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To The Members of the Council

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Date 22 May 2009

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT

Dear Sir/Madam

COUNCIL - THURSDAY 28 MAY 2009

I refer to the agenda for the above-mentioned meeting and enclose the following items:

Item No	Report Title	Page Nos
5.	Cabinet Minutes - 12 May 2009 Unconfirmed minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 12 May 2009.	69 - 87
10.	General Purposes Committee - 13 May 2009 Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 13 May 2009.	88 - 90
13.	Moving Thetford Forward Board - 14 May 2009 Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Moving Thetford Forward Board held on 14 May 2009.	91 - 100
15.	Elizabeth House Renewable Energy Project Report of the Strategic Director, Services.	101 - 107

Yours faithfully

Helen McAleer

Committee Officer

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

CABINET

**Held on Tuesday, 12 May 2009 at 9.30 am in
Norfolk Room, The Committee Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr J.W. Nunn (Chairman)	Mr W.H.C. Smith
Mr S. Askew	Mrs A.L. Steward
Mr P.D. Claussen	Mrs T. Hewett
Lady Fisher	

Also Present

Mr S.G. Bambridge	Councillor E. Gould
Mrs M.P. Chapman-Allen	Mr P. J. Hewett
Mr J.P. Cowen	Mr A.P. Joel
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mr J.P. Labouchere
Mr K.S. Gilbert	Mr W.P. Borrett
Councillor E. Gould	Mrs G. Bannister
Mr P.J. Hewett	Mr D. Spencer
	Mr D. Jolley

In Attendance

Ian Vargeson	- Member Services Manager
Robert Barlow	- Assistant Director (Governance)
Julie Britton	- Senior Member Services Officer
Phil Daines	- Development Services Manager
Mark Finch	- Head of Finance
Anita Brennan	- Strategic Housing Manager
Trisha Bailey	- Commercial Property Manager
Lindy Warmer	- Economic Development Officer
Trevor Holden	- Chief Executive
Tim Leader	- Deputy Chief Executive
Stephen James	- Policy and Performance Manager
Robert Leigh	- Head of Marketing and Communications
Steve Udberg	- Asset Manager
Gill Bannister	-
David Spencer	-
Dave Jolley	-

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34/09 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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35/09 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

An apology for absence was received from Mr R Goreham.

36/09 DECLARATION OF INTEREST (AGENDA ITEM 4)

The following declarations were made:

- Lady K Fisher declared a personal interest in Agenda item 7 by virtue of her being on the YMCA Board. She also wished for it to be noted that a personal interest would also be declared if matters relating to Thetford Growth Point were discussed.
- Messrs W Smith and P Claussen declared personal interests in Agenda item 19, Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership, the nature of which related to their positions on the Partnership Board.
- Mr P Cowen declared a personal interest in Agenda item 16, Capita contract, by virtue of his profession as an architect in practice.

37/09 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 5)

Messrs G Bambridge, B Borrett, P Cowen, P Duigan, K Gilbert, P Hewett, A Joel and J Labouchere and Mesdames M Chapman-Allen and E Gould.

38/09 ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER 2007/08 (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The Policy and Performance Manager introduced Gill Bannister from the Audit Commission who was in attendance to present the Annual Audit Inspection letter. She informed Members that this would be the last time the letter would be presented in its current format.

The report drew on the findings and conclusions from the audit of the Council and from any inspections that had been undertaken in the last year. The letter included the Commission's review on how well the Council had progressed and the auditor's assessment of how well the Council had managed its finances.

The main messages for the Council were as follows:

- Breckland Council was continuing to improve its performance although the rate of improvement had slowed. A higher than average proportion of the Council's performance indicators was amongst the best performers and most local priorities were being effectively tackled.
- Crime levels were generally decreasing and the Council was showing stronger community leadership. Services were becoming more accessible to different groups within the community, and were better tailored to their needs.
- Strategic planning was strengthening with clear links being made

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between corporate, community and county plans. Performance management was robust and the Council had capacity to deliver its plans.

- An unqualified audit opinion on the 2007/08 statement of accounts and certified the completion of the audit had been issued.
- It was concluded that, in all significant respects, the Council had made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2008.
- The Council had been assessed as performing at level 3 in the 'use of resources' judgement which represented a significant improvement and indicated that the Council was performing well.

The action needed by the Council was as follows:

- to continue to implement improvement plans to meet its key service priorities including those highlighted in the direction of the travel report;
- to exercise strong governance and financial management to combat the pressures brought by the current economic climate; and
- to continue to exercise strong governance through the period of uncertainty as the proposals for Norfolk local government re-organisation were clarified.

Breckland Council had 43% of its performance indicators amongst the highest performing for district councils in 2007/08; this was 10% above the national average.

A number of community events had been organised under the 'Pride in Breckland' banner; however, it was unclear what impact this had had on achieving the Council's main aims.

In 2007/08 the Council was amongst the worst performers for payment of invoices; however, the initial problems with the new electronic ordering system regarding invoice payments had since been addressed.

Support had been provided to specific areas and business sectors, for example through the major Rural Enterprise Valley project. This had been completed and had met most of its aims in terms of support for the motorsport and advance engineering sector based along the A11 corridor. The outcomes had been the sharing of best practice, increased turnover and creation of a substantial number of jobs. The Audit Commission wished for further updates on this matter.

Council performance in helping to ensure sufficient affordable decent housing and dealing with homelessness had been mixed. The number of affordable homes being built in the district had been well above average but the percentage of private sector homes vacant for six months or more

**Robert
Walker**

**Mark
Stanton**

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<p>had been worse than the district council average in 2007/08. The number of households accepted as priority homeless had decreased but was still above the national average. Despite the Council's efforts, homelessness remained a challenge; however, the Commission would be looking to assess the recent position on this matter taking the economic climate into account.</p>	Anita Brennan
<p>Sickness absence had increased year on year and had been worse than average in 2007/08; however, the new data that had been received showed that there had been some improvement.</p>	
<p>The Council had recently been awarded the Member Development Charter in recognition of its provision of the support, skills and training for councillors. More attention would be paid to this in future by the Audit Commission.</p>	Stephen McGrath
<p>Norfolk was currently subject to a review by the Boundary Committee into the future of local government across the county. There was a risk that improvement levels might not be sustained if this went ahead; the Audit Commission would be looking for a smooth transition if it did so.</p>	Tim Leader
<p>The Executive Member for Transformation thanked Gill Bannister and the Audit Commission for a very fair and good report. He also thanked the Chief Executive and Breckland Officers for their assistance and co-operation throughout the audit inspection, particularly the Performance and Finance teams. He was extremely pleased by the overall assessment score of 3.</p>	
<p>The Chief Executive echoed the aforementioned comments.</p>	
<p>The Audit Inspection letter was otherwise noted.</p>	
<p>39/09 <u>ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN 2009/10 (AGENDA ITEM 8)</u></p>	
<p>The Policy and Performance Manager was in attendance and explained the purpose of the Annual Delivery Plan.</p>	
<p>The Executive Member for Planning and the Environment queried the budget information on page 28 of the Plan. She asked for her budget to be separated from the Transformation Portfolio. The Assistant Director for Governance advised that confirmation of the Capita decision would mean that all of the Council's budgets would have to be re-worked. He would; however, get back to the Executive Member with a response.</p>	Robert Barlow
<p><u>Options</u></p>	
<p>To approve, reject or amend the Annual Delivery Plan.</p>	
<p><u>Reasons</u></p>	
<p>The Audit Commission require Councils to have in place robust performance management systems.</p>	Helen McAleer, Ian Vargeson, Stephen James
<p><u>RECOMMEND</u> to Council that the Annual Delivery Plan for 2009/10 be</p>	

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approved.

40/09 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008/09 (AGENDA ITEM 9)

A revised Capital Programme report had been circulated.

Capital investment played a key role in helping the Council to achieve its long term objectives. The report showed the out-turn on capital schemes in the 2008/09 Capital Programme along with the resources used to fund the programme.

The Executive Member for the Governance Portfolio introduced the report and requested that Members consider the Capital Programme prior to recommendation to Council.

The Assistant Director for Governance outlined the key issues contained in the report.

Referring to paragraph 4.1 of the report, under Planning and Building Control, the under spend of £27,500 was requested to be rolled over on a *scheme by scheme basis* into 2009/10 for work to be completed on the GEODSYS and TLC project.

In addition to items noted in section 4 of the report, there had been requests for other proposed changes to the programme including work in progress. These schemes had been added to the 2009/10 Capital programme as it was recognised that not all schemes finished at the end of each financial year.

The actual capital receipts in 2008/09 (6.1 of the report) now amounted to £398,802 as more money had recently been found.

The Executive Member for the Transformation Portfolio and the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission were pleased with the information presented and complimented the Finance team on a much more legible report.

Options

Members might wish to suggest alternative arrangements for amendments and associated financing to the 2008/09 Capital Programme.

The reason for the recommendation would ensure the Capital Programme for 2008/09 was amended along with the necessary funding.

RECOMMEND to Council that

- 1) the Capital Programme for 2009/10 be approved;
- 1) the associated financing be amended to reflect the items under paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 of the report; and
- 2) the funding as detailed in Appendix B of the report be approved to

**Robert
Barlow**

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finance the Programme for 2008/09.

41/09 CONCESSIONARY BUS FARES (AGENDA ITEM 10)

The report provided an update on recent changes to the concessionary bus fares scheme and sought clarification on areas where discretionary concessions might be applied.

The Executive Member for the Governance Portfolio explained that although various changes had been made to the scheme, she hoped that she would have the Members' support as the scheme was of great benefit to council tax payers particularly to those in rural areas.

Some services that had previously been mandatory under the national scheme had now become discretionary, in that the district could make its own decision whether to grant a concession to journeys starting within their district.

A Member asked whether the Council could provide a new concessionary flexi bus service in the south of Attleborough as he had concerns with the amount of buses that had been withdrawn from around the Attleborough area as a whole. He also asked that the Council supported a National Express coach from Attleborough to Thetford and to highlight the fact that it would be concessionary.

The Head of Finance explained that there had been a number of changes to the way in which the costs of the Norfolk scheme were allocated. He asked that the surplus budget be removed to assist the Council's efficiency plan, leaving sufficient funds to support the schemes outlined in the report.

The National Express coach route operating between Thetford and Norwich had allowed concessionary bus pass holders to travel free of charge since the new national scheme was introduced. This scheme, however, now fell outside of the new guidelines and authorities had been requested to confirm whether they intended to continue to allow this concession. The costs of granting a concession on this route were unknown, as the coach operator had never charged authorities for this service; therefore, the Council had not incurred any costs so far. As a result, Breckland Council did not hold data to help forecast usage. The Head of Finance explained that he would try to obtain some figures and would also keep a close eye on the numbers using it.

**Mark
Finch**

Another Member said that he would find it very useful if the Council supported a flexibus/connect bus in his area (the Eynsford Ward), as public transport facilities in these particular areas were minimal.

The Chairman agreed that there were rural deprivation issues in Breckland and that residents should be allowed to access the main bus arteries. He suggested that the budget should be held in abeyance whilst further investigations took place with regard to the National Express coach matter.

The Deputy Leader felt that the Council should be careful with how it

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allocated these monies as Breckland had, in the past, received the lowest level of funding for public transport from Norfolk County Council even though Breckland had the highest level of elderly living in the area.

Options

- To remove the surplus budget to assist the Council's efficiency plan.
- To grant discretionary concessions to allow the continuation of concessions that were previously in the statutory scheme (advantages and disadvantages had been set out in the report at Appendix A). All concessions encourage the use of public transport and support environmental objectives by providing alternative means of transport to private cars as well as supporting the development of prosperous communities.
- Not to grant these discretionary concessions.

Reasons

- To aid budget management and reallocation of surplus resources.
- To clarify instructions issued to the bus operators and the scheme administrator.
- Granting of the concessions would support the Council's Strategic Business Plan and help it develop flourishing rural communities by improving access to services for people who lived in villages, especially those who are older, disabled or suffer from health problems. It would ensure that people who lived in villages enjoyed reasonable access to basic services.

RECOMMEND to Council that:

- 1) the surplus budget be reallocated to assist the Council's efficiency plan conditional upon the need to fund discretionary enhancements to the community transport scheme;
- 2) the concession for eligible pass holders to use the Thetford to Norwich National Express coach service be allowed;
- 3) the flexibus services be continued to attract concessionary travel even though these services no longer form part of the national statutory scheme; and
- 4) concessions be allowed to continue to operate from 8.30 prior to the core start time of the statutory scheme.

**Ian
Vargeson,
Mark
Finch,
Helen
McAleer**

**42/09 BRECKLAND COUNCIL-OWNED LAND AT CORONATION TERRACE,
CASTON (AGENDA ITEM 11)**

The Executive Member for the Economic and Housing Portfolio presented the report which concerned a request to transfer two areas of Breckland Council-owned land at Coronation terrace, Caston to Caston Parish Council at nil consideration to be retained as amenity areas for the benefit

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of the community.

Option 1

That these two areas of Breckland Council-owned land at Coronation Terrace, Caston be transferred a nil consideration to Caston Parish Council, subject to a covenant being imposed restricting the use of these areas to amenity purposes only and that the legal costs associated with such transfer(s) be borne by Caston Parish Council.

Option 2

That these two areas of Breckland Council-owned land at Coronation Terrace, Caston be transferred, at or above the District Valuer's valuation, to Caston Parish Council subject to a covenant being imposed restricting the use of these areas of land to amenity purposes only and that the legal costs associated with such transfer(s) be borne by Caston Parish Council.

Option 3

That these two areas of Breckland Council-owned land at Coronation Terrace, Caston be sold on the open market thus receiving a minimum income of £1,950.00 plus VAT.

Option 4

That these two areas of Breckland Council-owned land at Coronation Terrace, Caston remain within Breckland Council's ownership.

Reason

The parish would like these areas to remain as green space for the village use. The Parish Council were currently planning a village enhancement scheme with new plants, bins etc. If these areas of land could be included it would provide a welcoming entrance to the village.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the transfer of the two areas of Breckland Council-owned land at Coronation Terrace, Caston to Caston Parish Council be approved at nil consideration;
- 2) a covenant be imposed restricting the use of these areas of land to amenity purposes only; and
- 3) the legal costs associated with such a transfer be borne by Caston Parish Council.

Zoe Footer

43/09 BARNHAM CROSS ESTATE, THETFORD - COUNCIL-OWNED LAND AT BEECH CLOSE (AGENDA ITEM 12)

The Commercial Property Manager presented the report which sought Cabinet's approval for the transfer of three areas of Council-owned land at Beech Close, Thetford, on the Barnham Cross Estate to Peddars Way

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Housing Association at nil consideration. Breckland Council and Peddars Way Housing Association were currently working in partnership to regenerate and enhance this estate, maximising the use of the garage blocks, garage forecourts, off street parking areas and amenity areas and the land adjacent to the houses.

The Executive Member for the Transformation Portfolio felt that this would prevent inconvenience to other car users if approved.

Option 1

That these areas of Council-owned land at Beech Close, Thetford be transferred, at nil consideration, to Peddars Way Housing Association to allow these areas of land to be used to create additional car parking provision.

Option 2

That these areas of Council-owned land at Beech Close, Thetford be transferred, at or above the District Valuer's valuation to Peddars Way Housing Association to allow these areas of land to be used to create additional car parking provision.

Option 3

That these areas of Council-owned land at Beech Close, Thetford remain within Breckland Council's ownership.

Reasons

- The Council would lose responsibility for these areas of land at Beech Close, Thetford.
- To support the regeneration and enhancement of the Barnham Cross Estate in Thetford.
- To reduce off-street parking and illegal parking on open space.

RESOLVED that, the three areas of Council-owned land at Beech Close, Thetford, be transferred, at nil consideration, to Peddars Way Housing Association to allow these areas of land to be used to create additional car parking provision.

Zoe Footer

44/09 FINANCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY (AGENDA ITEM 13)

The Strategic Housing Manager presented the report which invited Members to consider and agree the Financial Inclusion Strategy for Breckland and recommend it to Council for approval.

This Strategy would set out the issues and extent of financial exclusion nationally and locally and identify the work currently happening across the District to promote financial inclusion and highlight any recommendations for improving financial awareness and solutions to reducing the impact of financial inclusion.

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Options

- 1) To agree to adopt the Strategy for financial inclusion would demonstrate the Council's priority to improve the quality of life of residents currently facing severe hardship due to unemployment, reduction in income and loss of their homes. The current financial climate had touched every resident in some way. This Strategy enabled an opportunity to strengthen partnerships to deliver appropriate services to Breckland's residents.
- 2) Not to agree to adopt the Strategy would prevent a coordinated planned approach to service delivery for those requiring financial support. It would undermine the partnerships that have been developed and demonstrate to residents that the Council did not recognise the difficulties that they might be facing in the current climate.

Reasons

This would be the first Financial Inclusion Strategy in Norfolk. It aimed to build strong partnerships to deliver services to a cross section of the community. Financial hardship did not just affect social housing tenants; it impacted on the young, the old, homeowners, those in work as well as those out of work.

The Strategy was a positive reaction from the Strategic Housing team on the impact on their service from those experiencing financial hardship. Having a Strategy in place would enable the Housing team to have a platform to make funding bids to secure resources where actions needed to be delivered outside of the budget constraints.

RECOMMEND to Council that the Financial Inclusion Strategy and associated action plan be adopted.

**Anita
Brennan,
Helen
McAleer,
Ian
Vargeson**

**45/09 HOUSING ACCESS IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
(AGENDA ITEM 14)**

The report requested Cabinet's permission to use the external funding from Norfolk County Council Adult Social Services and Norfolk Supporting People to appoint the temporary post of a Housing Access Improvement and Development Officer.

Options

To approve or not to approve the funding for temporary post.

The reason for the recommendation was that at the General Purposes Committee meeting on 1st April 2009, it was resolved that, subject to the funding being approved, a temporary Housing Access Improvement and Development Officer be appointed

The risks of not appointing the temporary Housing Access Improvement and Development Officer were as follows:

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- Failure to deliver the recommendations of the Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy
- Reputational damage with other key partners in the statutory and voluntary and service user sector
- Failure to deliver key outcomes for vulnerable client groups
- Failure to capitalise on funding and accommodation opportunities for this client group, impacting on delivery against LAA indicators 151 and 152
- Missed opportunity to demonstrate the Council's contribution to the wider Comprehensive Community Assessment agenda.

RESOLVED that the external funding from Norfolk County Council Adult Social Services and Norfolk Supporting People be used to appoint a temporary Housing Access Improvement and Development Officer for a two year fixed term to deliver the outcomes identified in the Housing Strategy 2008 for people with physical and sensory impairments.

**Anita
Brennan**

**46/09 BRECKLAND ENTERPRISE & LEARNING ACCOUNT (BELA 3)
(AGENDA ITEM 15)**

The report sought Cabinet's approval for £20,000 funding to be released from the match funding reserve to enhance and enable Phase 3 of the ongoing Breckland Enterprise Learning Account (BELA) project which offered small grants of up to £500 to micro businesses based within the Breckland District. The project had recently been awarded £10,000 from the Breckland Partnership to enable Phase 2 and the Board had recently agreed a further £5,000 towards Phase 3.

The Economic Development Officer explained that Appendix 1 of the report highlighted how many businesses had benefited from such grants. This was considered to be good public relations for the Council as it was actually giving businesses something rather than taking away. In response to a question asked at a previous Executive Board meeting, Members were informed that the total required from Breckland Match Funding Reserve equated to 38.46%.

The Executive Member for the Transformation Portfolio was in strong support of the recommendation as he felt that small grants of up to £500 would be most valuable to small businesses particularly in the current climate.

The Economic Development Team were congratulated

Option 1

Members agree to funding the initiative to the full amount of £20,000 to enable an additional 50 (minimum) start up micro businesses across the Breckland District to directly benefit from the funding available thereby

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ensuring their needs were met especially during these challenging times, and progress towards meeting the Council's own strategic aims.

Option 2

Members agree to fund the initiative to a lesser amount which would result in diminished outputs and outcomes for Breckland based start up and micro businesses.

Option 3

Members decline to agree funding to enable the project to continue. If this was the case the project would diminish but would continue to run with the £5,000 awarded by the Breckland Partnership which would enable 10 further businesses to be assisted.

Reasons

Additional funding for this initiative would help maximise the opportunity for start up and micro businesses to obtain skills development, business support, essential items of equipment, advice and guidance at a time when businesses such as these were at their most vulnerable.

If the funding was not approved it would result in the subsequent scaling down of this initiative.

There was no other grant scheme like BELA available to businesses. If Members declined to agree the funding the one small form of grant aid the business community could access would be gone along with the opportunities that it offered.

RESOLVED that £20,000 from the Match Funding Reserve (MFR) be approved to deliver the project to enable the Council & Breckland Partnership to assist a minimum of 50 businesses through a total fund of £25,000.

**Lindy
Warmer**

47/09 CAPITA CONTRACT (AGENDA ITEM 16)

David Spencer and Dave Jolley from Capita Symonds were in attendance for this item.

This item had been referred to Cabinet for a decision having regard to a range of issues that had emerged during final negotiations and due diligence that, in the opinion of the Deputy Chief Executive, had a material impact on the five criteria against which the contract was to be evaluated, and the risks associated with proceeding to execute the agreement.

The report updated Members on these issues and the essential features of, and the risks associated with, the final draft of a contract between the Council and Capita Symonds Limited.

Specific issues related to:

- securing substantial efficiency savings;

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- generating significant income;
- demonstrable improvements to the quality of service;
- provisions for the return of s strong planning and building control service upon the termination of the contract; and
- pension costs

There were concerns of how projected savings could be measured and whether the Council would end up paying more for services if a specification of work Capita would have to complete was not comprehensive enough. There were also concerns about the legality of the delegated planning decisions and what would happen if the contract was terminated.

The Deputy Chief Executive was satisfied that the contractual arrangements that had been agreed with Capita had been met. However, this did not necessarily mean that the Council should enter into the agreement. It had become apparent that the negotiation process demonstrated that it would be impossible to devise a simple, robust mechanism for tracking the delivery of savings over time as the baseline and subsequent service levels demanded and provided would change. This was not to say that savings would not be delivered; they could not, however, be identified with sufficient precision to be incorporated into the contract. Members therefore needed to satisfy themselves that the mechanism for controlling costs as volumes changed would promote delivery of more efficient services than could otherwise be provided in-house over the same period. Officers believed that if the service did remain in-house, it would be possible to formulate a management plan with a cost profile that would deliver savings over the 15 year period broadly comparable to those offered by Capita as guaranteed efficiency savings.

Members were informed that the arrangements for making delegated decisions had been agreed to the Deputy Chief Executive's satisfaction. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that normally delegated decisions were made by the Head of Planning or one of his two principal officers. In future, Capita's agreed arrangement was that those officers would not now be able to make decisions on behalf of the Council. They would instead have to prepare a notice of decision, complete with reasons and any conditions together with a Proforma report for the Deputy Chief Executive and he, or an officer authorised by him, would make the decision.

If the contract was signed, Capita would provide all of the services that were presently provided by the authority's Planning and Building Control teams, including the land charges service. The remit that had been given to Capita had been described in service specifications that form part of the contract. The service specifications were intended to capture all the activities planning and building control currently carried out but it was important to bear in mind that it would be impossible to specify what they did in a comprehensive and precise manner.

One of the biggest challenges facing the Council would be that these service areas would no longer be Member-led and Members might find it culturally difficult to adjust.

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Referring to the termination of services, Members were informed that the Council could not terminate the contract without a very good reason. If Capita caused such a significant harming event, such as the business plan not being settled in a certain amount of time, then the Council could terminate the contract. The occurrence of three critical service failures, such as slipping a quartile in the performance indicators, would be another reason to terminate. Capita would be given a chance to come up with a remediation plan first and then if the Council was still not satisfied, the contract could be terminated. Everything else was as proposed as at the last Cabinet meeting.

The Assistant Director for Governance had come to the conclusion that the contribution to the Council's efficiency budget would be in the region of £250,000 per annum. This figure would be generated through a mix of a lower contracted cost of service with Capita, an opportunity to remove residual costs from the Council and a sharing of the turnover generated by the growth of the Breckland Capita team. The Assistant Director for Governance said that this was very much an opportunity that, in his opinion, was worth pursuing. As far as pensions were concerned, there was a big pension liability that had arisen over the last few months and whether the Council retained those liabilities was another matter. The Government's Actuary's Department had certified that Capita's scheme provided benefits that were broadly comparable to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

David Spencer, the Executive Director for Capita Symonds, said that Breckland was ahead of others in looking at selling off its planning department and that many others were looking to follow suit. He believed that local government was on the brink of change of how authorities thought about different ways of delivering services.

The Vice-Chairman asked about the governance arrangements and how this would affect the roles of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and the Audit Committee. He also asked how Members would sit with Capita. In response, the Deputy Chief Executive advised that operational issues would be managed through a Service Planning and Improvement Group, which would be responsible for the development of the annual business plan, monitoring performance, agreeing variations to the service, setting the contract price (subject to approval by Council), and resolving operational issues that could not be settled informally in the course of normal day to day business. This Group would meet monthly and would be attended by senior officers and elected Members and chaired by the Director of Services. More strategic planning and long term improvement of the service would be managed through a Service Improvement Group. This forum would meet every six months and would consider the potential for significant enhancements of the service that was being provided to local people and the Breckland Business Unit – the latter being with a view to maximising the income received by the Council. Sitting outside these two groups would be the Overview & Scrutiny Commission, which might want to look at any contractual issues and the Audit Committee for the financial terms.

The Chairman of the Development Control Committee asked what

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substantiated critical service failure, as she had concerns about problem applications at Committee which might get deferred and therefore deadlines could be missed. She also asked about the formulation of staff if the Council was to exercise a 'get out' clause. In response, the Deputy Chief Executive explained that Capita could not force the Committee to determine any application. As far as the future of staff was concerned, Members were advised that because it was impossible to predict what kind of service would be transferred back to the Council or to another provider in 15 years time, the contract had been set out with a range of principles to guide the formulation of an exit plan. Capita would be responsible for preparing this exit plan within six months of the commencement of contract. This approach did carry with it some risk; Capita's staff might not, for example, wish to transfer back to the Council. It would also be difficult in practice to determine precisely who should transfer or remain with Capita. Capita would performance manage its staff so therefore the risk that the Council might not get back everyone if wanted would be a big one.

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission asked if the Council found that critical service failure had occurred, was there a clause in the contract that Capita paid the costs. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that there were limits to Capita's liability and if the Council was judicially reviewed, Capita would be seen as the interested party and therefore Breckland would end up paying costs.

A Member asked what the Council would gain from this contract considering that Planning's current performance levels had a 90pc satisfaction rate. He had concerns about the word 'risk' being used many times in the document. Savings were not guaranteed and very little profit would be made in the next few years. He called for the matter to be deferred so that the Overview and Scrutiny Commission could consider these specific issues. He also queried the £225k on page 142 of the report and asked whether this amount was from Breckland Council or whether this was part of Capita's monies. The Vice-Chairman agreed with the points about risk and asked the S151 Officer, in his professional opinion, whether £250K mentioned in the document would indeed be saved.

In response, the S151 Officer informed Members that as well as the risks, the opportunities had also been highlighted in the document. In his opinion, this contract would be very much an opportunity that was worth pursuing. Dave Jolley from Capita Symonds agreed that there was a risk but what Breckland Council had in front of it was a formidable contract.

As far as the £225K on page 142 of the report was concerned, Members were informed that this amount was a contribution from Capita.

Referring to the risks involved, the Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission pointed out that all aspects of Council business contained risks. What mattered most was that we understood the context of it and what the outcomes would be. He asked for the requested deferment to be deferred until the debate had finished.

A Member was very much in favour of the scheme as described by the

Action By

Deputy Chief Executive; however, he asked whether Capita could provide an assurance that any initial problems that the Council might be faced with could be overcome and not distorted. The Member also mentioned Breckland being a very local working Council and hoped that this would continue. In response, David Spencer assured the Cabinet that Members, parish councils and the public would still be able to have the same access and contact with planning officers under Capita as they previously had. In answer to a concern about charges, the Deputy Chief Executive reassured Members that the Council was responsible for setting levying charges and would remain so; Capita could not levy charges on any member of the public.

The Executive Member for the Economic and Housing Portfolio assured the Cabinet that Parish Councils were not afraid of change. Members must not lose sight of how much better the access was going to be for everyone in Breckland once the new IT software systems were installed.

The Executive Member for the People First Portfolio read out questions from her residents which the Deputy Chief Executive answered in the positive.

The Executive Member for the Planning and the Environment Portfolio supported the contract between the Council and Capita and admitted that although it had been a very long process there were no major differences on the table. She said that many of these issues raised had been thoroughly discussed at the Panel meetings that had been set up specifically for this. She had no misconceptions about Planning and Building Control still being very much under Member control. She felt that the contract had been a huge achievement for the Deputy Chief Executive who had answered and dealt with all the questions that had been put. The Executive Member also thanked all the staff for their involvement and patience in which had been a very long drawn out process.

The Vice-Chairman asked Capita whether the contract was viable. Members were informed that it was; this was why the content of the contract had been discussed at great length. With regard to the quality of service, the performance standards would be based on current performance levels and if the service ever returned to Breckland it would be returned in the upper quartile. Capita would aspire to have upper quartile teams.

The Vice-Chairman said that any additional services would incur costs so it would be no different to what the Council had now. He was quite happy for this proposal to go ahead as he was quite content with what had been said.

The Chairman referred to the Thetford Growth Point team and asked whether Capita would cease to charge the £8,000 per annum if staff in that team were redeployed elsewhere. The aforementioned amount was to reflect the fact that the Thetford Growth Point team would not be making a full contribution to the Breckland business unit. Capita confirmed this request.

The Vice-Chairman felt that this was a unique contract and he thanked all

Action By

the Officers involved for enduring the various debates which had been held with Members and with the Deputy Chief Executive.

The Chairman pointed out that, Members had the right to call in this matter if approved. He asked the Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission whether he was happy that this contract had been fully debated. In response, the O&SC Chairman said that having been involved in this Scrutiny process for a very long time, there was nothing in this final contract that indicated that Capita wanted to fail and he wholeheartedly supported it.

A Member said that the calibre of questions from this authority was far higher than any other authority that he had dealt with.

Options

To enter or not to enter into the contract with Capita Symonds Limited.

Reasons

See report.

Members then voted on the matter, and it was

RESOLVED that

- 1) the externalisation of the Council's Planning and Building Control Services be approved;
- 2) the contract be entered into with Capita; and
- 3) the Deputy Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Business Transformation and Planning and the Environment Portfolio Holders:
 - a) to make minor amendments to the agreement to finally resolve any outstanding matters of detail as follows:
 - b) to execute the agreement on behalf of the authority; and
 - c) to take such steps as required to implement the agreement, including specifying the date of commencement of the contract.

**Tim
Leader**

**48/09 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL - ANNUAL APPOINTMENT
(AGENDA ITEM 17)**

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the existing members of the Member Development Panel be re-appointed; and
- 2) the vacancy be filled by Mrs D Irving.

**Stephen
McGrath**

Action By

**49/09 REFERENCE FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
(AGENDA ITEM 18)**

Members approved the recommendation proposed by the Overview & Scrutiny Commission as it was felt that a more robust mechanism needed to be in place.

Options

- 1) To approve the recommendation from the Overview & Scrutiny Commission.
- 2) Not to approve the recommendation from the Overview & Scrutiny Commission.

Reason

Everyone within the Council needed to adhere to the procedure for the recording of complaints.

RESOLVED that a clear protocol be put in place for the reference of complaints through senior managers to ensure all complaints are logged into the system as appropriate.

**Mark
Broughton
, John
Chinnery**

**50/09 ANGLIA REVENUES AND BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP - ADDITIONAL
FUNDING FOR BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION (AGENDA ITEM 19)**

The options available were:

- 1) not to request the extra funding available from DWP and not to employ extra benefit officers; or
- 2) to request the extra funding available as an additional subsidy to be used for temporary employment of agency staff within the Housing Benefits team.

The reason for the recommendation was to enable the ARP to continue to provide a Benefits service at the current level of performance whilst experiencing increasing workload.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the release of the grant funding to the Partnership be approved; and
- 2) the funding received by East Cambridgeshire and Forest Heath be paid into the Partnership budgets held by Breckland Council and allocated accordingly to the Partner Authorities.

**Steve
Knights**

**51/09 ANGLIA REVENUES AND BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP - LOCAL
HOUSING ALLOWANCE (LHA) AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT
ALLOWANCE (ESA) - FUNDING UPDATE (AGENDA ITEM 19)**

The options available were to:

Action By

- 1) note the report and approve the extension of this key post; or
- 2) reject the report and repay the surplus to the DWP.

The reasons for the recommendation were to provide an update on the project and to extend the key post as it had proved invaluable in terms of maximising income received on behalf of the three partner authorities. As the post holder had been seconded into this role, the post, Council Tax Officer, had also been backfilled on a fixed-term contract.

RESOLVED that a supplementary budget, to be funded from the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP), as outlined in the report be approved.

**Steve
Knights**

52/09 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 20)

The next meeting of the Cabinet would be held on Tuesday, 23 June 2009 at 9.30am in the Norfolk Room.

The meeting closed at 12.20 pm

CHAIRMAN

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

**Held on Wednesday, 13 May 2009 at 10.00 am in
Norfolk Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr R.W. Duffield (Chairman)	Mrs K. Millbank
Mr P.J. Duigan (Vice-Chairman)	Mr I. Sherwood
Mr G.P. Balaam	Mr A.C. Stasiak
Mrs J. Ball	Mrs L.S. Turner

In Attendance

Ian Vargeson	- Member Services Manager
Julie Britton	- Senior Member Services Officer
Stephanie Butcher	- Licensing Team Leader
Natalie King	- Principal Human Resources Adviser
Kathryn Ralphs	- Human Resources Adviser

Action By

29/09 MINUTES - 1 APRIL 2009 (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

30/09 MINUTES - 17 APRIL 2009 (AGENDA ITEM 2)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

31/09 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 3)

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs M Chapman-Allen and Mr D Myers.

32/09 LOCAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE : 29 APRIL 2009 (AGENDA ITEM 6)

a) Redundancy Compensation (Minute No. 12/09)

The Principal HR Advisor pointed out that further clarification was required with regard to the resolution at point (2). She advised that HR had not committed or agreed to produce a report on redundancy compensation multipliers. It had been her understanding that the lead on the project, the Head of HR at Great Yarmouth Council would be producing the said report and reporting the findings to the Norfolk County HR Managers Group. It was agreed to amend the resolution to read: "Human Resources prepare an addendum incorporating possible cost to the Council *depending on the outcome of the research*".

**Natalie
King,**

Action By

b) Breckland Council's Special Leave Policy (Minute No. 13/09)

Members were provided with copies of the Special Leave Policy.

The Chairman had concerns with clause 10 of the Policy – Reserve Forces.

He asked whether employees who were members of the Territorial Army (TA) were paid by Breckland Council as well as by the Army. The Human Resources Adviser explained that there was a limit to how much time off was granted in any one leave year. Referring to the pay, the employee would need to provide proof of the amount they had been paid for the training which would then be deducted from their salary. The employee would then end up with their normal wage.

Referring to the copies of the reports that had been circulated, it was agreed that in future the General Purposes Committee should receive copies of reports of the Joint Committee when recommendations were to be made.

RESOLVED that the Special Leave Policy as presented be adopted.

c) Adoption

Subject to the amendment above at Minute No 12/09 (a), it was

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Local Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 29 April 2009 be adopted.

33/09 APPLICATION TO CONSIDER THE RENEWAL OF A SEX ESTABLISHMENT LICENCE (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The Principal Licensing and Business Support Officer provided Members with the background to this report which concerned an application to renew the licence of a sex establishment at 17 Brunel Way, Thetford.

The licence was first granted in 2006 (Minute No. 26/06 refers).

Members were informed that no objections had been received regarding the application and accordingly none of the mandatory grounds for refusal, as set out in paragraph 3.1.6 of the report, were applicable.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the application by Absolookley Limited for the renewal of a Sex Establishment Licence at 17. Brunel Way, Thetford be granted; and
- 2) delegated authority be given to the Principal Licensing and Business Support Officer for subsequent renewal, subject to any objections being received.

Members were invited to work/shadow a day in the life of the officers in the Licensing team.

**Maxine
O'Mahony,
Kathryn
Ralphs**

**Stephanie
Butcher**

Action By

34/09 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 8)

The arrangements for the next meeting on Wednesday, 24 June 2009 were noted.

The meeting closed at 10.15 am

CHAIRMAN



Moving Thetford Forward
The Local Delivery Vehicle for Thetford
Growth Point

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD

Held on Thursday, 14 May 2009 at 2.00 p.m. at Level 8, Breckland House, St. Nicholas Street, Thetford

Present (Voting Members)

Cllr Ivor Andrew (IA) (substitute member)
 Martin Aust (MA)
 Cllr Jennifer Chamberlin (JC)
 Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen (SCA)
 Cllr Paul Claussen (PDC)
 John Connolly (JCo)
 Cllr Daniel Cox (DC)
 Mike Goulding (MG)
 Cllr Robert Kybird (RGK)
 David Napier (DN) (Observer Role)
 Jo Pearson (JP)
 Andrew Egerton-Smith (AES)
 Cllr Ann Steward (AS)
 Alec Witton (AW)

Representing

Croxton Parish Council
 Flagship Housing
 Norfolk County Council
 Breckland Council
 Breckland Council
 Thetford Business Forum
 Norfolk County Council
 Homes & Communities Agency
 Thetford Town Council
 Chairman, MTF Officer Group
 Local Business
 NHS Norfolk
 Breckland Council
 Land Representative (non-conflicting)

Present (Non-Voting Members)

Natalie Beal (NB)
 Owen Burnett-Jenkins (OBJ)
 Ed Chambers (EC)
 Tim Edmunds (TE)
 Trevor Holden (TH)
 Susan Glossop (SG)
 Ray Johnson (RJ)
 Richard Kay (RKay)
 Tim Leader (TL)
 Chris Nelson (CN)
 Martin Peckitt (MP)

Breckland Council – Growth Point Team
 Norfolk County Council
 Thetford Town Council
 Norfolk County Council
 Breckland Council
 Thetford Town Council
 Breckland Council
 Breckland Council – Growth Point Team
 Breckland Council
 Thetford Healthy Town
 Breckland Council

In attendance

Jodie Canham (Jca)
 Mark Fretwell (MF)
 Samantha Goodwin (Sgo)
 Rob Leigh (RL)
 Michael Spicer (MS), Architect
 Elaine Wilkes (EW)

Breckland Council – Growth Point Team
 LSP Officer, Breckland Council
 Breckland Council – Growth Point Team
 Breckland Council (Marketing & Communications)
 NPS (for agenda item 7)
 Breckland Council (Committee Services)

Apologies for Absence Received

Cllr Evelyn Collishaw
 Paul Crick
 Cllr Bob King
 Cllr William Nunn
 Cllr Tony Poulter
 Mark Stanton

Norfolk County Council
 Norfolk County Council
 Croxton Parish Council
 Breckland Council
 Brettenham & Kilverstone Parish Council
 Breckland Council

Cllr Paul Claussen – in the Chair

Action by

21/09 INTRODUCTIONS AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting and introductions were given.

AES declared a personal interest at minute 24/09 below as Chairman of Flagship Housing.

22/09 MINUTES AND ACTIONS (AGENDA ITEM 2)

(a) Board Meeting – 11 March 2009

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 11 March 2009 were received and noted. The following matter arising was discussed:

- (i) Thetford Area Action Plan (TAAP) (Minute 14/09(a)) – RKay reported comments received from Cllr Tony Poulter who felt that the wording of this minute in regard to a fall-back position in relation to the buffer zone issue was unclear.

Members confirmed their understanding that from a practical point of view, if the main development option should not proceed, then the proposed alternative, fall-back position would come into play, as stated in the minute. The minute was accordingly confirmed as correct.

RKay added that a fuller report on progress of the Thetford Area Action Plan would be submitted to the next meeting of the Board.

(b) Officer Group Meeting – 22 April 2009

The minutes of the Officer Group meeting held on 22 April 2009 were received and noted.

23/09 CHARLES BURRELL HUMANITIES SECONDARY SCHOOL - REDEVELOPMENT OPTIONS (AGENDA ITEM 3)

This item was deferred.

24/09 FLAGSHIP HOUSING GROUP VISION (AGENDA ITEM 4)

A presentation was given by MA (copy slides appended).

The presentation concerned affordable housing issues that were of a shared interest to the partners of the MTF Board. MA explained that the traditional approach was for affordable housing to be delivered through housing associations. He felt that a more innovative approach could deliver more.

Action by

With regard to the planned growth for Thetford, there was a danger that the existing estates could fall behind. Therefore, Flagship wished to put forward a proposal which could offer a collaborative and holistic approach to delivery of affordable housing through a single management organisation (SMO) structure, which could cover both new developments and existing estates.

Flagship had commissioned Keystone Development Trust to carry out a survey of existing residents on proposals for the future with a view to commissioning a Masterplan for the redesign of the existing estates (for completion by the end of the year). In this regard, there were three proposals for which the Board's support was sought:

- a) A jointly funded scheme with Breckland Council to develop a Masterplan for the redesign/redevelopment of car parking and unused areas on existing estates.
- b) To obtain legal advice on the viability of setting up an SMO, jointly funded by Breckland Council and Flagship Housing.
- c) The establishment of an affordable housing delivery group, perhaps in partnership with other authorities.

In response to questions, the following points were noted:

- There was currently no financial advantage in buying-back housing units on the open market. Government housing policy and funding had been aimed at the delivery of new housing. Mixed tenures on housing estates were felt to be beneficial and current planning policies supported that. Residents themselves also wanted mixed tenure housing.
- The proposal was envisaged to include community centres in new developments and existing centres could be incorporated by agreement.

The Board noted and thanked MA for the presentation but agreed to consider Flagship's proposals set out in the presentation as part of the next agenda item.

25/09 MTF PROGRAMME PLAN (AGENDA ITEM 5)

The report was presented by TL.

A summary of the core programme projects was as set out in paragraph 4 of the report. Details of provisional capital and revenue funding, plus fuller information on the core projects list, were contained in Appendices A and B to the report.

The Board was asked to confirm whether or not any other projects needed to be included and, if not, whether the programme was approved to proceed.

Action by

If to be approved, the Board's attention was drawn to the shortfall in funding, which was significant so far as revenue funding was concerned.

The town centre proposals were felt to be the key issues, together with the issue of other revenue funding to support the capital projects. The challenge would be to achieve some good, big capital projects. In this connection, TL suggested questions on which the Board needed to be satisfied were whether the land use plan was compatible with the overall vision for Thetford and whether the Programme Plan was ambitious and exciting enough.

JC highlighted the lack of any culture or heritage projects in the core programme. TL advised that if details of suitable projects could be provided, they could be incorporated into the plan.

JC

TE referred to the relationship of the programme to the prospects for jobs and the economy of the Thetford Enterprise Park and AES endorsed the need for the plan to be attractive to inward investors, since there would be competition from other areas.

TL confirmed he was happy to add to the list but the Board needed to bear in mind that it would need to secure and agree the funding needed.

AS explained that the projects in the plan were supported by a lot of work which formed the evidence base for the programme and that the report concentrated on the funding issues. The Board was now getting to the stage where commitments to projects would need to be given to enable them to start.

TL confirmed that marketing of the Enterprise Park had already commenced.

MG added that funding requests to the HCA were considered individually on the merits of each business case.

Members were conscious of the need to keep townspeople engaged and encouraged about the prospects for the town and its future, and that people wanted to see a timed agenda of projects.

MA asked the Board whether it supported the proposals put forward by Flagship Housing in the preceding item (Minute 24/09 above).

AGREED that

- (1) the MTF Management Team be charged to discuss the programme plan with the partner authorities and agencies with a view to securing in principle agreement to funding of projects and to report to the next meeting with a prioritised programme plan and associated project timetable;

MP

- (2) in principle support be given to Flagship Housing to explore the proposals for the establishment of an SMO and to investigate with the HCA the potential for the establishment of a consortium of housing associations to participate and invest in the provision of new housing.

Action by

MA

26/09 THETFORD HEALTHY TOWN PROGRAMME UPDATE (AGENDA ITEM 6)

The report was presented by CN, who informed the Board that the Department of Health had informally confirmed its approval of the Programme Plan by email received the day before. CN thanked everyone involved for their contributions in enabling the project to reach this point, where the programme could now start to be delivered.

RGK asked about the role of the town's GPs, which did not appear to be apparent in the programme. CN advised that progress on GP involvement had been dependent on agreement of the Programme Plan and that this would now be progressed through the delivery stages of the programme.

CN also informed the Board that discussions were taking place as to his successor and the future management of the programme upon his forthcoming departure from the post of Interim Project Manager by the end of May.

The Board extended their thanks and appreciation to CN for his work on the project to date.

AGREED that

- (1) the final draft of the Thetford Healthy Town Programme Plan be endorsed;
- (2) the Programme will be delivered through a set of projects and interventions under four "strands" as follows:
- A Enhancing knowledge and understanding
 - B Work on infrastructure and policy to support health
 - C Work with local communities to foster a culture of healthy lifestyles
 - D Project management and administration

CN

CN recorded his thanks to all the members of the Growth Point team for their hospitality and support during his time at Thetford.

27/09 THETFORD NEW BUS INTERCHANGE (AGENDA ITEM 7)

OBJ tabled a report at the meeting on the proposed options and costs for the new Thetford bus interchange and very early sketch design options were presented by Michael Spicer, Architect, NPS Group.

Action by

The report outlined the background leading to the present position with the project. The proposal provided for project design and management to be led by Norfolk County Council, reporting through the MTF Board.

Three design options were proposed:

Option 1 – Cost £2.51 million. This option included:

- Building conversion of the former listed building warehouse, with ground floor only occupied by bus station
- All hard surfacing, including off-site highway works
- Canopies
- Concourse edge fencing and automatic gates at bus stands
- Real time passenger information system and automatic ticket machines
- CCTV installation
- Landscaping areas
- A number of assumptions in the cost estimate to allow for, amongst other things, site excavation and regarding, electrical sub-station, archaeological site investigation, ground contamination etc.

Option 2 – Cost £2.34 million. As option 1 but **excluding**:

- Off-site highway works outside outer boundary
- Real time passenger information system and automatic ticket machines

Option 3 – Cost £1.97 million. As option 2 but **excluding also**:

- Canopies
- Concourse edge fencing and automatic gates at bus stands
- CCTV installation

The costs of these options were in addition to land assembly costs.

Option 1 was largely based on the successful design of the Norwich Bus Station and the Mildenhall Bus interchange was shown as an alternative comparison model. The Norwich Bus Station was also used as the basis for estimating costs.

Option 1 offered the optimum solution. Option 2 was a less pedestrian-friendly solution and option 3 offered a basic solution.

The conversion of the listed building would involve a lot of work. It was proposed that only a part of the ground floor would be required for the bus station ticket office/information area. The remainder of the building

would be refurbished to basic standards for letting. The estimated cost for making the building safe was £700,000.

RJ noted that the entry and exit points differed from the earlier Mott MacDonald plans, resulting in a larger site area being required. OBJ explained that the revised designs took account of the new requirements to allow for school bus needs to serve the planned Thetford College Forum and increased pedestrian use at the lower part of Minstergate. These had not been factors when the original scheme had been drawn up.

OBJ also explained that further work to ensure suitable links between the bus station site and the railway station and that for the college forum needed to be done.

By unanimous vote, it was

AGREED that

- (1) in order to meet the needs of a growing Thetford to 2026, the 'Option 1' design specification for a new bus interchange be agreed as the preferred option;
- (2) the MTF partners agree, in principle, to underwrite the cost of providing the new bus interchange (including the securing of land) up to a maximum of £3.5 million, which comprises £0.3 million contribution from Norfolk County Council and £3.2 million from CLG Growth Point Funds;
- (3) Officers should attempt to reclaim a substantial element of the aforementioned underwritten £3.5m, either prior to or post completion of the project. Such reclaimed sums will be explored (a) over the coming months by all public sector partners from their own resources and (b) from the forthcoming Thetford Area Action Plan "Developer Contributions via a Tariff" policy (see Draft Policy TH17). In the case of (b), this is subject to the draft Tariff Policy being tested through the statutory planning processes, including an appropriate, fair and viable contribution being set within that policy towards 'bus improvements' in Thetford. Any funds reclaimed via (a) or (b) will be returned to MTF for subsequent spend on MTF agreed projects; and
- (4) subject to a final decision by the Board and ratification by the accountable body (i.e. Breckland Council), the Norfolk County Council (Department of Planning and Transportation and NPS) be appointed to deliver the design and project management of the bus interchange.

28/09 GROWTH POINT TEAM UPDATE (AGENDA ITEM 8)

The report was presented by NB.

AGREED that

- (1) the October MTF Board meeting date be changed to Thursday, 19 November 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

Action by

RJ / OBJ /
MP

Action by

- (2) the nomination of an Infrastructure Champion to replace Cllr Dorrington be considered after the local elections on 4 June;
- (3) subject to the above, the report be noted.

29/09 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 9)

- (a) Thetford Enterprise Park – In answer to a question, RJ advised that EEDA funding was anticipated to be confirmed the following week. Active marketing of the site was proceeding and discussions were taking place with some prospective companies.
- (b) Development in Buffer Zone – IA sought clarification on the position regarding development in or adjoining the stone curlew buffer zone. TL explained that any development must not adversely impact on the special protection area. If a planning application could prove there was no adverse impact, it may be granted permission but a lot of detailed evidence would be required.
- (c) LSC Funding for Thetford College – TH reported on a very positive meeting held with Christopher Fraser MP and Sion Simon, Under Secretary of State for Further Education, to discuss the question of LSC funding for the proposed Thetford College. The Minister had expressed his support and had undertaken to press the case with his ministerial colleague responsible for the funding in question. The Board was pleased to note the encouraging position.

The meeting closed at 4.10pm



Moving Thetford Forward

"to deliver large scale new communities, ensuring they remain desirable places requires a new approach"

Successful places are characterised by:

- Good design
- High quality public realm
- Integrated range of house types and tenures
- Good connectivity to surrounding places

Creating an affordable housing delivery team

- A joint resource for all sites
- Working to develop a strategic approach delivering
 - Affordable housing
 - Stewardship services
 - Jointly with strategic partners
- Collaborative approach to project negotiation and delivery
 - Improving value for money

Creating an affordable housing delivery team (cont'd)

- Combined capacity giving security of delivery
 - Partners with strong track records of delivery
- Ensuring the planning of affordable housing and inclusive communities is an integral component
 - Better input into design and planning
 - Options appraisal
 - Tenure and procurement
- Close partnership working to avoid delivery barriers
 - Director level engagement
- Rising to the challenge of:
 - High quality design
 - Maximising the benefit of subsidy
 - Long term global budgeting

Creating an affordable housing delivery team (cont'd)

- Key objectives:
 - Reducing costs through efficient procurement
 - Maximising the benefit of subsidy across projects
 - Improving predictability of outcomes
 - Maximising HCA investment
 - Ensuring affordability for residents
 - Demonstrating excellent value for money
- Promoting good urban housing design
 - Exceeding minimum design standards
 - Achieving high CSH ratings and principles of sustainable construction
 - Functional, comfortable, adaptable, well built attractive homes
 - Early engagement leading to fully inclusive communities from the outset.

Sustainability through management

- A cohesive response to the stewardship of new communities
 - Joined up local management
 - Cohesive in planning and delivering services
 - Strengthens community cohesion
 - Leading to attractive and vibrant places
- One point of contact residence
- Ongoing working with stakeholders providing holistic and coordinated neighbourhood services responsive to local need

Sustainability through management (cont'd)

- Accountable structures along with local people to influence local services
- Financially self supporting
- Establishing common standards and availability of services
- Supports community cohesion
- Community assets could be owned by SMO to create income stream
- Funded by asset ownership – management of service charge activity – household precepts – endowments from land value

Holistic Housing Management Service

- SMO jointly owned by developing RPs providing:
 - Common standards
 - Best practise
 - Service to Residents of affordable homes across Thetford
- Providing core management activities (all or selected)
- Ensuring a common service across existing and new Thetford estates and between landlords

Why SMO to include existing estates?

- 90% of affordable housing already in Thetford could be rolled into SMO on day one
- To give a critical mass to set up one team approach as delivery of growth begins
- Longer term provides value for money (double the portfolio of homes to manage)
- Removes “them and us” stigma for residents
- One team/contact point:
 - Strategies
 - Implementation plans
 - Standards
 - Policies
 - Procedures

- Common approach/Team for critical issues:
 - ASB and tenancy enforcement
 - Rehousing, management of demand
 - Community engagement and capacity building
- Co-ordination improved across Thetford and across programmes (growth and regeneration)
- Sets “Exemplar” standards and encourages others to join (note “Youswitch” and audit framework)
- Management of the public realm on existing estates could be rolled in at a later stage

Governance and Structure

- SMO Management only company (stakeholders: developing RPs (by percentage) and LA)
- Manages existing social housing within Thetford
- Manages new affordable housing in Thetford
- Manages public realm assets

Governance and Structure (cont'd)

- Public realm assets in the ownership of the SMO
- Development consortium of 2-3 RPs established
- To develop and own affordable housing assets on
 - New growth sites
 - Offsite provision and regeneration

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

Report of Mark Stokes – Services Director to the FULL COUNCIL COMMITTEE – 28 May 2009
(Author: Ralph Burton, Asset Management)

ELIZABETH HOUSE RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT

1. Purpose of Report

The Council's Environmental Strategy 2008-2013 sets out the Council's proposals to advance environmental sustainability both in the conduct of its own business and as a community leader. This report provides members with an update on a key action within the strategy, to develop a renewable energy installation and system at Elizabeth House, and requests approval to authorise the next stage of the project.

2. Recommendation(s)

To support the implementation of a wind turbine at Elizabeth House in accordance with the following stages:

- 1: Tender specialised renewable energy works in relation to undertaking preparation (studies) for the installation and review.
2. Prepare and submit planning application, undertake tender for capital works and apply for grant funding where appropriate.
3. Install wind turbine and handover.

Delegation to be provided to the new Green Agenda Development Panel to authorise the future stages of the project.

Note: In preparing this report, due regard has been had to equality of opportunity, human rights, prevention of crime and disorder, environmental and risk management considerations as appropriate. Relevant officers have been consulted in relation to any legal, financial or human resources implications and comments received are reflected in the report.

3. Information, Issues and Options

3.1 Background

3.1.1 The Environment Strategy sets out a clear strategic aim to focus on sustainably energy, to minimise the impact on climate change by all those living and working in the district. The strategy action plans set out a requirement to investigate and identify opportunities for alternative energy sources for Council buildings.

3.1.2 In response to this action, the Asset Management service began discussions with Solar Technologies (a renewable energy services company) to review options for the installation of renewable energy technology at Elizabeth House to generate on-site energy for use in Elizabeth House by the Council. Solar Technologies provided a basic outline of wind turbine and photovoltaic panel options and costs.

3.1.3 Further work included the commissioning of RD Energy Solutions (RDES) to carry out a site and local natural resource assessment to determine the most appropriate renewable technology option. Specific questions were asked about payback, grants, costs and alternative options.

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 Electricity represents over 90% of the site energy consumption, therefore the greatest opportunity for financial and Co2 savings is to generate renewable electricity using technology to match the site's average load requirements. RDES were asked to provide a recommendation on the optimum renewable energy technology applicable to Elizabeth House's energy usage requirements. **Appendix 1** demonstrates a comparison of the wind turbine options and their respective advantages and disadvantages.

3.2.2 **Next Stage**

Following further discussions with RDES estimates were provided to the Council on the further detailed works that need to be conducted before the final decision is made to install a wind turbine and the estimated capital cost of a 50kW wind turbine. These costs are provided in **Appendix 2**.

3.2.2.1 Based on this information if the Council wish to proceed with implementing a renewable energy technology at Elizabeth House in the form of a wind turbine the draft project plan is outlined in **Appendix 3**. The project plan outlines the stages and tasks required to deliver this project and an outline of the timescale. A renewable energy consultancy similar to RDES would be procured (to ensure value for money on the fees) to undertake staged works to mitigate risks. Members should note that the consultancy fees are not included in the payback analysis in the RDES report, only the supply and installation cost.

3.2.3 **Governance & Scrutiny**

Members will be updated at each stage of the project via the new Green Agenda Development Panel that will report via the committee system possibly via Overview & Scrutiny (to be determined). This group will act as the project board and delegation should be provided to this group to authorise the stages of the project.

3.3 Options

3.3.1 1) The Council authorises the installation a 50kW wind turbine that is delivered as per the attached project plan and estimated costs.

3.3.2 2) The Council authorises the installation of an 11kW wind turbine that is delivered as per the attached project plan and estimated costs.

3.3.3 3) The Council authorises the installation of a 6kW wind turbine that is delivered as per the attached project plan and estimated costs. If members choose this option members are requested to indicate either the horizontal blade or vertical blade choice.

3.3.4 2) The Council does not authorise the installation of any wind turbine option and ceases the renewable energy project at Elizabeth House.

3.4 Reasons for Recommendation(s)

3.4.1 Two renewable energy consultancy companies have both generated similar recommendations on the most appropriate renewable energy installation for Breckland Council to adopt which is a wind turbine:

- A 50kW turbine would create the optimum economies of scale relevant to the appropriate energy requirement at Elizabeth House, although it represents the largest investment.
- A 50kW turbine creates the shortest payback period and the greatest energy yield and therefore the largest Co2 reduction. If the Council wishes to lead on the climate change agenda and create the largest reduction in fossil fuel consumption and therefore the largest Co2 emissions that it can, this would seem the appropriate size and technology to use.
- The size of the turbine recommended in the RDES report meets the average load requirements of Elizabeth House and is applicable to the relative distance of nearby residential development. It is not a commercial wind turbine.

- Options 2 and 3 demonstrate the Council's commitment to the climate change agenda whilst reducing the capital cost. However both of the smaller turbines create much less energy yields and the payback periods are longer therefore asking the question - are they worth it in both renewable and financial terms?
- This report puts forward a recommendation based on the conclusions set out by an expert consultancy to fulfil the Council's green agenda.

4. Risk and Financial Implications

4.1 Risk

4.1.1 This is a significant capital project for the Council and a full risk analysis will be undertaken in conjunction with Finance to mitigate the Council's exposure and liabilities during the preparation stage of the installation.

4.2 Financial

4.2.1 This project is in the Capital Programme for 2009/10. The attached Proforma B outlines the current commitment and the situation and issues to consider.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no specific legal issues that require comment here.

6. Other Implications

- a) Equalities – no implications to the best of our knowledge.
- b) Section 17, Crime and Disorder – no implications to the best of our knowledge.
- c) Section 40, Natural Environmental Rural Communities Act 2006 – no implications to the best of our knowledge.
- d) Human Resources – no implications to the best of our knowledge.
- e) Human Rights – no implications to the best of our knowledge.

7. Alignment to Council Priorities

7.1 The matter raised in this report falls within the following council aim and associated priority:

- Environment – to contribute to reducing the causes of climate change
- Entrepreneurial Council – identify and maximise the full earning potential of the Council.

8. Wards/Communities Affected

8.1 Dereham ward.

Background Papers

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Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix 1: Estimate Professional Fees Quotation for a 50kW Wind Turbine (received from RDES)

Estimate Supply and Installation Fees Quotation for a 50kW Wind Turbine (received from RDES)

Appendix 2 Wind turbine evaluation

Appendix 3 Draft project plan for installation of wind turbine at Elizabeth House

Appendix 1

Wind Turbine Evaluation

The RDES report recommended a wind turbine installation for Elizabeth House. Compared to the second recommendation, photovoltaic panels the analysis showed wind turbines have lower capital costs being, shorter payback periods and higher energy yields. In addition the following information on wind turbines may assist:

- A wind turbine would not interfere with the fabric of the building with two site options to the north and south of Elizabeth House.
- Grant funding through the Low Carbon Buildings Programme is currently available until June 2009 and at the time of writing this report no announcement has been made for future funding. The grant funding is limited to smaller wind turbines up to approximately 6kW output. Therefore future decision on investment should be made on what is available now although grant funding will be sought where applicable.
- A digital energy display board can be installed in Elizabeth House Reception to show the real-time energy generated from the turbine and Co2 savings.
- The RDES report provides conservative calculations on wind resource available to obtain a conservative payback analysis and therefore it will vary depending on this resource but unlikely to be lower than outlined.

The following tables outline the key evaluation facts between the different wind turbine options:

Physical:				
Product	Revolution	Proven	Gaia	Entegrity
Size	6kW	6kW	11kW	50kW
Blade Aspect	Vertical	Horizontal	Horizontal	Horizontal
Tower size	9m	up to 15m	18m	up to 36m
Rotor Diameter	3m	n/a	13m	15m
No. of blades	3	3	2	3
Financial:				
Capital cost	£49,000	£30,000	£56,900	£210,000
Annual Operational Cost	£400	£400	£1,200	£3,000
Energy Yield	7,600 kWh	7,900 kWh	27,393 kWh	101,585 kWh
1st Year Revenue	£1,663	£1,694	£5,548	£20,564
Annual Co2 emission reduction	4 tonnes	4 tonnes	15 tonnes	55 tonnes
% of E.Hse Electricity Usage	1.27%	1.33%	4.59%	17.03%
Grant funding available	0%	50%	0%	0%
Payback:				
Payback periods				
Energy inflation at 3.5%	26 years	18 years	11 years	10 years
Energy inflation at 5%	23 years	16 years	10 years	10 years
Energy inflation at 10%	18 years	13 years	9 years	9 years
Payback with grant funding:				
Energy inflation at 3.5%	n/a	13 years	n/a	n/a
Energy inflation at 5%	n/a	12 years	n/a	n/a
Energy inflation at 10%	n/a	10 years	n/a	n/a

Comparative Advantages & Disadvantages

Turbine Type	Advantages	Disadvantages
6kW Vertical Blade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost silent • High performance in turbulent airflow • Lowest annual operational costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest payback periods • Lowest % of Co2 emission reduction • Lowest energy yield and therefore lowest % of annual energy savings • No grant funding

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not as well proven technology as the horizontal blade systems • Costs 10% more than the equivalent horizontal blade option making the payback period longer.
6kW Horizontal Blade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest annual operational costs • Lowest capital installation cost • 50% grant funding available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest % of Co2 emission reduction • Low energy yield and therefore low % of annual energy savings
11kW Horizontal Blade		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low energy yield and therefore low % of annual energy savings • No grant funding
50kW Horizontal Blade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best size match to the scale of average electrical load on the site • Maximum scale turbine due to proximity of residential developments • Takes most advantage of estimated wind resources available at site • Greatest energy yield and therefore greatest % of annual energy savings • Lowest payback periods therefore best financial performance • Greatest % of Co2 emission reduction • Highest tower therefore greatest wind resource and higher efficiencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest annual operational costs • Highest capital installation cost • No grant funding • Highest consultancy costs

Appendix 2

Estimate Professional Fees Quotation for a 50kW Wind Turbine (received from RDES)

Professional Fees	Estimated Cost
Environmental Overview (site and ground survey, services check, noise check, screening study to reduce risk of objection from Norwich Airport)	£6,500
Planning Application (assuming no bad neighbour and CAD files supplied)	£3,400
Design Fees (assuming SI study is complete)	£7,500
Performance Specification and Procurement Documentation	£1,500
Due Diligence on Tenders	£900
Preparation of Contracts	£2,500
Construction Supervision	£7,500
CDM and H&SE	£3,500
Handover Supervision	£2,500
Total	£35,800**

**The professional fees for a smaller wind turbine will be no more than this amount and likely to be less.

Estimate Supply and Installation Fees Quotation for a 50kW Wind Turbine (received from RDES)

Supply and Install	
Nacelle and rotor	£100,000
25m monopole tower	£39,000
Shipping and delivery to site	£5,500
Handling fee and Import tax	£6,950
Full foundation construction	£22,000
Offloading and Handling	£1,000
Crane hire	£8,000
M&E Installation Labour	£12,600
Commissioning	£3,500
Total	£198,550*

*Differs from RDES report due to removal of design fees which are added to professional fees above. Also does not include costs for grid connection or metering supply.

