

**BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

**At a Meeting of the**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

**Held on Thursday, 28 October 2021 at 10.00 am in the  
The Breckland Conference Centre, Anglia Room, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke,  
Dereham, NR19 1EE**

**PRESENT**

Cllr Rhodri Oliver (Chairman)	Cllr Robert Kybird
Cllr Timothy Birt	Cllr Ian Martin
Cllr Vera Dale	Cllr Mike Nairn
Cllr Fabian Eagle	Cllr David Wickerson
Cllr Terry Jermy	Cllr Stephen Askew (Substitute Member)
Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris	Cllr Peter Wilkinson (Substitute Member)

**Also Present**

Cllr Roger Atterwill	Cllr Philip Morton
Cllr Harry Clarke	Cllr Nigel Wilkin

**In Attendance**

Rob Walker	- Executive Director Place & Delivery and Monitoring Officer
Samantha Armitage	- Communities Manager
Claire Burton	- Organisational Development Performance Manager
Jason Cole	- Assistant Director Customer and Performance
Andrew D'Arcy	- Planning Policy Manager
Andrew Holdsworth	- Assistant Director Economy and Growth
Michael Horn	- Solicitor to the Council
Stephen James	- Assistant Director Housing and Communities
Ryan Pack	- Innovation and Change Business Partner
Simon Wood	- Director of Planning & Building Control
Julie Britton	- Democratic Services Officer
Ruth Tudge	- Democratic Services Officer

**84/21 MINUTES**

The minutes from the meeting held on 9 September 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

**85/21 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Turner and Bushell. Councillors Askew and Wilkinson were in attendance as their substitutes.

**86/21 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)**

None.

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**87/21 URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**88/21 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None declared.

**89/21 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING**

Councillor Atterwill informed the Chair that there were members of the public in attendance who wished to speak at the meeting on the Local Plan Review.

**90/21 INSPIRING COMMUNITIES UPDATE**

The Community Services Manager, Samantha Armitage gave a presentation on Inspiring Communities and explained the scope of the programme, how decisions were made and how Members could be involved.

The Community Services Manager explained how Inspiring Communities had been set up with a community-led approach for the prevention of vulnerability within Breckland and that Breckland Council would collectively lead, enable and support a district-wide initiative to help its residents.

The vision was to inspire communities to enhance the lives of Breckland residents through strategic partnerships; early intervention services and community funding with a specific aim of making a positive impact on those affected by Domestic Abuse; Mental Health issues; Social Isolation, Loneliness and County Lines. The team had researched what mattered to the local communities across Breckland, the issues that were being faced and agreed what to prioritise and focus on. The Community Services Manager said that Breckland was a safe, healthy and prosperous place to live and work but that some residents were vulnerable and needed assistance.

The Community Services Manager stated that under their four priorities, so far Breckland Council had delivered the following:

County Lines:

- Funded ANPR Cameras
- Funded an improved Search Facility at Wayland Prison
- A Contextual Safeguarding Locality Plan with NCCSP was being developed

Domestic Abuse:

- Funded an Early Help Support worker for the Daisy Programme
- Developed an internal Domestic Abuse Commitment
- Signed up to H.E.A.R (Help, Educate, Awareness and Respond), a joint campaign between the Police, Crime and Commissioners Office and Norfolk County Council

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Mental Health:

- Funded Breckland Mental Health Community Partnership
- Co-designed Mindful Towns and Villages project
- Funded Breckland Youth Advisory Board Mental Health partnership

Social Isolation & Loneliness:

- Direct funding and delivery of Silver Social
- Commissioned to deliver Social Prescribing Service by Mid-Norfolk PCN (spanned wider than Social Isolation & Loneliness but was a vital service to help prevent)

The Community Services Manager also explained how decisions were made and what criteria and evidence would be investigated to base the decisions on. The Inspiring Communities Fund was a match funding scheme providing grants of up to £5,000 for community projects in the Breckland district and applicants could expect a maximum of 50% of the total project costs. The scheme was administered by Norfolk Community Foundation.

The team were currently working on providing a brochure and/or leaflets to list all of the services available that Members could to, to enable them to support their communities which would be made available in due course.

Councillor Eagle felt it was prudent to get the balance right for all ages with a mixture of capital projects in addition to support for social gatherings.

Councillor Jermy felt that sustainability would be key for the continuation of the project and that evidence base would be crucial to fund the right projects in the right way. He also felt that as a Member of Breckland Council, he would very much like to be involved in understanding how Members identified priorities and how they could be involved in shaping what was happening and how this evolved with 49 Members who had a great deal of local knowledge on the needs of residents and local priorities that differed from area to area across Breckland Council.

Councillor Atterwill said it was central to the project that Breckland Council continued to engage with local towns, parishes and communities as all had resources that could possibly be shared, even down to dissemination of information which could be included with local delivery of Town or Parish magazines.

Councillor Webb thanked Members for their comments and stated that the team were working hard to take on all comments and suggestions and were happy to work with Members as much as possible to engage with local communities. The Community Services Manager would also be visiting local towns and parishes to ensure inclusion and involvement with further engagement.

Members of the Commission noted the presentation.

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**91/21 CHAIRMAN'S PANEL**

The Director of Planning and Building Control, Simon Wood, advised Members of the role of the Chairman's Panel and the planning application process. The Chairman's Panel had been introduced in August 2019 after the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) undertook a review of the Planning Committee at Breckland Council in 2018. One of the recommendations of the PAS was for Breckland Council to review its delegation and call-in process and had advised to reduce the number of items going to Committee.

All call-in applications now went to the Chairman's Panel as well as the more contentious and significant applications. There was also the facility, following due process, for applications, where it was considered appropriate to do so, to by-pass the Panel and go direct to the Planning Committee.

The reasons behind the formation of the Chairman's Panel were:

- To provide a transparent and clear system whereby applications could be taken to the Planning Committee through the Member call-in process or the Executive Director of Place and Delivery, in discussion with the Chairman of Planning, to exercise the ability to call-in applications that raised significant issues to Committee, and
- To reduce the number of items on the Planning Committee agenda to enable shorter more focussed meetings to determine the most significant applications.

The Director of Planning and Building Control advised that this was a virtual process which all Members were invited to attend and as such had enabled the call-in process to become more transparent and robust.

A call-in request must be made on the prescribed form and must be received within 23 days from the publication of an application on the weekly list, which all Members received. All call-in requests were discussed at the Chairman's Panel; it was not a decision-making body but was there to recommend the route an application should take based on its significance. The decision to take an application to Committee or allow it to be determined by the delegated process was then made by the Director of Place and Delivery, or his delegated representative, after having regard to the views of the Panel.

It was felt that the process was now much more transparent, and all meetings were recorded.

It was considered that the Chairman's Panel had been a successful response to the issues set out within the PAS review. It had provided a more democratic process around call-ins providing Members with the ability to make their case directly to the Panel and it had also reduced the number of items going to Planning Committee which enabled the Committee to focus on significant and contentious applications without the pressure of a large agenda.

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Councillor Wilkin, the Chairman of the Planning Committee for a number of years felt that the introduction of the Chairman's Panel had made the whole process more transparent.

Councillor Birt agreed that the primary objective of reducing the Planning Committee workload had been achieved and was, in his opinion, a great success. He asked how many observers on average attended the Chairman's Panel and asked if it could be streamed to the public.

The Director of Planning and Building Control said that the reason the meeting was not streamed to the public was that it was not a decision-making Panel. It was difficult to state how many had attended as he had no figures to hand.

Councillor Wickerson endorsed all the aforementioned comments. The Panel was an excellent vehicle to be used and the results were publicised which demonstrated transparency. He asked, aside from call-ins, who made the decision for an application to go to Panel.

In response the Director of Planning and Building Control advised that it was an officer who made that decision, and he or the Head of Development Management would liaise with the Chairman of the Panel. It would be an application where there was a significant policy issue or an application that had generated a significant amount of local comment.

Councillor Martin said he was encouraged by the way the Panel had evolved but had one point to make in respect of the call-in timetable. Members had 23 days from when the application was listed and circulated to decide whether to call it in and felt that this was an insufficient timeframe and proposed that the time should be re-started if officers felt that the application should go out to full consultation. He also felt that, unlike at the Planning Committee meetings, the Ward Councillor was allowed two minutes to speak first, the officer presentation then followed, which had no time limit and could be quite lengthy, by the time this had finished the Ward Councillor's comments were possibly forgotten. In this respect, he felt that the process could be improved if the officer spoke first and the Ward Councillor after that, they would then be able to tailor their comments better by responding to officer comments.

Councillor Eagle pointed out that Breckland Council was a democratic body, and this needed to be demonstrated and agreed with Councillor Martin's comments.

Councillor Askew felt that the process had improved and had been successful but also agreed that the Ward Councillor did not have sufficient time to speak and felt that the decision could be based on incorrect information. The guidelines on the criteria of what and how you were allowed to deal with an application was too strict and there were aspects to applications that were relevant to local areas that could not be said and felt that if a call-in was made and the Panel decided it should be officer decision, this was not very democratic.

Councillor Atterwill was happy with the process if it remained virtual and

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transparent but agreed with Councillor Martin that the timescale of 23 days was insufficient and should be re-started if the officers were reconsulting the Parishes with an amended application.

The Chairman summarised the points made and agreed that the timescale should be reviewed and felt that there were several triggers for a cut-off to be extended. He also felt that Ward Members should be able to demonstrate that they had done their best for the community to bring an application to the Planning Committee, he said it was a democratic system and felt that there was merit in Members having input with their local knowledge but felt uncomfortable that Members did not have a final say.

Councillor Kiddle-Morris was happy with the process but also agreed that the 23-day cut off point was not always appropriate due to the timings of Town and Parish meetings which could be once every 60 days. If an application came in just after a meeting, the 23-day submission period could not be met so an extension of sufficient time to be able to submit comments beyond the 23 days would be welcomed.

Councillor Wickerson felt in terms of openness there should be a written reason provided if an officer overturned a recommendation.

The Executive Director Place and Delivery, Rob Walker, said that it was important to ensure this process was right, fair, democratic and as transparent as possible. The Chairman's Panel had been set up on the recommendation of PAS and Breckland Council had taken their comments on board to improve the service. He pointed out that all applications that went to the Chairman's Panel could be delegated, and as far as Members not being allowed sufficient time to speak or correct any possible mistakes made by Officers, or to challenge any decision made by Officers, could be investigated. He firmly believed that the Panel had strengthened the decision-making process and had made it more transparent.

The Chairman was happy that the comments and proposed suggestions made would be taken on board and would be investigated to try to improve the process.

Members of the Commission noted the report.

**92/21 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR PROPOSAL**

Councillor Robinson, the Executive Member for Customer, Digital & Performance presented the report that recommended proposed changes to Key Performance Indicators for the upcoming 2021/22 performance cycle which if agreed, would be submitted to Cabinet for approval.

The Innovation and Change Business Partner, Ryan Pack said that there was a list of approximately 60 indicators which the team were seeking feedback on to reduce and that some of the satisfaction measures were not yet set in place so would not be included in the Q3 report.

Councillor Wickerson suggested that planning enforcement should also

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be included and added to the planning heading.

Councillor Birt agreed with the comments on page 19, para 1.5 where it stated that focusing on the wrong metrics or too many metrics could be detrimental, but also felt that a lack of focus or too few metrics could be detrimental too. He mentioned the climate emergency declaration made by Breckland Council and the fact that it had agreed to try to reach net zero by 2035 but felt that this required some form of carbon measuring to be put in place to be able to reach that target but could not see sight of any metrics on this. He had concerns that the right metrics were not in the right place to get to the core of the issue and to measure how this could be achieved.

Councillor Clarke felt that the Complaints KPI needed to be broken down further to show the types of complaints received. He also felt that measuring how KPIs related to risk was important.

Councillor Morton felt that Breckland Council should go back to the climate change report from earlier in the year and look at the recommendations to see what progress the Council was actually making, as this highlighted the large carbon emission buildings and as a minimum felt that this should be measured.

Councillor Jermy asked for reassurance that under the section relating to jobs supported, it was important that the field was not too narrow and that the range and type of jobs created was important and not just the number of jobs created.

The Chairman had some suggestions and amendments to the KPIs and felt that some could only be reported by exception which were:

- page 23, Health and Safety Property Compliance, to be reported as an exception if there was a breach
- Page 24 & 25, Silktide – Overall external score, and Overall internal score – this was an Executive Member role to ensure that the website was doing everything it should do
- a combined figure should be seen on the amount of carbon reductions to ensure it was going down, rather than separate reports on the amount of carbon saved by staff, the emissions reduced from trees and the number of additional electric vehicle charging points delivered.
- Facebook engagement and twitter engagement were not necessary to be included in the report
- the number of staff who felt well supported by the Council could be included in an annual report
- the percentage of claims for compensation against the Council, the ICO decisions upheld could be reported by exception
- directly supported survivors could also be reported by exception or in an annual report
- the Percentage encouraged to try new things (Silver Social), the percentage who felt part of the community (Silver Social) and Total Attendance could be useful as a single report on a less regular basis
- the total referrals to Thetford Citizens Advice was too bespoke and not for this Commission
- information on HMOs and category 1 Hazard repairs could be

reported annually

Councillor Birt asked for the information on Category 1 Hazard repairs to remain as he felt this was important.

Councillor Jermy asked for the reporting on Thetford and District Citizens Advice to remain as this was directly funded by Breckland Council and should be monitored to ensure value for money and to spot increases in demand.

Subject to the above suggestions, the Commission noted the report.

### **93/21 Q2 21/22 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Executive Member for Customer, Digital and Performance, introduced the report for Quarter 2 which outlined the performance for the period 1 Jul 21 to 30 Sep 21. He said that the Contact Centre continued to work through a challenging period but that measures were in place, and it was hoped to see an improvement by quarter 3.

The Innovation, Change and Business Partner, pointed out that there had been a change in method and targets for the FOI reporting, which had resulted in a drop in performance. He also pointed out that although the Commercial Property Portfolio was showing as amber, it should in fact be showing as green based on the new target figures in place since the report was published.

Planning performance had fallen fairly significantly since the last quarter, but it was still above the annual target and would be monitored. In terms of housing, it was still showing a zero with regard to empty properties brought back into use by the Council, the reason for this was an increased demand for housing advice and the team were being utilised elsewhere to assist that peak in demand.

Councillor Jermy noted that there had been a decrease in the number of actual fly tips yet an increase in the tonnage which was a concern and felt that this directly related to the delay in Serco removing a reported fly tip and thus people adding their rubbish to it.

Councillor Birt said that the website reporting was still a concern as it used Google Analytics but was not on every page so the results, in his opinion, was not a true reflection. He felt that if these results continued to be included in the report it should be investigated further. He also felt that the FOI reporting still needed more work and thought that there was going to be something included to note response times as Breckland Council could still fall foul of the ICO for not responding quick enough.

The Innovation, Change and Business Partner noted the comments and confirmed that the website reporting was currently being investigated but remained at this time for continuity. He also confirmed that the FOI reporting could be re-visited.

Members of the Commission noted the report.

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**94/21 OUTSIDE BODY FEEDBACK (STANDING ITEM)**

Councillor Wilkinson, as a Breckland Council representative on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Kings Lynn Committee, reported that they were trying to get onto the shortlist for a new hospital and were hopeful this would go ahead. The hospital was also utilizing government funding set aside for emergency repairs towards a new endoscopy unit which needed to be re-located due to necessary repairs within the hospital.

As a representative for Breckland Council and a member of the Youth Advisory Board, Councillor Wilkinson also reported that Breckland Council had funded £20,000 towards a Mental Health Support Programme to fill a gap to help and support residents in need from the point of diagnosis to getting professional help.

Councillor Wickerson, as a representative on The Hamond Educational Charity, reminded Members that the charity supported young people up to the age of 21 across the Breckland Council Authority area who were in need of financial assistance towards education or sport and to be mindful of this opportunity when assisting residents.

**95/21 SCRUTINY CALL-INS (STANDING ITEM)**

(a) Call In: Local Plan Review

Councillor Atterwill thanked the Chairman for agreeing to his call-in request concerning the Cabinet decision on the Local Plan Review taken on 20 September 21.

He said that the decision had been taken without consultation with Council Members or the Local Plan Working Group and felt that the decision to take 6 years to complete the review would affect all Breckland Council's Communities and in particular those Communities who had worked hard over several years to produce their own Neighbourhood Plans. Members of the Commission and all Town and Parish Councils had received an email statement from representatives of a number of Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Plan groups detailing their concerns about the proposed timetable.

Councillor Atterwill reminded Members that the review of the existing Local Plan should have been completed by November 2024, but the proposed timetable now set a review date of 2027 and felt that the resulting 3-year period beyond 2024 could see a number of Local Plan Policies carry less weight when determining planning applications. He also had concerns that this prolonged timetable could also mean that Neighbourhood Plan Policies would also carry less weight through no fault of the communities who had worked so hard to put their plans in place. For this reason, Councillor Atterwill requested that the Commission ask Cabinet to consider this reviewed timetable with a view to minimising its completion beyond 2024 in order to avoid any adverse impact on local communities.

Councillor Clarke supported the above comments and had particular concerns in respect of the design code and open space areas which he felt needed to have protection through the Local Plan.

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Councillor Morton agreed with Councillor Atterwill and also had concerns on the timescale and financial shortfall involved with the Local Plan.

The Assistant Director Economy and Growth, Andrew Holdsworth, emphasised key points from the report. He explained that there had been a number of factors that had prevented the Local Plan from moving forward which had been externally influenced and national issues out of Breckland Council's control. He stated that if Breckland Council had moved forward on the plan earlier then it would have been time wasted and at financial loss to the Council. It was now the right time to chart a course and were deeply motivated to ensure that Breckland Council continued to benefit from as much protection as possible. He also stated that consultation was key and having stakeholders' input was primary to moving this forward.

The Director of Planning and Building Control, Simon Wood explained that the National Planning Guidance protected Neighbourhood Plans irrespective of whether the local authority had a five-year housing land supply or not and whether or not its policies were out of date and that Neighbourhood Plans were separate from that process and were protected. Breckland Council were still in support of neighbourhood planning and that it was not at threat. He also stated that they had started work on design codes and that they had appointed consultants to provide an evidence base training had been carried out. With regard to Section 106 Agreements and obligations, he explained that the policies would remain in place and required developers to provide planning obligations in respect of affordable housing and open spaces as set out in the Local Plan.

The Chairman asked what the practical implications were of the 3-year gap and asked for clarification about the external influences and National Policy changes that they felt had influenced the timescale and further asked why the Cabinet felt that this timetable would be more appropriate in light of that and financially, how much this would have impacted Breckland Council in terms of money lost. He also asked for more explanation about base requirements of consultation around the Cabinet decision.

The Planning Policy Manager, Andrew D'arcy, explained that the policy in the Local Plan that required Breckland Council to look at a partial review was INF03. One of the keys points was to consider the new housing need numbers at the time of the production of the Plan and the strategy for meeting that newly identified need. The Local Plan was based on a number that was locally derived and the Government, in 2016, had introduced a new national standard for calculating that figure. The Inspector considered that the councils should use the 2016 calculation. Over a number of years, the Government had reviewed the methodology underpinning this calculation and the Inspector had since advised that Local Authorities should not use the 2016 calculation but revert back to previous methodology. Since the adoption of the Plan in 2019 there was clearly some uncertainty about what the best housing number should be. The review of the methodology was completed in December 2020, and it would have been very difficult during this period to ensure this was

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done correctly in terms of the partial review. If a figure had been chosen to base calculation on and the figure was incorrect, it would have been difficult to cost but it could have been well over a £200,000 loss for just a partial review and then essentially the process would have to have started again.

The Director of Planning and Building Control explained that it was extremely difficult to predict what the implications of the 3-year gap might have been, with so many uncontrollable factors. There were current on-going discussions being had surrounding the 5-year housing land supply and whether this was an appropriate way to measure housing delivery and whether that should continue going forward. He also explained that there had been 4 changes to the National Planning Policy Framework in the last 3 to 4 years which had caused fluctuation and uncertainty. It would also depend on the progress made on the substantive review; any delay would cause more difficulties, and therefore felt that an efficient process needed to be in place as soon as possible. In his opinion it would have been irresponsible to have started this process earlier, spending Breckland Council's money which would have wasted time and lost money.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that as part of the consultation process, within the timetable for the substantive review there would be several opportunities for public consultation and community engagement particularly on various sites, the draft plan and the final plan and consultation and community engagement was built into the process from day one through to the final examination at the end.

Councillor Jermy had concerns on any cost or financial loss and having sufficient information available around this to be able to make judgement. He also asked for clarification on any work being undertaken in the interim and whether that would be partially or entirely lost and whether other local authorities were proceeding whilst Breckland Council proposed to wait.

The Assistant Director Economy and Growth explained that it would be imprudent to act unless there was some degree of certainty about the context and the surrounding environment and that it was very difficult to cost financially with so many interventions and changes.

The Director of Planning and Building Control stated that many that were being responded to were National Government changes and one matter that demonstrated the impact of those changes, was that two local authorities had very recently taken the decision to pause production on their local plans at a fairly advanced stage because of policy statements. He felt that Breckland Council was in a good solid position with a robust local plan with up-to-date policies and were trying to move forward at a pace to ensure that there was no repetitive or abortive work being done and that a Plan was produced that would be fit for purpose going forward. He was confident that this was the most responsible and pragmatic approach to achieve this.

The Chairman invited the members of the public to put their views forward and each were given an opportunity to speak. Richard Whadcoat from Yaxham Parish Council, Richard Harrison from

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Rocklands Parish Council, Maggie Oechsle from the Yaxham Neighbourhood Plan, and Graham Clarke from Mattishall Parish Council all put forward their concerns in respect of the Local Plan review and the potential impact that it could have on their Parishes and Neighbourhood Plans. The Chairman thanked them for their submissions.

Councillor Wickerson read aloud an email from the Chairman of the Planning Committee at Swaffham Town Council which shared the concerns over the timescale of the review of the Local Plan and urged the Commission to support a shorter timescale. He further added that the Commission should listen to the public and the communities who had elected the Members to speak on their behalf and felt that the Commission should pass this back to the Cabinet for review.

Councillor Martin had noticed that there were two Members of the Commission who were unable to attend, Councillor Turner and Councillor Bushell and that they had asked for their opinions to be noted which was to support the call-in and refer it back to Cabinet. He then went on to say that if INF03 remained unchanged and was not neutralised, then in November 2022, all the key housing related policies would be rendered out of date and would not carry the same weight and could be exploited. He supported the option to send this back to Cabinet and ask them to re-consider a significantly shorter gap between 2024 and when the new Plan would be in place to protect Breckland Council's communities and neutralise INF03.

The Chairman asked officers to clarify and provide their professional opinion as to whether Neighbourhood Plans would become ineffective.

The Director of Planning and Building Control emphasised that Neighbourhood Plans formed part of the Development Plan and as such carried full weight in the decision-making process. He also emphasised the fact that there was a requirement for Neighbourhood Plans to be kept up to date and issues such as possible conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework and possible conflict with a new Local Plan could be items that rendered them out of date. What the National Planning Guidance and the National Policy Framework did was to build in safeguards for Neighbourhood Plans to protect them.

If a Neighbourhood Plan was reviewed and fully up to date, and less than 2 years old and had policies and allocations to meet its own identified housing requirement and the local planning authority had up to a 3-year supply of deliverable housing sites then the Neighbourhood Plan would continue to have full weight irrespective of the status of the Local Plan.

Councillor Birt supported the proposal to pass this back to Cabinet and asked if Breckland Council had confidence in the quality of the report and its contents as mistakes had been made within the content of the report. He said that the Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plan had just been agreed after 5 years of exceptionally hard work and had concerns that all of that work could be in vain.

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Councillor Atterwill explained that the Local Development Plan was made up of two components, the Breckland Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans, the main concern was that Breckland's Local Plan contained policies on settlement boundaries and if that was weakened it could affect the weight of the Neighbourhood Plan and could be the subject of aggressive development applications. He felt that it needed the two components to be strong to work together to protect areas within the remit of Breckland Council.

Councillor Wilkinson pointed out the Planning Committee and planning officers at Breckland Council, along with Neighbourhood Plans, would protect towns and parishes against aggressive development and that Members and the public should have faith in this service.

Councillor Jermy fully supported a community led planning process and not a developer led one, and said it was heartening that people were so passionate about their local communities and that a great deal of time and effort had gone into producing Neighbourhood Plans across the district. He went on to say that one of the most frustrating and disappointing things about the report that went to Cabinet was the way in which it had been produced and the lack of engagement with the Local Plan Working Group. He felt that the strongest Local Plan was one that harnessed all of the possible skills and knowledge of Council Members and a Plan that engaged with and supported the involvement of local parishes and residents.

Councillor Martin summarised the reasons for the call-in which was the need to ensure that the existing Local Plan was out of date for as short a time as possible and was why they were asking the Commission to agree to refer the decision back to Cabinet supported by Councillor Wickerson.

Councillor Atterwill was aware that there was a wealth of work currently ongoing in addition to other work that could be undertaken and felt that referring this back to Cabinet would not hold things up but appreciated there was still a lot of work to be done. He suggested that it would be prudent to ask Cabinet to look at the timetable again with a view to reducing the timescale and also asked Members to support the decision to send it back to Cabinet.

**RESOLVED** that recommendation two be agreed:

To refer the decision back to Cabinet for reconsideration, setting out the nature of the Commissions concerns.

**96/21 COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION (STANDING ITEM)**

None.

**97/21 WORK PROGRAMME**

Councillor Atterwill asked for an update on the Task and Finish Group to monitor the progress of the Serco Contract during its first year. In response, the Chairman advised that this would be added to the December agenda in order to set up and create this Group, Members of

the Commission were asked to email the Chairman if they wished to be appointed to this Task & Finish Group.

Councillor Atterwill said that Councillor Turner had requested an agenda item to invite Anglian Water and UK Power Network to a meeting, to discuss practice for utility companies coping with demand with the introduction of future housing developments and contingencies in place for longer term for power, water and sewage. The Chairman agreed to add this to the agenda for the December meeting and invite Anglian Water and UK Power Network to attend.

**98/21 NEXT MEETING**

The arrangements for the next meeting scheduled for Thursday 16 December at 10.00am in the Anglia Room were noted.

**Action By**

The meeting closed at 1.30 pm

CHAIRMAN