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**BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

**At a Meeting of the**

**CABINET**

**Held on Tuesday, 3 November 2015 at 9.30 am in  
Anglia Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

**PRESENT**

Mr M. A. Wassell (Chairman)	Mr P M M Dimoglou
Mrs L.S. Turner (Vice-Chairman)	Mrs K. Pettitt
Mr C G Carter	Mr P S Wilkinson
Mr T R Carter	

**Also Present**

Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mr P R W Darby
Mr W.P. Borrett	Mr T. J. Jermy
Councillor M. Chapman-Allen	Mr J Newton
Mr P.D. Claussen	Mr M. S. Robinson
Mr D M Crawford	Mr F.J. Sharpe

**In Attendance**

Phil Adams	- Executive Manager Public Protection
Gerry Dawson	- Executive Manager, Growth (Interim)
Anna Graves	- Chief Executive
Stephen James	- Communities Manager
Julie Kennealy	- Executive Director (Commercialisation)(S151 Officer)
Helen McAleer	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Maxine O'Mahony	- Executive Director of Strategy & Governance
Rob Walker	- Executive Director Place

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**90/15 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**91/15 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ellen Jolly.

**92/15 URGENT BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 3)**

None.

**93/15 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (AGENDA ITEM 4)**

No declarations were made.

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**94/15 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 5)**

Councillors Bambridge, Borrett, M Chapman-Allen, Claussen, Crawford, Darby, Jermy, Newton, Robinson and Sharpe were in attendance.

**95/15 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 6)**

None.

**96/15 BRECKLAND COMMUNITY FUNDING APPLICATIONS (AGENDA ITEM 7)**

The Executive Member for Place advised that there was currently one application under consideration. It was for a grant to strengthen the roof of Tittleshall Village Hall.

Councillor Borrett noted that the Ward Representative was keen for that grant to go ahead.

**97/15 LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT TO TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS (AGENDA ITEM 8)**

The Executive Member for Finance introduced the report which proposed a phased reduction in the grant paid to Town & Parish Councils in line with the reduction in grant that the Council received from Government.

Councillor Darby asked if there was any legal requirement for the Council to pass on the grant and the Executive Director for Commercialisation confirmed that there was not. It was up to each Council how it apportioned its Rate Support Grant.

Councillors Bambridge and Borrett were both pleased that the Council was still passing on some grant. Councillor Jermy agreed and said that the phased reduction would help parishes with their financial planning.

**OPTIONS**

1. To approve recommendation 1 in the report.
2. Not to approve recommendation 1 in the report.
3. Not to approve recommendation 1 and to approve an alternative.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

To provide a clear position on the grant to towns and parishes over the medium term and to assist with Breckland's medium term budget setting.

**RESOLVED** that the Localised Council Tax Support grant paid to town and parish councils is phased out over the medium term:

- A reduction of 27% from the original £305k in 2016-17
- A reduction of 50% from the original £305k in 2017-18
- A reduction of 75% from the original £305k in 2018-19
- No grant for 2019-20 or future years

Unless the grant and value is specifically identified by central Government and paid to Breckland Council, in which case the decision will be reviewed.

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**98/15 OPEN FOR BUSINESS ACTION PLAN (AGENDA ITEM 9)**

In the absence of the Executive Member for Income & Prosperity the Interim Executive Manager for Growth presented the report.

He referred Members to a presentation to Cabinet by David Marlow in March 2015 which had provided an economic analysis and set out some recommendations for action. Since then there had been formal and informal discussions with local businesses. They had supported the key recommendations and contributed to the Action Plan.

The Appendix to the report was divided into categories and reflected the analysis provided by David Marlow. Some of the key aspects were highlighted. Work would be done to optimise relationships between universities and Breckland's business community, with a view to supporting innovation.

The Council was committed to improving its relationship with the top 50 employers in the District and had introduced a cycle of meetings to provide direct support to them in their ambitions for growth.

It was also critically important to maximise the relationships with surrounding Local Authorities, the Local Enterprise Partnership and the County Council.

Discussions were taking place with the County Council about apprenticeships.

The Chief Executive picked up on the point about the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and pointed out that the money for growth sat with the LEP. The Council had done some significant work over the past 12 months to improve its relationship with the LEP and had been successful in drawing money down for the District.

Councillor Bambridge applauded the work the Council had done and asked that time and effort also be spent on small and start-up businesses. The CEO of the LEP had made some very complimentary remarks about the Council's Senior Officers when he had spoken to him at a recent meeting.

Councillor Darby thought that small business units and workshops needed to be provided to keep people in the small towns and stop them commuting to larger towns for work. The Chairman agreed but said it was very difficult to build speculatively. The Council had to be careful where it invested its money to ensure both financial and social returns.

Councillor Jermy said it was encouraging to hear about apprenticeships. They tended to be in the agriculture and care work areas, but a good mix was required to provide opportunities for a range of people. He asked if the Council and the ARP had a commitment to recruit apprentices.

The Executive Director for Strategy & Governance confirmed that the Council already employed several apprentices. She encouraged Members to talk about the apprenticeship scheme and to put forward any ideas they had.

**OPTIONS**

1. to not adopt the '*Open for Business Action Plan*', as appended to this

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- report.
2. to adopt the '*Open for Business Action Plan*', as appended to this report.
  3. to adopt the '*Open for Business Action Plan*', as appended to this report, with amendments.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

This report gives Cabinet the opportunity to implement the '*Open for Business*' propositions approved in March 2015 and continue on a growth focussed approach to economic development. If adopted, this approach will sustain and help to deliver the Council's Corporate Business Plan approved by Council at their meeting in February 2015.

The Council has the opportunity to refresh it's approach to economic and business growth to maximise potential, this in a context where the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership has major resources to commit to local and national economic growth priorities. The Council is ideally placed to lead and implement the four major proposition work packages that form the '*Open for Business*' agenda and approach.

**RESOLVED** that the "Open for Business" Action Plan be approved. This will form the basis of the Council's approach to facilitating and enabling business and economic growth for the District. It will be the primary document employed by the Council's Inward Investment Team in defining their Service Plan and will inform the Service Plans of other growth-related teams.

**99/15 PAYMENTS SOLUTION OPTIONS TRIAL (AGENDA ITEM 10)**

The Executive Member for Public Protection presented the report which provided a way for the Council to improve a service which was currently outdated.

The Executive Member for Growth fully supported the proposal which he said was in line with the Council's Transformation Programme.

**OPTIONS**

1. That we trial and implement the ability to make payments for Council services, by effective payment solutions, that will enable the authority to be commercially astute in the way we operate; by allowing both residents and businesses to make payments in forms that align with digital and flexible solutions
2. That we introduce within all services the preferred platform for payment in the following stages:
  - By digital where anyone who can use digital pathways should be encouraged to do so, or
  - That we will assist those to use digital that may not be able to do so with assistance from our contact centres; or
  - That those that don't have the ability to use digital with or without assistance should be able to use a more traditional face to face approach.
3. Do Nothing.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

1. Providing the correct platform for the services to use, we will enable both our residents and businesses the ability to operate in the most effective

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- and efficient way, and will enable us to deliver services more cost effectively.
2. Enables the Council continually to improve the services we deliver, while expanding into new areas of delivery.
  3. It has been demonstrated through consultation and research that customers interact more effectively with the Council and are more likely to purchase new services, such as Garden waste collection services.
  4. Ensuring the needs of our communities are anticipated and catered will reward us in enabling effective efficiencies in our service deliveries.
  5. That we recognise the changing profile and expectations of users, by reflecting the fact there is greater use of technology by customers & businesses.
  6. By reducing the demand on our resources we free up resources to support the most vulnerable or those without access to this platform.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) approval be given to trial all forms of payment solutions (excluding credit card option for business rate payment); and
- 2) the cost of credit card transactions applied by the scheme provider will be charged to the payee at point of payment.

**100/15 GRANT PROCESSING AND ADMINISTRATION (AGENDA ITEM 11)**

The Executive Member for Place introduced the report. The proposal would rationalise the grant process, outsource the administration and provide an expanded service.

Councillor Sharpe raised concerns about the sums of money involved but the Executive Director for Place explained that £300,000 was set aside in the budget annually for grants. In recent years that amount had not been spent and it was hoped that the proposal would encourage more community groups to apply for funding. He further confirmed that the grants would continue to be paid for projects within Breckland and the funding therefore continued to be ring-fenced for spending within the District. He reiterated that only the management and administration of the grant process would change – everything else would stay the same. The decisions would still be made by Breckland and the grants would remain branded to Breckland.

Councillor Jermy welcomed the change. He thought it would be useful to have the figures of the amount of grants applied for in previous years to provide a comparison for monitoring purposes. It was also an opportunity to tighten the criteria for grant applications and he hoped that there would be Member involvement in that. Finally he suggested that the process should ensure that there was a geographical and 'needs' spread. Norfolk Community Foundation (NCF) was very good at analysing 'need'.

The Executive Director for Place said those suggestions would be incorporated into the Service Level Agreement. A key criteria of that was to bring in external money in the form of Match Funding and that was something else that NCF were good at.

Councillor Chapman-Allen asked which other Local Authorities used CMT and the Chairman invited Mr Graham Tuttle from CMT to give some details.

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Mr Tuttle advised that CMT had been administering grants for King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council and Sport and Arts grants for South Norfolk District Council. They handled grants for all the Local Authority Youth Advisory Boards except Norwich. They also delivered half a million pounds of LEP funding and £600,000 of Police & Crime Commissioner grants among others.

Councillor Crawford added his support to the proposal which he said was the right way to go.

**OPTIONS**

1. Do nothing and continue to administer the grant schemes internally and potentially recruit to the vacant Pride & Grants Officer post.
2. Transfer the administration and management of the Council's grant schemes and the Community Car Schemes to Norfolk Community Foundation for a maximum of 3 years with an annual review after each year [to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 but to include a handover transitional period to commence during 2015/16].

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

1. The transfer of the administration and management of the Council's grant schemes and Community Car Schemes to Norfolk Community Foundation will deliver a cost saving to the Council of £6,560. This funding could be reinvested in the grants programme to support more local community projects than previously anticipated.
2. Should the amount of money allocated to a particular grant scheme reduce then so would the cost of the service thereby delivering greater efficiencies.
3. The service would provide a better service to the community and therefore would deliver better value for money, this is most apparent from the ability of the Foundation to offer a greater support service to the applicant as well as being able to signpost groups to a wider number of grant schemes.
4. Under this proposal, council resources will be more focused on proactive and preventative work with local communities and partner agencies, in particular around the health and social care agenda rather than administration of the grants scheme.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) the administration and management function for grant applications and the Community Car Schemes be transferred to Norfolk Community Foundation for a 3 year term [following an interim handover period during 2015/16] with Breckland Council retaining the respective decision making responsibility;
- 2) delegated authority be given to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder of Place to agree contractual terms with the Norfolk Community Foundation; and
- 3) the £6,560 saving from this proposal be reinvested into the Pride in Breckland funding programme to support local community projects.

**101/15 ANGLIA REVENUES AND BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP (AGENDA ITEM 12)**

The Chairman drew attention to a recommendation on page 45 of the Agenda

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which was a matter that Cabinet could determine.

The ARP Joint Committee now comprised seven Partner Authorities and the proposal to reduce representation from two Members to one per authority had been mooted for some time. The change would not affect the proportional representation or weight of the vote.

Councillor Claussen agreed that the change was needed as the Joint Committee had become unwieldy. He fully supported the proposal.

**OPTIONS**

1. Move to a single member per authority immediately
2. Move to a single member per authority at a later date
3. Do nothing and continue with two members per authority.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The Joint Committee has worked very effectively since the inception of ARP. However, as the partnership has expanded, both in terms of membership and activities, and in light of the potentially significant changes relating to the implementation of Universal Credit, it is likely that the committee will need to become more nimble, be able to meet at shorter notice, and be able to respond more quickly to events. Latterly if a joint committee meeting has had to be rearranged it has proved extremely difficult to get a date which is suitable for everyone.

**RESOLVED** that the ARP Joint Committee representation moves to a single Member and two Substitutes per authority, with the option for one of the Substitutes to attend and take part in debate (but not vote).

The Minutes were otherwise noted.

**102/15 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL (AGENDA ITEM 13)**

Noted.

**103/15 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 14)**

The arrangements for the next meeting to be held on 1 December 2015 were noted.

The meeting closed at 10.10 am

CHAIRMAN