

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

COUNCIL

**Held on Thursday, 18 December 2008 at 10.30 am in
Anglia Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr S. Askew	Mr C.R. Jordan
Mr G.P. Balaam	Mr R. Kemp
Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mr R.G. Kybird
Mr W.P. Borrett	Mr J.P. Labouchere (Chairman)
Councillor Claire Bowes	Mr K. Martin
Mr A.J. Byrne	Mrs S.M. Matthews
Mr P.D. Claussen	Mrs S.R. Miller
Mr J.P. Cowen	Mr I.A.C. Monson
Mr R.W. Duffield	Mrs L.H. Monument
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mr D.G. Mortimer
Lady Fisher	Mr D.S. Myers
Mr P.S. Francis	Mr J.W. Nunn
Mr R.F. Goreham	Mr J.D. Rogers (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor E. Gould	Mr B. Rose
Mr J.R. Gretton	Mr F.J. Sharpe
Mr M.J. Griffin	Mr I. Sherwood
Mr P.J. Hewett	Mr W.H.C. Smith
Mrs D.K.R. Irving	Mrs A.L. Steward
Mr A.P. Joel	Mrs L.S. Turner

Also Present

Mrs J Jenkins	Chairman – Standards Committee
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In Attendance

Sheila Cresswell	- Member Services Officer
Trevor Holden	- Chief Executive
Helen McAleer	- Member Services Officer
Ian Vargeson	- Member Services Manager

126/08 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Member Services Manager drew attention to two inaccuracies under Minute Number 124/08 (Declarations of Interest):

- Mr Cowen's interest in the LDF was not because he had land under consideration but rather by virtue of his profession as a practising architect in Breckland;
- Mr Askew had left the meeting for the duration of the LDF Core Strategy and Policies debate.

Subject to the above amendments, the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2008 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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127/08 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs J Ball, Mrs M Chapman-Allen, Mr S Chapman-Allen, Mr R Childerhouse, Mr M Fanthorpe, Mrs T Hewett, Mr M Kiddle-Morris, Mr T Lamb, Mrs K Millbank, Mrs P Quadling, Mr M Spencer, Mrs P Spencer, Mr A Stasiak and Mr D Williams.

128/08 DECLARATION OF INTEREST (AGENDA ITEM 3)

After clarification that there was no need to declare interest in any LDF matters as this subject was not on the agenda, the only declaration of interest was from Lady K Fisher in respect of the Moving Thetford Forward Board Minutes (Agenda items 7.1 and 7.2.); and also with respect to the Kilverstone Lane residential development in the Development Control Committee Minutes of 3 November (Agenda item 189/08).

129/08 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 4)

Chairman's Engagements

Date	Event	Host
9 th November	Remembrance Sunday Parade, Dereham	
24 th November	Opening of the Breckland Housing Offices	
25 th November	Farewell to Colonel Angus Watson, Light Dragoons	
28 th November	Topping out the Thetford Pine Close Housing Project	
5 th December	Annual Yuletide Reception, Galaxy Ballroom	Commander, 100 th Air Refuelling Wing, Colonel Eden J Murrie, RAF Mildenhall

Vice-Chairman's Engagements

Date	Event	Host
14 th November	60 th Anniversary Celebration of the United States Air Force	Colonel Jay B.Silveria, Commander, 40 th Fighter Wing

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23 rd November	Centenary Service	Norfolk Scouts
7 th December	Civic Carol Service	Mayor of St Edmundsbury, Councillor Robert Cockle
11 th December	Reception	Mayor & Mayoress of King's Lynn & West Norfolk, Councillor and Mrs. David Johnson

Whilst formally bidding farewell to Colonel Angus Watson from the Light Dragoons, the Chairman had thanked him for being such a good Ambassador for Breckland and mentioned the particularly good relations he had shared with the former Chairman. On behalf of the Council, the Chairman then wished the Light Dragoons well for their deployment to Helmand in March next year and welcomed Colonel Gus Fair, as Colonel Watson's successor.

The Chairman then took the opportunity to remind Members of the following:

- The Pride in Breckland awards, nominations for which were currently open;
- That the Member Development Panel was to meet immediately following the Council meeting; and
- The Carol Service which he and his wife were hosting that evening in Watton.

Finally, on behalf of the Council, he extended very best wishes to Mr Kiddle-Morris for a full and speedy recovery.

130/08 CABINET MINUTES - 25 NOVEMBER 2008 (AGENDA ITEM 5)

(a) Local Government Review – Update (Minute No. 150/08 (b))

The Opposition Leader drew attention to the text at page 36, saying that he shared the Leader's view about the need for public consultation on the Local Government Review (LGR). However, he felt that any proposed referendum would need country-wide participation across all Councils in order to be worthwhile. He also raised concerns about the £100,000 put aside for court costs and the potential £47,000 allocated for a referendum. He believed that any decision on a referendum should not be taken until after the end of the six week consultation period i.e. once the whole position on LGR was clearer.

The Chief Executive made three points in reply:

- That there was no plan to go ahead with a referendum on the LGR at this stage: the Council had been keen to ensure that a potential budget was in place should it wish

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to pursue this option at some point.

- That the figure of £100,000 for costs, quoted in the press as the outcome of the judicial review, was inaccurate: the real figure was considerably less.
- That the disbursement of costs which the judge had awarded was to be split between the Councils involved in the case and was, in fact, currently the subject of an appeal. It was therefore possible that the Council might not have to pay any legal costs at all. Additionally, the Leader announced that the same judge was currently hearing the case for East Devon. Dependent upon the outcome, East Devon might join the appeal - thus potentially spreading any costs even further across the board.

Finally, with regard to money currently locked up in Iceland, he reminded Members that this money was considered "at risk", rather than actually "lost" at this stage.

(b) Release of Funds – Management of Landfill Site at Rutherford Way, Thetford (Minute No. 151/08)

The Executive Member for Planning and the Environment announced that since the report had been issued, a grant of just over £29,000 had been awarded. She thanked the Environmental Health Team for their work on this and congratulated them on their success.

(c) Norfolk Climate Change Strategy (Minute No. 153/08)

RESOLVED that the Norfolk Climate Change Strategy be adopted.

(d) Draft Calendar of Meetings (Minute No. 155/08)

RESOLVED that the Schedule of Council and Committee meetings for 2009 to 2010 be adopted, subject to an additional Council meeting being allocated to 30th July 2009, in order to avoid a long gap over the August recess period.

(e) Adoption

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 25 November 2008 be adopted.

131/08 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE - 3 NOVEMBER 2008

RESOLVED that the confirmed Minutes of the Development Control Committee meeting held on 3 November 2008 be adopted.

132/08 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE - 24 NOVEMBER 2008 (AGENDA ITEM 7)

RESOLVED that the now confirmed Minutes of the Development

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Control Committee meeting held on 24 November 2008 be adopted.

133/08 APPEALS COMMITTEE - 3 DECEMBER 2008 (AGENDA ITEM 8)

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Appeals Committee meeting held on 3 December 2008 be adopted.

134/08 STANDARDS COMMITTEE - 2 DECEMBER 2008 (AGENDA ITEM 9)

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 2 December 2008 be adopted.

135/08 AUDIT COMMITTEE - 14 NOVEMBER 2008 (AGENDA ITEM 10)

- (a) Risk Management – Revised Policy and Update (Minute No. 46/08)

RESOLVED that the revised Risk Management Strategy be adopted, subject to a suitable cross-reference being inserted in Appendix B of the Strategy, relating to the Roles and Responsibilities for Health and Safety to clarify the position in relation to capital building contracts (i.e. on-site arrangements).

- (b) Adoption

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 14 November 2008 be adopted.

136/08 AUDIT COMMITTEE - 20 NOVEMBER 2008 (AGENDA ITEM 11)

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 20 November 2008 be adopted.

137/08 MOVING THETFORD FORWARD BOARD - 27 NOVEMBER 2008 (AGENDA ITEM 12)

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Moving Thetford Forward Board meeting held on 27 November 2008 be adopted.

138/08 THE CONSTITUTION - CHANGES TO STANDING ORDERS (AGENDA ITEM 13)

The Member Services Manager outlined the need for the three proposed changes to the Constitution to be formally approved by the Council.

RESOLVED that the changes to Standing Orders 43, 61, 62 and 63 proposed at the Council meeting on 6 November 2008, together with the resulting changes to Standing Order Nos 21 and 32, be adopted.

139/08 SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES (AGENDA ITEM 14)

The Member Services Manager outlined the scheme of allowances for

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the year commencing 1 January 2009, as recommended in the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

He explained that the Panel had followed government guidance, taking into account earlier reports; the existing scheme; developments and topical issues; comparative information from other authorities and job descriptions etc, - all within its remit as set out in paragraph 1.4 of the report itself which was attached.

It was felt that the basic allowance needed to be rounded-up to get it back to a level where it could be easily converted as a unit, especially when calculating Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs).

Except in one case, the relationship between SRAs and the basic allowance would remain as at present.

The overriding feature would be an increase of 2.2%, which the Panel considered to be a reasonable level of increase and certainly not the "cash hike" as referred to by the press. (In fact, this would be a lower rate of increase than for the last two years.) All other allowances would only be payable for defined and independently assessed special responsibilities, and would be limited to one per member.

The Member Services Manager then thanked the Chairmen of the Audit, Licensing and Standards Committees (who had participated in the interview process), explaining the reasons for the interviews and the resulting recommendations in each case.

He also confirmed that the Panel made no recommendation that any member should have access to the Local Government Pension scheme, on the basis that allowances should not be considered a wage or a salary and that the extra expense should not be imposed on local tax payers.

The following amendments were suggested to the scheme as recommended:

- Under the specialist childcare allowance, the wording should be changed to "normally subject to...", in order to enable an element of flexibility whenever personal circumstances warranted this.
- Freezing the rates for the Chairmen of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission and the Development Control Committee in order to establish a differential between these special responsibilities and those of the Executive Members.
- On Appendix B (Members' Travelling & Subsistence Allowances: Approved Duties) the following amendments were proposed.
 - "Executives' meetings" should become:
"Executives' meetings with Officers".
 - "Attendance of Executive Support Members at any

official meetings called by officers” should become:

“Attendance of Members at any official meetings called by officers or an Executive Member with officers”.

- The addition of mileage incurred by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman whilst on civic duties.

The Leader hoped that when the Panel met in 2009 to consider the next set of allowances, consideration should be given to reinstating the link with the RPI.

RESOLVED that, subject to the amendments proposed above, the scheme of allowances for the year commencing 1 January 2009 be adopted as recommended.

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The meeting closed at 11.10 am

CHAIRMAN