

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

COUNCIL

**Held on Thursday, 12 April 2018 at 10.00 am in the
Anglia Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr S. Askew	Mr A.P. Joel
Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mr R.G. Kybird
Mr W.P. Borrett	Mr K. Martin
Councillor C. Bowes	Mrs S.M. Matthews
Mr R. F. W. Brame	Mrs K. Millbank (Chairman)
Mr M. P. Brindle	Mrs L.H. Monument
Councillor M. Chapman-Allen	Mr J.W. Nunn
Mr S. H. Chapman-Allen	Mr R. R. Richmond
Mr H. E. J. Clarke	Mr W. R. J. Richmond
Mr P.D. Claussen	Mr M. S. Robinson
Mr J.P. Cowen	Mr J.D. Rogers
Mr D. M. Crawford	Mr F.J. Sharpe
Mr P. R. W. Darby	Mr W.H.C. Smith
Mr P. M. M. Dimoglou	Mr A.C. Stasiak
Mr R.W. Duffield (Vice-Chairman)	Mr M. Taylor
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mr M. A. Wassell
Mr K.S. Gilbert	Mrs A. M. Webb
Mrs T. Hewett	Mr N.C. Wilkin
Mrs J. Hollis	Mr P. S. Wilkinson
Mr T. J. Jermy	

In Attendance

Anna Graves	- Chief Executive
Mark Stinson	- Executive Manager Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Rob Walker	- Executive Director Place
Julie Britton	- Democratic Services Officer

43/18 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ashby, Carter, Gould, P. Hewett, T. Monument, Nairn, Newton, Oliver, Sherwood and Turner.

44/18 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman; subject to, the word 'business' being removed from the penultimate paragraph under Minute No. 27/18.

45/18 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (AGENDA ITEM 3)

None declared.

46/18 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 4)

The Chairman highlighted a number of events that she had attended since the last Full Council meeting which she had thoroughly enjoyed and those that had to be cancelled due to the inclement weather conditions. She also mentioned and promoted her forthcoming civic service being held on Sunday, 29 April 2018 at St

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Nicholas Church in Dereham, followed by refreshments at the Dereham Memorial Hall. Members were asked to contact her secretary, Alex Elliott, to confirm their attendance if they had not done so already.

She also promoted a forthcoming event on 28 August 2018 in Downham Market which was a dragon boat race and suggested that Councillors should be involved. The Leader felt that a team made up of Officers would be a better option.

47/18 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 5)

The Chairman invited the Leader to make his announcements.

The Leader was pleased to announce that the first of the Cabinet 'roadshows' had been a great success. The meeting had been held in Swaffham and had attracted a great deal of public interest and he hoped that this would continue. The next roadshow on 12 June 2018 would be held in Attleborough.

Members were encouraged to have a photograph taken after the meeting in support of the 'Dual It A47' Campaign.

More than 100 shops from the district's five market towns had joined an initiative which allowed people to browse and buy online from local stores. The first official launch of the 'ShopAppy' scheme was being held in Swaffham, the following day, on Friday 13 April 2018 at 11am. The Leader encouraged as many Members as possible to attend.

Another initiative to encourage businesses to locate to the District was the offer of 80% business rate relief.

The Leader read aloud a statement in relation to travellers in Thetford. Breckland Council was currently working with Police and other partners.

Councillor Jermy welcomed the 'ShopAppy' initiative because for every pound spent, 63p remained in the local economy. However, following a Freedom of Information request, he had found that a number of purchases made by Breckland Council were from national on-line providers. He asked if he could have more details on Breckland's procurement process.

The Leader said that he would be disappointed if Breckland Council was spending significant sums with on-line providers and he tasked the Chief Executive to look into this matter.

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Councillor Clarke welcomed the Leader's Cabinet roadshow initiative and felt that this was a step in the right direction. He suggested that the next budget setting meeting should be held in the evening to enable more people to attend. In response the Leader pointed out that Cabinet on the road had been the Deputy Leader's idea rather than his own.

48/18 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE UNDER STANDING ORDER NO 6 (AGENDA ITEM 6)

None.

49/18 QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE UNDER STANDING ORDER NO 7 (AGENDA ITEM 7)

Councillor Crawford directed his question to Councillor Mark Robinson, the

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Portfolio Holder for Governance. He was disappointed that the proposed boundary changes for Thetford had not been supported at the recent Community Governance Review (CGR) meeting. Councillor Robinson advised that the meeting had been held at the end of March and had been widely publicised and, whilst it had been acknowledged that Thetford was very passionate about this issue, only one Thetford Member had attended. In his opinion, it had been a fair process and he invited Members to view the Minutes.

Councillor Jermy mentioned the instruction of the Police & Crime Commissioners which he believed was brought in to bring about accountability and transparency to the decision making process and the management of the Police Force. However, he was aware that the Norfolk Police Crime Commissioner, Lorne Green, had taken to blocking anyone on social media that disagreed with his view points and deleting any negative comments that he received on Facebook. He asked Councillor Paul Claussen, the Portfolio Holder for Place, if he shared these concerns that this approach to accountability and engagement displayed by the Police Commissioner was unacceptable. Councillor Claussen was not quite sure what, if anything, he was able to do about this other than to pass on these concerns. The Leader added that there had been incidences where the Council's own website had received negative comments on the Facebook page against certain matters/issues. These were not removed as people were entitled to make comments, good or bad. He disagreed with the Police & Crime Commissioner if he was deleting such unfavourable comments.

Councillor Clarke asked the Deputy Leader a question about the gender pay gap. At the February Council meeting it had been noted that the gender pay gap was around 22% and according to the data on the BBC website the average female employed by Breckland Council was paid 31.3% less than the average male employee. He mentioned the figures that he had found relating to other Councils in the area which had proved that Breckland was at the top of the league table. The Labour run Council in Norwich was reported to have no gender pay gap issues at all. He asked the Cabinet Member to confirm that he was aware of this issue and what actions, if any, had been implemented since the last meeting to address this apparent large disparity.

The Deputy Leader thanked Councillor Clarke for his question and the points that had been raised; however, the composition of the workforce across all authorities was very varied and this had been one of the points that he had flagged up at the Full Council meeting in February. There was an action plan in place and he hoped that next year when the report came forward that the points that had been raised would be taken into account. Councillor Clarke was asked to put his specific questions, comments and concerns in an email so that the Deputy Leader could respond accordingly.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Clarke asked that as this information was already in the public domain, it would be helpful if the Council could include some information on the Breckland website once a position paper had been produced. The Deputy Leader advised that a significant reason for the disparity was due to the services that were contracted out compared to other authorities. Councillor Taylor pointed out that as an ex member of the military all were paid the same and were awarded increments for the amount of time served. In response, Members were informed that this was about two different issues; regardless of gender, staff received equal pay for equal work. The gender pay gap referred to the Council's makeup of its workforce - for example the Council's waste provider that was currently outsourced was more male dominated than female dominated and for comparison, the Contact Centre, was more female dominated.

Councillor Borrett had noted the interesting comments made by Councillor Clarke in relation to the gender pay gap and asked the Deputy Leader if he agreed with the report that he had seen in the Financial Times highlighting the fact that the Unions had a large disparity in the pay gap. In response, the Deputy Leader stated that this just proved that everyone had to get their house in order and that Breckland Council already had an action plan in place.

Councillor Brame directed his question to Councillor Mark Robinson, the Portfolio Holder for Governance. He had been asked by several members of his Ward to put forward this question. The Community Governance Review Sub-Committee had met and had decided that it would be premature to discuss the boundary issue in Thetford until after the people had moved into the houses so that they could then be consulted. He had been reminded of a particular housing estate in Thetford that had been part of another boundary review where the boundaries had moved prior to the residents moving in. This particular housing estate now came under Thetford rather than Kilverstone and/or Croxton and he asked how many people would have to put forward a petition or ask the question about it being changed back to Thetford as this change had been decided prior to purchasing their properties. Councillor Robinson knew the areas that were being discussed, and reminded Members that this had been a settlement boundary change, not a parish boundary change, so would not result in a community governance review. He also reminded the Council that the CGR sub-group did not have the remit to make a final decision; it had made a recommendation to go forward to the second stage, a consultation, which would commence from Monday, 16 April 2018 to Friday, 22 June 2018. The process was still on-going and the final recommendation would be brought to a future Full Council meeting.

Councillor Taylor mentioned the rubbish lying around in the woods at the back of the BP garage on the A11 and wanted to know when this would be removed. The Leader pointed out that he was confident that this would soon be resolved.

50/18 CABINET MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 8)

i. Breckland Community Funding Applications (Minute No. 32/18(a))

Cllr Brindle thanked the Cabinet Members for the large match funding application for the Charles Burrell Museum. He was delighted with the support.

ii. Adoption

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 20 March 2018 be adopted.

51/18 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION (AGENDA ITEM 9)

i. Attendance

Councillor Hollis had attended the O&SC meeting but had been omitted from those present.

ii. HR Policy Handbook Updates (Minute No. 25/18)

Councillor Monument raised concerns about some of the wording within the report and asked that prior to this Policy being published use of the words 'officers' and 'employees' needed to be consistent and the correct

terminology used in the correct context.

iii. Adoption

RESOLVED that, subject to the addition of Councillor Hollis to the record of those present, the unconfirmed Minutes of the Overview & Scrutiny Commission meeting held on 8 March 2018 be adopted.

52/18 PLANNING COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 10)

(a) Confirmed minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 12 February 2018.

RESOLVED that the confirmed Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 12 February 2018 be adopted.

(b) Unconfirmed Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 12 March 2018

RESOLVED that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 12 March 2018 be adopted.

53/18 GOVERNANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE (AGENDA ITEM 11)

1. Quarter 3 2017-18 Risk Report (Minute No. 8/18)

The word 'not' be added to the 5th paragraph to read: "...Members were assured that the loss for this year could be significant but would '*not*' be for 2019/20....."

2. Updated Treasury Management Policy, Strategy and Prudential Indicators 2018-19 (Minute No. 12/18)

RESOLVED that:

- a) the Treasury Management Strategy 2018-19 to 2021-22 at Appendix A of the report be approved;
 - b) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement contained within Appendix A of the report which sets out the Council's Policy on MRP be approved;
 - c) the Prudential Indicators and limits contained within Appendix A (tables 1-9) of the report be approved;
 - d) the Investment Strategy 2018-19 at Appendix B of the report and the detailed criteria included in Appendix B1 of the report be approved; and
 - e) the Treasury Management Policy at Appendix B2 of the report be approved.
3. **RESOLVED** that the unconfirmed Minutes of the Governance & Audit Committee meeting held on 16 February 2018 be adopted.

54/18 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL (AGENDA ITEM 12)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Member Development Panel meeting held on

13 March 2018 be noted.

**55/18 RELEASE OF NEW BURDENS FUND - HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION ACT
(AGENDA ITEM 13)**

Councillor Bambridge, the Portfolio Holder for Growth presented the report which sought Members' agreement to accept and release funds to the value of £182,281.

Councillor Jermy felt that any money from Government was encouraging; however, although he entirely appreciated that this was a Government definition, he had concerns with calling it a 'new *burden*' fund as this, in his opinion, implied that homeless people were a burden. He drew Members' attention to paragraph 1.4 of the report and was pleased that the time period for a person or household to be at risk of homelessness had been extended to 56 days. However, he was concerned by paragraph 1.5 of the report where it highlighted the fact that the additional duties and responsibilities placed on the Council, would demonstrate a 33% increase in current demand and he asked the Portfolio Holder if he felt that the staff would be able to cope with this increase.

Councillor Bambridge assured Members that the Council, in this respect, was coping well. Rob Walker, the Executive Director of Place advised that all local authorities were in the same position but time would tell if any resourcing improvements were required. The Leader also made it clear that the Council did not view those who were unfortunate enough to be homeless as a burden.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the funds be released to the value of £182,281 as a new 'burdens' fund in respect of the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act, be accepted; and
- 2) the Executive Director for Place, in consultation with the Executive Member for Growth be granted delegated authority to commit and agree spend of the above monies in accordance with the conditions of the new 'burdens' fund.

56/18 LAND RELEASE FUND GRANT ACCEPTANCE (AGENDA ITEM 14)

The Portfolio Holder for Growth & Commercialisation, Councillor Adrian Stasiak presented the report.

It was noted that the Chief Executive had already taken the urgent decision to accept the offer of a grant of £300,000 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCG) Land Release Fund. The reason for the urgency had been that the MHCG had offered this grant on 8 March 2018 which had to be accepted by 14 March 2018. The Leader had been consulted.

The Portfolio Holder for Growth & Commercialisation was pleased that the Government had supported Breckland Council on its bid for funding.

This funding would allow the Council to bring forward surplus land for housing on smaller schemes that would otherwise not be developed. This £300,000 would allow capital works to be undertaken to overcome site constraints and enable access to council-owned land at Shipdham which could lead to the development of housing (subject to planning).

RESOLVED that:

1. the urgent decision taken to accept a grant of £300,000 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government be noted; and
2. the grant of £300,000 be added to the Capital Programme/Revenue Budget for the associated spend.

57/18 HR POLICY HANDBOOK ADDITIONS (AGENDA ITEM 15)

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Governance & Transformation presented the report that related to new policies being added to the HR Policy Handbook. He extended his thanks to the Overview & Scrutiny Commission for their comments on the Stuck not Sick Policy and the Alcohol, Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy.

The Stuck not Sick Policy gave employees access to two emergency days in the leave year, where, subject to a genuine reason, staff were able to take a leave of absence without prior agreement but with the authorisation of their line manager.

The latter Policy addressed the principles by which the Council would like employees to operate by when addressing alcohol, drugs and substances. The Council would seek to take a supportive stance where possible but had acknowledged the fact that this could not always be the case when the safety of others was at risk.

RESOLVED that the following Policies be approved:

1. Stuck not Sick Policy; and
2. Alcohol, Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy.

58/18 NOMINATIONS FOR COMMITTEE AND OTHER SEATS (AGENDA ITEM 16)

RESOLVED that:

1. the following Outside Body organisations be removed:
 - a) Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group;
 - b) Norfolk LGA Health Sub-Group
 - c) Thetford Tourism Heritage Partnership Steering Group;
2. Councillor Adrian Stasiak be appointed as the Council's representative on the Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan Committee (new Outside Body organisation);
3. Councillor Trevor Carter be replaced by Councillor Lynda Turner on the Health & Wellbeing Board.

59/18 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION (IF ANY) (AGENDA ITEM 17)

None.

60/18 ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT (AGENDA ITEM 18)

None.

61/18 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (AGENDA ITEM 19)

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 as it contains the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1,2, 3, and 4 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

62/18 CAPITA BUSINESS PLAN (AGENDA ITEM 20)

The Portfolio Holder for Growth presented the Capita Business Plan.

Stephen Ottewell, the National Director of Planning & Building Control for Capita (Local Government) and Alex Chrusciak, the Director of Planning & Building Control for Capita (Breckland) were in attendance and provided Members with a detailed overview of the Annual Business Plan 2018/19.

The purpose of the Annual Business Plan was to provide the overall strategy of how the partnership supported the key strategic goals of the Council. It also provided details on the service delivery priorities for the forthcoming year and a summary of achievement in the preceding year.

Members' attention was drawn to section 2.2 of the report that highlighted the key changes since the last Business Plan presented to Full Council in May 2017.

The Local Plan was also mentioned. Members were informed that the dates of the Hearing sessions were as follows and all would be based in the Anglia Room, Elizabeth House:

Week 1 – 17, 18, 19 April 2018
Week 2 – 09, 10, 11 May 2018
Week 3 – 15, 16, 17 May 2018
Week 4 – 05, 06, 07 June 2018

All Members were encouraged to attend.

Many questions and concerns were raised relating to KPI's, timing of delivery and communication issues.

Councillor Dimoglou congratulated the Capita Team on their Business Plan.

Councillor Theresa Hewett was looking forward to the successful implementation of a Member Engagement Protocol. The Director of Planning & Building Control reminded Members that Jon Berry, Head of Development Management, was now the key Member Liaison Officer who had already been very proactive with Members and Parish Councils.

The Portfolio Holder for Growth thanked all the Officers involved and encouraged Members to come along to the Local Plan Hearings. All details could be found on the website.

The Capita Business Plan was otherwise noted.

The meeting closed at 11.20 am

CHAIRMAN