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BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

CABINET

Held on Tuesday, 9 February 2016 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 E. M. Jolly
Mr C G Carter	Mr P S Wilkinson
Mr T R Carter	

Also Present

Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mr A.P. Joel
Mr W.P. Borrett	Mr K. Martin
Mr H E J Clarke	Mr J Newton
Mr D M Crawford	Mr F.J. Sharpe

In Attendance

Alison Chubbock	- Chief Accountant (Deputy Section 151 Officer)
Julie Kennealy	- Executive Director (Commercialisation)(S151 Officer)
Maxine O'Mahony	- Executive Director of Strategy & Governance
Teresa Smith	- Democratic Services Officer

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14/16 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15/16 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Marion Chapman Allen.

16/16 URGENT BUSINESS (AGENDA ITEM 3)

None.

17/16 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (AGENDA ITEM 4)

None.

18/16 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 5)

Councillors Bambridge, Borrett, Clarke, Crawford, Joel, Martin, Newton and Sharpe.

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19/16 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 6)

None.

20/16 BRECKLAND COMMUNITY FUNDING APPLICATIONS (AGENDA ITEM 7)

None.

21/16 RESOURCE4GROWTH FUNDING DISTRIBUTION (AGENDA ITEM 8)

The Executive Member for Finance presented the report.

Councillor Jolly said that this was an excellent idea, with a good outcome. She paid tribute to the excellent work that Resource4Growth contributed to the businesses within the District.

Reasons for Recommendation

To provide support to the five market towns to deliver the benefits detailed in the report.

A Community Interest Company is no longer an appropriate vehicle for the Council to use for future delivery.

Options

1. That the final retained funding within Resource4Growth (R4G) is distributed to the five market towns based on the 2011 population figures in the report, and that R4G be wound up.
2. That the final funding within R4G is distributed in a different way and that R4G be wound up.
3. That R4G is not wound up and the final funding is not distributed and the company is used for alternative purposes.

RESOLVED that:

1. The final retained funding within Resource4Growth is distributed to the five market towns based on the 2011 population figures.
2. That Resouce4Growth be wound up.

22/16 QUARTER 3 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2015-16 (AGENDA ITEM 9)

The Executive Member for Finance presented the report.

Councillor Jolly said it had always been important that the Council maintained reserves which allowed for risks.

Councillor Borrett asked if a blanket refund would be given to businesses, or if they would need to claim a refund. It was confirmed that a claim would need to be made.

Reasons for Recommendation

To provide timely information to Members on the overall finances of the

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Council and to make the best use of resources available, anticipating future year's expenditure and providing funding to invest in the future.

Options

1. To note the report, approve the virements in table 4 of section 1 of the appendix, recommend to Full Council that the 15-16 below budget spend on the NNDR levy is contributed to the revenues & benefits reserve to fund the NNDR deficit in 2016-17 and recommend to Full Council that the remaining below budget spend at the end of 2015-16 is contributed to the Council's investment fund.
2. To note the report and approve some but not all of the recommendations 2 to 4.

RESOLVED that:

1. The report and the Appendix be noted.
2. That the revenue Virements in table 4 of Section 1 of the appendix be approved.
3. **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that (due to the timing issue of the NNDR accounting rules) the full year below budget spend in 2015-16 on the NNDR levy payment is contributed to the Revenues and Benefits reserve in 2015-16 to fund the NNDR collection deficit in 2016-17.
4. **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** that the remaining full year below budget spend for 2015-16 at 31.3.16 is contributed to the Council's investment fund reserve, to support the budget objectives.

23/16 SECTION 47 DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS RATES RELIEF (AGENDA ITEM 10)

The Executive Member for Finance presented the report.

Councillor Jolly said it was good to see consultation with the Town and businesses to find the right solution to achieve what the Town needed.

Councillor Clarke thanked Officers and Members for the scheme and hoped it would be successful so that it could be implemented across all Market Towns within the District.

Councillor Bambridge congratulated everyone that had been involved and said the scheme had the potential to make a difference.

The Executive Director Commercialisation highlighted that the recommendation should be a decision of full Council.

Reasons for Recommendation

We have a clear corporate commitment to supporting our market towns to thrive in order that they in turn provide the required support to surrounding villages and hinterlands. We recognise that in the current changing "shopping" environment in order to succeed Breckland's market towns need to be vibrant and busy drawing people in to visit a multitude of different

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offerings, making a shopping trip an interesting and enjoyable experience. Out of town shopping and internet have drawn many people away from town centres, thus businesses find it extremely hard to make ends meet and fail; as a result we are finding that shops remain empty for significant periods. High rents, location of the premises, competition, business rates, and poor footfall all add to this scenario and unfortunately the upshot is the natural presence of more charity shops opening taking advantage of low business rates applicable to that sector as retail units become empty.

We recognise that we must be able to respond flexibly to the needs of retail businesses within the five market towns, enabling each to support strong and sustainable local communities with growing business sectors. In order to achieve this and to bring new retail entrepreneurs to a level playing field with charity shops we look to introduce the discretionary business rates relief scheme.

Options

1. To approve the recommendations.
2. To not approve the recommendations and ask for a further review.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL that:

1. The revised Business Rates Relief eligibility guidance and precise boundaries of the zones were suitable for the scheme to commence from April 2016.
2. Delegated authority be granted to the S151 Officer, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, to award discretionary business rates relief in line with the policy guidance.

24/16 BUDGET SETTING, MEDIUM TERM PLAN (MTP) & CAPITAL STRATEGY (AGENDA ITEM 11)

The Executive Member for Finance presented the Report.

The Executive Director Commercialisation informed Members that final confirmation of the comprehensive spending review was received on 8 February 2016. The Government had confirmed that additional Rural Service Delivery Grant would be received of £353k during 2016-17 and £175k for 2017-18 only; this would be allocated into the Investment fund. The New Homes Bonus had been confirmed at £19k higher than expected for 2016-17. Also confirmation had been received that new homes bonus retrospective reductions would not take place for 16-17 and therefore this would be £412k higher. Both these amounts would be allocated to the Growth Fund. However, consultation was still underway regarding future New Homes Bonus and the position would be clarified for future years after consultation ends.

The Revenue Support Grant remained unchanged and therefore did not have financial impact. The Council were encouraged to consider the 4-year Fund Settlement and had until the 14 October to respond to the required elements, however further details were yet to be received.

There had not been any details given on changes to the NNDR, but this was likely to form part of a separate consultation.

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In summary, all changes gave an improved position to the Growth and Investment fund, and did not change the Council Tax position.

The Executive Director Commercialisation asked for Cabinet to agree to allow changes to be made to Appendices A, B and E before the report be presented to Full Council.

Councillor Borrett said this was good news, and thanked the Officers for their work into the budget preparation.

Councillor Bambridge added his thanks especially in relation to the support given to war pensions.

It was **RESOLVED** that the S151 Officer updated Appendix A, B and E in light of the Government Settlement.

Reasons for Recommendation

To comply with budgetary and policy framework.

Options:

1. That recommendations 1 to 9 are made to Full Council for approval.
2. Make amendments before recommendations 1 to 9 are made to Full Council for approval.
3. Some but not all of recommendations 1 to 9 are made to Full Council for approval.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL that:

1. The Breckland revenue estimates and parish special expenses for 2016-17 and outline position through to 2019-20 (as set out in appendix B and E) are approved
2. The capital estimates and associated funding for 2016-17 and outline position through to 2019-20 (as set out in appendix H) are approved
3. A 100% disregard of war pensions, war widow's pensions, war widower's pensions and armed forces compensation payments or any other successor scheme in the calculation of Housing Benefit be approved
4. The fees and charges shown at appendix D and D2, for adoption 1 April 2016 are approved
5. The Council Tax for a band A property in 2016-17 be set at £49.32, a £3.30 per annum increase on 2015-16 levels (band D £73.98, a £4.95 per annum increase on 2015-16 levels)
6. The financial medium term plan at appendix A is approved
7. The Council applies for the four year settlement from central Government
8. The capital strategy at appendix G is approved

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9. The release of budget, up to £1m from the investment and growth funds be delegated to S151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and to jointly approve on receipt of a fully worked and appropriate business case which generates an agreed ongoing return.

25/16 REFERENCE FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION (AGENDA ITEM 12)

None.

26/16 ANGLIA REVENUES AND BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP (AGENDA ITEM 13)

The minutes of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership meeting held on 12 January 2016 were noted.

27/16 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL (AGENDA ITEM 14)

The minutes of the Member Development Panel meeting held on 14 January 2016 were noted.

28/16 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 15)

The arrangements for the next meeting on 15 March 2016 at 9.30 in the Anglia room, Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham were noted.

The meeting closed at 10.00 am

CHAIRMAN