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**BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

**At a Meeting of the**

**BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**

**Held on Monday, 7 September 2009 at 11.15 am in  
Room 2, The Robertson Suite, Breckland Business Centre, Dereham**

**PRESENT**

Mr P.D. Claussen  
Lady Fisher

Mr W.H.C. Smith

**Also Present**

Mr P.J. Duigan

**In Attendance**

Margaret Bailey  
Robert Barlow  
Anita Brennan  
Stephanie Butcher  
Monica Coffey  
Adam Colby  
Lesley Heywood

- Senior Accountant Capital and Treasury
- Director of Governance and Finance
- Assistant Director - Health & Housing
- Principal Licensing Officer
- Customer Services Manager
- Senior Business Improvement Officer
- Strategic Contracts & Procurement  
Manager
- Business Improvement Officer
- Policy and Performance Manager
- ICT Project Manager
- ICT Manager
- Member Services Officer

Gavin Hughes  
Stephen James  
Kevin Rump  
Kevin J Taylor  
Helen McAleer

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**1/09 CHAIRMAN**

After being duly proposed and seconded it was

**RESOLVED** that Mr WHC Smith be elected Chairman for the ensuing year.

**2/09 URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chairman was concerned that with a Membership of only three, there might be occasions when meetings of the Sub-Committee would not be quorate. He therefore proposed that Mr P Duigan should be co-opted.

As membership of the Sub-Committee was restricted to Cabinet Members only it was agreed to

**RECOMMEND TO CABINET** that Mr P Duigan be co-opted as a full voting member of the Business Improvement Sub-Committee.

**Julie  
Britton**

The Chairman suggested that the Capital Projects Working Group and the Business Improvement Sub-Committee could be combined to avoid duplication. There was concern that this would create too wide a remit and it was

**RESOLVED** that the Capital Projects Working Group would meet twice more before a decision on amalgamating with the Business Improvement Sub-Committee was made.

The Chairman also asked that the Project Initiation Document (PID) for the Capital Projects Working Group should be amended in line with the PID for the Business Improvement Sub-Committee, as this included consultation with relevant Service Managers and therefore provided Members with a fuller picture.

**RESOLVED** that the Capital Projects Working Group Project Initiation Document would be amended to include consultation with Service Managers.

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**Kevin  
Rump**

**3/09 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING**

Mr P Duigan.

**4/09 TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Terms of Reference of the Sub-Committee were noted.

At the request of the Strategic Contracts and Procurement Manager it was agreed to

**RECOMMEND TO CABINET** that clause 9 of the Terms of Reference be amended to ensure the use of sustainable procurement, rather than 'green' procurement.

**Julie  
Britton**

**5/09 CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY / CONTACT CENTRE EXPANSION**

The Customer Services Manager explained that some re-wording was needed before the strategy was circulated to Service Managers. The main aim of the strategy was to improve the internet and make it more interactive.

The Contact Centre extension had been completed and two additional desks had been purchased. Options were being investigated for the telephony system which would allow greater flexibility for mobile working, etc. A health check was needed for the Lagan system to determine whether an upgrade to version 7 was needed and if it was upgraded, whether it would work with the current telephony system. The health check would require the release of funds.

The Senior Accountant Capital and Treasury was concerned that there had been no formal report provided in support of the funding request and that the health check might not be eligible as capital.

The ICT Manager explained that discussions were taking place with Norfolk County Council, to determine the potential for shared telephony

with them. Once the outcome of those talks was known a report could be prepared.

The Chairman asked the officers to provide the necessary documents for the next meeting when a decision would be taken.

A Member asked about the volume of calls being received as he felt there should be a policy concerning direct dialled numbers.

The Customer Services Manager confirmed that information was available from BT which would be presented to the next meeting.

In response to a question about the outcomes of the Customer Contact Centre trial she reported that take-up at Swaffham had been disappointing and as a result she intended to introduce a direct phone line in place of the officer at that Centre on Fridays as turnout had been so low.

Watton did not need any further hours, but Attleborough was busy on all four days and having a Housing representative at the office had proved successful.

There had been no further progress on potential shared service with Norfolk Constabulary as they were currently looking for internal efficiencies.

Information from the Contact Centre was being fed to the Performance Team but the Policy and Performance Manager was concerned that only limited areas of data were being captured. Where issues had been identified, action had been taken to address them, but to fully understand the needs of customers more information was required. Lagan held more data, but at present it could not be accessed.

The Customer Services Manager said that they were currently investigating a Survey which was able to target specific groups and gave traffic light outcomes. It could be used for Customer Service Excellence Accreditation purposes, and could also be utilised by other service areas.

A Member asked if there was any way to assess the impact that the changes to Planning and Building Control, including upgrades to the Ocella system, would have on the number of calls handled by the Contact Centre. It was confirmed that benchmarking information should be available.

Finally the Chairman asked what the latest position was in relation to providing additional telephone lines. The ICT Manager explained that although this could be done they were investigating ways of encouraging self-service use of the internet first, thereby reducing telephone demand.

## **6/09 APPLICATION FORMS**

### **(a) Election Management Software**

An application had been submitted requesting the release of funds to replace the existing system due to a lack of confidence in the current

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**Monica Coffey,  
Kevin J Taylor**

**Monica Coffey**

**Action By**

supplier following problems experienced with postal vote support at the most recent elections.

A very productive meeting had been held with Strand (the existing supplier) and they had agreed to offer extra functionality and support at no extra cost. Confidence had been restored and the request for a new system had been withdrawn, avoiding £45,000 expenditure.

**7/09 NORFOLK HEADS OF ICT / PARTNERING**

The ICT Manager was holding regular meetings with other Norfolk Heads of ICT and contacts at Forest Heath and South Norfolk. These meetings were proving very productive and were resulting in the sharing of skills and services.

There were plenty of opportunities and the Council was in a good position to share an existing Norfolk County Council high speed voice and data link, which would be cost effective and potentially offer both efficiency savings and greater resilience for Breckland.

The ICT Strategy was still being revised due to the frequent changes to requirements and the many and changing opportunities available. However the revised version in a high level form would be presented to the next meeting.

The ICT Manager confirmed that Finance was being consulted on the proposals and he hoped to be able to clarify potential saving opportunities at the next meeting.

**Kevin J  
Taylor**

**8/09 CAPITAL BUDGET**

(a) Infrastructure to support Customer Access Strategy

This item had been discussed at Minute No 5/09 above.

(b) ICT Refresh Programme

The ICT Manager explained that it was necessary to release the 2009/2010 allocation to ensure operational capability. This funding had previously been approved by the ICT Board.

The Refresh programme was a three year plan. Discussions with Norfolk County Council concerning a lease model for ICT equipment might reduce capital spending and be worth considering alongside a refresh programme.

The Senior Accountant Capital and Treasury asked for clarification of the potential spend and exactly what equipment would be purchased. The Strategic Contracts & Procurement Manager also needed to be involved in the process.

The Chairman wanted to budget for new PCs for all Members following the next election as the current equipment would be almost 10 years old. A Member pointed out that some equipment was already failing and because of its age, could not be repaired. The ICT Manager confirmed

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that 'failed' equipment, beyond economic repair, would be exchanged under the current contract, therefore service should not be affected.

A trial using Citrix was currently being carried out. This should improve performance, although it would require the use of an additional level of security (as per Government Connect Code of Connection). There was also the potential to move away from PCs to using mini-boxes. This model was currently being used successfully by Forest Heath. Breckland had acquired a similar device for the Council to trial. If successful this could also lead to a long-term reduction in capital and revenue costs.

**RESOLVED** to release the sum of £176,400 for the ICT refresh programme.

(c) **ICT Connectivity**

The ICT Manager said that additional spending had resulted from the Capita connectivity requirements.

The Chairman thought that the ICT contract would come under scrutiny due to the recent system failures and the ICT Manager agreed that there was not enough resilience in the system at present. He was in conversation with Norfolk County Council concerning data and voice sharing, plus provision of an ISP connection and he was confident that problems would be resolved more quickly in future.

**RESOLVED** to release the sum of £22,386.07 for ICT connectivity.

**9/09 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**

The Senior Accountant Capital and Treasury tabled a finance report and an extract from a performance report listing projects and highlighting the 2009/2010 budget. She said that she would work to simplify the report for future meetings.

The Director of Governance and Finance was concerned that the current layout, showing a large sum of money against unapproved projects, should be changed. The money could be held in Reserve and drawn as and when required.

**10/09 OPERATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

This item had been discussed under Minute No 8c/09.

**11/09 STERIA SERVICE REVIEW**

The Head of ICT introduced this report which was self explanatory.

He explained that the VM were allowed greater resilience across the sites and addressed green agenda issues. The cost was in the region of £80,000 but existing equipment would be re-used to help reduce this cost. The remainder would be sought from the ICT Refresh budget.

The Capita Ocella Online Planning project was on target with more work

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being done this week. The full service was likely to be ready in early October. Capita still had had some connectivity issues connecting back to Capita services, but not in accessing the Breckland systems. Short and medium term plans would rectify this.

**12/09 NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 6 October 2009 at 09.30am in the Norfolk Room, Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham.

**13/09 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

**14/09 LICENSING SERVICE REVIEW**

Due to the sensitive nature of the information contained within the review it had been agreed to take this item 'below the line'.

The Senior Business Improvement Officer put forward a proposed Improvement Programme to bring the service up-to-date and to improve customer access. He sought approval to commence the programme of works and to provide detailed costs to the next meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the Business Improvement Programme should commence and that details of how it would be co-ordinated, the timescale and costs would be presented to the next meeting.

**15/09 COUNCIL TAX - BENEFIT REALISATION STATUS**

This was a standing item on the agenda.

The Senior Business Improvement Officer had undertaken a post project review. Improvement targets were being exceeded but there had still been no realisation of benefits. The Director Governance and Finance would meet with Senior Officers at Forest Heath to discuss this.

**Rob  
Barlow**

The meeting closed at 1.23 pm

CHAIRMAN