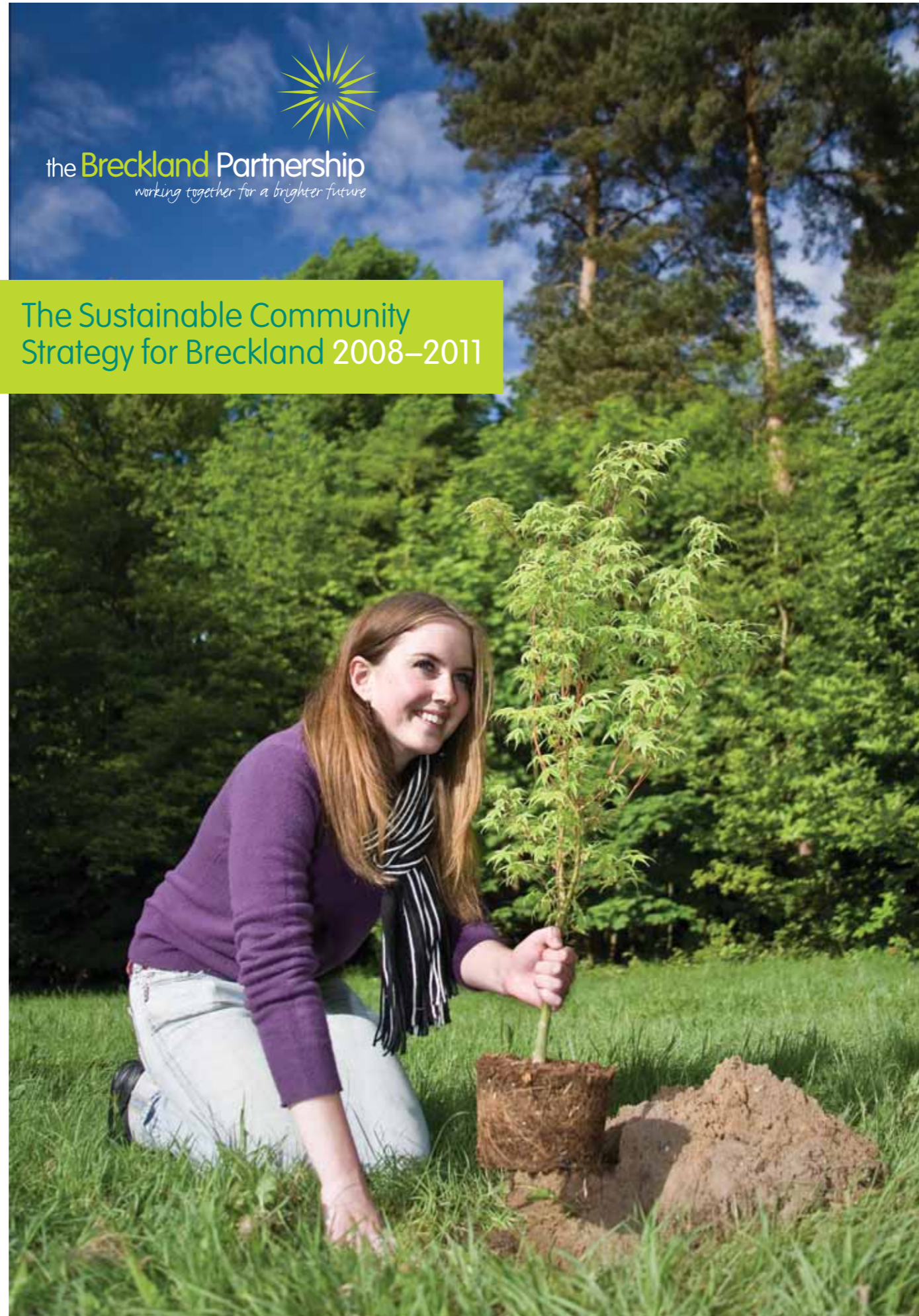




the **Breckland Partnership**
working together for a brighter future

The Sustainable Community
Strategy for Breckland 2008–2011



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by the Chair of the Breckland Partnership 3

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Equality Statement

We recognise and value diversity in our community and the contribution that people from different backgrounds and cultures bring to the development and wellbeing of our District. We are therefore committed to principles of equality.

This document can be made available in larger print and other formats. If you need help to read this document, please do not hesitate to contact us on 01362 656870 or email partnership@breckland.gov.uk.

Foreword



I am pleased to introduce the Sustainable Community Strategy for Breckland.

It has been developed by the Breckland Partnership, which brings together a range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to improve quality of life in the District.

The Strategy sets out the priorities for the Partnership over the next three years (2008-2011) and introduces a commitment to creating sustainable communities.

Breckland, with its vibrant market towns, villages and striking rural environment, is already one of the best places in the country to live and work. Overall, health is good and crime is low. Educational attainment and economic prosperity are in line with national trends.

But, not all our residents share enough in these benefits. Residents living in deprived areas face disproportionate poor health, educational achievement and high crime. In isolated rural communities residents can also struggle with geographical barriers when trying to access services.

An underpinning theme of this Sustainable Community Strategy is to work towards a good quality of life for all residents. By focusing on priority issues, co-ordinating the actions of organisations and commissioning joint projects, we aim to improve quality of life and make Breckland a place everyone can be proud of.

The District has great diversity amongst its local communities. This Strategy recognises and embraces this diversity and seeks to respond to the differing needs of different communities.

Breckland is also one of the fastest areas of growth in the country and faces the challenge of ensuring that new communities have the services and facilities they need to make them sustainable; whilst existing services are maintained or improved in established communities.

The spatial expression of this Strategy, and everything to do with growth and the future development of land in Breckland, will be set out in the Local Development Framework later this year.

In developing the Strategy, we asked for the views and aspirations of the organisations whose services impact upon Breckland's quality of life. It is a living document that will be reviewed and may need to change over time as we face new opportunities and challenges in the effort to develop truly sustainable communities.

William Nunn
Chair of the Breckland Partnership



Part one: Setting the Scene



The Breckland Partnership was set up in 2002 and brings together representatives from the district council, county council, voluntary and community sector, primary care trust, constabulary and a range of key agencies that deliver public services in the area.

The aim of the Partnership is to create sustainable communities and improve the quality of life for all residents in Breckland.

A key role of the Partnership is to improve 'ways of working' by:-

- > Developing common aims, joint priorities and shared commitment;
- > Drawing on the expertise of voluntary, public and private sector partners;
- > Coordinating the delivery of local services and agreed objectives more effectively;
- > Providing a forum for debate and discussion;
- > Increasing awareness of activities and communication between local partners;
- > Enabling the development of rationalised partnership structures.

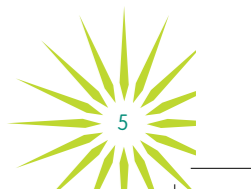
The work of the Breckland Partnership began in earnest with the publication of the Community Plan for Breckland in 2005. This Sustainable Community Strategy replaces and updates the initial plan.

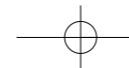
The role of the Partnership continues to evolve as we face new opportunities and challenges and as we increasingly look for innovative ways to deliver services that meet established and emerging community priorities.

This new, updated Sustainable Community Strategy reflects this progress.

In the last two years, the Partnership has developed three new strategies on Economic Prosperity, Culture and Social Inclusion. Together, with the Local Development Framework and the Norfolk Local Area Agreement, the three documents underpin this Sustainable Community Strategy and structure the work of the Partnership.

An increasing part of the Partnership's role is to represent Breckland at a county and regional level and to influence other strategic planning processes. By undertaking this representative role, the Partnership will strive to secure additional funding, resources and improvements for the District.





Our Vision

Together we can improve our quality of life

Breckland is a place in which we take great pride, where our communities, organisations and businesses work in partnership within an outstanding rural environment to bring about sustainable success and wellbeing for all.

We want everyone who chooses Breckland as a place to live or work, to meet their aspirations and enjoy an excellent quality of life.

Our Priorities

Together we can:-

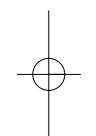
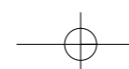
- 1 > **Develop safer and stronger communities**
So that all Breckland's communities are free of crime and anti-social behaviour, where people actively participate in community activities and differences are respected.
- 2 > **Improve homes**
So that the number of affordable and quality homes available in the District is increased.
- 3 > **Promote and develop a thriving economy**
So that Breckland is an economically prosperous place, which attracts and supports businesses and encourages local enterprise.
- 4 > **Improve the health and wellbeing of local people**
So that people in Breckland lead healthier lives and inequalities in health across the District are reduced.
- 5 > **Ensure the accessibility of all services**
So that all Breckland's communities can access a level of service, which they choose or their needs require.
- 6 > **Achieve environmental sustainability**
So that Breckland's outstanding rural environment is respected and that action is taken to enhance and sustainably manage the local environment.

Our Principles

In order to achieve our ambitions, and to turn our Vision into a reality, we will be guided by the following core principles:-

- > Seeking to make our activities meaningful and relevant to the person in the street
- > Ensuring all our activities are sustainable
- > Tackling inequalities in service provision across the District

We are committed to these principles and will integrate them into all aspects of our work.



What is the Sustainable Community Strategy?

The Sustainable Community Strategy is a long term plan to deliver sustainable communities and improved quality of life for local people. It is the overarching vision for Breckland, which guides the priorities and objectives of all plans and strategies relating to the District.

Breckland Council has a statutory duty to work with partners organisations to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy, which demonstrates how public, private and voluntary organisations will work together to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area. This Strategy is the culmination of this work.

It is important that the Strategy is based on evidence of local need and the aspirations of local people and organisations. This is why we have produced a comprehensive evidence base to support this Strategy and the Local Development Framework

The Strategy must also inform the Local Development Framework, which is the spatial planning strategy for the area. This is why we have developed the two documents side-by-side: undertaking joint consultation, evidence collection and even setting-up a joint steering group. We have achieved best practice in developing the two strategies together.

What are Sustainable Communities?

Sustainable communities are places in which people want to live, now and in the future. According to the Government, these communities are likely to be:

- > Active, inclusive and safe
- > Well run
- > Environmentally sensitive
- > Well designed and built
- > Well connected
- > Thriving
- > Well served
- > Fair for everyone

Sustainable communities meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Last year, when we consulted you on the Local Development Framework, you told us that your sustainable communities would:-

- > Have a strong economy with skilled jobs
- > Be able to support themselves
- > Build good quality homes that are affordable for future generations
- > Offer skills and vocational training for young people
- > Promote recycling
- > Offer a range of local services
- > Present opportunities for all members of the community

You also told us that your communities should have the capacity to grow in a sustainable fashion.

We listened to you. Together with the Local Development Framework, this Sustainable Community Strategy will help deliver sustainable Breckland communities by setting out a Vision to improve quality of life for all whilst safeguarding the environment for future generations.

Who is this Strategy for?

The Strategy has a number of different audiences:-

For the organisations that, together, form the Breckland Partnership. This is our 'road map' to help us work together to maintain and improve the quality of life for the people of Breckland;

For local people and the communities of Breckland, so that they can see what we are determined to achieve on their behalf and for future generations;

For regional and national government, other national agencies and the wider business community – on whose support, cooperation and resources much of this Strategy depends.

Community Leadership for Sustainable Communities

Our first Community Plan, published in Spring 2005, set out how we aimed to improve quality of life for everyone in Breckland over the subsequent 10 years.

Much has been achieved since then and you will see some of the highlights later in this Strategy. We are rightly proud of these, but we know that lots more still needs to be done.

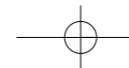
The challenges we face in society are becoming more and more complex. Addressing these challenges, building on our successes and delivering genuinely sustainable communities requires a joined-up, partnership approach. All local organisations and agencies need to play their part, as do individuals within communities themselves.

The Breckland Partnership is a powerful agency through which the financial and non-financial resources of local partners can be used to build on these achievements, respond to the challenges we face and turn the vision of sustainable communities into reality on the ground.

The Breckland Partnership has an important Community Leadership role. To fulfil this function, the Partnership will seek to:-

- > Raise the public profile of the Partnership;
- > Increase community involvement in decision-making;
- > Improve the availability and exchange of information;
- > Increase coordination between different organisations.

This work will be informed by the findings of the consultation undertaken in the development of this Strategy.



The wider context

Whilst the Sustainable Community Strategy is the overarching strategy for the area, it must also fit into a wider context of strategies and plans at the local, sub-regional and regional level.

There are three documents in particular with which the Breckland Sustainable Community Strategy needs to be closely linked:-

- > **The Breckland Local Development Framework**
- > **Norfolk Ambition**
- > **The Norfolk Local Area Agreement**

The Local Development Framework is the planning strategy for the District and represents the 'spatial expression' of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Framework set out Breckland Council's preferred spatial strategy for development in Breckland up to 2026. The core strategy and associated development control policies is the subject of consultation in Spring 2008 and will be submitted later this year.

Norfolk Ambition is the county-wide partnership's equivalent of the Breckland Sustainable Community Strategy. First published in 2003, it currently being updated with a view to adoption later in 2008.

The consensus from the refresh process to date, suggests the following areas as priorities for the future Norfolk County Strategic Partnership work programme:-

- > **Skills**
- > **Access**
- > **Environment**
- > **Vibrant Communities**

The Norfolk Local Area Agreement is being refreshed during 2008. An outline framework has already identified eight outcomes:

- > **Improving skills and raising aspirations**
- > **Supporting independence**
- > **Improving housing**
- > **Healthier lifestyles**
- > **Safer communities**
- > **Stronger communities**
- > **Thriving economy**
- > **Environmental sustainability**

This Strategy will feed into the Local Area Agreement, ensuring that the particular issues that exist in Breckland are fully addressed.

Breckland overview

This overview is shared with the Local Development Framework.

Geography

Breckland is a geographically large rural District in central Norfolk covering an area of over 500 square miles. Just under half of the population lives in the many dispersed villages and hamlets found in the 108 rural parishes, with the remaining 53% of the population living in the District's five towns of Thetford, Dereham, Attleborough, Swaffham and Watton.

Thetford is the principal retail, service and employment centre in the south of the District. Dereham and Attleborough are the second and third largest towns in the District, which serve as administration and service centres, but are also a focus for retail and employment. Elsewhere, Swaffham and Watton are similarly sized market towns and provide a good range of services for day-to-day needs.

Population

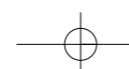
Breckland has a diverse community of over 120,000 people which is forecast to increase to 134,000 by 2012. Generally, quality of life is good with official crime rates being low and generally decreasing. However there are pockets of health, poverty and disability related deprivation, notably in some of the Thetford wards.

Recently, migrant workers from the European Union have become established as a significant new community with numbers estimated between 6,000 and 15,000.

The Economy

The growth of the Breckland population has led to growth in the working age population. This has been driven to a significant extent by high levels of in-migration from Europe. The number of people with higher level qualifications is low, however the number of people with other qualifications is comparable with other areas of the region and the country. Economic activity is high and unemployment is low.

Wages are also relatively low in comparison with the national and regional averages. This reflects the lower level of qualifications of people in the district and the low level of skills required by many of the available jobs.





Housing

Closely linked to the economy, Breckland's housing market has seen house prices rise much faster than incomes. At present, the average two-bedroom property costs over five times the average income.

The Local Development Framework is required by the draft East of England Plan to deliver 15,200 new homes over the next 13 years, of which at least one third are required to be affordable and of which 6,000 will be delivered in Thetford as a key centre for growth.

Environment

Breckland is a diverse district for biodiversity, landscape and heritage. It takes its name from 'The Brecks', which is a nationally unique landscape and habitat of sandy heath, forest and arable farmland found in the west and south of the District.

Breckland contains 21% of all Sites of Special Scientific Interest found in the East of England. Elsewhere the character of Breckland is clay farmland, punctuated with woodland, occasional river valleys and dispersed settlement. The historic character of Breckland's settlement is recognised by 50 separate Conservation Areas and over 1500 Listed Buildings.

Transport

Given the rural nature and dispersed pattern of settlement, movement in the District is primarily by private car. Two trunk road routes run across the District. The A47 links Dereham and Swaffham with Norwich in the east and King's Lynn in the west while the A11 links Attleborough and Thetford with Norwich to the north and Newmarket and Cambridge in the south-west. The remaining parts of Breckland are served by a network of smaller roads.

The A11 is dualled from the Norfolk county border to Norwich. However, delays from congestion (and accidents) - on the 8km stretch from the south-west end of the Thetford bypass to the Barton Mills junction - adversely impact upon Breckland business traffic to and from the south, including Cambridge, London and Stansted Airport.

Thetford and Attleborough are connected to the national rail network with regular services to Norwich and Cambridge. Public transport services in the District are principally provided by bus and focus on linking the District's market towns with shopping and employment destinations at Norwich, King's Lynn and Bury St. Edmunds.

Accessibility

53% of the population lives in the rural areas of Breckland where there has been a decline in service provision linked to increasing mobility for car owners and a rationalisation of service and retail provision. Significant areas of the District are now without key service provision and allied with very limited public transport provision, this has resulted in three rural areas identified as Accessibility Action Areas by Norfolk County Council.

Summary

The complete picture of the area is one of rapid population growth, poor connectivity, good health and low crime, low pay but low rates of unemployment, localised hotspots of multiple deprivation, along with an increasing migrant population.

A detailed area profile is provided in the evidence base that accompanies and informs this Strategy and the Local Development Framework.

Part 2: The Focus for Action



Introduction

Six priority areas have been identified:

- > Developing safer and stronger communities
- > Improving homes
- > Promoting and developing a thriving economy
- > Improving the health and wellbeing of local people
- > Ensuring the accessibility of all services
- > Environmental sustainability

In addition to the six priorities there are two cross-cutting challenges that will be addressed by this Strategy.

Growth in Breckland will continue at high levels for the next 20 years, particularly in the Thetford Growth Point Area and alongside the A11. As a result, Breckland will face enormous pressure in the number of houses and associated developments it will have to accommodate.

The challenge for the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Partnership will be to ensure that all new communities have the services and facilities they need to make them sustainable, this includes investment in health services, youth services and community facilities.

It will also be important to maintain the environment and facilities that existing residents most value.

Breckland has many distinct and diverse communities, both of interest and of place. We want to encourage cohesive communities that can remain stable while accommodating significant social and cultural change. We want to embrace the opportunities and challenges that accompany the significant in-migration from European countries.

Increasing public involvement in decision-making and devolving power to individuals and local organisations is also increasingly important.

The Partnership will explore the ways in which we can empower local people to take an active part in the partnership, local democracy, in decision-making and supporting their own communities.



Safer and stronger communities

Aspiration

Together we can ensure that Breckland is a place where people feel safe and secure and where people from all backgrounds can play an active role in the local community

Current position

Overall levels of crime are relatively low compared to the county, regional and national averages. In Breckland there are 64 crimes per 1000 population. The corresponding figure for Norfolk is 79 and nationally is 103.

However, perception of crime – particularly anti-social behaviour – as an issue remains high. It is in the 'top 10' of issues that local people feel should be improved.

Within Breckland, the highest levels of crime are recorded in Thetford. For example, over 40% of all criminal damage occurs in Thetford. Similar figures are recorded for theft from a motor vehicle, theft of a motor vehicle and assault.

Local people are also concerned about the need to promote a better understanding between different communities, especially those who have moved to the area relatively recently.

Breckland is the destination for 30% of all economic migrants entering Norfolk from A8 European countries.

In the national household Best Value Performance Indicator Survey 2006, for the indicator: the percentage of residents who agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, Breckland scored 62.8%. The national average is 79% and this places Breckland thirteenth from the bottom in the country.

Priorities

In the next three years we want to:-

- > Reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour
- > Reduce fear of crime and raise the confidence of communities in the safety of their area
- > Increase the participation and engagement of local people in community activities
- > Increase the percentage of residents who agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together

Key actions

The key actions will include:-

- > Bringing together frontline officers from a range of local agencies who are working on community safety, environmental and neighbourhood/community issues to share their knowledge and expertise and develop joined-up approaches, which help create safe and cohesive environments for all
- > Promoting diversionary activities for young people that exploit and support local community, sport and cultural opportunities
- > Developing a community cohesion action plan and promoting initiatives aimed at improving links between different communities
- > Promoting parish, town and community planning as a method for actively engaging people in shaping their own communities

National and Local Area Agreement indicators

- > Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area
- > Percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality
- > Engagement in the Arts

- > Adult participation in Sport
- > Young peoples participation in positive activities
- > Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police

Local indicators

- > Perceptions of anti-social behaviour
- > Migrant English language skills and knowledge

Key strategies

Breckland's Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy provides a framework for the wide range of initiatives and programmes developed by partners and other agencies to tackle community safety issues.

Breckland's Social Inclusion Strategy provides a framework for the wide range of initiatives and programmes developed by partners and other agencies to tackle community cohesion issues.

Local Development Framework outcomes

Not applicable





Improving homes

Aspiration

Together we can increase the number of affordable and quality homes available in the district.

Current position

The cost of housing (whether purchasing or renting) has increased considerably. The average purchase price in 2005 in Breckland was £165,237 compared with £136,481 in 2003.

The Rural East Anglia Partnership's housing market assessment (October 2007) highlights the particular problems facing those needing decent homes for themselves and their families. Lack of decent housing is often linked to other threats to quality of life including ill health, mental illness, anti-social behaviour, criminality, and access to local jobs, services, and support from friends and family.

The Breckland private sector stock condition survey (2007) highlights that across all private tenures 17.2% of properties still fail the decent homes standard requiring action and intervention to address. In addition, empty homes make up 4.2% of the overall stock.

The relative concentration of social housing stock in Thetford means that this area has significant housing issues, particularly around the quality of provision. However, there are also significant housing pressures across more rural parts of the District.

Priorities

In the next three years we want to:-

- > Assist a wide range of vulnerable residents to be able to live independently
- > Improve the quality of homes provided by public and private sectors in Breckland
- > Promote better access to affordable housing for local people

Key Actions

The key actions will include:-

- > Working with partners to bring empty properties back into use
- > Working with partners to increase the number of households living in a 'decent home'

National and Local Area Agreement indicators

- > Net additional homes provided
- > Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)

Local indicators

- > Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living

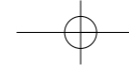
Key strategies

Activities on housing related issues are informed by the Rural East Anglia Partnership's Housing Market Assessment 2007. The Breckland Housing Strategy 2005-10 structures this work and will be refreshed in 2008/09.

Local Development Framework outcomes

- SO1 To deliver a minimum 15,200 net new homes
- SO2 To secure sufficient affordable housing for those in need





Thriving economy

Aspiration

Together we can make Breckland an economically prosperous place which attracts and supports businesses and encourages local enterprise

Current Position

In our Economic Prosperity Strategy, we found that in Breckland:

The population of working age is highly economically active and there is low unemployment. However:-

- > With regard to gross weekly pay, Breckland earners are receiving the second lowest salary in the county and the second lowest full time hourly rate. Gross weekly pay in Breckland is nearly £100 below the regional average;
- > Workforce qualifications in Breckland are below the rest of Norfolk and well below the national standard;
- > Breckland has lower levels of management, professional, and associate professional occupations than Norfolk and the rest of England and Wales, and higher levels of manual occupations.

Key priorities

The Economic Prosperity Strategy has five strategic objectives:

- 1 > Improving business competitiveness
- 2 > Attracting inward investment
- 3 > Enhancing workforce development & skills
- 4 > Improving transport & infrastructure
- 5 > Regenerating & developing the Breckland Environment

A detailed Action Plan was published in May 2007. This sets out a comprehensive programme of initiatives and provides the basis for accountability and monitoring progress by the Partnership.

Key actions

The key actions will include:-

- > Maintaining and reviewing progress on the Breckland Partnership Economic Prosperity Strategy and its associated Action Plan

As the Partnership already has a detailed and current Economic Prosperity Strategy and associated action plan in place, this Strategy does not contain any additional initiatives.

National and Local Area Agreement indicators

- > Working age population on out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods
- > Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher
- > Average earnings of employees in the area
- > VAT registered businesses in the area showing growth

Local indicators

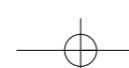
- > 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET)
- > Overall employment rate
- > Skills gaps in the current workforce reported by employers

Key strategies

Breckland's Economic Prosperity Strategy provides a framework for the wide range of initiatives and programmes developed by partners and other agencies to promote prosperity and enterprise.

Local Development Framework outcomes

- SO4 To develop and retain a flexible and highly skilled workforce through training
- SO13 To ensure high and stable levels of employment through restructuring the local economy
- SO19 To ensure good accessibility for all to jobs, facilities and services in Breckland





Improving health and wellbeing

Aspiration

Together we can ensure that people in Breckland lead healthier lives and inequalities in health across the District are reduced.

Current Position

Breckland is generally a healthy place to live.

However, compared to the Norfolk average for a number of the lifestyle indicators Breckland scores badly for: healthy eating and obesity, physical activity, people with diabetes, older people with hip fractures and road traffic deaths/injuries.

There are significant health inequalities across Breckland. For example, poor health and lifestyles appear to concentrate within Thetford and the other market towns.

This variation is reinforced by the difference in life expectancy. In Thetford Abbey and Castle wards the life expectancy (for all persons) is 75 years compared to Dereham Toftwood where it is 83 years.

A Health and Wellbeing Partnership has been established to sit under Breckland Partnership Board. A key role of the Partnership is to ensure that there is adequate capacity in the community to deliver all the elements necessary for a good quality of life and healthy well-being.

Priorities

The Breckland Health and Wellbeing Partnership has developed a Delivery Plan, which aims to:

- > Improve health knowledge and information sharing amongst organisations
- > Improve health and tackle inequalities across the District

The Partnership will take forward actions that aim to address the determinants of health, and the factors that can lead from ill health to social exclusion and vice-versa.

This will involve improving health, promoting healthy lifestyles, empowering participants, providing training and work opportunities, and contributing to the development of inclusive, health-supporting communities.

Key actions

The key actions will include:-

- > Maintaining and reviewing progress on the Breckland Health and Wellbeing Partnership Delivery Plan
- > Teaming up with the Primary Care Trust and other health-related bodies to bring together information and services on health promotion

- > Coordinating an ongoing media programme which aims to raise the profile of health issues and interventions in Breckland
- > Providing a programme of training for individuals and community organisations engaged in health improvement activity
- > Supporting the Breckland Community Sports Network to develop and deliver a sports development work programme across the district
- > Supporting the ongoing delivery and expansion of the Walking for Health programme
- > Introducing the Cycle Recycle and Cycling for Health project in the Thetford area
- > Supporting work in priority communities to increase capacity to deliver local health improvement interventions
- > Seeking opportunities to develop and implement a Health Trainers programme in Breckland

National and Local Area Agreement indicators

- > Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6
- > Mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75

- > 16+ current smoking rate prevalence
- > Adult participation in Sport

Local indicators

- > Children and young people's participation in high-quality PE and sport
- > Healthy life expectancy at age 65
- > People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents

Key strategies

Breckland's Health and Wellbeing Partnership Delivery Plan will structure work aimed at reducing inequalities and improving wellbeing.

Breckland's Cultural Strategy provides a framework for a wide range of initiatives and programmes developed by partners and other agencies that are linked in part to health activity and participation.

Local Development Framework outcomes

- SO19 To ensure good accessibility for all jobs, facilities and services in Breckland
- SO20 To reduce rural isolation through the protection and provision of key services and facilities in rural areas



Improving access to services

Aspiration

Together we can ensure that all Breckland's communities can access a level of service which they choose or require.

Current Position

All the partners in the Partnership are committed to ensuring that the services we are collectively responsible for are delivered to a high quality and fairly to all those who seek them.

We recognise that there are many users (and potential users) who are unable to obtain the level of service which their needs require or which they would chose.

Overall, Breckland is not amongst the most deprived local authority areas – 222 most deprived out of 354 local authorities. However, Breckland scores poorly on 'connectivity' and geographical barriers to services. 31 of Breckland's 78 Super Output Areas are in the 10% most deprived for the geographical barriers deprivation score. Mid Forest is the 2nd most deprived Super Output Area in the Eastern Region for this indicator.

A Local Futures report in 2006 ranked Breckland the 13th worst local authority in the UK in terms of 'connectivity' (400 authorities).

Key factors include:

- > The remoteness of significant parts of this largely rural district – particularly for those without access to a car;
- > Difficulties in delivering efficient services to people living in remoter areas;
- > Clear evidence that those on low incomes and suffering deprivation are less able to benefit from services (health, housing, education & training etc.) which offer the opportunities for a better quality of life.

The complicated nature of these difficulties requires a coordinated approach to service delivery. For the person needing assistance, we should endeavour to offer a seamless 'one-stop' service which overcomes professional and organisational boundaries.

Priorities

In the next three years we want to:-

- > Improve access to key services and advice, particularly for those most in need without their own transport or living in deprived communities. We will achieve this by:-
 - > Improving electronic access
 - > Working more collectively to deliver and plan our services
 - > Supporting the delivery of improved travel and transport

Key actions

The key actions will include:-

- > Mapping inequalities to highlight where hard to reach and marginalised groups exist across geographical communities and communities of interest in the Breckland area
- > Strengthening neighbourhood/community services in each of the Market Towns and Local Service Centres (as defined in the Local Development Framework)
- > Exploring the potential for jointly provided mobile services and/or clinics in remoter areas
- > Producing joint publicity and information on access to services in priority areas, e.g. isolated communities.
- > Encouraging all service providers to consider accessibility when planning their services

National and Local Area Agreement indicators

- > Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling

Local indicators

- > Not applicable.

Key Strategies

Breckland's Social Inclusion Strategy provides a framework for the wide range of initiatives and programmes developed by partners and other agencies to tackle exclusion issues. A significant component of the Strategy links to fair and equal access to services.

Local Development Framework outcomes

- SO19 To ensure good accessibility for all jobs, facilities and services in Breckland
- SO20 To reduce rural isolation through the protection and provision of key services and facilities in rural areas
- SO21 To reduce urban isolation and social exclusion through the promotion of appropriate tenure mixes in new developments and improved accessibility to key services and facilities



Environmental sustainability

Aspiration

Together we ensure that Breckland's outstanding rural environment is respected and action is taken to enhance and sustainably manage the local environment.

Current Position

The environmental challenges that we, as a partnership, face are not significantly different from those facing the rest of the country. The introduction to recent Government guidance sums up the challenge for the Local Strategic Partnership:–

“It means providing effective local leadership on climate change and the environment; promoting the active role that the public and other local service providers can play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, protecting our natural environment and working to create a sustainable community.”

Breckland is one of the driest areas of the country and availability of water resources is an issue with the increasing pressure for development. Climate change has been identified as the most significant challenge that we currently face. The release of greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide,

is the main contributing factor and human activity is a direct cause. We can expect warmer wetter winters and drier hotter summers; reduced water resources and more extreme weather events.

Breckland's location means that it is not vulnerable to sea level changes. However, many parts of Breckland have a high clay content and consequently inadequate drainage, which can lead to problems of flash flooding.

Road traffic is a significant source of carbon dioxide. There is a high level of commuting by car, and congestion at peak times in the market towns. Breckland has one of the highest rates of commuting to work by car in Norfolk.

The area includes some nationally acclaimed initiatives demonstrating sustainability in practice – including the EcoTech Centre in Swaffham.

Nitrates are an issue given the large areas of Breckland that are identified as Nitrate Vulnerable Zones by the Environment Agency (both surface and ground waste). This is considered in the environmental baseline for the LDF and data is being monitored on a number of indicators.

Priorities

In the next three years we want to:–

- > Minimise the impact on climate change by all those living and working in the district
- > Raise environmental awareness in local communities
- > Minimise the impact of waste production and increase recycling rates
- > Reduce the environmental impact of travel to all those living and working in the district

Key actions

The key actions will include:–

- > Maintaining and reviewing progress on the Breckland Local Development Framework, with particular regard to sustainability requirements on new developments
- > Adopting and publicising good practice in energy conservation, use of natural resources, waste minimisation, green travel plans and other environmental initiatives
- > Promoting recycling and composting, thus reducing the household waste collected
- > Supporting local communities in environmental projects
- > Promoting sustainable transport – public transport, walking, cycling

National and Local Area Agreement indicators

- > Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling
- > Adapting to climate change
- > Per capita CO2 emissions in the local authority area
- > Municipal waste land filled

Local indicators

- > Tackling fuel poverty – people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating

Key Strategies

Breckland Council's new Environment Strategy sets out proposals to advance environmental sustainability both in the conduct of its own business and as a community leader. This strategy links to the Sustainable Community Strategy by seeking to reflect people's views on what needs to change in the district to improve quality of life.

Local Development Framework outcomes

- SO8 To protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the biodiversity, geology and landscape of Breckland
- SO10 To require high quality design that meets high environmental standards.
- SO11 To enhance open space provision throughout the District
- SO12 To promote renewable energy to reduce carbon emissions
- SO13 To minimise the risk of flooding to existing and new developments
- SO14 To maximise the opportunity to redevelop sustainable previously developed land.
- SO15 To prevent groundwater contamination and a deterioration in air, water and soil quality
- SO16 To require the efficient use of water resources
- SO17 To minimise the amount of waste produced and promote sustainable waste management
- SO18 To provide for a significant modal shift from a reliance on the private car, in particular single person car use, to sustainable forms of transport



Part 3: Supporting Information



Supporting strategies, plans and information

In the last two years we have developed three strategies that underpin this Sustainable Community Strategy.

Tackling social exclusion

In our Social Inclusion Strategy, we recognised the particular needs of a number of disadvantaged groups in our communities, including: families at risk from a multiplicity of problems; disaffected young people; the long term unemployed; isolated older people; people with long term health problems or disabilities; migrant workers (particularly from Portugal and the A8 countries); and, gypsies and travellers.

Disadvantage in Breckland has a particular character when compared with the region as a whole. This includes:

- > Low income;
- > Inadequate skills of the workforce and a lack of aspiration among the young;
- > Poor health and the lack of a healthy lifestyle;

- > Lack of affordable housing;
- > Lack of transport and poor access to employment and services;
- > Crime, anti-social behaviour, domestic violence and self harm incidences.

The Strategy has six strategic objectives, to:

- > Provide leadership in tackling social exclusion in Breckland
- > Improve information and raise awareness of available support (particularly for the disadvantaged and those working with them)
- > Improve joint working and inter-agency communication
- > Involve those (particularly the disadvantaged and those working with them) to whom this Strategy is aimed
- > Release and support the potential for local action
- > Improve access to services





Revitalising the local economy

This Economic Prosperity Strategy for Breckland has been produced by the Partnership to help inform and mould its actions and initiatives, and those of its partners, to achieve its vision: to make the district an economically prosperous place which attracts and supports local businesses and encourages local enterprise.

Focusing on the 2006 to 2010 period, the Strategy provides a framework for the deployment and integration of resources and actions to ensure that there are significant improvements to economic performance and environment in Breckland, that raise the standards of living and quality of life in the area.

It is designed to help and allow the area, its residents, businesses and other organisations realise their potential to contribute to sustainable economic growth.

The Strategy identified five strategic objectives:

- > Improving business competitiveness
- > Attracting inward investment
- > Enhancing workforce development & skills
- > Improving transport & infrastructure
- > Regenerating & developing the Breckland Environment

A detailed programme of action has been developed and is being progressed by the Partnership's Economic Group.

Cultural participation

The development of the Breckland Cultural Strategy helped the Partnership to build a clear picture of the District and its economic, demographic, social and cultural profile along with the range of future influencing factors on opportunities and 'cultural' participation.

The objectives of the Strategy are to:

- > Identify a set of shared principles to improve the Partnership's approach to arts, sport, play and leisure;
- > Develop and implement improvement plans to ensure a more coordinated, consistent and effective approach to addressing leisure and cultural development in Breckland.

A detailed programme of action has been developed and is being delivered by the Culture Team at Breckland Council, with support from a wider stakeholder group.

Supporting information and evidence

The Breckland Partnership and Breckland Council Environmental Planning Policy teams have produced the Breckland Area Profile as a shared evidence base for the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework.

The development of the Local Development Framework and the preparation of the Sustainable Community Strategy have been aided by this collaborative approach to data and spatial analysis. The common vision is based on a common evidence base. Robust local data analysis and a shared understanding of its spatial implications are vital for future planning and service delivery in Breckland.

The Area Profile is a living document and will be updated and expanded, when necessary, to take account of changes and incorporate new intelligence when it becomes available.

Managing performance

The Breckland Partnership is committed to an evidence based approach to managing and driving improved performance so that we achieve our agreed outcomes.

The Council's alignment of its performance management arrangements to the Sustainable Community Strategy enables the Partnership to measure and manage progress on a more comprehensive basis.

The Breckland Partnership will provide an annual account of its progress to all stakeholders.

Meetings of the Breckland Partnership are open to the public and the Partnership welcomes comments on its progress and priorities for the future.

For more information on the work and progress of the Partnership, visit: www.brecklandlsp.org.uk.

A spatial vision

A spatial vision for Breckland is set out in the Local Development Framework.

The vision is that:-

By 2026, Breckland's settlements and its wider rural area will have developed as a dynamic, prosperous and self-sustaining community through the delivery of sustainable housing and employment growth, supported by necessary facilities, services and infrastructure. The new housing will have been integrated with new and existing facilities and will be comprised of an appropriate tenure, type and mix to address issues of affordability and social inclusion. In response to the challenges of delivering sustainable development in a predominantly rural area, the majority of development will have been directed to key settlements, providing services and facilities to their hinterlands. This development in the key settlements will have been supported by appropriate development in villages and in rural areas where it addresses local need or is a sustainable response to an advantage offered by a location. The jobs, housing and other services and facilities will be located and of a scale and balance to deliver self-contained settlements reducing the need to travel and maximise opportunities for delivery of sustainable transport provision.

Along the A11 corridor significant employment growth will have been achieved in advanced engineering, motor sport, research and development and logistics employment, building on the emerging employment base and taking advantage of the excellent highway network and linkages to other centres of business. In the rest of Breckland, employment will meet local needs with the important cultural, heritage, landscape and natural assets forming the basis for tourism, leisure and recreation.

Building on the town's function as the main service centre in the south of Breckland and its location on the A11 corridor and railway, Thetford will continue to develop as a key strategic centre and gateway to the Brecks. Significant levels of sustainable housing and jobs will have been delivered, acting as a driver for and supported by a regenerated town centre.



Balanced growth of housing, employment, services and facilities will have been delivered in the four Market Towns of Attleborough, Dereham, Swaffam and Watton. The particular attributes of the Market Towns will define the scale and direction of growth, but the aim for all will be, as a minimum, to reinforce their position within the settlement hierarchy. Where opportunities are identified in the Towns, growth plans will be put in place to ensure their development and enhancement as centres for living and working and to improve the services and facilities they offer. This enhancement will improve their sustainability as self-containment settlements and provide wider benefits to their hinterland.

The natural and built environment of the District will be comprehensively protected and enhanced, as appropriate, to ensure that their inherent environmental and visual qualities are retained. In particular the special landscape quality of the Brecks and areas of scientific interest and wildlife benefits will be protected. All development will be within the environmental limits placed on Breckland, particularly with respect to the District being located in the driest region of the country and the extensive areas that are designated as European Habitats. The quality of the built environment, building on the District's heritage and archaeological values, will be protected with high quality design being a key principle of all development.



Recent achievements

When we consulted you on the development of this Strategy you told us that we weren't very good at telling you what we were doing and what we've achieved. Below are some highlights of what we've achieved over the last couple of years. We are committed, as a partnership, to communicating these messages more effectively in the future.

In 2006, the Breckland Partnership made project funding available for the first time. Eight projects have since been funded totalling £81,145.

They are:-

- > Travel Token Scheme
- > Creative Change
- > The Joy of Food
- > Breckland Enterprise and Learning Account
- > Big Sitting Room
- > Community Safety Infrastructure
- > Building Inclusive Rural Communities
- > Safer Neighbourhoods Team Vehicles

There have been further notable achievements:-

- > Economic Prosperity Strategy developed
- > Cultural Strategy developed
- > Social Inclusion Strategy developed
- > £10,000 funding towards Economic Prosperity Strategy action planning
- > Moving Thetford Forward Group established to steer partnership work on Growth Point Status and infrastructure development in Thetford
- > Play Forum established to develop Play Strategy; successfully bid for £238,000 from the Big Lottery Fund.
- > £28,000 funding for Learning Communities accessed from Norfolk Learning Partnership over two years.
- > £100,000 Second Homes Council Tax funding allocated to Breckland for affordable housing projects



Glossary

Local Area Agreement (LAA)

These agreements provide a single framework through which government departments can allocate additional funding to local authorities and their partners. Their aim is to reduce and simplify funding streams and give more scope for local authorities to concentrate on local priorities.

Local Development Framework (LDF)

This is a new type of local planning policy document. It replaces the Local Plan and the County Structure Plan. The Local Development Framework will shape the future development of the District. The issues and aspirations identified through the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy will set the context for development needs in the District.

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

A Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is a single, non-statutory, multi-agency body, which matches local authority boundaries, and aims to bring together at a local level the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors. LSPs are key to tackling deep seated, multi-faceted problems, requiring a range of responses from different bodies.

Sustainable Community Strategies

Sustainable Community Strategies have a vital role to play in helping to deliver genuinely sustainable communities. All councils and LSPs already have a Community Strategy in place. They are now required to convert their Community Strategies into Sustainable Community Strategies by developing a stronger focus on integrating social, economic and environmental issues and by tackling the longer-term and global impacts of communities.

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