



AGENDA

NOTE: In the case of non-members, this agenda is for information only

- Committee - **POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PANEL 3**
- Date & Time - **TUESDAY, 29TH JULY, 2008 AT 10.00 AM**
- Venue - **THE NORFOLK ROOM, CONFERENCE SUITE, ELIZABETH HOUSE, DEREHAM**

Members of the Committee requiring further information, or with specific questions, are asked to raise these with the appropriate officer at least two working days before the meeting. If the information requested is available, this will be provided, and reported to Committee.

Panel 3 Members:

Mr R.G. Kybird (Chairman)	Mr R. Kemp
Mrs S.R. Howard-Alpe (Vice-Chairman)	Mr J.P. Labouchere
Mr G.P. Balaam	Mr B. Rose
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mr F.J. Sharpe
Mrs D.K.R. Irving	Mr M. Spencer

PERSONS ATTENDING THE MEETING ARE REQUESTED TO TURN OFF MOBILE TELEPHONES

Member Services

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

Date: Friday, 18 July 2008

PART A

ITEMS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

	<u>Page(s)</u> <u>herewith</u>
1. <u>MINUTES</u> To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2008.	1 - 4
2. <u>APOLOGIES</u> To receive apologies for absence.	
3. <u>URGENT BUSINESS</u> Members are asked at this stage to declare any interests that they may have in any of the following items on the agenda. The Members' Code of Conduct requires that declarations include the nature of the interest and whether it is a personal or prejudicial interest.	
4. <u>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</u> Members are asked at this stage to declare any interests they may have in any of the following items on the agenda. The Members' Code of Conduct requires that declarations include the nature of the interest and whether it is a personal or prejudicial interest.	
5. <u>NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING</u> To note the names of any non-members wishing to address the meeting.	
6. <u>HOUSING PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN - MONITORING REPORT JULY 2008</u> Report by the Strategic Housing Manager – Anita Brennan.	5 - 21
7. <u>LEISURE PFI UPDATE</u> Report of the PFI Monitoring and Sports Development Officer – Riana Rudland.	22 - 28
8. <u>PROVISION OF DOG AND PEST CONTROL SERVICE</u> Report of the Head of Environmental Health – Mike Wheatley.	29 - 31
9. <u>BRECKLAND HEALTH IMPROVEMENT WORK PROGRAMME/SMOKE FREE COMPLIANCE</u> Verbal reports by the Health Improvement Manager, Martin Seymour and Oliver Clark from Clarkson Business Services.	
10. <u>WORK PROGRAMME</u> To receive the Work Programme and note any amendments.	32

11. **NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting of Policy Development and Review Panel 3 will be held at 10.00am on Tuesday, 16 September 2008 in the Norfolk Room, Dereham.

PROTOCOL

The Working Style of the Policy Development & Review Panels

This document sets out the roles of Members and Officers, and the general principles to be adopted by the Policy Development & Review Panels (PD&RP) overseeing the Panel's mode of operation.

Member Leadership

Members of the Panel will undertake scrutiny topics as directed by the Overview & Scrutiny Commission (O&SC) and will recognise that best practice identifies scrutiny as a Member-led activity. The Panel will expect Cabinet members, to take responsibility for answering their questions about topics which primarily relate to the Council's activities.

A Constructive Atmosphere

Meetings of the Panel will be constructive and not judgmental. Panel recognises and accepts that effective scrutiny is best achieved through challenging and constructive enquiry. People giving evidence at Panel should be given due respect and not made to feel under attack.

Independence

Members of the PD&RP will not be subject to whipping arrangements by the party groups.

Respect and Trust

Meetings will be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and trust.

Consensus

Members of the Panel will work together and, while recognising political allegiances, will attempt to achieve consensus and agreed recommendations. There will be recognition that the Panel has a primary duty to scrutinise on behalf of the community.

Openness and Transparency

The PD&RP's business will be open and transparent, except where there are sound reasons for protecting confidentiality. The minutes of the Panel's meetings will explain the discussion and debate so that they can be understood by an outside reader.

Impartial and Independent Officer Advice

Officers who advise and support the Panel will give impartial and independent advice, as officers support all members of the Council.

Regular Review

There will be regular reviews of how the scrutiny process is working, and a willingness to change if it is not working effectively.

Programming and Planning

The Panel will have a programme of work assigned by the Overview & Scrutiny Commission. The Panel will be able to suggest additional topics for review through the O&SC for approval in the work programme. Before each topic is commenced, the O&SC will agree the scope of the exercise, what information they will need initially, and which members, officers and external witnesses they wish to see.

Managing Time

The Panel will aim to conclude the business of each meeting in reasonable time. The order of business will be arranged as far as possible to minimise the demands on the time of witnesses. Where possible, members should give advance notice of specific questions being provided at the time of the meeting to save items being deferred.

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW PANEL 3

**Held on Tuesday, 17 June 2008 at 2.30 pm in
Thetford Town Council, King's House, Thetford**

PRESENT

Mr R.G. Kybird (Chairman)	Mr B. Rose
Mrs S.R. Howard-Alpe (Vice-Chairman)	Mr F.J. Sharpe
Mr G.P. Balaam	Mr M. Spencer
Mr P.J. Duigan	

Also Present

Mr T. Edmunds	Norfolk County Council
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In Attendance

Julie Britton	- Senior Member Services Officer
Mark Broughton	- Member Development Officer
Rick Steels	- Revenue Services Manager

17/08 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18/08 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs D. Irving, Mr R. Kemp and Mr. J. Labouchere.

**19/08 HOUSING BENEFITS - ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP
(AGENDA ITEM 6)**

The Revenue Services Manager, who was also the Project Manager for Local Housing Allowance (LHA), provided Members with a brief overview of the scheme which had taken three months to complete.

It was explained that the reason behind the introduction of LHA was that the Government was encouraging tenants to take responsibility for themselves. From 7th April 2008, when LHA came into force, a tenant could not now request that their payments be made direct to the landlord. There were certain circumstances, however, in which landlords must still be paid directly by the Councils, where there was discretion to do so, to protect those requiring safeguard considerations due to vulnerability. The Vulnerability & Safeguarding Policy circulated set out the guidelines under which consideration should be given to individual cases and decisions made. This Policy had yet to be ratified through the Anglia Revenues Joint Committee.

LHA only affected tenants already receiving Housing Benefit who had moved into accommodation rented from a private landlord; it did not affect council tenants or persons living in other social housing.

Action By

Action By

The benefit paid under this new scheme was based on the number of bedrooms it was deemed were required for the claimant and their household and which area they lived in.

The number of bedrooms required for each household was dependant upon the number of adults and the number, age and sex of any children also resident. Examples of this scheme were provided.

The Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA) was the geographical area used for the determination of LHA. Our BRMA included the areas for Bury St Edmunds, central Norfolk and Norwich and Kings Lynn. The Rent Service had provided local authorities with information that had helped identify the extent of the BRMAs and therefore which properties fell within them. The BRMA figures provided were the starting point of what benefit a person was going to receive.

Since the introduction of LHA, there had been major changes in how benefit claims were processed. The Revenue Services Manager had been working very closely with other authorities to ensure consistency across borders and therefore reducing significant costs. Funding for the introduction of the LHA had been provided by the Department for Work and Pensions. A large part of the funding had been put into upgrading current software. Firstly, a project team had been established to test the software, to revise documents, to change benefit claim forms, upgrade the website and produce leaflets. A progress report was regularly reported to the Joint Committee.

At the last count, since LHA came into force, there were only 81 customers receiving this type of benefit. There had been two requests from tenants for the benefit to be paid direct to landlords. The real affect of LHA would not be felt for two to three years. A post implementation plan was in place to ensure that LHA was fit for purpose.

The Chairman asked whether there had been any significant changes in the amount of benefit paid. In response, the Revenue Services Manager advised that the ethos was that no-one should be any worse off under this new scheme.

It was agreed that there should be some reference made in the new policy document with regard to rights of appeal.

The Chairman thanked the Revenue Services Manager for his report.

RECOMMEND to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission that a reference is made to rights of appeal in the Vulnerability & Safeguarding Policy.

Elaine
Wilkes, Rick
Steels

20/08 THETFORD HEALTHY LIVING CENTRE (AGENDA ITEM 7)

Mr Tim Edmunds, Developer and Travel Planning Services Manager for Norfolk County Council, was in attendance for this item.

The Chairman reminded Members that this item was in response to concerns raised at previous meetings with regard to the monitoring of the Green Travel Plan, particularly with regard to car parking issues. The

Action By

Panel was informed, however, that since the granting of the planning application some joint parking arrangements had been instituted with the adjacent Sports Centre. A Member pointed out that he had noticed that private cars were being parked in the ambulance bays.

Mr Edmunds highlighted the fact that when the application for the erection of the Healthy Living Centre had been submitted, Norfolk County Council had recognised that there was insufficient parking on the site.

Copies of an internal email was circulated to prove that Norfolk County Council had been listening to public concern and evidence that planning permission had been granted before the receipt of the requested Transport Assessment. In his opinion, approval had been given by Breckland Council without detailed consideration of the proposals from a highways and transport point of view. Mr Edmunds said that he had been highly disappointed that this had happened but was pleased that permission had been granted subject to the implementation of a Green Travel Plan, albeit a voluntary one. He explained that NCC would rather have had a regulatory travel plan as it would have had more 'teeth' that underlined planning obligations paid by the developer. The issue with a voluntary Travel Plan was trying to enforce it. NCC had, however, undertaken a number of improvements themselves but these had unfortunately fallen on the public's purse, given that there was not opportunity to secure funding from the developer.

A Member explained that the reason planning permission had been granted at that time had been due to a funding deadline. If planning permission had not been granted, the funding would have been lost. In response, Mr Edmunds stated that if there had been a deadline issue, then an invitation to attend the Development Control Committee would have been helpful. He reminded Members that Norfolk County Council was significantly involved in the delivery of planning across Norfolk and it wished to support and attend planning committees to defend its advice, particularly when the authority was recommending that a proposal be refused.

In summarising the aforementioned issues the Chairman stated that he hoped that the Green Travel Plan would be adhered to. In conclusion he suggested that when the results of a required Transport Assessment were not known that the Development Control Committee should ask a Norfolk County Council representative to attend to help the committee better understand any outstanding transport or highway issues.

Mr Edmunds advised that investigations were underway with regard to possible pedestrian crossing measurements and that he had looked at the subway which, in relation to the surveys undertaken, was well used. Further to this, NCC was aware of the Growth Point issue in the Thetford area. NCC would be taking stock on different options as the growth in Thetford would provide different opportunities and lead to extra Government funding which could be targeted.

The Chairman, having used the subway himself, pointed out that pedestrians still had to cross the busy Croxton Road and suggested that an island should be installed. In response, Members were advised that space on the Croxton Road was limited but the matter was being investigated.

Action By

RECOMMEND that the Overview and Scrutiny Commission recommend to the Development Control Committee that in cases when proposals were being taken to Committee before the results of a required Transport Assessment were known that a Norfolk County Council representative be asked to attend.

Elaine
Wilkes, Phil
Daines

21/08 WORK PROGRAMME (AGENDA ITEM 8)

The schedule was noted, subject to the following amendments and additions:

Mark
Broughton

- Dog and Pest Control Service – Schedule for 29 July meeting
- Affordable Housing Policy – Schedule for 16 September meeting
- Healthy Living & Lifestyles – PFI Leisure Centres – Rescheduled to 16 September meeting
- Breckland Health Improvement Programme – Rescheduled to 16 September meeting
- Emergency Planning – Avian Flu – Possible reschedule (Mark Broughton to contact Mike Wheatley)

It was understood that Oliver Clark would be attending to speak on the Smoke Free Compliance item scheduled for 29 July.

Members were asked whether there were any further issues with regard to the Healthy Living Centre. The Panel agreed that the matter of private cars parking in the ambulance bays should be addressed by writing to the Healthy Living Centre. The agreement of NCC on the need for more signage still remained.

The Chairman raised the question of the relevance of Poly Clinics in rural areas and asked the Member Development Support Officer to find out whether there was anything on this matter on NCC Health Scrutiny Committee's work programme. If this matter had not already been included it was to be added to Panel 3's work programme accordingly.

22/08 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 9)

The Chairman stated that he might be on holiday for the next meeting and asked the Vice-Chairman to chair the meeting in his absence.

The arrangements for the next meeting on Tuesday, 29 July 2008 at 10.00am in the Norfolk Room were noted.

The meeting closed at 3.30 pm

CHAIRMAN

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

**Report of the Strategic Director – Services Directorate to the
Policy Review Panel 3 – 29th July 2008**

**HOUSING PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN – MONITORING REPORT JULY
2008**

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 Policy Review Panel is requested to note progress against delivery of the Housing Improvement Plan and agree to the inclusion of the remaining recommendations into the Housing Strategy 2008-2012 Action Plan.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Panel:

2.1 Note progress against the Housing Improvement Plan and agree to include the remaining recommendations not yet delivered into the Housing Strategy 2008-2012 Action Plan.

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 Audit Commission inspection judged the Housing Service as 'Fair with promising prospects of improvement' in May 2005.

3.1.2 The inspection report contained a series of recommendations, one key one being 'to produce an improvement plan incorporating the many recommendations contained in the inspection report.'

3.1.3 Policy Review Panel initially requested that quarterly monitoring reports be submitted detailing progress against delivery of the plan. This has been amended to six monthly updates.

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 The recommendations contained in the Housing Improvement Plan have formed the basis of the Council's Annual Delivery Plan and the Strategic Housing Service Plan for 2007/08 and 2008/09. These documents in turn have influenced the staff appraisal process and the development of statutory documents such as the housing and homelessness strategies.

3.2.2 Progress against the targets contained in the plan has been consistent since its adoption, despite pressure on the team to respond to other national and local targets not contained within the Improvement Plan itself. The team has responded well to the challenges and the majority of targets have been met.

3.2.3 The main recommendation outstanding for the housing team is a comprehensive review of the Council's private sector policies on empty properties and fuel poverty and the development of a new Private Sector Housing Strategy. Work is well

underway on these recommendations, but completion has been delayed somewhat by Communities and Local Government's (CLG) response to Breckland's request for a district wide licensing scheme for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO).

3.2.4 There remain a number of targets which are influenced by corporate rather than Strategic Housing issues/timescales and members are requested to agree to monitor progress against these as part of Housing Strategy 2008-2012 currently in development. These are:

- a) Migration of Housing Service into Customer Contact Centre
- b) Affordable Housing Policies/approach

3.2.5 An update will be provided on the above at the meeting.

3.2.6 The Housing Improvement Plan July 2008 update is contained at Appendix 1. For ease of reference matters arising of note to members have been highlighted in the final column entitled 'update'.

3.3 Options

3.3.1 To note progress made against the Housing Improvement Plan and the outstanding matters

3.3.2 To not note progress made against the Housing Improvement Plan and the matters arising.

3.3.3 To agree to the inclusion of the remaining recommendations within the Housing Strategy 2008-2012 Action Plan and to continue to monitor progress accordingly.

3.4 Reasons for Recommendation

3.4.1 The inspection report identified areas for improvement across the Housing Service which are contained in the improvement plan

3.4.2 It is considered that the 'prospects of improvement' is the more critical judgement for organisations.

3.4.3 A new Housing Strategy document for the Breckland District is currently under development covering the period 2008-2012. The Housing Strategy is the Council's overarching housing document setting out the Council's aims, objectives and priorities for the delivery of housing services across the district. As the majority of recommendations have been met from the Housing Improvement Plan 2005, it is considered appropriate for any remaining matters to be included and thus monitored by Policy Review Panel 3 as part of the Housing Strategy Action Plan.

4. Risk and Financial Implications

4.1 Risk

4.1.1 Non delivery of the action plan items could indirectly affect the Council's direction of travel rating from the Audit Commission, in terms of improvements to the overall service. The Council has however mitigated this risk by its progress and achievements to date. There remains a residual risk to the Council in terms of non delivery of targets which can only be delivered with corporate assistance.

4.2 Financial

4.2.1 No direct financial implications resulting from this report.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 No direct legal implications resulting from this report.

6. Other Implications

- a) Equalities: The report has no direct Equalities implications. Equality Impact Assessments have been carried out across the range of housing services.
- b) Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998: There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.
- c) Section 40, Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006: There are no direct implications from this report.
- d) Human Resources: n/a
- e) Human Rights: The report itself does not have any direct implications in respect of human rights. Delivery of individual targets/projects/service contained in the plan make a significant contribution to ensuring the Council is upholding an individual's human right whilst they are accessing housing services Articles 2, 8, 10, 12 refer.
- f) Children's Act 2004: the provision of housing and housing support services contribute directly to the core aims of the Children's Act. Access to decent affordable housing can be seen to make a substantial contribution to improving the life chances, address health inequalities and improve access to education and opportunities for children and vulnerable young people.

7. Alignment to Council Priorities

- 7.1 Safer and Stronger Communities – The improvement plan contains recommendations for improvement to the housing service (Domestic Violence, temporary accommodation, HMO licensing, BME research et) and in doing so gives the housing function a central role in regards to delivery of the Council's wider Community Safety and Community Cohesion agenda. All actions are evaluated for Section 17 implications.
- 7.2 Your Council, Your Services – delivering noticeable, sustained improvement in the delivery of the housing service to customers is the central aim of the performance and improvement plan objectives.

8. Ward/Community Affected

8.1 All wards

Background Papers

n/a

Lead Contact Officer:

Name/Post: Anita Brennan, Strategic Housing Manager

Telephone: 01362 656880

Email: anita.brennan@breckland.gov.uk

Key Decision Status (Executive Decisions only):

n/a

Appendices attached to this report:

Strategic Housing Performance and Improvement Plan 2005 – July 2008 update

STRATEGIC HOUSING
PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Response to Audit Commission Housing Inspection 2005

Improvement Plan – Access/Customer Care/Consultation (Generic)

Action	Timescale/ Months :	Lead Officer (and support)	Comments / update	Resources	<u>UPDATE</u>
Develop an access strategy in conjunction with the corporate centre, based on research into footfall and need, which clearly identifies how the housing service will: improve access for customers; develop service standards; deliver mandatory customer care training; and use complaints, surveys and other forms of customer consultation to ensure access to services meets customer needs.	medium	AB / Corporate	Key recommendation of report – to complete by March 1 st 2006 – item referred to corporate centre	H / C	Homelessness Strategy addressed improvement of access to service. Will be fed into the corporate access strategy when developed.
Renew web pages	Short	PK		H	Completed
Review web pages	ongoing	JH		H	Completed
Review homeless out of hours service	medium	AB		H/C	Completed
Review daytime homelessness service and service standards and need for a local rate or free phone telephone service (Previously identified)	medium	JMW	i - Service reviewed to emphasise prevention and introduce soft split	H/C	Review completed – freephone number in place at Theford Customer Contact Centre
Review leaflet formats and consultation /participation arrangements for leaflets	short	AB/GP		H	Completed

Improvement Plan – Diversity (Generic)

Action	Timescale/ Months :	Lead Officer (and support)	Comments/update	Resources	Completed
	Short (3) Medium (6) Long (9) Ongoing			H = Housing C = Corp Con = Consultant	
Within six months, develop a diversity strategy in conjunction with the corporate centre, which includes: profiling of customers to inform service development; a comprehensive training package for housing staff to ensure behavioural compliance with good practice and which is tailored to housing specific service delivery issues; and a system for monitoring contractor compliance on equalities and diversity issues.	Medium	AB/ Corporate	Key recommendation of report – by March 1 st 2006. referred to corporate centre	H/C	Completed BME housing research study completed. Norfolk Wide Action plan in development.
Review involvement in the East of England Regional Assembly equality network, the county wide Community Cohesion group, the Racial Equality Council or the BME (Black & Minority Ethnic) sub group of the county wide public involvement forum	Short	AB		H	Completed
Investigate and address the needs of groups other than gypsies and Portuguese including the needs of HIV customers	Medium	AB Corporate		H/C	Research completed.
Develop a BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) housing strategy and specifically take account of Houses Of Multiple Occupation	Medium	AB / GP		H	Completed – Norfolk Wide Strategy Action plan adopted.

Improvement Plan – Performance Management and Value for Money (Generic)

Action	Timescale/ Months :	Lead Officer (and support)	Comments / update	Resources	<u>Completed</u>
	Short (3) Medium (6) Long (9) Ongoing			H = Housing C = Corp Con = Consultant	
Review protocols with partner agencies around case management and nominations to ensure improved services for homeless applicants during assessment and rehousing	Medium	AB		H	Completed.
Use newly increased staffing resources as an opportunity to improve the effectiveness of appraisal, performance management, risk management and partnership involvement processes and embed in the way housing services are planned, delivered and monitored	Medium	AB		H	Completed/ongoing
Within six months, develop systems for involving partners, particularly in rural areas, and customers in monitoring performance and reviewing the continued relevance of strategies on a regular basis	Medium	AB/GP	Key recommendation of report – by March 1 st 2006	H	Completed.
Identify a risk champion in the service	Short	AB		H	Completed
Review the properties and shortcomings of FLARE' computer system	Short	GP		H/C	Completed

Improvement Plan – Housing Strategy and Enabling

Action	Timescale/ Months :	Lead Officer (and support)	Comments/update	Resources	Completed
Review the methodology for assessing housing need to include local needs survey information from parish councils or targeted research data on the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic, older or younger people.	Short (3) Medium (6) Long (9) Ongoing	AB		H = Housing C = Corp Con = Consultant	Housing Market Assessment completed.
Assess the housing options available for young people including supported accommodation	Medium	AB/PK		H/Con	Assessment complete – bids in place
Review the decision made in 2002 housing not to adopt a policy recommended an affordable housing policy of 40 per cent on new build sites	Short	AB/PC/ Corporate		H/C	Review of affordable housing policies currently being undertaken through LDF
Develop a strategy to deliver the required number of affordable housing units as defined by the housing needs study of 2003 for 600 units per year and assign affordable housing objectives to named individuals so as to assess success	Long	AB/ Corporate		H/C	New Affordable Housing Policy to be developed by Q2 2008 following LDF consultation

							process.
Investigate other forms of funding for development	Long	AB/ Corporate					Completed 07/08
Adopt a formal 'preferred partner' system	Short	AB/ Corporate					Completed
Prepare development briefs for sites to guide developers	Ongoing	PC/ Corporate			Subject to planning agreement		Planning target – achieved where appropriate
Assess the provision of shared or other low cost home ownership or market renting schemes.	Medium	AB/ Corporate				H/C	Completed - Part of Housing Market Assessment
Establish a protocol with regeneration service areas to ensure that housing is firmly on the agenda	Short	AB/ Corporate				H/C	Completed/On going – Growth Point status.
Assess the need for a direct lettings scheme in the private rented sector.	Short	PK				H	Completed - service to be developed in 2007 with landlords forum.
Lead the development of a Norfolk wide physical and sensory disability strategy	Medium	AB				H/CON	Completed
Whilst making use of the powers contained in the Housing Act 2004 as soon as they take effect, develop over the next twelve months a private sector housing strategy. This should be based on a revised stock condition survey	Long	AB/GP			Key recommendation of report – by September 1 st 2006	H	Completed
Review strategies including the empty property and fuel poverty strategies and the renewal policy	Medium	AB/GP				H	In development – part of 08/09

STP.

Homelessness and Housing Advice – Performance and Improvement Plan

Improvement Plan - Housing advice and Homelessness

Action	Timescale/ Months :	Lead Officer (and support)	Comments / update	Resources	Completed
	Short (3) Medium (6) Long (12) Ongoing			H = Housing C = Corp Con = Consultant	
Monitor the number of homelessness presentations prevented through housing advice	Short	JMW		H	Completed – ongoing (Best Value Performance Indicator)
Undertake a rough sleeper count.	Short	PK		H	completed march 06
Review protocol with Peddars Way regarding assessment and rehousing processes	Medium	AB/ JMW	Key recommendation of report – undertake as part of choice based lettings proposal - by March 1st	H	Completed as part of transfer of waiting list.
Review the budgetary provision for the rent deposit loan scheme	Short	AB/PK	Budget required – in star chamber bid	H	Completed budget increased
Review the position regarding a 'sanctuary' scheme to reduce homeless presentations after domestic abuse,	Short	PK	Budget required- in star chamber bid	H	Completed
Review the list of private lettings agents it provides to customers asking for help in obtaining private rented accommodation	Short	PK		H	Completed

Review the 95% target for the speed in assessing homelessness cases	Short	SHM / JMW		H	Completed – reviewed and maintained
Within six months, develop a strategic approach to the provision of interim and temporary accommodation to ensure it is of appropriate quality and in locations which optimise the opportunity for customers to maintain existing support networks.	Medium	AB		H	Completed – actions ongoing
Review procedures and practices engaged in placing homeless people in interim accommodation	Short	JMW		H	Completed
Review the level of support given to people placed in temporary accommodation	Short	AB		H	Completed review of floating support finalised
Establish a programme to regularly check the quality of temporary or interim accommodation and review the need to adopt the Greater Norwich grading system for bed and breakfast accommodation, based on the fitness standard	Short	PK/AC		H	Completed Regular checks undertaken
Assess the need to adopt the Government's hostel review toolkit.	Short	PK/AC		H	Completed Desirable elements adopted

Improvement Plan - Private Sector

Action	Timescale/ Months : Short (3) Medium (6) Long (12) Ongoing	Lead Officer (and Support)	Comments / update	Resources H = Housing C = Corp Con = Consultant	Completed
Undertake a stock condition survey to identify properties not achieving decent homes standard	Long	GP		H/Con	Completed
Investigate the effectiveness of local Performance Indicators and consider identifying further ones.	Short	GP/AB		H	Completed
Amend e mail contact provided on web site from principal housing officer	Short	GP		H	Completed
Realistically assess the risks inherent in inspecting only 30 houses of Multiple Occupation per year in a district.	Short	GP/AB		H	Completed new target adopted
Reinvigorate the landlord forum and task it to :- Develop its terms of reference Establish an accreditation scheme	Short	GP		H	completed
Establish systems to ensure housing associations in the district achieve 100 per cent decent homes standard by 2010.	Short	GP		H	Monitoring system in place via annual reporting mechanism.
Review the use of intervention strategies to target disrepair in the private sector	Short	GP/Ab		H	To be undertaken as integral part of development

							of private sector housing strategy in 07
Establish a system to prioritise work on the worse cases of empty properties or properties in disrepair	Short	GP	H				Completed
Review the application of small grants and loans, under the 'Enhance' and Domicile schemes, to help tackle disrepair.	Short	GP/AB	H				Completed
Complete discussions to transfer 'safeguard' inspections and customer support role on grants and loans to the Home Improvement Agency. (HIA)	Short	GP/AB	H				Completed
Identify resources required to focus on Home Energy Act work and education to ensure 'Enhance' is well used for heating installations.	Short	GP/AB	H				Completed budget agreed
Establish consultative proposals for the implementation of the 2004 Housing Act.	Short	GP	H				Completed
Agree arrangements with partner housing associations to manage Empty Dwelling Management Orders,	Short	GP	H				Completed
Examine how the enabling role is used in respect of adaptations	Short	GP/AB	H				Completed as part of LAA target discussions and physical Disabilities strategy
Establish a district wide register of adapted properties to allow all agencies to 'work smarter' in exploring rehousing options.	Medium	GP/AB	H/RSL'S				As above.
Review and improve target timescales allocated to dealing with DFG's	Short	GP/AB	H				Review completed – timescales on priority 1 cases have improved.
Agree with partners a system for reporting performance i.e. Home Improvement Agencies and Occupational Therapists	Short	GP/Ab	H				Agreed.

Key

- AB – Anita Brennan
- GP – Gordon Partridge
- PC – Paul Cason
- PK – Polly Kane
- JMW – John Walker
- AC – Adrian Cherry

BRECKLAND COUNCIL**Report of Stephen Askew Executive Member of Services to
Policy Development Review Panel 3 COMMITTEE – 29th July 2008****Leisure PFI update report****1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update and overview of the PFI leisure contract and the performance of Dereham Leisure centre and Breckland Leisure centre and Waterworld.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council/Committee:

2.1 Note the contents of the report.

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 Full service commencement of the PFI (Private Finance Initiative) Leisure contract was triggered on 19th April 2007 with the completion of the building phase at Dereham Leisure centre. Dereham Leisure Centre opened on 20th April on time and on budget, the enhancements made to the existing site at Breckland Leisure Centre in Thetford completed three months ahead of schedule.

3.1.2 The opening of the new facility in Dereham and the enhanced and refurbished facility in Thetford has resulted in increased membership and throughput of users at both sites.

3.2 Issues

3.2.1 The first 12 months of operation of the centres has proved an exciting and challenging time for the operator Parkwood Leisure. They have worked hard to drive up participation and memberships while coping with some ongoing defects resulting from the building phase. The key challenges during this period were related to the tiles in the learner pool at Dereham and the MUGA fencing at Thetford, both of which have now been rectified with pleasing outcomes.

3.2.2 Overall usage of the centres has increased throughout the first year of operation. At Breckland Leisure Centre overall usage for 2007/2008 increased by 15.26% when compared to 2006/2007. At Dereham Leisure centre overall usage increased by 52.84% for this period. This gives an overall combined usage increase of 28.75%.

3.2.3 The new Dereham Leisure centre achieved an excellent first time score of 72% for Quest, the leisure industry quality standard award scheme for leisure management, which puts Dereham in the “commended” category. Breckland Leisure Centre and Waterworld is due to be assessed in early August.

3.2.4 Both facilities have gained the environmental management standard ISO14001 in recognition of the environmental systems in place.

3.2.5 Additional investment by the leisure operator was made at the facility in Thetford to improve the MUGA netting and the café area. A high level 'catch net' has been installed on the MUGA to limit the number of balls deflecting into the adjoining properties and this has greatly improved the relationship with these residents. Investment into the catering facilities has resulted in a brand new front counter and serving area, a new store room, kitchen and state of the art catering equipment.

3.2.6 The success of the Aquazone swimming programme has resulted in additional classes being added to the programme both at Dereham and Breckland with the introduction of a fifty week programme.

3.2.7 The following table shows comparative usage figures for both centres:

Dereham	1st April 06 - 31st March 07	1st April 07 - 31st March 08	Variance	% Variance
Swimming lessons	28160	36882	8722	30.97%
Sports Halls	3850	16635	12785	332.08%
Classes	3725	10852	7127	191.33%
Fitness	20111	45166	25055	124.58%
Breckland	1st April 06 - 31st March 07	1st April 07 - 31st March 08	Variance	% variance
Swimming lessons	31213	53433	22220	71.19%
Sports Halls	11503	12626	1123	9.76%
Classes	8260	11810	3550	42.98%
Fitness	37920	55285	17365	45.79%

3.2.8 A number of user satisfaction surveys were undertaken during the first year of operation covering a range of service areas. The results are tabled below:

Service Area	Dereham Leisure Centre	Breckland Leisure Centre & Waterworld
Service at Reception	83.08%	83.80%
Helpfulness of staff	88.30%	87.20%
Overall value for money	83.40%	83.74%
Café services	83.23%	84.82%
Changing rooms	84.62%	85.38%
Fitness facilities	91.25%	90.92%
Quality of equipment	90.00%	90.00%
General Cleanliness	87.92%	87.51%
Accessibility of centre	88.68%	89.98%
Parking	92.69%	92.20%
Signposting	79.53%	76.91%
Ease of booking	87.03%	86.52%
Washroom facilities	86.27%	87.08%
Information facilities	82.13%	81.82%
Opening hours	84.53%	84.38%
Availability	81.67%	80.74%

3.2.9 Appendix 1 and 2 shows membership maps for each of the centres identifying where the centre users live.

3.2.10 From April 2007 Parkwood Leisure have trialled a number of initiatives to increase

throughput at the centres and contribute to increased participation within the district. These initiatives have included Music Babies (swimming to music session for mothers and toddlers), Ballroom dancing, 50 pence swim vouchers, free swimming sessions, leisure card offers and discounted membership offers.

3.3 Options

3.3.1 To note the contents of the report.

3.4 Reasons for Recommendation(s)

3.4.1 Report for information only

4. **Risk and Financial Implications**

4.1 Risk

4.1.1 There are no risks attached to the contents of this report

4.2 Financial

4.2.1 None

5. **Legal Implications**

5.1 None

6. **Other Implications**

- a) Equalities: The Council in conjunction with its Partners Parkwood Leisure are committed to providing fair and equitable services
- b) Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998: None
- c) Section 40, Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006: None
- d) Human Resources: None
- e) Human Rights: None
- f) Other: [e.g. Children's Act 2004] None

7. **Alignment to Council Priorities**

7.1 Functions and activities relating to sports development and leisure services support delivery of the following Council Priorities:

- Stronger Communities
- Prosperous Communities

8. **Ward/Community Affected**

8.1 The leisure services within the district are available to all members of the community.

Background Papers

None

Lead Contact Officer:

Name/Post: Riana Rudland – PFI monitoring and sports development officer

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Key Decision Status (Executive Decisions only):

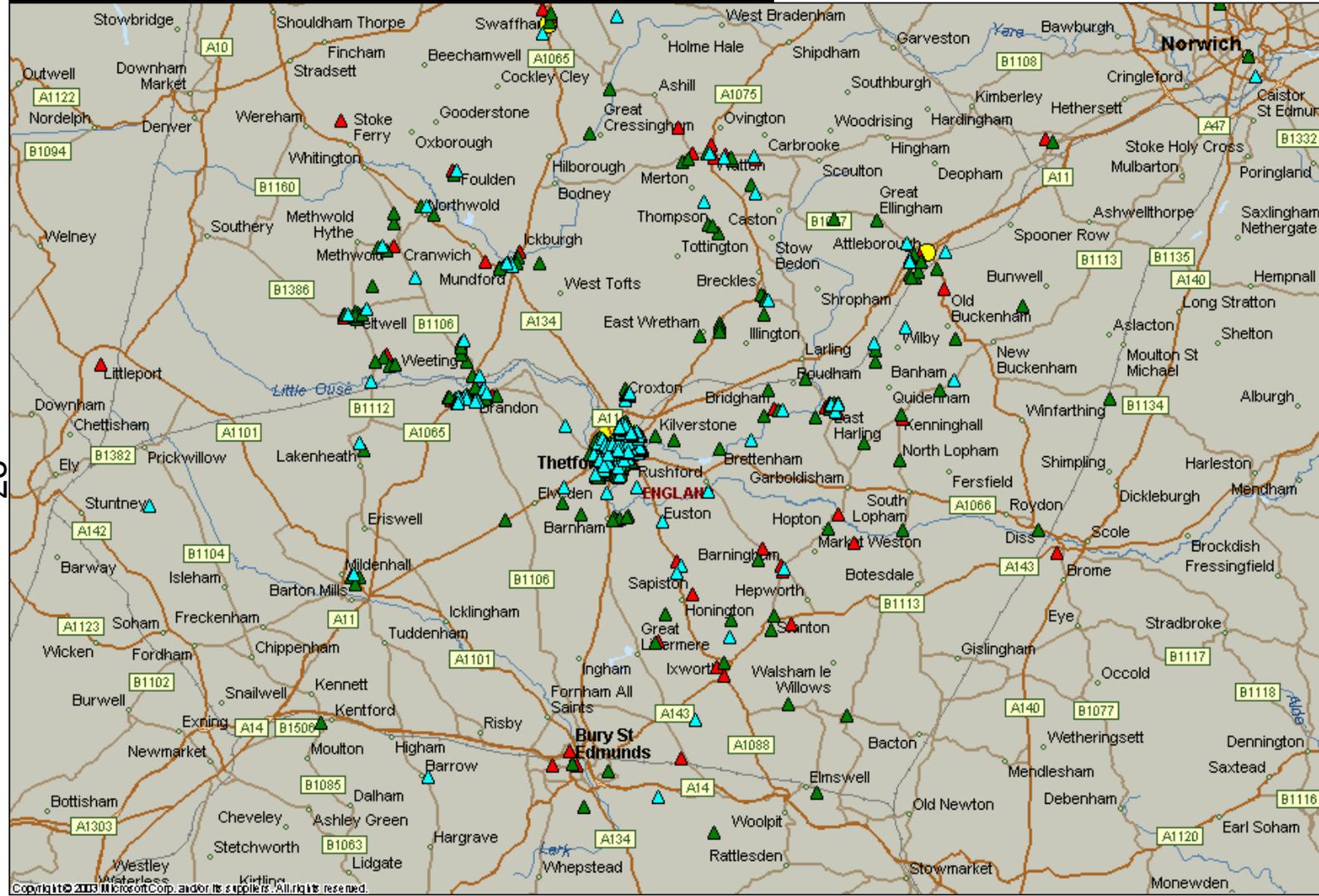
This is not a key decision

Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix 1 – Dereham Leisure centre membership map

Appendix 2 – Breckland Leisure centre & Waterworld membership map

Appendix 2 - Breckland Leisure Centre & Waterworld Membership map



BRECKLAND COUNCIL**Report of the Strategic Director – Business Transformation to the
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION COMMITTEE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND
REVIEW PANEL 3 – 29th July 2008****PROVISION OF DOG & PEST CONTROL SERVICE****1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 Update on the review of the future provision of the Dog Warden and Pest Control Services. Both Services have been advertised for contractors interested in providing them under contract and the results of the tender submissions are being compared to the cost and service levels of the current in house services in reports being submitted to executive members and cabinet.

2. Recommendations

- It is recommended that the Panel:
- 2.1 Consider and note the report contents.

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 report put to Members in December 2007 detailed the issues relating not only to the provision of the existing Dog Warden Service but also the new requirement from April 2008 to take over the complete responsibility for stray dogs out of hours which is currently shared with the police.
- 3.1.2 The decision at the December meeting concluded that there was a need to provide further details on how to provide both parts of the service with an emphasis on identifying if partnership working could be carried out with neighbouring authorities.
- 3.1.3 A further report was submitted to the OSC on 6th March 2008 detailing that both the dog control service and the pest control service were to be advertised in terms of private contractors expressing an interest in terms of tendering for the provision of these services. The results of these tenders would then be compared under the principles of best value against the current in house provision and be reported to executive members / cabinet as appropriate in terms of determining how they wish to see the services provided in the future.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 Both the dog and pest control services have now been advertised asking for expressions of interest from contractors who wish to tender for the provision of these services.
- 3.2.2 2 tender quotations for the dog service were received and 5 for the pest control service (however only 2 of the pest tenders were correctly submitted and therefore acceptable under the councils tendering rules). Each of the valid tenders has been assessed and compared against a matrix which examines not only cost but value for money in terms of the level and quality of service offered

- 3.2.3 The results of these assessments with comparisons of the costs and levels of service of other options available in providing the service , primarily retaining the service in house have been put into reports which are currently being put before executive members for there consideration.
- 3.2.4 The report relating to the provision of the dog warden service has been to corporate management team and executive board and is due to go to cabinet on 22nd July. Dependant upon the decision made by cabinet members there are additional costs related to several of the preferred options which will need potential funding through the supplementary estimate process.
- 3.2.5 The report relating to the provision of the pest control service is to be submitted to corporate management team and executive board shortly. Dependant upon the decision made by executive members there are additional costs related to several of the preferred options which will need potential funding through the supplementary estimate process.
- 3.4 Reasons for Recommendation(s)
- 3.4.1 The cost of providing full dog warden and pest control services needs to be tested in the market place and compared to the current in-house provision to ensure that the Council receives a high quality service which is the best value for money.

4. Risk and Financial Implications

4.1 Risk

- 4.1.1 Not to improve the dog warden service by providing an out of hour's service may leave the Council open to challenge for not complying with its legal duties.
- 4.1.2 Not to provide a cost effective pest control service may leave the Council open to challenge for not complying with its legal duties.

4.2 Financial

- 4.2.1 Financial implications are being considered as part of the reports being submitted to cabinet and executive members.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 None at present but issues of tendering to be dealt with as part of recommended actions.

6. Other Implications

- a) Equalities: Has an Equalities Impact Assessment been conducted? No – Implicit within process of tender and reviewing service.
- b) Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998: None
- c) Section 40, Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006: None
- d) Human Resources: Future issues as part of possible contractor taking over service – to be addressed as part of tendering process.
- e) Human Rights: None
- f) Other: None

7. Alignment to Council Priorities

- 7.1 Building safer and stronger communities.
 - Tackling anti-social behaviour.
 - Ensure our services are delivered in a fair and equitable manner.
 - Promote a sense of community belonging and pride.
 - Contribute to improving the health of people who live in Breckland Council.
- 7.2 Prosperous communities
 - Protect and enhance our town centres
- 7.2 Entrepreneurial Council
 - Ensure the Council manages its resources well and delivers value for money.

8. Ward/Community Affected

- 8.1 District wide service issue.

Background Papers

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Commission 6 March 2008 – Provision of Dog Control Service.

Report to Overview and Scrutiny Commission 13 December 2007 – Provision of the Dog Control Service.

Lead Contact Officer:

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Key Decision Status (Executive Decisions only):

This is not a key decision.

Appendices attached to this report:

[List]

Policy Development & Review Panel 3

Work Programme & Meeting Schedule

Topic/Item	Lead Officer (s)	17 June 2008 Thetford	29 July 2008 Dereham	16 Sept 2008 Dereham	21 Oct 2008 Dereham
Healthy Living & Lifestyles – PFI Leisure Centres	Joe Liggett/ Riana Rudland		Inc. on Agenda		
Housing Improvement Plan – Monitoring	Anita Brennan		Inc. on Agenda		
Housing Waiting List – Allocations Policy & Choice Based Lettings	Anita Brennan/ Darryl Smith			Postponed from 17/6	
Breckland Health Improvement Work Programme	Martin Seymour		Postponed from 17/6 Inc. on Agenda		
Housing Benefits – Anglia Revenues Partnership	(ARP)	Discussed			
Emergency Planning – Avian Flu	Mike Wheatley (& DEFRA)				postponed from 17/6
Thetford Healthy Living Centre – Green Travel Plan	Nicola Reeve (THLC)/ Norfolk County Council	Discussed			
Monitoring of Homeless Strategy Action Plan	Anita Brennan/ Darryl Smith				
Breckland Lifestyle Survey (1)	Rob Walker				
Open Spaces Audit – Provision of Football Pitches	Joe Liggett/ Mark Stokes				
Smoke Free Compliance	Oliver Clark		Inc. on Agenda		

Notes:

(1) Bring forward to 9 December 2008

PD&RPanel3-WkProg&MtgSchedule