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To The Members of the Council

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Date: 16 January 2012

AGENDA SUPPLEMENT

Dear Sir/Madam

COUNCIL - THURSDAY 19 JANUARY 2012

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

Item No	Report Title	Page Nos
5.	Cabinet Minutes - 10 January 2012 Unconfirmed minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 January 2012.	161 - 172
6.	Overview and Scrutiny Commission - 5 January 2012 Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission held on 5 January 2012.	173 - 181
8.	General Purposes Committee - 4 January 2012 Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 4 January 2012. The confidential reports concerning Minute Nos 6/12, 7/12, 8/12 and 9/12 are attached for Members' information.	182 - 242

Yours faithfully

Julie Britton

Committee Officer

Breckland Council, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham, Norfolk NR19 1EE

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BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

CABINET

**Held on Tuesday, 10 January 2012 at 9.30 am in
Anglia Room, The Committee Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr J.W. Nunn (Chairman)	Mr S. Askew
Mr A.C. Stasiak (Vice-Chairman)	Mr P.D. Claussen
Mrs L.S. Turner	Mr M.A. Kiddle-Morris
Mr W.H.C. Smith	

Also Present

Mr K.S. Gilbert	Mr T. J. Jermy
Mr A.P. Joel	Mr P.J. Duigan
Mrs S.M. Matthews	Mr W. R. J. Richmond
Mr T.J. Lamb	Mrs E. M. Jolly
Mr F.J. Sharpe	Mrs S Armes
Mrs D.K.R. Irving	Mr M. S. Robinson
Mr W.P. Borrett	Mr M. A. Wassell
Councillor C Bowes	

In Attendance

Dominic Chessum	- Joint Marketing & Communications Team Leader
Maxine O'Mahony	- Director of Commissioning
Mark Stanton	- Economic Development Manager
Terry Huggins	- Chief Executive
Vicky Thomson	- Assistant Director - Democratic Services
Mark Stokes	- Deputy Chief Executive
Julie Britton	- Senior Committee Officer
Margaret Bailey	- Senior Accountant Capital and Treasury
Riana Rudland	- PFI Leisure Monitoring Officer and Sports Development Officer
Mark Finch	- Assistant Director of Finance
Susan Smith	- Senior Accountancy Officer
Kevin Ward	- Growth Programme Manager
Simon Best	- Economic Development Officer

Action By

1/12 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2/12 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

None.

Action By

3/12 URGENT BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 3)

None.

4/12 DECLARATION OF INTEREST (AGENDA ITEM 4)

The following declarations were made:

The Chairman, the Executive Member for Assets & Strategic Development, Mr B Borrett and Mr P Duigan declared a personal interest in agenda item 17 due to them all being County Councillors.

Mr P Cowen declared a personal interest in agenda item 17 by virtue of his profession as an architect in practice.

5/12 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 5)

Mesdames S. Armes, C. Bowes, D. Irving, E. Jolly, S. Matthews and Messrs P. Duigan, K. Gilbert, T. Jermy, A Joel, T. Lamb, W. Richmond, M. Robinson, F. Sharpe and M. Wassell.

6/12 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 6)

The Chairman was pleased to announce that Breckland Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) document had been found sound by the Planning Inspector following the Council's response to the additional consultation on the Inspector's proposed changes in Shipdham.

7/12 PROPOSED TRANSFER OF LAND AT CORONATION TERRACE, CASTON (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The Executive Member for Assets and Strategic Development presented the report which requested Members' approval to transfer two areas of land at Coronation Terrace in Caston to Caston Parish Council.

Background information was provided.

Options

- 1) To transfer the two areas of land at Coronation Terrace in Caston to Caston Parish Council at nil consideration subject to the imposition of a restrictive covenant "not to use these areas of land for any purpose other than amenity purposes only".
- 2) Breckland Council to retain ownership and therefore maintain these areas of land.

Reasons

- 1) To relieve Breckland Council of future liabilities.
- 2) The imposition of the restrictive covenant would protect Breckland

Action By

Council should this land be considered suitable for development in future; the value of such a release would be payable by Caston Parish Council or their successors in title.

RESOLVED that the two areas of land at Coronation Terrace in Caston be transferred to Caston Parish Council at nil consideration subject to the imposition of a restrictive covenant “not to use these areas of land for any purpose other than amenity purposes only”.

8/12 ROLLOUT OF EAST ACTIVE PROJECT TO GENERATE INCOME (AGENDA ITEM 8)

The Executive Member for Assets and Strategic Development introduced this item which requested permission for a full business case to be submitted to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for the East ACTIVE project, with the Council underwriting the costs and risks associated with the delivery of the project.

The Economic Development Manager and the Economic Development Officer were in attendance and provided Members with a presentation.

The current REV ACTIVE project had gained national recognition and had won an award and due to its on-going success an opportunity had arisen to submit a further bid to the European Funding Programme under the title of East ACTIVE.

An expression of interest had been submitted to the DCLG which had been received favourably and as a result it was likely that the DCLG would be requesting a full business plan submission in the first half of 2012.

East ACTIVE would be focusing on delivering to other areas in the Eastern region, rather than directly in Breckland and the area of focus was currently within the borough of Luton in Bedfordshire. Luton had already opted to come on board and Gt Yarmouth Borough Council had already expressed an interest.

With significant reductions in business support, this would be a great opportunity for Breckland Council to fill a gap. East ACTIVE would buy economic development staff time and would generate management fees back to the Council.

The financial profile of the project was shown and how the monies would be spent was highlighted.

The Vice-Chairman asked if all business enquiries along the A11 corridor which was currently covered by the REV ACTIVE project had been dealt with. He further asked if the Team would be talking to businesses who were considering moving to the area since the announcement of the duelling of the A11. Members were advised that the Economic Development Team continued to engage with businesses in a number of ways. East ACTIVE was a separate project but there would be some overlap with REV ACTIVE as businesses did not take account of district boundaries.

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Members were informed of a recent Overview & Scrutiny Commission meeting that had looked at discretionary and non-discretionary services within the Council. This report proved that Economic Development, although classed as non-discretionary, was an important asset to the Council and the Overview & Scrutiny Commission Chairman commended the project to the Cabinet.

Option 1

Agree the following:

- Development and submission of an East ACTIVE full Business Case to CLG;
- If successful, accept the funding and subject to all other funding being secured, set up the appropriate income and expenditure budgets to allow the project to proceed;
- Employ three additional staff (an Area Manager and two part time administration/technical support posts – one in Luton and one in Breckland) to deliver the project. These posts would be 100% funded from Project income;
- Extend and reconfigure the existing REV ACTIVE Project Manager's post to December 2015. This post would be 100% funded from Project income.

Option 2

As per Option 1 but with amendments/further 'subject to' conditions being added by Members.

Option 3

No further action to be taken, with no East ACTIVE Business Case developed and submitted.

Reasons

The recommendation was to approve option 1. The development and delivery of East ACTIVE represented a clear evolution of the existing REV ACTIVE project and a logical next stage for the Economic Development Team. It represented an excellent opportunity to generate 'surplus income' for the Council at an acceptable risk level.

RECOMMEND to Council that:

- 1) an East Active Full Business Case be developed and submitted to the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG);
- 2) the funding be accepted (if the Business Case is successful) and, subject to all other funding being secured, set up the appropriate income and expenditure budgets to allow the project to proceed;
- 3) three additional staff be employed (an Area Manager and two part time administration/technical support posts – one in Luton and one in Breckland) to deliver the project (these posts would be 100%

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funded from the Project income); and

- 4) the existing REV ACTIVE Project Manager's post be extended and reconfigured to December 2015 (this post would also be 100% funded from the Project income).

9/12 ALTERNATIVE CAR PARK POLICY FEASIBILITY (AGENDA ITEM 9)

The Chief Executive presented the report which requested the release of revenue funds to enable specialist resources to be obtained to undertake research and the completion of a business case in relation to alternative car parking policies.

The proposal was highlighted.

The Chief Executive knew that Members were well aware of the financial challenges ahead and the recent statement made by the Chancellor had made it quite clear that government funding would be reduced even further in future. In these circumstances, all possibilities, such as car parking charges must be considered to get through these difficult economic times. Breckland Council did not have the same knowledge as other authorities that already had parking charges in place and this was why this type of expertise was being sought.

The Chairman understood why Breckland Council was considering this review and further understood why Members and the public were so alarmed; he too was alarmed by the amount of money being requested and asked whether one of the Council's own officers could be used to undertake this study.

In his defence, the Chief Executive stressed that no more than £50k would be required. He had been aware of the Chairman's suggestion of using someone in-house and agreed to either extend an existing officer's contract or second someone from another authority who already had the knowledge and expertise. This method would cost considerably less than £50k.

Mr Sharpe spoke on behalf of residents and various organisations from Swaffham who were concerned about the amount of money being requested. He urged Cabinet to authorise a far lower amount and to agree to the Chairman's aforementioned suggestion.

Mr Wassell asked for the business rate figure for car parks. In response, the Executive Member for Assets and Strategic Development advised that the business rates for this financial year was just over £61k. This figure included refurbishment and running costs and would increase year on year with inflation.

Mr T Jermy, on behalf of the Labour Group, was totally against the idea of car parking charges and felt that free parking was a major advantage for retailers. He quoted a statement made by Mary Portas who had said that the introduction of parking charges at this moment in time would be a disaster as most High Streets were already struggling (Mary Portas had been appointed by the Prime Minister to lead an independent review into

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the future of our High Streets). Mr Jermy felt that such charges would reduce the number of visitors to the town as it relied on a 'nip in' culture and would be a disadvantage to rural residents. He urged Members to abandon the plans and find other ways to plug the funding shortfall.

The Executive Member for Internal Services reminded Members that the report was not requesting a decision to charge for car parking it was just requesting that a feasibility study be carried out. All services had to be reviewed as part of the best value regime. However, he asked Members to note that Breckland had already been criticised by the Audit Commission for not implementing such charges. He also asked Members to note that a certain Town Council had, in the past, requested the introduction of car parking charges. Most car parks were very often clogged up by all day users which damaged the viability of the towns and all required to flow which local authorities needed to address. The Executive Member pointed out that if car parking charges were introduced Rocklands Parish Council had stated that they would like to see a free element of parking available. He agreed with the aforementioned suggestion about employing someone in-house to undertake the work. He also felt that South Holland Council should be approached as it had already had the expertise of dealing with car parking charges.

The Overview & Scrutiny Chairman noted the very impassioned pleas from Members and assured them that Breckland Council was not proposing to introduce such charges at this moment in time. He urged Members to tread carefully and communicate properly with the public when carrying out this study and to take account of the many car parks that were not under Breckland's ownership that required consideration during the investigation.

The Vice-Chairman said that he had attended a recent Town Council meeting where it had been made clear that the town's car parks needed to be freed up from all day users. The meeting had agreed that should charging come into force a small fee or a free parking period should be introduced. He pointed out that residents to the south of the Attleborough did not attempt to shop in the town as they knew that parking was a problem and instead journeyed to Diss.

Mr Gilbert wished to register his strong opposition to the proposal as he felt that free parking attracted many people outside of the Breckland area to the market towns. Charging would push shoppers into parking in side streets or on housing estates and not one resident who he had spoken to had been in favour of car parking charges. He felt that the Cabinet should take a step-back and allow Full Council to have a debate and vote on the principle of charging before spending the £50k.

The Executive Member for Internal Services reminded Members that this was just one alternative being considered - if this did not come about then the Council would still have to look at something else to make up the shortfall of government funding.

The Chairman reminded Members of what the Council had already done to save money and what was being done in the near future. No-one else had come forward with ideas of how this authority was supposed to save

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£3.5m. He then proposed that the monies requested be capped at £25k. He made it clear that any revenue made from the introduction of car parking charges (if and when approved) would be used purely to cover maintenance costs, any surplus would be put straight back into the match-funding pot.

Mrs Matthews and Mrs Jolly also spoke on the matter. It was suggested that the UEA be used again to carry out such a study. Other suggestions put forward were to charge different amounts in different towns and to devolve some matters to the Town Councils. The Chief Executive assured Members that he would look into all the aforementioned suggestions.

The Executive Member for Assets and Strategic Development reminded Members that students from the UEA had assisted with the Attleborough car parking study at a cost of £5k. He assured Members that there was still a huge amount of work to be done which could take at least six months to complete before a conclusion could be gathered.

Mr Borrett was pleased that the meeting had acknowledged that different towns had different needs and required different solutions. He was also pleased that Breckland Council was considering devolving some matters to the Town Councils.

In concluding the debate, the Chairman reiterated that Breckland Council was not an expert on this matter but the review had to take place in some shape or form to understand the implications of it all – this did not mean that such charges would be implemented.

Option 1

Authorise the release of £50,000 from the Organisational Development Reserve which was used for invest to save initiatives. The funds would be used to procure specialist resources to undertake the completion of a business case to fully inform Members about alternative car parking policies.

Option 2

Do not undertake the feasibility work and continue to manage the car parks within the current policy. This would result in continuation of the costs as outlined in paragraph 1.1.1 of the report.

Reasons

1. The Council did not currently have the expertise or knowledge in-house to research alternative car parking policy provision.
2. An alternative policy could positively support traffic management.
3. Continuation of the current car parking policy 'as is' would mean a continued burden on the tax payer rather than the user (motorist).
4. All the Council's land assets including car parks must be assessed to ensure they create best value for the residents of Breckland.

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5. An alternative car park policy could help to balance the Council's budget over the next 4 years.
6. The Council needs to adopt a flexible approach to car parks.
7. The Government required local authorities to get best value from their assets.
8. To be able to meaningfully appraise this option with others, that will be needed to balance the Councils budgets over the next 5 years.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the amount of £25k of revenue funds be released and not £50k as requested; and
- 2) internal, and where appropriate, external expertise be acquired to undertake research and the completion of a Business case to fully inform Members about alternative car parking policies.

10/12 BUDGET, FINANCIAL MEDIUM TERM PLAN AND CAPITAL STRATEGY (AGENDA ITEM 10)

The Executive Member for Finance and Democratic Services thanked the Assistant Director of Finance and his Team for all their hard work throughout the year. He highlighted the number of efficiencies that had been made during the year which had assisted in producing such a balanced budget.

The appendices to the report outlined the 2012-13 revenue and capital estimates for the General Fund, the proposals for the setting of discretionary fees and charges, the outline financial position through to 2016-17, the financial Medium Term Plan and the Capital Strategy. It was noted that the effect of the Riverside project, if approved, had already been included in the budget.

The Executive Member for Internal Services was very pleased to have a balanced budget; many other local authorities would envy being in this position. He also mentioned the efficiency savings that Breckland had made over the years whilst still maintaining the lowest council tax in the country. He was very proud of being involved with such a proactive and far sighted Council and congratulated the Portfolio Holder and the Finance Team.

The Overview & Scrutiny Commission Chairman echoed the above comments as it had been a great challenge for everyone involved.

In response to a request for an explanation of the New Homes Bonus, the Chief Executive explained that the New Homes Bonus was a reward paid to local authorities based on the council tax of additional homes and those brought back into use. The Finance Team had been prudent and this bonus would be contributed to reserves in the year it was received. Although this was a six year grant, it had been assumed that after four years the grant would be funded from a reduction in Rate Support Grants and National Domestic Rates; therefore, at this stage no additional grant

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had been assumed.

The Executive Member for Internal Services felt that public money needed to be well managed for future generations.

Options

There were no alternative options presented; however, Cabinet was able to make amendments before recommendation to Full Council.

Reasons

To comply with the budgetary and policy framework.

RECOMMEND to Council that:

- 1) the Breckland revenue estimates and Parish Special Expenses for 2012-13 and outline position through to 2016-17 (as set out in Appendix B of the report) be approved;
- 2) the capital estimates and associated funding for 2012-13 and outline position through to 2016-17 (as set out in appendix I of the report) be approved;
- 3) the revised capital estimates and associated funding for 2011-12 (as set out in appendix I) be approved;
- 4) the fees and charges shown at appendices E & E2 of the report be adopted on 1 April 2012;
- 5) the Council Tax for a Band D property in 2012-13 be set at £64.05 (as set out in appendix B of the report);
- 6) the Financial Medium Term Plan at Appendix A of the report be approved; and
- 7) the Capital Strategy as at Appendix H of the report be approved.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the budget virements in 2011-12 as set out in Appendix C of the report be approved; and
- 2) the contribution of £2,000,000 from the General Fund into an earmarked reserve for Council Tax and Business Rates as detailed at Section 13 of Appendix A of the report be approved.

**11/12 REFERENCE FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
(AGENDA ITEM 11)**

None.

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12/12 ANGLIA REVENUES AND BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP (AGENDA ITEM 12)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Anglia Revenues & Benefits Partnership Joint Committee meeting held on 1 December 2011 be adopted.

13/12 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL (FOR INFORMATION) (AGENDA ITEM 13)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Member Development Panel meeting held on 24 November 2011 be noted.

14/12 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 14)

The arrangements for the next meeting on Tuesday, 14 February 2012 in the Norfolk Room were noted.

15/12 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (AGENDA ITEM 15)

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of the Act.

16/12 PFI BENCHMARKING (AGENDA ITEM 16)

The Executive Member for Assets and Strategic Development presented the report which asked Members to support the business proposals as listed in the report.

The contractor had identified two opportunities to help reduce any adverse financial impact of the Benchmarking process. The set up of the PFI benchmarking process was explained.

Mrs Armes asked a number of questions about the proposal some of which were answered by the PFI Leisure Monitoring Officer at the meeting. She asked that the proposal for the Club based at Thetford Leisure Centre be put on hold until all relevant persons had been consulted. The Chairman suggested that the remaining questions be discussed outside the meeting with the said Officer.

There was some discussion about membership and the way particular sports had been promoted.

The Executive Member for Internal Services was in support of the recommendation as it did not make sense to keep something open throughout the year when there was no demand.

Options

See report.

Reasons

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- To help reduce the financial impact to the Council of the benchmarking process
- To assist the contractor in attracting new users and increasing the centres income
- To allow the contractor to vary the facilities on offer to meet the demands of the customers

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the business proposal for a contractual 'change of use' of the Bar/Function room at Dereham Leisure Centre into a dedicated Martial Arts Dojo arena be approved; and
- 2) the business proposal for a contractual change of use of the Bowls Hall at Breckland Leisure Centre in Thetford during the summer months (May-Sept) for the provision of soft play and children's activities be approved.

17/12 THETFORD RIVERSIDE REGENERATION PROJECT (AGENDA ITEM 17)

The Executive Member for Assets & Strategic Development introduced the report which set out the proposals for the Thetford Riverside Regeneration project.

A presentation and a detailed overview of the project were provided.

A Member suggested that Thetford Town Council should be approached for possible financial assistance.

After much discussion, it was proposed that one of the recommendations be changed and a Special meeting be held to legally complete and sign off the agreement to lease (if approved) and the Audit Committee be tasked to monitor the contract and any financial risks associated with the project.

Options

See report.

Reasons

See report.

RECOMMEND to Council that:

- 1) the funding as requested be released; subject to due diligence being completed;
- 2) the grant from Norfolk County Council Infrastructure fund be accepted subject to acceptable Heads of Terms;

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- 3) a Special Cabinet meeting be held to legally complete and sign off the agreement to lease, if agreed; and
- 4) the Audit Committee be commissioned to monitor the contract and any financial risks associated with the project.

The meeting closed at 12.05 pm

CHAIRMAN

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held on Thursday, 5 January 2012 at 2.00 pm in the Anglia Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham

PRESENT

Councillor C Bowes (Substitute Member)	Mr R.G. Kybird
Mr A.J. Byrne	Mrs S.M. Matthews
Mr C G Carter	Mr R. R. Richmond
Mr T. J. Jermy (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)	Mr J.D. Rogers
Mr A.P. Joel	Mr B. Rose

Also Present

Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mr M.A. Kiddle-Morris
Mr A.C. Stasiak	Mr W. R. J. Richmond

In Attendance

Terry Huggins	- Chief Executive
Helen McAleer	- Senior Committee Officer
Teresa Smith	- Committee Officer (Scrutiny & Projects)
David Spencer	- Joint Deputy Planning Manager
Ben Wood	- Business Development Manager

1/12 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2/12 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Apologies had been received from Mr P Cowen and Mrs D Irving.

Mrs C Bowes was present as substitute for Mrs Irving.

Mr Kybird had sent apologies that he would be late for the meeting (he arrived at 2.30pm).

3/12 URGENT BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 3)

None.

4/12 DECLARATION OF INTEREST (AGENDA ITEM 4)

Mr R Richmond and Mr W Richmond declared personal interests in Agenda Item 7 by virtue of owning land in the Site Specifics submission.

5/12 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 5)

Mr G Bambridge, Mr M Kiddle-Morris, Mr W Richmond and Mr A Stasiak were in attendance.

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6/12 EXECUTIVE MEMBER PORTFOLIO UPDATE (AGENDA ITEM 6)

Mr Stasiak had been invited to update the Commission on his Portfolio. He was accompanied by his Executive Support Member, William Richmond.

Mr Stasiak said that he worked with able and forward thinking officers who dealt with a wide range of areas including Internal Communications, Marketing, the Print Room, Performance and Risk.

Mr W Richmond explained that the Print Room had been reviewed in September to determine whether the service should be outsourced, improved or retained as was. It had been decided that improvements should be made to maximise its potential. New ways of working had been introduced and these included a new procedure for print requests which provided greater accountability.

Mr Stasiak said that there had been significant work regarding Shared Management since the Election and the Performance and Business Improvement Teams had been at the forefront of that work. Monitoring performance was critical for joint working and the Performance Plus system used by South Holland had replaced the TENS system to enable both authorities to access information from any location.

Each authority had its own priorities and the challenge for the Portfolio was to provide a co-ordinated approach that measured performance and took residents needs into consideration. He was pleased with the direction of travel, but there was still a lot of work to do.

He went on to give an update on the work programme:

Completed

A new Business Development Manager had been recruited
Food and Health & Safety services had been reviewed
Housing Advice and Homelessness services had been reviewed
Front Office optimisation had been completed.

In Progress

The Environmental Protection service was being reviewed
A strategy was being developed to market key products of the Council to generate income if possible
Benefit realisation was being developed

To Do (January to April)

Conclude the Environmental Health reviews
Review Private sector Housing
Implement new ways of working

Everything was being looked at and questioned to find improvements and make savings.

Mr Rogers asked if there was any chance that the Council would purchase development land for industry as the current owners were not selling small plots. He explained that there were 646 houses being built in the vicinity and if the Council bought the land and offered it to small businesses it could provide employment opportunities for the residents

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of the new houses and cut out the need for them to travel to work.

Mrs Matthews said that she was impressed with the Contact Centre. She asked for clarification of the changes to the print room and also for an explanation of the terminology used.

Mr Stasiak advised that previously the print room had operated on a kind of 'ad-hoc' system with print requests not always being attributed to specific departments. The new procedure had addressed that problem. He asked the Business Development Manager to explain the terminology further.

The Business Development Manger explained that the reviews that were being done were led by the respective Service Managers, supported by the Business Improvement Team. They were looking at systems and ways of working to find efficiencies to make savings and at the same time enable officers to do their job more effectively. With regard to Environmental Health, the changes included upgrading the ICT system and implementing mobile working.

Benefits realisation meant knowing how the Council was performing, how much it was spending and how much it was saving as a result of the reviews.

Mr Bambridge asked how much money could be made from the Print Room and Mr Stasiak said that they were actively seeking additional work from outside the Council. Officers were working on that and the possibility of providing a service to Town and Parish Councils was being investigated. However, Mr W Richmond advised that at the last Town & Parish Council Forum flyers had been handed out advertising that opportunity and the response had been 'luke warm'. He asked Members to pass on any ideas they might have to maximise the print room's potential.

Mr Joel asked if the website was being used to advertise the offer to provide a printing service. He also asked if it was possible for the Council to provide printing for the upcoming Police Commissioner's election.

The Chief Executive advised that Election printing was a very specialised and controlled function with only about four Printers nationally being allowed to do that work.

Mr Stasiak also pointed out that there was a fine line to be drawn as every printing job brought in could impact on business out in the community. He was anxious to generate income, but he did not want to be in competition with the people that Members were elected to serve.

The Chairman thanked Mr Stasiak and Mr W Richmond for their presentation.

**7/12 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK AND CORE STRATEGY
(AGENDA ITEM 7)**

Mr Kiddle-Morris, Executive Member for Assets and Strategic Development introduced David Spencer as the new Joint Deputy Planning Manager, joining Breckland from Capita.

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The Joint Deputy Planning Manager explained the background to his update. At the Cabinet meeting in November one recommendation of the Annual Monitoring Report had been to start work on the review of the Core Strategy in 2012. The Strategy had been adopted in 2009 and was due to be reviewed on a three yearly basis.

Since the adoption of the Core Strategy there had been some significant changes and these would be taken into account during the review. These included:

- the Thetford Area Action Plan which included proposals for 5,000 new homes (reduced from 6,500)
- the Government's draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- the removal of the Regional planning process
- the review of the European Habitats regulations by DEFRA (at the request of the Secretary of State)
- the effect on viability of on-going infrastructure work

Local Policies would still need to be backed up by local evidence and it was important that the Core Strategy review did not damage the confidence of communities, infrastructure providers and developers in the current LDF. The review would involve consultation and conclude with an Examination in Public by an Independent Inspector.

In the short term, the timeframe for a Review was influenced by the committed work programme with included:

- the Examination in Public of the Thetford Area Action Plan (1st week of March)
- progressing the Attleborough Area Action Plan
- progressing the CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy)

In the early summer the final version of the National Planning Policy Framework would be available, as would the Government's Review on the European Habitats, both of which would provide certainty for the way forward with a Core Strategy Review which was likely to form the new Local Plan under the emerging NPPF.

Mr Joel congratulated the Deputy Planning Manager on his new job. He asked when provisions in the new Localism Act relating to Parish Councils could be implemented.

Mr Kiddle-Morris explained that within the Localism Act was the Neighbourhood Plan which could be put together by a single Parish Council or a group of parishes. The Plan could detail what houses, factories, etc a parish wanted. It had to be pro-growth, conform to the Local Plan and would be subject to an independent examination. Once those requirements had been met the Plan would need to receive at least 50% of the vote in a local referendum to be adopted.

Mr Bambridge was concerned that it would be very difficult for small parishes to develop a Neighbourhood Plan, even if they grouped together, as they might lack expertise and might not be able to afford the costs. He also questioned whether current restrictions such as

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Special Areas of Conservation would prevent growth.

Mr Kiddle-Morris agreed and said that the Council had not been consulted on the Government's Review of Habitat Directives. The Core Strategy and Site Specifics both included a Stone Curlew buffer which had been supported by two Independent Inspectors. He thought it would be interesting to see what happened.

He confirmed that it would be difficult for small parishes to put together a Neighbourhood Plan. The Council might be expected to provide assistance but that would have cost implications. He thought it likely that a lot of parishes would not progress a plan because of the amount of work involved.

Mr Bambridge hoped that, despite the difficulties, the Council would be able to provide support in return for a contribution, as the officers had the knowledge and the work would be the same for most plans.

Mr Kiddle-Morris recommended Members should visit the CLG website (<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/introductionneighbourplanning?view=Standard>) to see the documents associated with the Neighbourhood Plan. However, until the NPPF was in place to give a steer on sustainability it would be very difficult to process a Neighbourhood Plan.

Mr Kybird asked if the Council should actively seek to be consulted on the Habitats work and Mr Kiddle-Morris asked the Deputy Planning Manager to consider that.

The Chairman asked to what extent newly completed dwellings would be factored in to the review of the Core Strategy. The Deputy Planning Manager explained that under the previous Regional plan system, the timeframe for planning included an element of what had already been built and what remained to be allocated. Under the new system there was a degree of flexibility concerning the period of the Plan but past performance on planning delivery would influence the Review. The key starting question for a Core Strategy Review would be "what is the starting point and where should the Plan run up to". Officers would need to look at past delivery as well as considering emerging household need from latest projections and local evidence.

Mr R Richmond congratulated the Deputy Planning Manager and said that he had enjoyed the presentation. He asked if there would be any opportunities for growth in villages not previously identified as Service Centres.

The Deputy Planning Manager advised that the five criteria previously set for growth villages could be reviewed. It would be up to each Local Authority to determine which facilities were required to support sustainable growth based on local evidence.

Mr Kiddle-Morris noted that under the previous regime, sustainable development meant that residents had to be able to walk or cycle to access services including work. In the countryside, where there was little or no public transport, a car was essential and sustainability needed to be defined in a rural context. Other villages would be looked at besides those already identified as Service Centres. He also

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suggested that villages could be clustered together to provide the necessary facilities as that would still cut down on travelling.

The Chairman asked that towns should also be looked at concerning public transport issues as they had the same problems as villages.

Mr Kiddle-Morris concluded by saying that Breckland was one of only 36 Local Authorities with a Core Strategy in place. That gave it protection and once the NPPF was approved, the Core Strategy could morph into a Local Plan.

The Chairman thanked the Executive Member and Deputy Planning Manager for their presentation.

8/12 DISCRETIONARY AND NON-DISCRETIONARY SERVICES
(AGENDA ITEM 8)

The Business Development Manager presented the report which provided a commentary to prompt discussion. The work summarised in the appendices had been rigorous but did contain flaws and might raise more questions than it answered.

It had been very difficult to get answers as there was no definitive list of Discretionary and non-Discretionary services. He had concluded that it would be difficult to legally define services for budget purposes. It was not a black and white issue, as the removal of one service could potentially impede the rest of the Council's functions.

As a starting point he suggested that the Council needed to look at what was important for the area, to look at the Service Plan and to decide what was the minimum they wanted to achieve and what resources were available.

In response to a question from Mr Kybird it was confirmed that Car Parking was the responsibility of Asset Management.

Councillor Bowes asked if the Council charged for private water supply analysis and also what the annual cost of the MTF Programme Management was (referring to the items listed on page 13 of the supplement).

It was agreed that the Development Services Manager would provide more information direct to Councillor Bowes. Mr Kiddle-Morris was able to advise that the MTF Programme Management was funded by Growth Point money.

Mr Bambridge was glad that the report had prompted discussion. He said that as the Council represented the community it needed to consider what residents wanted and needed.

The Chairman noted that some discretionary functions were covered by grant funding and other income.

The report was otherwise noted.

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9/12 TASK AND FINISH GROUPS (AGENDA ITEM 9)

(a) Housing Task & Finish Group

The Minutes of the first meeting had been tabled. The Chairman of the Task & Finish Group said it had been a basic 'setting out' meeting. The next meeting would be held on 20 January 2012.

10/12 SHARED SERVICES (AGENDA ITEM 10)

The Chief Executive had been invited to provide an update on Shared Management with South Holland and to advise Members of progress regarding Great Yarmouth.

He was pleased with the way that sharing with South Holland was bedding in. It was less than 12 months since Shared Management had commenced and in that time they had come a long way. They had supported both Councils in refreshing their Corporate Plans. They had also supported the budget preparation at both Councils acknowledging the need to find savings. To that end the service reviews were on-going in an effort to drive down costs.

There had been one joint meeting of the Councils which, due to poor weather, had had a lower turnout than expected, but it had been a successful, informal event.

The Chief Executive, together with the Leaders of both Councils, was doing work with the Local Government Association using the Partnership as an example of Good Practice.

However, there were still areas to be worked on and there was no complacency. There was more fine tuning to be done and two specific issues had been identified as:

- KOGs (Key Managers mostly employed wholly by one authority but taking on additional responsibility) – more support to be provided
- Members' expectations concerning availability and contactability – trying to improve. Visibility was also being addressed by trying to ensure that Senior Managers were available on Council meeting days, etc.

Work with Great Yarmouth was on-going. The timeframe had been delayed, but all three Leaders were still committed.

Great Yarmouth had elections every year for one third of their Members and would therefore be having an election in May. Originally it had been hoped to have the whole process completed by then, but as it would be necessary for all three Councils to hold two Council meetings; one to agree in Principle, subject to a 30 day consultation period, then a second meeting to approve the proposals, it had been decided that that timeframe was unduly hasty. It had therefore been agreed to have the first Council meeting early in March and the second meeting after the consultation and election, in May, for the final sign off.

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It was also considered appropriate to align those Council meetings and so special Council meetings would be arranged at all three authorities for early March. In the meantime at Breckland the proposals would be presented to LJCC on 26 January 2012, then General Purposes, then Cabinet.

Mr Bambridge thanked the Chief Executive for an interesting and helpful update. He thought that communications had already improved recently and asked what had been the biggest problem with joining up and did the Chief Executive think that would be exacerbated by the expansion.

The Chief Executive said there had been no big problems. Having to manage two sets of Members with different expectations had been a challenge which he thought he was getting better at.

The Chairman asked if there would be any correlation of calendars for the three Councils and the Chief Executive acknowledged that there had been liaison with South Holland for the 2012/13 calendar to avoid clashes particularly with the Planning Committee.

Mr Rogers asked about car park charges. He wanted to know how much it would cost to install the ticket machines and how long it would be before it showed a profit. He suggested that if car park charges were being considered because the Council was short of money it might be better to add 10 pence to the Council Tax bill instead.

The Chief Executive did not know the answer to the detailed questions but said that a reasonable assessment had suggested that comparable charges to other Local Authorities would make the car parks break-even. The suggestion being made to Cabinet was that they provide the resources to allow a detailed business case to determine how charging might work. However, even if the business case supported the ability to cover costs from charging, it would only be to pay the costs of maintaining the car parks. Also, it would still be the Members' choice to decide whether it was an option they wished to choose. Members would be provided with alternative options and provided with the information to allow them to make an informed decision.

The Chairman suggested that any further questions on that subject should be put at the Cabinet meeting. He thanked the Chief Executive for his update.

11/12 HEALTH SCRUTINY (STANDING ITEM)(AGENDA ITEM 11)

Mr Kybird confirmed that no meetings had been held.

12/12 SCRUTINY CALL-INS (STANDING ITEM)(AGENDA ITEM 12)

None.

13/12 COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION (STANDING ITEM)(AGENDA ITEM 13)

None.

Action By

14/12 WORK PROGRAMME (AGENDA ITEM 14)

Mr Kiddle-Morris was invited to provide the Executive Member update for the next meeting.

15/12 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 15)

The arrangements for the next meeting on 9 February 2012 were noted.

The meeting closed at 3.15 pm

CHAIRMAN

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

**Held on Wednesday, 4 January 2012 at 10.00 am in
Norfolk Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr R.W. Duffield (Chairman)	Mrs S.M. Matthews
Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mr B J Skull
Mr P.J. Duigan (Vice-Chairman)	Mr D.R. Williams JP
Mr B J English	Mr T. J. Jermy

Also Present

Mrs L.S. Turner	- Executive Member for Localism, Community & Environmental Services
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In Attendance

Mark Stokes	- Deputy Chief Executive
Natalie King	- HR Manager
Jane Osborne	- Committee Officer
Lon Jeal	- Interim ICT/Customer Services Manager
David Incoll	- Legal Consultant

Action By

1/12 MINUTES

With regard to paragraph 3 on page 3 of the Minutes, Cllr English wanted it noted that he had pointed out that grammar and phrasing in the reports needed to be "tidied up" and wanted his name recorded in all Minutes where appropriate in future.

Subject to the above being noted, the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2/12 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Clark, Steward, Green and Borrett. Cllr Jermy was in attendance as a substitute for Cllr Clark. Cllr Quadling's absence was noted.

3/12 LOCAL JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE 15 DECEMBER 2011

It was noted that the recommendations in the Minutes would be dealt with under items 8-11 of the Agenda.

Subject to it being noted that Cllr Duigan was present at the LJCC held on 15 December 2011 it was,

RESOLVED to adopt the unconfirmed Minutes of the Local Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 15 December 2011.

4/12 NEXT MEETING

The arrangements for the next meeting on 8 February 2012 at 10.00 a.m in the Anglia Room were noted. The Chief Executive would address the meeting on the potential of extending shared services.

5/12 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

6/12 COMMUNITY SERVICES RESTRUCTURING

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the report which was a summary of work undertaken and answered questions raised by Members which covered multi-functional aspects of the organisation and some posts, contact with groups and parishes and youth engagement which was a priority to publically promote.

The corporate priorities of the Council and the principles upon which they were founded would become central to the approach and work of the Community Development Team going forward and the outcomes the team would endeavour to achieve.

The key changes to the existing structure were explained and discussed at length.

Some Members of the Committee including the Chairman voiced concern and felt that having a Lead Officer present when reports of this nature came to General Purposes would be beneficial. A comparison was given to the template and model used when the Licensing and Business Support Restructure was undertaken

The Executive Member for Localism, Community & Environmental Services gave Members some background information and statistics on work undertaken by Officers, and examples of how the service would move forward.

RECOMMEND to Council that :

The proposal to restructure the Community Development service in Breckland Council be endorsed.

7/12 ICT REVIEW

Lon Jeal, Interim ICT Management summarised the report. Cllr Jermy was pleased to see a generic job description and person specification included in the report which assisted Members with their understanding. Further Job Descriptions/Person Specifications had been produced.

Action By

RECOMMEND to Council that :

- (1) The new ICT staff structure be approved
- (2) Agree results of the JE process and financial implications

Cllrs English and Jermy asked to be provided with details of salary scales, which the HR Manager agreed to circulate following the meeting.

Natalie King

8/12 LEGAL REVIEW

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the report and introduced Mr David Incoll, Legal Consultant who answered questions and concerns raised by Members.

The Chairman asked for assurances that the Legal Services Co-Ordinator would have a legal background. Both the Deputy Chief Executive and Mr David Incoll confirmed that it was an essential criteria listed within the Job Description/Specification.

RESOLVED :

That the Deputy Chief Executive return to the General Purposes Committee on 8 February 2012 to update them following the end of the formal staff consultation period.

RECOMMEND to Council that :

That delegated authority is given to the two Council Leaders and the Chief Executive to sign off the restructure following formal consultation with Staff and Unions to ensure the restructure and efficiency savings can be achieved in 2012/13 onwards.

9/12 HR REVIEW

The HR Manager presented her report and explained that training and development was not included in the proposed re-structure, but would be picked up in a separate report for the General Purposes Committee to consider.

RECOMMEND to Council that :

- (1) The restructure of the existing HR Team to reduce establishment by 0.6 FTE be approved
- (2) Provide delegated authority to the Chief Executive to make one redundancy, subject to the outcomes of the consultation and selection process.

Cllr Bambridge took the opportunity of advising the HR Manager that in his opinion, Member training was working well. The HR Manager stated that a lot of work was being undertaken around The Localism Bill.

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The Chairman asked the HR Manager to bring back to the General Purposes Committee updates on the Performance Related Pay Scheme and Out of Hours Payments.

**Natalie
King**

The meeting closed at 12.00 pm

CHAIRMAN

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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