

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

**Held on Thursday, 16 February 2017 at 2.00 pm in the
Anglia Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham**

PRESENT

Councillor E. Gould (Chairman)	Mr D R R Oliver
Mrs E J Bishop	Mr R. R. Richmond
Mr R. F. W. Brame	Mr A.C. Stasiak (Vice-Chairman)
Mr T. J. Jermy	Mr J Newton (Substitute Member)
Mrs S.M. Matthews	Mr P S Wilkinson (Substitute Member)
Mr M J Nairn	

Also Present

Councillor C Bowes	Mr F.J. Sharpe
Councillor M. Chapman-Allen	Mr N.C. Wilkin
Mr P. M. M. Dimoglou	

In Attendance

Maxine O'Mahony	- Executive Director of Strategy & Governance
Rob Walker	- Executive Director Place
Phil Adams	- Executive Manager Public Protection
Greg Pearson	- Corporate Improvement and Performance Manager
Riana Rudland	- Breckland Place Manager
Paola Sabatini	- HR Manager
Teresa Smith	- Democratic Services Team Leader

12/17 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13/17 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence had been received by Councillors Bambridge, Crawford, Joel and T Monument.
Councillor Wilkinson was present substitute for Councillor Joel, and Councillor Newton was present as substitute for Councillor Crawford.

14/17 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

15/17 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

16/17 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

Councillors Bowes, S Chapman-Allen, M Chapman-Allen, Dimoglou,

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Sharpe and Wilkin were in attendance.

17/17 PFI CONTRACT UPDATE

Mr Paul Young, General Manager of Parkwood Leisure presented Members with an update on the Private Funding Initiative (PFI) contract. Parkwood Leisure operate the leisure facilities at two sites within Breckland; Dereham Leisure Centre and Breckland Leisure Centre & Waterworld in Thetford.

Usage levels had increased by 3.6% with the main activity areas being the swimming pools, swimming lessons, fitness and use of the sports hall. The partnership continued to be an excellent working relationship between the operator and Breckland.

A number of events had taken place at the leisure centres which had helped to develop community awareness of the services provided. This included attending the Dereham Carnival, and being part of the Dereham 5k event.

Both sites had over 1000 memberships for both swimmers and the expressions membership. A 52-week swimming programme had been developed which had increased the direct debit intake.

A Carer membership had been introduced as well as an improved GP referral programme which aimed to bring benefit to the community. In addition grandparents were entitled to a free swim when they attended with their grandchildren at Dereham Leisure Centre, which had been warmly welcomed by users. Training had also been delivered to staff providing better awareness of dementia and Dereham Leisure Centre had recently become an approved centre for being dementia friendly.

The marketing plan for 2016 had been agreed and delivered on time. The centre was keen on develop on the benefits of e-marketing.

The Camp Adventure holiday programme held in 2016 had increased to 519 attendees and had been the most successfully attended to date. In addition links had been established with Thetford Rugby Club where courses linked to community groups had been successful. A new sport, Pickleball, had been trialled in June with a good uptake Health and Safety was a priority with Parkwood Leisure and currently five members of staff were fully qualified to ensure policies of health and safety were adhered to. Both sites had also recently passed the quality assurance assessments.

A gym extension had recently taken place within Dereham for the use of a new multifunctional area and plans were in place to develop the gym at the Thetford site.

The Dereham Leisure Centre would be celebrating the 10 year anniversary since the opening of the new complex in May 2017 and more details would be shared with Members in due course.

The Chairman thanked Mr Young for his detailed presentation.

Councillor Richmond asked who was responsible for the maintenance

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of both sites and how much profit needed to be generated to make it work. The Communities Manager responded that the building maintenance was the responsibility of the PFI Contractor, Breckland Leisure Limited and that Mr Young was responsible for the operation of the buildings only.

Councillor Jermy referred to the capacity figures and asked to what extent it had increased in unique visitors, or those that were frequent visitors. He also asked if there was a queue for equipment of swimming lanes busy this could be off putting and how Parkwood managed this. Mr Young responded by affirming that the customer journey had already improved by the changes to the gym within Dereham, and this would also have the similar benefit in Thetford. With regard to swimming it was a balancing act between maximising usage and customer experience.

Councillor Jermy went on to ask how Parkwood were gauging customer feedback as the customer feedback meetings were poorly communicated. Mr Young said a new sales manager was in post and had already picked up the issues of corporate membership. He also hoped to have focus groups with organisations that used the facilities to receive feedback.

The Chairman asked how Parkwood could be certain that leaflet drops reached rural villages. Mr Young said it could not be guaranteed, but he would continue to look at E-marketing as an efficient method of promoting the facilities.

The Chairman went on to ask if Parkwood would consider providing transport from remote villages for communities to use the facilities. Mr Young said it could be considered if there was a demonstrable demand shown for this and that it was commercially viable. In addition conversations with partner groups such as Age UK were underway to see how Parkwood could assist with the leisure experience.

Councillor Brame was pleased to see how well Parkwood Leisure was performing, and asked how the promotion of concessions were publicised. Mr Young said work was being undertaken to consider the target market area and how promotion of concessions could be improved. The Communities Manager confirmed he would work with Parkwood Leisure to ensure that this was extensively promoted.

Councillor Wilkinson suggested that Parkwood Leisure worked with the Council's Communication team to advertise information. Mr Young agreed that it was a good suggestion and would work with the Council on that.

The Chairman asked if Parkwood produced a newsletter and if so could Members receive a copy to publicise the facilities within their wards. Mr Young believed it was published quarterly and would ensure Members received a copy.

Councillor Matthews asked how carers would be aware that they were entitled to discounted membership. The Communities Manager confirmed there was a set of criteria and would clarify this with Members.

SJ

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Councillor Stasiak asked how Parkwood liaised with villages or Towns within the district that did not have access to the gym or swimming pools. Mr Young said he had a detailed map which showed where Members of the leisure centres were coming from and the distances people were travelling.

Councillor Bishop asked if the leisure centres were involved in the 'swim the channel' campaign which raised money for local charities. Mr Young would look into this initiative further.

The Chairman asked to review the promotional campaign in three months and the Communities Manager would respond to this.

SJ

18/17 UNSIGHTLY AND DERELICT SITES

The Executive Director Place presented the report asking Members whether they would consider and recommend to Cabinet instigating a programme of work to identify and take sites that were deemed to be significantly and adversely impacting upon the character and appearance of their immediate and wider environment of which they were located.

Councillor Brame felt that there was currently a problem around the District and there was no mechanism to inform the Council of these issues; having a list would make a difference.

The Executive Director Place said it would be a co-ordinated approach whereby sites and issues would be identified with a proposed course of action which would be agreed by Members.

Councillor Wilkinson fully supported the report and asked if the Council could use compulsory purchase orders. The Executive Director of Place said it would depend on each individual case.

Councillor Oliver was surprised that the Council were not doing this at the moment and asked if this would be co-ordinated with the empty homes piece of work. The Executive Director Place said that as part of the recent service review there would be the re-establishment of a reinforcement team, who would pick up the empty homes piece of work and the derelict sites piece as both strands would run alongside one another.

Councillor Newton asked if a lesson had been learnt by not having a conservation policy. The Executive Director Place confirmed that legislation was available to use and therefore was not a need for a conservation policy.

Councillor Jermy said there would be situations where hands were tied but that prioritisation was the key. In addition it did not have to be overly costly and that the influence the council had was key. The Chairman agreed and said that there were many different ways to approach this.

Councillor Jermy went on to ask if Officers had the appropriate legal

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expertise to lead on this. It was confirmed there was active recruitment to the enforcement team as previously described. In addition the Executive Manager Governance had the legal knowledge and had also implemented a similar project at South Holland District Council.

The Chairman supported the need of a list of sites to be drawn up showing a planned approach of the action that could be taken. All sites would be handled in a sensitive way on a case by case basis and prioritised accordingly. In addition the reason behind the report was to improve the District.

Members **AGREED** to recommend a report to Cabinet that a programme of work be undertaken to address unsightly and derelict sites and land in the district.

19/17 Q3 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Deputy Leader Executive Member Strategy, Governance & Transformation presented the report.

The Chairman asked if the two indicators where information was unavailable were the same two indicators as the previous report; therefore not reported for a period of 6 months. The Corporate Improvement and Performance Manager confirmed this was the case, as there had been some technical difficulties which had caused the data to not be reported.

The Executive Director Place informed Members that with regard to the Serco information, focus had been on the book and pay system, and appreciated that it was unacceptable and would therefore provide the information to Members by 24 February.

Councillor Oliver said that as it was a contractual requirement to provide the information had there been a register of an infraction to the contract. The Executive Director Place confirmed that it was a Breckland issue and not Serco.

The Chairman went onto ask if Members were content with the style of the report, and if there was any confusion. Some Members confirmed that there were some areas that were not easy to understand.

The Chairman asked the Corporate Improvement and Performance Manager to provide a report that outlined issues that Scrutiny should be considering. It was agreed that the Chairman and Corporate Improvement and Performance Manager would consider the format prior to the next report being submitted to Overview and Scrutiny.

GP

Members noted the report.

20/17 HR POLICY HANDBOOK

The Deputy Leader Executive Member Strategy, Governance & Transformation presented the report which had been viewed by Full Council on 19 January, but requested that Overview and Scrutiny consider the document.

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The aim of the newly drafted HR Policy Handbook was to mitigate risk by having a single set of policies to make it clear for employees who would use this on a daily basis. There were two main changes in the recommendations. The first was to allow any changes in employment law to be delegated to the Head of Paid Service with a briefing paper submitted to Full Council where legislative changes had occurred. The second was with regard to implementing Maternity Support Leave of up to 5 days at the discretion of the line manager.

Councillor Oliver asked what financial impact that would have on the Council. The Executive Director Strategy & Governance advised that the impact would be extremely minimal.

It was **AGREED** that Members recommended the report to Full Council.

21/17 TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

Councillor Stasiak informed Members the group had considered opportunities for the future.

The Chairman was pleased with the comprehensive list, and had noted that some of the examples provided had been included in the Budget and Council Tax setting report scheduled for Full Council.

The Chief Accountant added that support had been provided and some progress had already been made in some projects. Some opportunities were longer term projects which would be taken to the growth project.

The Chairman asked that this item return to the next Overview and Scrutiny meeting outlining in detail what opportunities had been done, were being considered or on a future work programme.

AC/TS

22/17 OUTSIDE BODY FEEDBACK (STANDING ITEM)

Councillor Wilkinson informed Members he had attended a youth conference where it was confirmed the Youth Advisory Board would continue to be funded for the next five years.

He went on to inform Members that the Norfolk Health Overview & Scrutiny commission had been informed that pharmacies had been asked to support GP surgeries, but government had reduced the funding for pharmacies. Norfolk County Council would be writing to the government to look into the possibility of area budgeting rather than national budgeting.

23/17 SCRUTINY CALL-INS (STANDING ITEM)

None.

24/17 COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION (STANDING ITEM)

None.

25/17 WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman asked to scrutinise how the council worked between service areas and proposed the staff were interviewed across

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interdepartmental areas.	
It was asked that the review of the Council Investment Strategy and what was being considered to improve and diversify the cash reserves, be considered as soon as possible. The Scrutiny Officer would schedule this into the work programme.	TS
Councillor Brame said he had attended a meeting where Norfolk County Council Education provided a presentation informing the public of how school places were allocated. He felt this would be a very useful presentation which Members would benefit from. The Scrutiny Officer would schedule this into the Work Programme.	TS
26/17 <u>NEXT MEETING</u>	
The arrangements for the next meeting on 30 March 2017 at 2.00pm were noted.	
Members were also advised that a special meeting would be arranged for Thursday 6 April at 2pm to discuss the Local Plan.	
27/17 <u>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC</u>	
RESOLVED that under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.	
28/17 <u>NEW BRECKLAND PAY SCHEME: PERFORMANCE RELATED INCREMENTS (PRI) SCHEME</u>	
The Deputy Leader and Executive Member Strategy, Governance & Transformation presented the report.	
The HR Manager gave Members a detailed presentation explaining the proposed performance related increment scheme which had been devised as a request from the then Cabinet with the constraint that it be delivered within budget. Consultation with Unison, the staff forum and the staff had also been sought.	
It was AGREED to recommend the report to full Council, and requested that this was returned in one year to Overview & Scrutiny to see how it had embedded in.	

The meeting closed at 4.30 pm

CHAIRMAN