BRECKLAND COUNCIL

OPERATIONS MANAGERS – 5 DECEMBER 2007
EXECUTIVE BOARD – 17 DECEMBER 2007
CABINET – 8 JANUARY 2007

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CABINET PORTFOLIO

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE
(Author: Sian Harland, Senior Committee Officer)

MEMBER WEB PAGES

Summary: To ascertain whether Members should have the ability to publish content directly onto their Member Web Pages and request that the Member Web Page User Acceptance Policy is supported.

1. **INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

1.1 On 30 March 2006, Breckland Council agreed to sign up to achieving the principles of the East of England Regional Assembly Charter on Elected Member Development and Training. There are a number of areas of work which need to be undertaken before the Charter can be achieved. The Council is aiming to achieve the Charter by May 2008. An assessment will be carried out by Trained "Peer Member" Assessors and representatives from the IDEA Peer Clearing House as part of this process.

1.2 One of the five requirements to achieve the Charter is to identify ways to improve Access to Local Democracy. The Member Web Sites will provide Members with ability to improve the flow of information to their constituents.

2. **KEY DECISION**

2.1 This is not a key decision.

3. **COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

3.1 The matter raised in this report falls within the following Council priority:

- A well planned place to live which encourages vibrant communities

4. **MEMBER WEB PAGES**

4.3 The Member Web Pages form part of the Modern.Gov system and can be easily populated both by Members and Officers. Although the Pages will be hosted by the Breckland website they will bear no Breckland branding. The Web Pages will be 'switched off' during election periods.

4.4 The Pages will bear the political party branding at the top of the page and a clause will be written stating that the views are not necessarily the view of Breckland Council. Each Member will have 10 pages they can populate with information such as personal information, events, achievements and ward news.

4.5 It was anticipated that Pages would be monitored through the Marketing and Communications Section. Members would send their content to the Marketing and Communication Section who would proof read the content; inform the Member of any change; then publish the content on the site. However, after providing the Member Training Panel on 2 October 2007 with an update on the progress of the Member Web Pages it was apparent that Members wished to publish their own content directly to the sites without any information being edited or monitored by officers.

4.6   Following this decision by the Member Training Panel the other Councils using the Modern.Gov Web Pages were asked whether they allowed Members to publish information directly on to their Web Pages. It became apparent that most of the Councils using the Web Pages allowed Members to directly publish information but Members were required to sign a User Acceptance Policy before they could populate their Pages. Further to this Member Web Pages at other authorities were 'switched-off' during election periods.

4.7   Advice was sought from Breckland's Legal Team who raised concerns regarding the Data Protection implications. The Legal Executive advised that Members should have their own separate notifications with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) irrespective of whether they wish to publish information directly on to their own web pages or not.

4.8   The registration cost to for each Member to register separate notification with the ICO is £35 per Member per year and this cost can be met through a virement within the Democratic Services budget for 2007. However, this will need to be budgeted for 2008 and there after.

4.9   Registration for all Members will be completed by the end of December 2007 in anticipation of populating the Member Web Pages by January 2008.

4.10 If it is decided that Members wish to publish their own websites it may be prudent to follow the good practice of other Councils and request that Breckland Members sign a User Acceptance Policy before they can populate their Web Pages. The Policy is attached at appendix 1 and includes a Complaints Procedure.

5.   OPTIONS AVAILABLE

5.1   That Members publish information directly to their own web pages and sign the Breckland User Acceptance Policy to enable them to publish information directly on to the Member Web Pages.

Members must be aware, when publishing information directly on to the Member Web Pages, of the protocols contained within the User Acceptance Policy as they may put themselves at risk of complaints if they do not follow the advice contained therein.

5.2   That Members do not publish information directly to their own web pages and submit all data to the Marketing and Communications Team for publication.

6.   REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

6.1   The Member Web Pages are a useful tool for Members to disseminate information in a quick and efficient manner whether they publish the information themselves or submit the information for editing before publication. The Member Web Pages will assist the Council in gaining the East of England Regional Assembly Charter on Elected Member Development and Training.

7.   RECOMMENDATION(S)

7.1   That Members be permitted to publish information directly to the Member Web Pages subject to signing the Breckland User Acceptance Policy.

7.2   That the registration cost be met through a virement within the Democratic Services budget.

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Acceptable User Policy – Member Web Pages

Where appropriate, this report has taken account of the need for compliance with
▪ The Council's Equal Opportunities Policies
▪   Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998
▪ Human Rights Act 1998
▪ Section 40, Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006