

# Public Document Pack

## BRECKLAND COUNCIL

### At a Meeting of the

### COUNCIL

Held on Thursday, 10 December 2020 at 10.00 am

Virtual meeting via Zoom

#### **PRESENT**

Mrs L.S. Turner (Chairman)	Mr F. Eagle
Mr R. F. W. Brame (Vice-Chairman)	Mr K.S. Gilbert
Mr T. J. Ashby	Mr C. Harvey
Mr S Askew	Mr P.J. Hewett
Mr R. Atterwill	Mr T. J. Jermy
Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mr M. Kiddle-Morris
Mr T. Birt	Mr R.G. Kybird
Mr W.P. Borrett	Mr I. Martin
Councillor C. Bowes	Mrs L.H. Monument
Mr M. P. Brindle	Mr P. Morton
Miss H. Bushell	Mr M. J. Nairn
Mr T. R. Carter	Mr J.W. Nunn
Councillor M. Chapman-Allen	Mr D. R. R. Oliver
Mr S. H. Chapman-Allen	Mr M. S. Robinson
Mr E. Colman	Mr I. Sherwood
Mr H. E. J. Clarke	Mrs S. E. Suggitt
Mr P.D. Claussen	Miss T. Taylor
Mr J.P. Cowen	Mr S. Terry
Mrs H Crane	Mrs A. M. Webb
Mrs V. Dale	Mr D. Wickerson
Mr R.W. Duffield	Mr N.C. Wilkin
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mr P. S. Wilkinson

#### **In Attendance**

Maxine O'Mahony	- Executive Director of Strategy & Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Nathan Elvery	- Head of Paid Service
Josie Hoven	- Licensing Team Leader
Mark Stinson	- Executive Manager Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Teresa Smith	- Democratic Services Team Leader
Julie Britton	- Democratic Services Officer

#### **Opening Remarks by the Chairman of the Council**

The Chairman gave a warm welcome to all those in attendance.

Before the meeting started, the Chairman paid tribute to all past colleagues and Mr Colin Armes, a former Councillor and former Chairman of Breckland Council who had recently passed away.

Councillor Terry Jermy, the Leader of the Labour Group lead the tribute and was honoured to be able to say a few words in respect of who he felt was simply a Thetford legend.

**Action  
By**

Colin had been elected to the Town Council, District Council and County Council on multiple occasions. Serving as Mayor of Thetford twice and as Chairman of Breckland. Colin had been passionate about Thetford and a proud son of Norfolk. After his many years' service as a postman, it was no surprise that he was such a people person, warmly and vigorously shaking the hand of whomever he came across and embracing them as an old friend. He had been a strong supporter of dozens of local groups, not just there to make up the numbers, but often the driving force behind getting things started and getting things done. He had a tenacity that he maintained throughout his life, right up to the end when he could be spotted pulling up on his mobility scooter to catch the ear of whomever he needed to so that he could highlight a local concern or issue.

A particular passion for Colin was the environment, and he was a strong advocate for Barnham Cross Common and a regular volunteer working to improve our town's river corridor. He inspired many and was one of the reasons that Councillor Jermy got involved in politics. Colin was part of a generation of Labour Councillors and activists that Councillor Jermy grew up with, and that have sadly now departed. In Thetford and the wider Breckland District we owe him an immense debt of gratitude for his many decades of service.

Condolences were then offered to Colin's wife Sylvia and the wider Armes family at this sad time.

A service of thanksgiving would be held sometime in 2021 when Covid restrictions were eased and further details would be shared in due course.

The Leader, Councillor Sam Chapman-Allen, the Vice-Chairman of the Council, Councillor Roy Brame, Councillor Gilbert, Councillor Kybird and Councillor Wilkin also paid their own tributes as all had fond memories of Colin.

The Chairman had sent a card of condolence to the family on behalf of Breckland Council.

A minute's silence was held.

#### **89/20 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 1)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dowling, Grey, James, Kiddell and K Martin.

#### **90/20 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 2)**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November were agreed as a correct record.

#### **91/20 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 5 (AGENDA ITEM 3)**

Councillor Birt was concerned that the Council was not dealing with all of the required business under Standing Order No. 5 in particular parts J and K.

In response, the Chairman advised that this was the reason that the waiving of Standing Order 5 had been included on each Council Agenda during the pandemic. The business of the Council had needed to remain succinct and manageable in the new environment of virtual meetings.

This matter had, however, recently been discussed with the Leader, Democratic

Services and the Executive Manager for Governance and would be reviewed in due course.

Following a proposal which was seconded, it was:

**RESOLVED** that Standing Order No. 5 be suspended.

**92/20 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (AGENDA ITEM 4)**

None declared.

**93/20 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 5)**

The Chairman was delighted that the bookings for the Council's 'Zoom into Santa' events that were taking place on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> December had been very positive and already donations to the Daisy Programme had been made. This had been a Member-led exercise and no Officer time or Council resources had been used. She and Councillor Webb were responsible for the booking line which would remain open until all places had been filled.

The Chairman had also been very encouraged with all the donations made by Members to the Daisy Programme for wearing their Christmas jumpers to the meeting and she thanked everyone for their contributions.

Members were encouraged to take up the training opportunities in respect of the befriending and safeguarding service and she thanked those Members who had attended the recent training sessions.

The Chairman had been made aware of many Breckland success stories during the pandemic and shared just a few of them.

The Gressenhall Gym

The young owner had said that the grants had helped him to secure his business by allowing him to continue to pay his overheads during the pandemic. It had allowed him to use Zoom and other communication platforms to keep in touch with his clients and to run sessions via the internet keeping them fit, well and active as well as mentally sound during these most difficult times.

Cranworth

Cranworth was a tiny village with no facilities other than the Church, a village hall and a playing field. Prior to lockdown, two enterprising young ladies had started a volunteer group and funds had had been raised to get the playing field back in use and the collapsing pavilion fit for purpose. The £10k grant that had been awarded had been a lifeline and the site was ready for use by local and visiting sports teams which was a fitting legacy for generations to come.

The Silver Social Programme

Now in its 4<sup>th</sup> year, the Silver Social Programme brought the arts and activities and friendship to the elderly and vulnerable people in Breckland's communities. Live events would normally take place in the towns and villages but during this pandemic all were being held on the internet. From these activities, friendships were formed, new groups emerged, and a foundation was built to help manage

loneliness and isolation. The Chairman encouraged everyone to take part and contact the Council's Communities Team for further information.

Finally, on behalf of all the Members, the Chairman conveyed a huge thank you to all Breckland Officers for all their hard work and efforts during these difficult times.

#### **94/20 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 6)**

The Leader, Councillor Sam Chapman-Allen was, pleased that so many Members had made an effort to wear their Christmas jumpers and donate to the Daisy Programme.

The following announcements were made.

Following the recent periods of national restrictions, Breckland's High Streets were once again open for business and all Members were encouraged to support their local shops going forward. The Council was still working closely with all local traders throughout this pandemic providing them with advice, support and millions of pounds of grant funding to help them to remain viable now and into the future.

Following the success of the Council's Confidence Campaign in the Spring and Summer 2020, a new campaign was underway to support those businesses in the run up to the Christmas period – 'Enjoy, Discover and Explore' that called upon all residents in Breckland to support their High Streets and shop locally in all five market towns.

A team of Covid Officers had recently been recruited in response to the pandemic. These Officers were already in place on the High Streets within the market towns and would provide a presence in the coming weeks and months to provide support, advice and guidance - not just to businesses but to local shoppers as well. They would also be undertaking door knocking for the local 'track and trace' that had proved to be a valuable tool in the attempt to prevent the spread of the virus. Officers would be introduced via social media platforms and Members and the public watching this meeting were encouraged to follow the videos and on-line content to understand what roles these Officers would be undertaking in the coming weeks.

As 2020 drew to a close, in what had been a dreadful year for many, Members and Officers were encouraged to look forward and focus on the new year ahead. The draft budget was already well underway for the forthcoming financial year and would be shared in due course through the committee process. Breckland Council was in a balanced budget position and would not have to make some of the difficult decisions that many other Councils were facing. All frontline services would be protected, and further investments would be made in respect of environmental issues, a new Animal Welfare Officer, new waste collection services and enhanced fly-tipping support.

A positive response had been received in respect of the Council's Market Towns Initiative (MTI). Breckland Council was still committed to the investment of £150,000 for every market town in the District. The first tranche of projects was being prepared and it was anticipated that delivery would be in the latter part of the current financial year, all being driven local Members.

For Watton, new improved sustainable street furniture would be installed in the High Street to enhance the look and feel of the town centre making it a fantastic

place for people to live and to visit

In Thetford, new lighting and new seating would be installed along the riverside, together with new attractions for people to enjoy this incredible area - one of the town's greatest assets.

Active Attleborough would be the main focus for Attleborough, such as movement, sport and activities to encourage people out into the community and enjoy the wonderful public spaces whilst also promoting the historic centre.

Green infrastructure initiatives would be the main focus for Swaffham to actively improve the air quality within the town and make Swaffham a destination of choice within the northern part of the District.

For Dereham, vibrant independent shops would be encouraged to the town linked together with the culture sector and with footways to inspire coactivity between those locations.

The Council had approved the power connectivity in both Thetford and Snetterton and this would enable Breckland to grow not just in housing but in industry so that individuals had the chance to live and work in Breckland.

In the light of Covid, the Corporate Plan would be re-visited and revamped to ensure that Breckland was still a place where residents and businesses could thrive. The Plan would be presented to the relevant Committee process - Overview & Scrutiny Commission in early January, followed by Full Council in February 2021. Cabinet colleagues and Officers across the Council were working hard to pull this together and have it ready so that this Council could continue to deliver to every single resident and business within the District.

The vaccine had been rolled out across England and other parts of the UK this week which had been a great achievement. The NHS in Norfolk & Waveney had already started to invite care home workers and the over 80's to attend appointments to receive the vaccine which had been confirmed as safe and effective. Initial supplies of the vaccine were limited and would be given to those most at risk together with a small number of frontline National Health Service staff. People over 80 would be contacted by their local GP practices so all would need to follow the advice by only attending an appointment when invited. The pandemic, however, was still very much with us, therefore all across the District and Norfolk must remain cautious and the best way to protect each other and friends and families was to continue to wash hands, cover our face and make space.

The Leader thanked all Officers, all Members, and public sector workers across Breckland and Norfolk, key workers and volunteers, childcare workers and those in the care sector providing valuable support to those most in need. All had ensured that Breckland communities were safe. The Council would continue to operate over the Christmas and New Year period supporting those most in need and details of the out of hours service would be available on the website.

The Leader then took the opportunity to wish everyone across Breckland a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Councillor Jermy, the Leader of the Labour Group thanked the Leader for his update. His views had been reaffirmed about the importance of Local Government when his inbox had been filled with emails about Covid, Bird Flu and an unsafe

building in Thetford but had been dealt with. He thanked the Officers who had all been doing a sterling job in keeping everyone informed including Members and the public alike.

He asked how negotiations were going in relation to local government funding and what representations had been made on behalf of the District to provide all these important services and if it was known whether a fair settlement would be provided from Government.

The Leader echoed Councillor Jermy's thanks to the Officers concerned. These Officers had worked weekends to support Defra in respect of the Avian Flu outbreak and to protect residents in Thetford from the unsafe building. These were just some of the examples of why local Government was so important to the district's residents and businesses.

In respect of the budget position, he had been involved in recent meetings with the District Councils Network (DCN) to prepare the Council's position statement in response to the Government's settlement. Members could note from the emerging budget the measures that Breckland Council was taking to ensure that it was protecting its frontline services. There would be some disadvantages in respect of the announcements made but the Government had, throughout the pandemic, committed millions of pounds to local councils to ensure that they were able to continue to operate and protect frontline services.

Councillor Wilkinson echoed the thanks that had been offered to all Officers, but he highlighted, in particular, Democratic Services who had been facilitating all of the meetings. He asked the Leader if he would also agree in thanking the Chairman, Councillor Lynda Turner for the sterling job in chairing these meetings.

The Leader said that he congratulated anyone who was able to chair a meeting successfully on-line, it was immensely challenging, and he felt that the Chairman had done a sterling job. There were many Members who chaired various meetings, groups, parish councils and sub committees and all should be proud of what they had achieved.

Councillor Borrett highlighted a number of projects that were already underway including the Norfolk Strategic Infrastructure Plan that was being delivered with the Council's partners, the LEP and NCC with Breckland Council very much taking the lead. The Attleborough town centre improvements of £4.5m that had already started, £3.6m for the Snetterton Energy supply, £9.8m for the Thetford Water supply and £2m for the sewage infrastructure in Thetford. Also planned but not yet started, was £14m towards the Thetford Sustainable Urban Extension and works in respect of the A47. This was an enormous amount of capital money being spent in the District in the midst of a pandemic and he asked the Leader if he agreed that this was an incredible achievement.

The Leader agreed fully and stated that as a District Council it would not be able to deliver this programme of works and activities without working in partnership. The projects listed highlighted how true partnership and collaboration worked to ensure that Breckland was a place where residents and businesses could thrive.

#### **95/20 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE UNDER STANDING ORDER NO 6 (AGENDA ITEM 7)**

The responses to the questions raised under this Standing Order had been emailed to all Members prior to the Full Council meeting (see attached).

Under this Standing Order and according to the Council's Constitution, a member asking a question (under paragraph 6.1 or 6.2 of the Constitution) may ask one supplementary question, without notice, of the member to whom the first question was put or by whom it was answered. The supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.

The following supplementary questions were asked.

Councillor Morton was pleased to learn that the Council had applied for the 'Green Homes' grant and asked that Members were kept informed of progress. He hoped that this was the first of many applications that the Council made to the 'Green' schemes going forward and if successful would data be collected to evaluate the financial and carbon benefits for the insulations work that was being carried out.

In response, Councillor Sherwood, the Executive Member for Customer Engagement & Member Champion for Breckland Sustainable Strategy advised that, as part of the Norfolk Green Homes funding bid, the Council was planning to nominate a Park Homes site in Breckland for insulation works. The properties must be of an EPC rating of E, F or G and such homes had to fall within certain financial criteria. He did not have an exact answer to the question as to whether this would be monitored but he presumed that it would, and a written response would be provided to Councillor Morton in due course.

Councillor Morton asked a supplementary question in respect of his second question. He asked Councillor Sherwood if he could provide a written response to confirm whether street lighting was metered and if so, how they were analysed, and how many streetlights had been converted to LED as of March 2020.

Councillor Sherwood advised that he was aware that the cost of streetlighting had reduced due to the lamps being switched to LED bulbs and would be happy to provide an response in writing.

Councillor Wickerson thanked Simon Wood, the Director of Planning & Building Control for his very detailed response to his question with notice. He did have a supplementary question but as it was equally detailed, he would be presenting that to him in writing and continue his dialogue on the planning enforcement issue with the Director of Planning & Building Control accordingly.

Councillor Birt had noted that Key Performance Indicator decisions would be dealt with in the next year and he looked forward to reviewing these in January. However, he felt that his question had not been fully answered in that he had asked whether the data that he had been provided with, on electricity consumption, could be disclosed on the Council's website as this would be useful for assessments and carbon targets and felt that such data should be available to everyone.

In response, Councillor Sherwood advised that the information that had already been supplied to Councillor Birt had not contained the granular level of detail as this was currently being considered. The data requested contained information on tenants and users of the Council's buildings which could be considered as private and confidential and therefore there was no plans to publish that level of detail at this present time.

The key performance indicators were crucial to monitor and the Council had a good suite of reporting methods and once it was understood exactly what important

issues needed to be monitored, the reporting system would be appropriately adapted.

Councillor Birt also asked Councillor Paul Claussen, the Executive Member for Planning a supplementary question in respect of the Local Plan and the Monitoring report. He felt that the response provided had shown that a Monitoring report had not been produced even though such reports should be mandatory and asked if the Council had sufficient resources to be able to fulfil this monitoring arrangement.

In response, Councillor Claussen advised that the Council did have enough resources during normal times but was unsure whether it had remained the same during this pandemic. He was aware that many Officers were carrying out work not related to planning and he had not been surprised by Councillor Birt's comments but, as far as he was concerned, the Planning department did have sufficient resource in normal times.

**96/20 QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE UNDER STANDING ORDER NO 7 (AGENDA ITEM 8)**

Councillor Jermy, the Leader of the Labour Group asked a question relating to a recent report in the Telegraph newspaper where it stated that one in ten Councils had written to the Government objecting to the latest planning proposals particularly in respect of the new algorithm that had been devised. He asked the Leader, Councillor Sam Chapman-Allen if he believed it was now time for the Government to scrap the Planning White Paper and go back to the drawing board.

The Leader did not feel that it was the time for the Government to scrap the Planning Consultation White Paper as there had been a phenomenal amount of work carried out by civil servants and local government which, if scrapped, would all be wasted. Local Government had provided Central Government with a wealth of responses and he believed that the Government should now go through all that information in great detail to formulate their response. If it turned out to be unfavourable to the residents of Breckland and Norfolk as a whole, then there were various lobbying forums in place such as the DCN and the LGA and through local MPs to ensure that our voices were heard.

Councillor Atterwill asked the Executive Member for Planning if he would join him in urging those community groups who were producing Neighbourhood Plans to carry on with their work despite the uncertainty created by the Government's Planning White Paper.

In response, the Executive Member for Planning said the simple answer was yes.

Councillor Atterwill's second question was directed to the Leader of the Council. He pointed out that in the last 10 years, Norfolk County Council's Conservative Group had cut Youth Services, the Connection Service, Children's Centres and was now closing Holt Hall. He asked the Leader if there was any scope for Breckland Council to provide additional help for the young people of Breckland.

Members were informed that Breckland Council made youth provision both within its leisure facilities and outreach activities across the District. All Councils had statutory responsibilities but whilst looking at budgets going forward all must ensure that the finances were targeted to those most in need whilst continuing to deliver its statutory services.



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By**

Councillor Birt addressed his question to the Leader of the Council. He had a number of outstanding issues including a complaint against a Senior Executive Officer of the Council but had not, as yet, had a response. He asked the Leader if these matters would be dealt with and there was sufficient time and resource for the new Head of Paid Service to complete this work.

The Leader advised that a Full Council meeting was not the appropriate forum for such matters to be discussed. There was an internal process through which such complaints could be addressed. In relation to any outgoing member of staff where a complaint had been made against them this would be looked at to establish whether the complaint was substantive enough to spend time and resource investigating.

The Leader asked Councillor Birt to have a further conversation with the Council's Monitoring Officer outside of this meeting as he was not fully aware of the details.

Councillor Wickerson directed his question to Councillor Sherwood the Executive Member for Community Engagement & Member Champion for Breckland Sustainability Strategy. As the Council moved into Christmas and the New Year period, he asked if Members would be provided with any update on the appointment of the Climate Change Officer as he understood that a shortlist had been produced and he wanted to know if an appointment had been made and when this person would start.

Councillor Sherwood advised that he had taken part in the final shortlisting interviews where he had been incredibly impressed by the calibre, knowledge and experience of all candidates. These interviews had recently been completed and the successful candidate would be notified shortly, and it was anticipated that this individual would commence employment early in the New Year. Once the HR process had been completed Members would be notified accordingly.

Councillor Crane asked the Executive Member for Customer Engagement if he agreed that Breckland Council had shown complete commitment to residents ensuring that all could access the Council more easily either on-line or by appointment and by offering and operating evening calls also by appointment.

Councillor Sherwood was pleased to state that his Portfolio recognised that no resident in Breckland should be missed and many people now used the internet and website and the on-line forms to engage with the Council. There was still a high volume of calls and the Contact Centre had adapted during the pandemic with the majority of the Call Centre Team working from home. It had been recognised that there was always going to be a vulnerable element of residents who could struggle with on-line forms etc and trying to get help had proved difficult. A scheme had since been introduced where appointments could be made to have someone call back out of hours, this was a trial process which was being monitored.

Councillor Borrett felt that Councillor Atterwill's question had been based on the premise that there had been a reduction in youth services by Norfolk County Council and asked the Leader if he would agree, in light of the following, that this was not the case. Norfolk County Council was moving from being a provider to being a facilitator of outdoor learning, and there were other opportunities for outdoor learning than those provided by Holt Hall. NCC would be using the money it saves by closing Holt Hall to increase the provision and access to outdoor learning for Norfolk's youth and he named a number of these initiatives.

The Leader completely agreed with Councillor Borrett's comments.

The Chairman felt that a list of youth initiatives taking place in Breckland and wider Norfolk should be sent to all Members.

Councillor Clarke was very grateful to Councillor Claussen, the Executive Member for Planning and the Officers for their work behind the scenes with different agencies in respect of flooding. He asked if the Executive Member would meet with him via Zoom to explore some of these issues prior to the conclusion that was expected in January 2021, and particularly, how this information should be communicated to residents and how this might be improved.

Councillor Claussen said that he would be happy to meet to discuss this further and he thanked Councillor Clarke and Councillor Duigan for raising this concern.

Councillor Brindle directed his question to the Leader of the Council. In his role as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Charles Burrell Centre in Thetford he thanked the Leader of the Council for his support of the recently opened Burrell shop on site and asked if he could confirm what benefits would he hoped would materialise from this new service for Breckland residents.

The Leader said that he had recently been invited to speak on Radio Norfolk to promote what he felt was a fantastic scheme and initiative that proved, by working in collaboration and partnership, so much could be achieved for residents and communities. This was a trial pilot scheme in a prime location in Thetford that would transform the lives of those individuals who found themselves in financial hardship. Following the review, and if successful, Breckland Council would be looking to replicate similar schemes.

Councillor Terry asked the Leader of the Council if it was possible for meetings of the Council to be held in the evenings, as some Members being in full time employment struggled to have time off to attend.

In response, the Leader explained that this would have to be a decision of this Council, but his personal view was that it would be immensely complicated and difficult as many Members were Parish Councillors whose meetings were always in the evenings and to try and juggle both would be challenging. However, he would be happy to write to any employer to explain the importance of being Councillor and the benefits for allowing them to attend. He reminded Members that all Councillors received an allowance that was a remuneration for taking time off from their employment to cover any loss of earnings for attending daytime meetings.

Councillor Colman asked Councillor Hewett, the Executive Member for Contracts & Assets if he agreed with him that the recent work completed in Swaffham by the Council's Facilities Team should be welcomed as it had allowed additional market traders to attend the town's popular Saturday market. He also asked if his thanks could be conveyed to the relevant Officers.

Councillor Hewett agreed it had been very worthwhile to get the dropdown bollards installed. Swaffham Town Council had been updated and hopefully this work would improve the whole vista of the marketplace.

Councillor Atterwill thanked Councillor Claussen for his earlier response in respect of urging communities to carry on with their Neighbourhood Plans but asked if it could be explained why Breckland Council was not leading by example and

carrying on with the work of the Local Plan Working Group.

In response, Councillor Claussen said that it was very difficult to carry on with this Group as no-one knew what the new Local Plan was going to look like. The Local Plan was going to look completely different going forward following the publication of the Planning White Paper and therefore, for now, the Local Plan Working Group had been stood down.

### **97/20 PLACE BASED MANAGEMENT (AGENDA ITEM 9)**

The Chairman was delighted to welcome Nathan Elvery the Head of Paid Service & Strategic Adviser to the meeting.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Sam Chapman-Allen provided Members with an overview of the report, explaining that the vast majority of shared officers were now primarily place based as a temporary measure whilst dealing with the Council's emergency response to the pandemic. It was proposed that this arrangement should continue until the Head of Paid Services completed his strategic review in March 2021.

Councillor Birt read with interest on page 18 at section 1.4 of the report that most planned-for emergencies tended to have a geographic dimension; this he very much agreed with, but he wondered if the Council was inching its way towards admitting that it did not have a proper plan in place. This pandemic was a Tier 1 Risk that appeared on every significant emergency plan as the first item and he felt that the Council should be a little more explicit on the things that had not worked well so that improvements could be made in future.

The Leader of the Council disagreed with Councillor Birt's comments. Breckland Council had within 3 days been able to pivot and organise Place Based Teams across two Councils to ensure that responses could be made at pace in the emergence of the pandemic. Not only were the officers able to work from home but also to support residents and businesses alike whilst ensuring the Executive function continued in accordance with delegations and the Constitution. Hindsight was wonderful and, in due course, the Leader believed that all organisations would reflect on what went well and what did not, so that improvements could be made, and important lessons learnt.

After being duly proposed and seconded, it was:

**RESOLVED** that:

1. the contents of the report be noted;
2. the extension of the current place-based management arrangements at both Councils, until the conclusion of the strategic review in March 2021 and the preferred option had been approved by both Councils, be supported; and
3. the resignation of Christine Marshall (Executive Director) as Company Director of ARP Trading Ltd and the appointment of Sarah Wolstenholme-Smy as her replacement be agreed.

**98/20 REVISED STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY (LICENSING ACT 2003)**  
**(AGENDA ITEM 10)**

Councillor Bambridge, the Executive Member for Environmental Services & Public Protection presented the report.

Section 5 of the Licensing Act 2003 required Breckland Council, as a Licensing Authority, to prepare and publish a statement of its Licensing Policy at least every five years. The current Statement of Licensing Policy came into force on 7 January 2016.

For ease of reference, all the proposed changes to the Policy had been highlighted in yellow (see Appendix A of the report) and Councillor Bambridge drew Members' attention to a number of these. He thanked Councillor Marion Chapman-Allen, the Chairman of the Licensing Committee, and the Members of the Licensing Committee, for achieving unanimous cross-party support for all the changes and additions to the Statement.

Josie Hoven the Licensing Team Leader was in attendance to answer any questions.

After being proposed and seconded, it was

**RESOLVED** that in order for Breckland Council, as the Licensing Authority, to discharge its statutory duties under the Licensing Act 2003, the revised Statement of Licensing Policy be approved and adopted.

**99/20 CONSTITUTION - NON-KEY OFFICER DECISIONS/LICENSING/SHAREHOLDER AND TRUSTEE ISSUES/CONTRACTS/VACATION OF OFFICE/GRANTS**  
**(AGENDA ITEM 11)**

Councillor Sarah Suggitt, the Executive Member for Governance presented the report.

The report contained a number of amendments to the Constitution. Several were routine matters to reflect legal requirements.

Councillor Suggitt drew attention to recommendation A of the report, relating to proposed changes to call-in for Non-Key Officer Decisions. She suggested that this should be referred back to the Governance & Audit Committee for further consideration.

Mark Stinson, the Executive Manager for Governance was in attendance to answer any questions.

As Chairman of the Governance & Audit Committee, Councillor Borrett thanked the Executive Member for the Committee to have further opportunity to consider the call-in for non-key officer decisions and seconded the proposal.

**RESOLVED** that:

- a) That the proposed changes to Call-in for Non-Key Officer Decisions be referred back to the Governance & Audit Committee for further consideration.

- b) **Licensing functions**
- That the terms of reference of the Licensing Committee be amended to include reference to the Animal Welfare functions, and to clarify the licensing functions for which it is responsible as shown in Appendix B to the report.
  - That the terms of reference of the Licensing Panel be amended to refer specifically to Regulation 2 and Schedule 1 of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities (England) Regulations 2000 as shown in Appendix B to the report.
  - That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to amend the Constitution to include reference to any future additional licensing matters which come under the above terms of reference, subject to a report being submitted to full Council for information, and the Log of Delegation to Officers be amended accordingly;
- c) **Shareholder/trustee issues** – that the list of functions exercised by the Cabinet detailed at Part 3 Section D (Delegations to Committees) of the Constitution be amended as detailed in paragraph 2.17 of the report;
- d) **Contracts – signing of contracts / entering into contracts as deeds** – that Article 13, Standing Order no. 49 and Contract Procedure Rule 22.2 be amended in accordance with Appendix C to the report;
- e) **Contract Procedure Rules – delegation to vary or waive the Rules** – that the Log of Delegations to Officers and Contract Procedure Rule 7.2 be amended as shown in Appendix D to the report;
- (f) **Vacation of office by failure to attend meetings** – that Standing Order no. 56 be amended as shown in Appendix E to the report; and
- g) **Virements and Grants** - that the Financial Procedure Rules contained within the Constitution be amended as shown in Appendix F to the report insofar as they relate to virements and grants.

**100/20 NOMINATIONS FOR COMMITTEE AND OTHER SEATS (IF ANY) (AGENDA ITEM 12)**

None.

**101/20 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION (IF ANY) (AGENDA ITEM 13)**

Councillor Birt advised that he had been having various discussions with the Executive Manager for Governance about updating the Council's Constitution in line with the Nolan Principles and referred Members to the relevant section of the Constitution. The text that the Council used within its Constitution was out of date as the descriptors relating to the Nolan Principles had been updated in 2013. Councillor Birt felt that this matter should have been addressed after he had notified the Executive Manager for Governance.

The Executive Manager for Governance explained that the Local Government Association (LGA) was currently working on a new draft Model Code of Conduct. The error that Councillor Birt had identified was in the current Code of Conduct, a

copy of which was included in the Constitution. In addition, the House of Lords Committee on Standards Public Life had made a number of recommendations to local authorities in respect of their arrangements for investigating Standards complaints. Once the LGA had completed its work on the new Model Code of Conduct, a report would be prepared to cover that and any of the recommendations from the House of Lords Committee which needed to be reflected in the Council's Standards Arrangements.

The Executive Manager for Governance then reminded Members of the recent link to the consultation paper that had been sent to all Members and which was also on the Members' page that formed this piece of work.

Councillor Borrett agreed with the comments made by the Executive Manager for Governance and this was a matter of which the Governance & Audit Committee was aware.

The Chairman reminded Members of the Constitutional Working Group that had been formed previously where all Members of that Group had spent many hours together trying to put something together that was fit for purpose and was suitable for Breckland Council going forward. Members were encouraged to contact Councillor Borrett, the Chairman of the Governance & Audit Committee if they had suggestions or comments they wished to make.

**102/20 ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT**  
**(AGENDA ITEM 14)**

None.

**Closing Remarks by the Chairman of the Council**

The Chairman read the following statement:

This Christmas would be very different and difficult for many residents but with the help and support of the health & care workers, key workers, volunteers, scientists, councils and all other agencies, lives had been made a little easier during the pandemic. There was still a long way to go, the vaccination programme would take many months to reach everyone but there was a light at the end of the tunnel and in the words of the great gentleman Captain Sir Tom Moore, we will get through this and come out of it stronger, more united and ready to face any challenge together.

The Chairman asked Members to raise their glasses not only to absent friends but to everyone in the community and beyond who had played a part, however small or great, in keeping the communities going in Breckland.

On behalf of the Council, the Chairman wished everyone a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year and a happier and safer 2021.

The meeting closed at 11.35 am

CHAIRMAN

**AGENDA ITEM 7: QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE AND RESPONSES: FULL COUNCIL – 10 DECEMBER 2020****QUESTION:**

**Councillor Morton to the Executive Member for Customer Engagement & Member Champion for Breckland Sustainability Strategy:**

Can the Cabinet member for Sustainability confirm that an application for funding under the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme, which closes on 4th December, was made?

Monthly electricity consumption figures show that unmetered street lighting accounts for over a third of our annual usage at 593721? KWh for year ending March 2020. It is encouraging to see the March 2020 figure of 42664 is 12000 down on the previous year. Can the member for Climate Change confirm if this is expected to continue and what has contributed to this dramatic reduction of 22%?

**RESPONSE:**

I can confirm that the Council is part of a countywide application which is being made to the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme.

In relation to metered street lighting, the council has been undertaking an ongoing programme of work to replace its end-of-life street lights with more energy efficient LED units. This is attributing to the reduction that you are seeing and is likely to contribute to a further reduction, however, at some point this will plateau once the replacement programme is concluded.

**QUESTION:**

**Councillor Wickerson to the Executive Member of Planning:**

Firstly, thanks to Simon Wood for responding to my Question without Notice from the last Full Council meeting, which in itself was helpful but did generate further questions which I hope can be answered in writing accordingly.

Can we please see a comparative report showing similar figures for the past 10 years to enable a full picture of the historic extent of Planning Enforcement workload?

In addition, it would be helpful to understand how many of the “closed” cases related to genuine Enforcement issues which required full Officer time as opposed to those that were immediately “closed” as not genuinely falling under the auspices of Planning Enforcement.

**RESPONSE:**

The figures requested are attached (below). They date from 2012 in terms of the total number of cases closed each year. From 2014 these are broken down to identify the reason why a case has been closed.

In order to establish how many of the “closed cases related to genuine Enforcement issues which required full Officer time as opposed to those that were immediately “closed” as not genuinely falling under the auspices of Planning Enforcement” would involve going into each case and establishing the sequence of events and nature of each one. This would run to nearly 4000 cases and would take several days.

**QUESTION:****Councillor Birt to the Executive Member for Customer Engagement & Member Champion for Breckland Sustainability Strategy:**

After some difficulty and delay I have now received the electricity consumption figures which formed the answer to my question raised at the 24 September meeting. These figures are a useful measure to help show our progress in reducing our climate impact. It has been agreed that I will receive regular updates and I suggest these be more widely disclosed to Members and Residents via our website.

This measure is an important 'Key Performance Indicator' but is only a start.

1. What other KPIs will we be able to use?
2. Will data from these KPIs be made available immediately, even if it is provisional or incomplete?

**RESPONSE:**

**As part of this programme of work we will develop a set of indicators that will measure the success of the work that is being undertaken. As the Council's strategy and initial programme of work is not due to be agreed until January it is a little premature to set out how we intend to measure the success of our interventions. We will look to deliver a number of high-level measures or performance indicators that will monitor how the benefits identified are being realised after this, these will form part of the Council's performance reporting arrangements already in place that are regularly reported quarterly to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny.**

**QUESTION:****Cllr Birt to Executive Member for Planning:**

I would have liked to have asked this question of the Local Plan Working Group; however, they have not met for many months so that has not been possible.

Referring to the Breckland Local Plan, Local Development Scheme (LDS) section 2.3; it states we must keep the LDS under review and the LDS will be monitored on an annual basis, part of which includes a Monitoring Report.

It has been a year since we adopted the Local Plan, so a Monitoring Report is due. Please would the Executive Member for Planning give us a summary of its findings and release the Monitoring Report for inspection.

**RESPONSE:**

**In the last 2 quarters of 2018/ 2019 the Council concentrated its resources on securing the adoption of the Breckland Local Plan which was achieved in November 2019. Monitoring work for 2019/2020 has been delayed mainly due to the pandemic. The housing monitoring has recently been completed and a Five-Year Housing Supply Statement has been produced. This would normally take around 3-4 months to finalise but was done in less than 6 weeks from start to finish.**

**The annual monitoring for employment and town centres for the year ending 2020 is undertaken by Norfolk County Council and was not undertaken due to the restrictions caused by the pandemic. There is no indication yet as to when they will resume.**

**It is hoped to produce short Annual monitoring reports for both 2018/ 2019 and 2019/2020 in the next quarter subject to site visits taking place.**



## **Planning Enforcement stats 2012 to 2020 (partial year)**

### **2020 (up to 01/12)**

Number of cases received **391**

Cases Closed **363**

De minimis 1

No Breach Established 209

Not Expedient 2

Notice Issued/Complied with 1

Plan App Validated 45

Permitted Development 25

Refer another service 27

Remedied Informal 42

Use/Op Dev. Lawful 3

### **2019**

Number of Cases received **386**

Cases closed **388**

Condition Discharged 1

De minimis 1

No Breach Established 197

Not Expedient 41

Notice Issued/Complied with 7

Plan App Validated 55

Permitted Development 13

Refer another service 36

Remedied Informal 23

### **2018**

Number of Cases received **332**

Cases closed **329**

Condition Discharged 1

De minimis 4

No Breach Established 132

Not Expedient 35

Notice Issued/Complied with 4

Plan App Validated 47

Permitted Development 27

Refer another service 29

Remedied Informal 38

Use/Op Dev. Lawful 4

## **2017**

Number of Cases received **359**

Cases closed **350**

De minimis 4  
No Breach Established 130  
Not Expedient 42  
Notice Issued/Complied with 6  
Plan App Validated 54  
Permitted Development 33  
Refer another service 24  
Remedied Informal 45  
Use/Op Dev. Lawful 5

## **2016**

Number of Cases received **377**

Cases closed **384**

Condition Discharged 1  
De minimis 8  
No Breach Established 135  
Not Expedient 32  
Notice Issued/Complied with 6  
Plan App Validated 56  
Permitted Development 50  
Refer another service 18  
Remedied Informal 52  
Use/Op Dev. Lawful 12

## **2015**

Number of Cases received **340**

Cases closed **360**

Condition Discharged 9  
De minimis 2  
No Breach Established 75  
Case Complete/Closed 3  
Not Expedient 25  
Notice Issued/Complied with 8  
Plan App Validated 54  
Permitted Development 62  
Refer another service 41  
Remedied Informal 73  
Use/Op Dev. Lawful 4

## **2014**

Number of Cases received **435**

Cases closed **478**

No Breach Established 15

Case Complete/Closed 410

Not Expedient 6

Notice Issued/Complied with 1

Plan App Validated 4

Permitted Development 8

Refer another service 7

Remedied Informal 11

**New Ocella system implemented during 2013 by Chris Curtis and Laura Steward with new reports. Cases prior to 2014 have limited information.**

## **2013**

Number of Cases received = **413**

Cases closed **136**

## **2012**

Number of Cases received = **530**

No record of number closed. Although during 2013 Chris Curtis purged the live cases and reduced live numbers.