Indicative	53,227	67,605	62,166	27,243	27,243	23,984

It is Cllr Birt's personal choice as to whether he chooses to use the Council provided IT equipment and email address or not. The assertion around active monitoring is not one that we agree with and is misleading.

QUESTION 12:

Cllr Birt to the Executive Member for Planning, Leisure & Contracts, Cllr Sarah Suggitt:

The agreement between Breckland Council and Serco is an active contact which defines vitally important services affecting all the residents of Breckland. Despite repeated requests, why am I still not permitted to see it?

RESPONSE:

Councillors have the right to access information held by their authority where it is reasonably necessary to enable the member to properly perform their duties as a councillor. Concerning your particular request, you were duly provided with sufficient relevant extracts from the Serco contract to enable you fully to address the issues that you had raised and to properly perform your duties as a councillor. It was not reasonably necessary for you to be provided with a copy of the full Serco contract to enable you to do this.

QUESTION 13:

Clr Morton to the Executive Member for Economic Development & Growth, Clr Paul Claussen:

Significant work, including 18 supporting papers have been produced by the Norfolk Strategic Planning Member Forum project team to support the new Section 8, and new Agreement 19, on climate change in the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework. This includes a research paper on climate change in the planning system. The current Breckland plan does not demonstrate that its policies for low carbon construction, low energy homes, renewable energy, transport and the quantum and spatial distribution of the housing proposed, meet the required level for soundness and compliance with regulations in addressing climate change mitigation. For example, the plan currently does not demonstrate compliance with the legal duty for local plans to be designed to secure climate change mitigation under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. In physical and scientific terms, the policy gaps in the Breckland plan amount to significant tonnes of CO2 emissions from now to 2050 which could otherwise be prevented.

On the one hand, this is a very regrettable situation, on the other hand, this serious research in the NSPF, if applied now in the local plan review process, could go a long way to starting to correct the climate change issues in the reviewed plan, and ensuring future plan soundness and legal compliance. Will the Cabinet Member for Planning go back and ensure these issues are addressed in the plan review process. And especially that the findings and research of the NSPF on Climate Changes are applied to ensure legal and regulatory compliance?

RESPONSE:

Thank you for your question.

The Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF) provides a structure for tackling these planning issues across the county, especially those which have a strategic impact across local authority boundaries. It includes guidance relating to housing, economic growth, infrastructure and the environment.

The NSPF informs the Local Plans produced by all the authorities. The purpose of the work handled by the subgroup on climate change was to investigate what local plans could do in response to climate change and was instigated as a result of many local authorities, including Breckland, declaring climate change an emergency.

Across Norfolk, existing local plans did not address this issue fully particularly within the framework of a declared emergency. The purpose of this work was that it would be woven into local plan work going

forward. I can therefore confirm that the work of the NSPG, including the research paper on climate change in the planning system, will be considered by Breckland, together with any work undertaken by the District Council itself, as part of the review of the Local Plan.

It should be remembered that the current Breckland Local Plan was found sound by an Inspector after undergoing an Examination in Public and therefore meets all its legal requirements.

QUESTION 14:

Cllr Morton to the Executive Member for Economic Development & Growth, Cllr Paul Claussen:

Can the Cabinet member for Planning confirm what procedures are in place to ensure that Breckland Bridge developments are aligned to our Sustainability Pillars to achieve zero carbon by 2035. In particular will the forthcoming development at Litcham fully adopt these values and set an example to the wider community?

RESPONSE:

Thank you for your question. I am responding on behalf of my colleagues, Cllrs Hewett and Sherwood, as well as myself.

Breckland Bridge Ltd is a private limited company and as such its principal aim is the generation of commercial returns to shareholders through property development commercial activities. In fulfilling this role, it is driven by market forces and the strategies the company follows will always be profit driven.

However, the company is aware of the Council's Sustainability Strategy and more so the global property sector's ambition to achieve zero carbon targets which the company supports. Breckland Bridge's residential developments are designed to meet all current planning and building regulation standards in terms of energy efficiency, insulation, and requirements for sustainability. Where market forces allow, the company will seek to prioritise renewable energy sources although this is not always achievable within the constraints of its principal purpose.

As an example, at the company's first residential development in Mileham (where natural gas was not available) the company installed air source heat pumps which provide renewable energy for the domestic heating systems to some units and electric heating fuelled in part by solar PV panels to other units. For the company's next scheme in Colkirk it is planned to utilise air source heat pumps in all house types, together with solar PV panels to achieve a top EPC rating of A.

All planning applications are determined in accordance with the policies of the Breckland Local Plan and all other material considerations, including the guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The application at Litcham was determined by Planning Committee on this basis.

QUESTION 15:

Cllr Wickerson to the Executive Member for Executive Member for Property & Projects, Cllr Paul Hewett:

As we are now some 4 months past the previously agreed deadline for the resolution of the financial issues with Barnham Broom and there has been no subsequent report, can the Executive Member for Property and Projects please update Members on the current position.

RESPONSE:

On 27 April 2021 the Executive Member for Property and Projects issued an update to all Members outlining the current position with this situation with this asset. The information provided to Members in April was commercially confidential. The current situation remains similar to the update provided in April. When there is a material change to the situation a further updated will be provided to all Members.

QUESTION 16:

Clr Wickerson to the Executive Member for Housing, Health & Communities, Cllr Alison Webb:

At a previous meeting when a representative of Flagship gave Members a report, it was agreed that a list of all Flagship managed properties would be provided to respective Ward Members. Can the Executive Member for Housing please provide an update on the status of said information as nothing has been yet been received.

RESPONSE:

Flagship have now merged with two other Registered Providers of Social Housing (Victory Housing and Suffolk Housing) under the Flagship Group. This merger was significantly delayed due to the cyber-attack and they have only recently been in a position to finalise this transition. The Housing Manager has contacted them to request this information in line with their commitment to provide a detailed stock list for each Councillor at the Overview & Scrutiny Commission meeting.