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BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

GREATER THETFORD DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

Held on Wednesday, 20 March 2019 at 2.30 pm in
Carnegie Rooms, Cage Lane, Thetford, IP24 2EA

PRESENT

Mr S. H. Chapman-Allen
(Chairman)
Jane James
Mr M. Robinson
Mr R. King

Mr A. M. Poulter
Mr S. Holmes-Smith
Mr T. J. Jermy
Cllr Wilby

Also Present

Ms T. Cunnell

Robert Whittaker

In Attendance

Teresa Smith
Rob Walker
Adam Oxbury

- Democratic Services Team Leader
- Executive Director Place
- Regeneration Officer

Action By

1/19 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Wilby (NCC) and Andrews (Croxton Parish Council).

2/19 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER 2018

Mr Whittaker asked for the following amendments under the following item:

44/18 – Any Other Business

The minutes should state that Mr Walker had an action to investigate the disparity between planning policy and what had been implemented, but would investigate and respond to the question.

The fourth paragraph should read 'RWh queried if there had been...'

The fifth paragraph should state that Councillor Brame had an action to feedback issues on the 'report it' function on the Norfolk County Council's website.

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 November were agreed subject to the above amendment.

Action By

3/19 NETWORK IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

This item would be moved to the next meeting.

4/19 THETFORD RAILWAY STATION CAR PARKING

The Executive Director of Place provided an update on the Thetford Railway Station Car Parking. Whilst there had been a willingness of engagement from Greater Anglia, there was not a commitment of funding. The Town Council were key to the discussions and should establish whether there were alternative potential sites in public ownership to replace the allotment space which would be reallocated to car parking.

Councillor James added it had been discussed at the last meeting of Thetford Town Council, and the consensus was a desire to explore the opportunities for a land-swap in order for there to be a deal.

The Town Clerk added that by law they could not remove the allotments, however the Town Council had not received a formal request to consider moving allotments to create further car parking at the railway station.

It was clarified that whilst the Board had no delegated powers on behalf of another Authority to make a decision, it was agreed in principle that the Town Council would look at options available to bring back to the Board for further discussion.

It was **AGREED** that a letter to be written by the Board to ask Thetford Town Council their requirements regarding allotments, should further parking be required at Thetford Railway Station.

ACTION: A letter from the Board to be sent to Thetford Town Council asking for their requirements regarding the allotments should further parking be required at Thetford Railway Station, and to explain reasons should the Town Council not have additional land available.

AO

5/19 FUTURE HIGH STREET FUNDS

The Executive Director of Place (Breckland) said there had been a number of announcements from central Government providing significant investment into the High Streets. As a result, a decision had been taken to put together a bid for the 'Future High Street Fund' for Thetford, and work was underway by Breckland with support from key stakeholders and developers in putting together the report. It was hoped that more information would be provided at the next meeting.

Councillor Jermy was pleased to hear that Breckland had chosen Thetford and felt there were two strong assets for the Town Centre that should be included – the environment/leisure destination –

	<u>Action By</u>
such as Castle Park or Kings House gardens, as well as the heritage aspect.	
ACTION: Further update on the bid for Future High Street Funds to be received at the next meeting.	AO/RW
6/19 <u>COMMUNITY SUB-GROUP - MEMBERSHIP</u>	
The Executive Director of Place (Breckland) explained there were two vacancies on the Community Sub-Group and agreement from the Board on how to fill these vacancies was required. An approach to seek representation from Voluntary Organisations had been undertaken. Whilst the Stanforth Trust had indicated they would be interested, a response was still awaiting from the Keystone Trust and Benjamin Foundation.	
The Board were content with the approach and suggested additional organisations be contacted – Youth Advisory Board, Thetford Residents Group, Access Community Trust, Charles Burrell Centre, and Thetford Christians Together Group.	
Mr Whittaker expressed his disappointment that he had not heard about the proposal sooner. The Chairman explained he was required to have the Board’s approval as to the direction of the Community Sub-Group recruitment.	
It was AGREED the Executive Director of Place (Breckland) contact agencies who may be interested in being co-opted onto the GTDP Community Sub-Group.	
ACTION: the Board to write to the organisations (via email) to gain further knowledge if they would be interested in joining the group. A networking approach would be taken (rather than formal interview) with the outcome emailed to the Board.	AO
7/19 <u>COMMUNITY SUB-GROUP REPORT</u>	
The Chairman of the Community Sub-Group, Robert Whittaker presented a summary of the report to the Board.	
The Sub-group asked the Board for a number of actions of which are detailed below:	
Passengers were being charged more when purchasing tickets on the train compared with buying them at the station.	
ACTION: A letter to be written to the Secretary of State to ask that the national rules about not needing to give railcard discounts on trains should only be applied when there are ticketing facilities at the station that are readily accessible to those with limited mobility from the boarding platform.	AO

Concern about the lack of planning for expanded health-care provision for the new SUE residents.

ACTION: A letter to be written the local GP surgeries in Thetford (and will also include the Watton practice) to enquire about the current status, including their ability to accept new patients, the level of care they are able to provide for existing patients, and what facilities and resources they might need to improve services.

Action By

AO

Mr Whittaker raised concern about the lack of a bus route from day one in the Thetford SUE area (first phase) which had been a planning requirement. The Executive Director of Place (Breckland) explained that the bus service would be implemented at trigger points, and Phase 1a did not meet that trigger point. In addition, there was no accessible pedestrian access from Phase 1a into Thetford and it was suggested that Highways approach the developer for a compromised solution.

ACTION: that the Board write to the Developers (Hopkins Homes) raising concerns of the Community Sub-Group, and ask them to consider in the development plans the requirement for a footpath.

AO

Mr Whittaker reminded the Board that he was still awaiting a response from Norfolk County Council with regard to the Cycling and Walking report. He asked the Board considered moving the outstanding recommendations. The Chairman explained that as there was not a representative from Norfolk County Council present at the meeting, he was unclear as to the direction of response from a County point of view, and was also aware the report had been included as part of the wider Thetford Transport study.

Councillor Jermy acknowledged the hard work that had been put into the study, and offered to make enquiries at Norfolk County Council to progress the report and recommendations. He also added that as a County Councillor he had access to a very small budget of which he had not used to its full potential.

Mr Whittaker felt there had been a lack of communication and public engagement from the Board, and suggested a number of actions for the Board to consider.

It was **AGREED** that the following **ACTIONS** would be undertaken:

AO

- At its next meeting the Board has a main agenda item on communication and public engagement
- **A Member of the GTDP board is assigned the task of monitoring the website to ensure it is kept up to date**
- **Each partner organisation appoints a named person to ensure that details any relevant news items and consultations are included on the GTDP website**
- **Partners agree to work with the community Sub-group**

Action By

on any local public engagement and consultation tasks they require

- **The Board re-considers whether its name and that of the Community Sub-Group best reflects its work and purpose in the eyes of the public**
- **A meeting is arranged between Board Members and the two sub-Groups to discuss improvements and co-ordinate a forward planning**

On behalf of the Board, the Chairman gave thanks to the outgoing Chairman of the Community Sub-Group who had been robust in his challenging, engaged with the Public, and continually raised public issues with the Board.

8/19 MARKET TOWN INITIATIVE

Members of the Board heard of a number of funding bids that had taken place to enhance the area around Thetford.

ACTION: Town Clerk to send details of the Brecks and River project to the Executive Director for Place (Breckland).

TC

Work on Button Island had taken place to tidy and open up the area. In addition other initiatives such as BreckWorld and ShopAppy had been launched to encourage footfall in and around the Town.

Councillor Jermy was delighted to see the work undertaken at Button Island and suggested the Town had a chance to give a greater sense of community by providing opportunities for local communities to be involved to brighten up areas of the Town.

Councillor King added he had recent cause to use the bus interchange within the Town and felt extremely disappointed as there were no toilet facilities, no bus information or timetables and felt strongly that the issues needed addressing. In addition there was a building close to the interchange that continued to remain empty and was an eye-sore to visitors and residents alike.

Members heard that the toilets, owned by Norfolk County Council had been continually vandalised and had been closed as a result.

ACTION: The Board to write to Norfolk County Council regarding the public toilets at the bus station, and ask for an updated position on the situation with the building at the Bus station – to make this more attractive to visitors within the town.

AO

9/19 LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director of Place (Breckland) welcomed views of the Board on the document which explained the three tiers of local government.

Action By

Feedback included that the document should:

- be blocked into 3-tiers to be clearer.
- be Colour coded
- be linked to digitally to make it interactive (i.e. links to the relevant web-page)

Once finalised, the document would be distributed to all Parish and Town Councils, as well in the Transforming Breckland publication (delivered to all households across Breckland).

10/19 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Nothing to report.

11/19 SUMMARY OF AGREED ACTIONS AND REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

The summary of agreed actions agreed had been captured on the attached document.

The Chairman asked a work programme be devised for the Board, and the following items would be discussed at the next meeting:

1. Receive the Network Improvement Strategy Report.
2. Update on the Future High Street Funds bid for Thetford.
3. Update on the Thetford SUE, by Simon Wood Director of Planning & Building Control) to include an update on Power and Drainage
4. Update on the Thetford Railway Station
5. Update on the Cemetery Bid by Mr Poulter
6. Update on Communication and public engagement.

It was agreed that a private workshop would be held with the Community Sub-Group prior to the next Board Meeting, to work through the challenges moving forward and to align work streams. Details of this would be communicated as soon as possible.

12/19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The arrangements for the next meeting on 6 June 2019 at 2.00pm in Kings House, Kings Street, Thetford were noted.

The meeting closed at 4.35 pm

CHAIRMAN



Highlights of the board meeting held on 20 March 2019

The Board agreed on the following actions:

A letter to be written to the Secretary of State to ask that the national rules about not needing to give railcard discounts on trains should only be applied when there are ticketing facilities at the station that are readily accessible to those with limited mobility from the boarding platform.

A letter to be written to the local GP surgeries in Thetford (and will also include the Watton practice) to enquire about the current status, including their ability to accept new patients, the level of care they are able to provide for existing patients, and what facilities and resources they might need to improve services.

Councillor Jermy will liaise with Norfolk County Council with regard moving the Cycling and Walking report.

The Board agreed to the actions listed under the Communication and Public Engagement Actions part of the Community Sub-Group report.

A letter to be written to ask Thetford Town Council their requirements regarding allotments, should further parking be required at Thetford Railway Station.

The Board agreed that the Executive Director of Place (Breckland) to contact agencies who may be interested in being co-opted onto the GTDP Community Sub-Group.

The Board will write to Norfolk County Council regarding the public toilets at the bus station, and for an updated position on the situation with the building at the Bus station – to make this more attractive to visitors within the town.