

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

**Held on Thursday, 12 February 2009 at 2.15 pm in the
Anglia Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr J.P. Cowen (Chairman)	Mr M.A. Kiddle-Morris
Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mr R.G. Kybird
Mr A.J. Byrne	Mr K. Martin
Mr K.S. Gilbert	Mrs S.M. Matthews
Mr R.F. Goreham (Vice-Chairman)	Mr J.D. Rogers
Mr J.R. Gretton	Mr B. Rose
Mrs D.K.R. Irving	Mr A.C. Stasiak
Mr A.P. Joel	

Also Present

Mr S. Askew	Lady Fisher
Mrs J. Ball	Mr J.P. Labouchere

In Attendance

Keith Eccles	- Building Services Manager
Jason Elliott	- Spatial Information Manager
Grahame Green	- Community Safety Officer
Lesley Heywood	- Procurement Officer
Andrea Long	- Environmental Planning Manager
Mark Stokes	- Strategic Director (Services)
Ian Vargeson	- Member Services Manager
Elaine Wilkes	- Senior Member Services Officer

11/09 MINUTES

(a) 8 January 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(b) 19 January 2009 - Special joint meeting with Audit Committee

It was agreed that, while these minutes reflected the essence of the meeting and the recommendation as passed, it would be helpful to have a summary of some of the key points of detail from the meeting, in particular relating to certain aspects of the outsourcing proposals and the responses to questions on staff issues (for example, TUPE arrangements).

On this basis, the minutes of the special joint meeting held on 19 January 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

12/09 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. S.R. Miller and Messrs. M. Broughton and T. Leader.

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13/09 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The following declarations were made:

- Mr. J.P. Cowen – Personal interest as Ward Member in respect of agenda item 9.
- Mr. K.S. Gilbert – Personal interest as an employee of Royal Mail in respect of agenda item 7.

14/09 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

The following members were in attendance:

- Mrs. J. Ball
- Lady Fisher – Executive Member for Governance
- Mr. J.P. Labouchere

15/09 WORK PROGRAMME (AGENDA ITEM 6)

The Member Services Manager presented the report, which outlined a work programme for the Commission for 2009-10, based on best practice, covering:

- Key strands:
 - i) Partnership scrutiny
 - ii) Holding the decision makers to account
 - iii) Performance monitoring
 - iv) Contract monitoring
- Stand-alone (minor) reviews by the Commission
- Reports of Task and Finish Groups
- Annual reports
- Pre-scrutiny items (i.e. key decisions)
- Standing items (e.g. call-ins, items arising under Councillor Call for Action (once mechanism adopted), Corporate Forward Plan, OSC work programme for forward planning purposes)

Themed topics identified for the 2009 Programme and Task and Finish Groups, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, were:

1. Local Development Framework (LDF)
2. Health
3. Waste and Recycling
4. Transport and Parking
5. Rural Issues Agenda
6. Sewage and Flooding
7. Youth Issues

The Council on 29 January 2009 had approved the new scrutiny arrangements and protocols, together with the appointment of Messrs. M. Kiddle-Morris, R.G. Kybird and J.D. Rogers as the three Task and Finish Chairmen under the revised arrangements. The appointment of members to Task and Finish Groups would be drawn from non-Executive members of the Council by the Task and Finish Chairmen.

It was proposed that there should be a standing Task and Finish Group for the LDF, whose membership would be drawn in the main from the

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members of the former Policy Development and Review Panel 1 to ensure that their knowledge and experience on the subject was retained. Mr. M. Kiddle-Morris would be the Chairman of this Group and he explained that he felt that there was a need for additional representation on the Group covering the Attleborough area (previously there had been only one Attleborough member on the Panel). Mr. Kiddle-Morris would, therefore, be contacting members for Attleborough and the surrounding area to discuss appointments.

The opportunity to be able to draw on external expertise for the LDF Group would also be taken up where appropriate, for example to involve members and officers of the Thetford Growth Point team or the Attleborough Area Action Plan team.

The need to establish the LDF Group as soon as possible to meet the LDF timetable was noted.

In answer to a question, it was noted that there was no statutory requirement for Task and Finish Groups to be politically balanced and that for small Groups of, say, five or six members there was likely to be little or no scope to do so given the current political balance of the Council. However, it was accepted that it was relevant to maintain the political balance when dealing with issues covering the Thetford area but that for the Attleborough area, say, this would not apply as all the members were of one party.

Another member highlighted the need to ensure the rural wards were well represented on the LDF group, as he felt the rural parishes could be more adversely affected than the towns by the impact of the LDF policies.

Members also accepted that any external or expert persons co-opted to Groups should be on a non-voting basis.

It was proposed that the three Task and Finish Group Chairmen should meet to determine the remaining programme of reviews.

So far as the draft OSC Work Programme set out in Appendix 2 of the report was concerned, Lady Fisher suggested that as she and Mr. Askew shared responsibility for the Leisure Contract monitoring, they both attend the meeting on 26 March in place of Mr. Claussen.

On the question of Executive Member attendance, it was explained that as well as a standing general item for Executive Members to attend to speak and answer questions on key ongoing issues and policies within their portfolios, the procedures also provided for the relevant Executive Member to attend for specific matters under review. Members felt there should also be a requirement for the relevant Director/Service Manager to attend for items.

It was also suggested agenda items should, where feasible, be matched with the attending Executive Member.

Following the successful election recently of the new Youth Council, members endorsed a proposal that they should be actively engaged in the scrutiny process. It was confirmed that discussions were taking place on the way forward, including looking at the possibility of fitting

meetings into the school timetable and venues, and Mrs. Irving, the Council's Young People's Champion, welcomed members' endorsement of the new Youth Council.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the OSC Work Programme (including the rotation of venues) as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be approved, subject to
 - the substitution of Lady Fisher and Mr. S. Askew as the attending Executive Members for the meeting on 26 March 2009 in place of Mr. P. Claussen
 - where appropriate, agenda items being matched to the attending Executive Member's portfolio
 - the relevant Directors/Service Managers be required to attend for consideration of review items
- (2) an LDF Task and Finish Group be established on the basis of the membership of the former Policy Development and Review Panel 1, to include a proportionate increase in the number of members representing the Attleborough area;
- (3) the use of external or expert co-optees, where appropriate, be endorsed, such membership to be on a non-voting basis;
- (4) the remaining programme for Task and Finish Group reviews be determined at a meeting of the three Group Chairmen.

16/09 POLICY FOR LOCAL LAND & PROPERTY GAZETTEER, INCORPORATING STREET NAMING & NUMBERING (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The Environmental Planning Manager presented the report and explained that the various issues regarding street naming and numbering procedures raised previously by the Commission were addressed in Appendix B of the report.

In response to questions, the following additional points were noted:

- The new guidance included provision for checks to be made for the supply of information on street naming and numbering to the emergency services.
- The provision of shop/retail property names for the benefit of emergency services would be updated through changes in NDR and Council Tax information wherever reasonably possible but it was acknowledged that this could not cover every eventuality. Members supported the use of numbers on new shop/retail developments.
- The LLPG and street naming and numbering functions were included under the proposed externalisation of planning and building control services.

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<p>The proposed solutions to the earlier issues that members had raised were noted and were considered acceptable.</p> <p>Members endorsed the provisions for flexibility in regard to street naming and the close liaison with developers and the local councils. Liaison with developers was felt to be particularly relevant to avoid the problems of unauthorised or unknown street names being used on developments prior to properties being occupied.</p> <p><u>RECOMMEND</u> to Cabinet and the Council that the Local Land and Property Gazetteer Policy, incorporating Street Naming and Numbering, be adopted and the solutions to the issues as set out in appendix B of the report be approved.</p>	Andrea Long, Jason Elliott
<p><u>17/09 COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION (AGENDA ITEM 8)</u></p>	
<p>The Member Services Manager explained that since this report had been drafted, the suggested approach did not now appear to be in line with the emerging Government's guidelines on the matter. It was therefore proposed that the report be deferred to enable further consideration to be given in the light of the Government's guidelines, which were anticipated to be published on 23 February 2009.</p> <p>Lady Fisher circulated a summary sheet taken from the Improvement and Development Agency's website giving an update on the White Paper, which she felt raised a number of concerns that the Council would need to take into account.</p> <p>Two further issues not covered in the report were also raised for further consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Any Call for Action needed to be to the benefit of the District as a whole.▪ The implications for the Council should it not accept a Call for Action on a scheme the Council, bearing in mind there was an onus on the Council to give a response on why a matter would not be taken forward.	
<p><u>RESOLVED</u> to defer consideration of this matter to a future meeting so that the Government's guidelines can be taken into account, together with the additional issues noted above.</p>	Mark Broughton
<p><u>18/09 STOW BEDON PAYPHONE (AGENDA ITEM 9)</u></p>	
<p>The Chairman declared a personal interest in this item as Ward Member for Stow Bedon.</p> <p>Mr. M. Kiddle-Morris presented the report of the Task and Finish Group, who recommended that a formal objection be made to BT over the proposed removal of this payphone and that it be reinstated as a card-only operation.</p> <p>The Chairman explained the reasons why he felt it was important that this kiosk should be retained, the details of which were as set out in the report. In addition, he stated that other kiosks in the area had been allowed to be removed on the basis that this box would be retained. He</p>	

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thought it was notable that BT appeared to have made no attempt to repair the kiosk since it was vandalised in 2007 and had removed the equipment. He also stressed the point that BT had a statutory duty to provide a universal service in rural areas, which, he felt, was relevant to the fact that this kiosk was sited close to the Pingo Trail and would therefore be an important facility for visitors to the site.

Members supported the findings of the Task and Finish Group and endorsed the view of the importance to the rural areas of having a good payphone network to serve the needs of the whole District.

It was suggested consideration should be given to scrutinising the issue again with BT representatives in attendance once more.

RESOLVED that a formal objection be lodged with BT against the proposed removal of the payphone at Stow Bedon and requesting that it be reinstated as a card-only operation.

Mark
Broughton

19/09 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 10)

The arrangements for the next meeting on 26 March 2009 were noted, subject to confirmation of venue as proposed under minute item 15/09 above.

20/09 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (AGENDA ITEM 11)

It was explained that this item was exempt due to the fact that negotiations were still ongoing at this stage and the report contained commercially sensitive information.

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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

21/09 PROCUREMENT OF A NEW CCTV SERVICE (AGENDA ITEM 12)

It was explained that the existing system was nearing the end of its life and was becoming more expensive to maintain and the objective of the review was to enable the Council to deliver an improved and enhanced system, taking advantage of new technical solutions and to seek a service that could be tailored to the Council's needs. This would also support the Council to continue to meet its priorities in terms of community safety.

Details of the review process and the evaluation of the bidders have been given to the Commission, from which it was noted that a preferred bidder had been identified.

In answer to questions, it was noted that the proposal provided that:

- The existing control centre would be upgraded
- There would be opportunities for the contractor to work with the business community

- A focus group had been established for the purpose of the review and had worked closely with the Town Councils and the various bidders
- There would be opportunities for the Town Councils or other neighbouring authorities to take up options to buy in to the scheme
- Protocols and controls relating to Police access and use of the system were under discussion
- The system included technology capable of serving rural areas
- The tenders were within the capital budget. Revenue costs were in the process of being finalised

Various technical details of the proposal were given.

The Commission noted the report and no additional issues were raised for Cabinet's consideration.

RECOMMEND to Cabinet to note that the Overview and Scrutiny Commission endorses the recommendation for the award of the CCTV Services contract as set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report.

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Mark
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The meeting closed at 3.55 pm

CHAIRMAN