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## BRECKLAND COUNCIL

### At a Meeting of the

### CABINET

Held on Tuesday, 22 November 2016 at 9.30 am in  
Norfolk & Dereham Rooms, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham

#### PRESENT

Mr J.W. Nunn (Chairman)	Mr P. M. M. Dimoglou
Mr S H Chapman-Allen (Vice-Chairman)	Mr M. S. Robinson
Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mrs L.S. Turner
Mr J.P. Cowen	Mrs A M Webb

#### Also Present

Councillor M. Chapman-Allen	Mr J Newton
Mr P.D. Claussen	Mr P S Wilkinson
Mr D M Crawford	

#### In Attendance

Anna Graves	- Chief Executive
Suzanne Jones	- Interim Executive Director Commercialisation and s151 Officer
Robert Leigh	- Executive Manager People & Information
Maxine O'Mahony	- Executive Director of Strategy & Governance
Teresa Smith	- Democratic Services Officer

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#### **111/16 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **112/16 APOLOGIES**

None.

#### **113/16 URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

#### **114/16 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None.

#### **115/16 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING**

Councillors Marion Chapman-Allen, Claussen, Crawford, Newton, Wilkinson.

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**116/16 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)**

The Chairman informed Members that Agenda Item 13 – Breckland Bridge Annual Strategic Site Review would be moved to be held in Public session.

**117/16 BRECKLAND COMMUNITY FUNDING APPLICATIONS (STANDING ITEM)**

The Executive Member Place informed Members that over £43,000 had been given in match funding throughout the community since the last Cabinet meeting, including £20,000 to Thetford Town Football club and £1000 to gifted and talented applications.

Councillor Wilkinson thanked the Executive Member for the support in the recent application within his ward for LED lighting.

Councillor Crawford also passed on his thanks for the support to Thetford Town Football Club. Councillor Robinson added his appreciation and said it demonstrated the continued support and showed greater commitment to Thetford.

The Chairman asked what budget remained in the match funding pot. The Executive Member Place confirmed that £135k was the remaining budget, and £114k remained in the DC11 budget. Those who were unsuccessful in previous round of applications would be approached.

Councillor Marion Chapman-Allen asked if finance from the second homes bonus contributed to the match funding allocation. The Executive Member Place said that was the case, but it was on a sliding scale. She added that as the Community Funding Partnership dealt with funding applications now they could direct applicants to other funding available.

The Chairman said he had seen funding given many times to projects, especially tourism within the market towns. He would like to encourage Towns to consider new routes for tourism and asked Overview & Scrutiny Commission to look into this. The Executive Member Place agreed with the suggestion and added that £7,000 was given to 'Visit Norfolk' through the Pride board.

**118/16 QUARTER 2 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Executive Member Finance presented the report and said the overall forecast was below the budget spend.

The Chairman asked why the funding variance of £150k was on the report if the Council would receive that money back.

The Chief Executive said Council would still be in a growth position next year but it was a balancing process. Further information would be available at a future Cabinet meeting.

The Chairman asked what the Council were expecting to use consultancy for when there was an underspend of £60k.

Councillor Claussen asked for further detail on why the income for planning

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was lower than anticipated especially when the Planning Committee were busier than ever.

The Interim Executive Director Commercialisation said she would seek the answers and report back to Cabinet Members.

The Chief Executive asked that the original budget be added to the table so Members could see the difference of the significant variance.

Members noted the report.

**119/16 COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS REVIEW**

The Executive Member Finance presented the report. It was highlighted that Breckland Council currently offered 100% discount for up to 3 months for empty and unfurnished properties. However, by reducing this discount from 3 months to 1 month would be improving housing opportunities across the district by increasing the housing supply.

In addition there would be a separate exemption for 6 months for properties affected by bereavement and this meant Council Tax was not payable whilst probate or letters of administration were being applied for and once granted there was a further six month exemption from that date.

The Council would continue to support service personnel who maintained a second home in the District to increase the amount of discount offered from 10% to 50%.

The Executive Director Commercialisation confirmed that Members had the ability to review Council tax on an annual basis.

It was confirmed that the discount to service personnel was only available to those that were currently serving and if the property remained empty it would be eligible for 50% discount. However if it was rented out the tenant would be responsible for the full Council Tax payment.

Councillor Sam Chapman-Allen said the Norfolk Covenant Board were very excited about the offer for service personnel and were impressed that Breckland Council would be the champion for this.

**Options:**

1. That the Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) is not changed for 2017-18 and a full review is undertaken for the 2018-19 year; that the discount awarded for empty unfurnished properties is amended to 100% discount for up to 1 month and accept the one off contribution of £50,000 from NCC; That the discount awarded to service personnel for 2<sup>nd</sup> homes is amended from 10% to 50%.
2. That the Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) is not changed for 2017-18 and a full review is not undertaken for the 2018-19 year; that the discount awarded for empty unfurnished properties is amended and we do not therefore accept the one off contribution of £50,000 from NCC; and the discount awarded to service personnel for 2<sup>nd</sup> homes is not amended.

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3. A combination of 1 and 2.

**Reasons:**

To provide Members an opportunity to review the Council Tax discounts as part of the budget setting process.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- 1) That the Localised Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) is not changed for 2017-18 and a full review is undertaken for the 2018-19 year.
- 2) That the discount awarded for empty unfurnished properties is amended to 100% discount for up to 1 month and accept the one off contribution of £50,000 from NCC
- 3) That the discount awarded to service personnel for 2<sup>nd</sup> homes is amended from 10% to 50%.

**120/16 BRECKLAND BRIDGE STRATEGIC SITE REVIEW - PLANNING ACTIVITY**

The Executive Member Growth and Commercialisation presented the report to Members. He said that as the Local Plan had not yet been adopted, decisions had not been made on sites that had been put forward. Breckland Bridge as a partnership had been engaged to take forward future sites for development and raise additional funds.

The Breckland Bridge Strategic Site Review had identified two sites (in Litcham and Garboldisham) and recommended advancing planning applications on the two sites, however serious concern had been raised as the Local Plan had still not been adopted and more comfort was needed before the funds were released.

Councillor Marion Chapman-Allen read a letter from the Chairman of Garboldisham Parish Council which raised anger that houses would be built in Back Street, Garboldisham. The Parish Council had fully co-operated with the consultation on the Local Plan and had asked that the recommendation be put on hold until the Local Plan had been adopted.

She went on to ask that the Council would not support Breckland Bridge to go ahead if the majority of residents in Garboldisham did not want development. In addition she asked for assurances that the Council would not offer the land to any other developer and the Council entered negotiation with a resident who had offered to purchase the land and keep it as open space.

The Chairman had noted Councillor Chapman-Allen's comments, and confirmed that no decision would be made until consultation with the Parish Council and the residents had been completed. However he could not commit what would happen with the land until the Local Plan had been completed.

Councillor Claussen felt it would be better for the Council if the Ward Member was involved in the process from the beginning to be able to assist with consultations.

The Executive Member Growth and Commercialisation recommended that a pre-planning consultation was carried out with the community in

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Garboldisham, as this would provide evidence in order to make further decisions.

The Chairman asked that additional wording be added to the recommendation to allow for consultation with the Ward Councillor. Members agreed to the amendment.

Options

- 1) Cabinet recommends to Council to agree the Breckland Bridge Strategic Site Review recommendation to initiate submission of planning applications at two sites as described in the report and to do that:
  - Release £120,000 of funding which is subject to Breckland Bridge undertaking pre-planning community consultation which results in a positive outcome.
  - Provide delegation to the Leader of the Council to the release of the funding on satisfaction of the outcome of the community consultation.
  
- 2) Do not agree the Breckland Bridge Strategic Site Review recommendation to initiate planning applications at two sites as described in the report and therefore this activity will not occur.

Reason for recommendation

The reasons for this recommendation is as follows:

- This activity will prepare sites for a future potential phase of the Breckland Bridge partnership (but does not commit the Council to this) so there is a pipeline of sites with which to continue development activity and therefore meet the aim of the Breckland Bridge partnership in getting better value and use and regeneration of Council owned land / sites.
- If the sites are successful in achieving the planning permission proposed then there could be an uplift in value created from their existing use value of c.£114,000 to c.£1.1m.
- The Council has procured professional expertise within the Breckland Bridge partnership and therefore should obtain the value for money from that procurement in working with the partnership to professionally undertake the planning activity as described.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cabinet **recommends to Council** to agree the Breckland Bridge Strategic Site Review recommendation to initiate submission of planning applications at two sites as described, and to do that:

- Release £120,000 of funding which is subject to Breckland Bridge undertaking pre-planning community consultation which results in a positive outcome.
- Provide delegation to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the relevant Ward Councillor to release the funding on satisfaction of the positive outcome of the community consultation.

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**121/16 NEXT MEETING**

The arrangements for the next meeting held on 3 January 2017 at 9.30am in the Norfolk Room, Elizabeth House, Dereham were noted.

**122/16 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

**123/16 ICT STRATEGY**

The Executive Member for People & Information presented the report.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be recommended to full Council.

The meeting closed at 10.40 am

CHAIRMAN