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BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

CABINET

Held on Monday, 3 February 2020 at 9.30 am in
Dereham Meeting Point, 4 St Withburga Lane, Dereham NR19 1ED

PRESENT

Mr S. H. Chapman-Allen
(Chairman)
Mr P.D. Claussen (Vice-
Chairman)
Mr S.G. Bambridge
Mr P.J. Hewett

Mr I. Sherwood
Mrs S. E. Suggitt
Mrs A. M. Webb

Also Present

Mr R. Atterwill
Mr T. Birt
Mrs H Crane

Mr P.J. Duigan
Mr T. J. Jermy
Mr S. Terry

In Attendance

Anna Graves
Stephen James
Christine Marshall

Maxine O'Mahony

Rob Walker
Teresa Smith
Julie Britton

- Chief Executive
- Communities & Environmental Services Manager
- Executive Director Commercialisation (S151 Officer)
- Executive Director of Strategy & Governance (Monitoring Officer)
- Executive Director Place
- Democratic Services Team Leader
- Democratic Services Officer

Action By

14/20 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15/20 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Cowen and Robinson.

16/20 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

17/20 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

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18/20 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

Councillors Atterwill, Birt, Crane, Duigan, Jermy and Terry.

19/20 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)

None.

20/20 BRECKLAND COMMUNITY FUNDING APPLICATIONS (STANDING ITEM)

The Communities and Environmental Services Manager informed Members that over 70 applications had been received for the funding available to assist communities with commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the VE and VJ days during 2020.

The Executive Member for Contracts and Assets asked if the applications were valid and met the criteria if the Council would endeavour to ensure the grant be paid in full. The Leader said Breckland were the only District to allocate further funding, and in addition there was funding within the Armed Forces Covenant available of which he would write to the Norfolk Commissioner asking for any funding that had not been spent to be carried forward into the next financial year.

21/20 BUDGET SETTING, MEDIUM TERM PLAN AND CAPITAL STRATEGY 2020-21

The Executive Director for Commercialisation presented the report explaining that the budget had been out for public consultation as well as to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission. Members heard that the budget was based on the fact that there would be no reliance on New Homes Bonus funding; no cuts to service delivery; financial support in reserves for feasibilities which lead to growth and investment; and a good financial position to manage any future changes from the Fair Funding Review or Spending Review allowing time to put an appropriate programme in place if required.

The draft Capital Programme outlined limited scope for future investment and that prioritisation for future capital investment would be key.

Councillor Atterwill thanked the Chief Accountant for the detailed presentation Members had received and the subsequent information that had been sent to Members on the draft budget.

As a result, the Independent and Green Members wished to propose two very small amendments to the proposed budget:

The first was with regard to the Neighbourhood Planning Forums where it was felt the Council had not placed enough emphasis on the importance of Neighbourhood Planning and that more communities should be encouraged to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. He added that both the Swanton Morley and Saham Toney Neighbourhood Plans should be used as examples of good practice and that through holding two Neighbourhood Plan Forums it would help to raise the profile of the subject and encourage communities to participate. It was proposed that a total of £3000 be allocated for this purpose and be funded from the Growth and Investment fund as the forums would provide a return through housing supply at a future date.

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The second proposal related to rough sleeping transport. Councillor Atterwill explained how there had been a rough sleeper within his Parish and through contact with the Breckland Rough Sleeper Team understood that as the gentleman could not be contacted during the day had been left a notice to call the team, or to make his way to the Salvation Army or the Crossings café, both in Thetford to receive support. Councillor Atterwill felt there was a weakness within the system in that there was no transport available from Swanton Morley to Thetford, and the instruction seemed to assume that the person in need would have the means and capacity to find their way to Thetford. It was proposed that a total of £1000 be allocated to cover the costs of transporting rough sleepers to Thetford to receive support. The budget could be used at the discretion of the Housing Manager. It was suggested that this could be funded from the recently announced Flexible Housing Support Grant funding for 2020/2021.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Atterwill for the suggestions and highlighting the issues. He agreed that the Neighbourhood Forums would help to encourage communities to have their own Neighbourhood Plans, and agreed that due to the small amount this could be funded via a delegated authority. The Chairman asked the Executive Director of Place to work with the Housing Manager to seek a scheme for supporting transport to those sleeping rough.

The Chairman went onto inform Members that there would be an increase to the Council Tax (£4.95 per annum increase on 2019/20 levels), and was confident that Breckland would still remain the lowest Council Tax across the UK. He felt it was a strong budget that had been proposed and endorsed the recommendations to Members.

The Executive Member for Contracts and Assets added that the Council had become a victim of its own success by maximising return on investments and sensed the frustration by reviewing the comments within the budget report that strong performing Councils were being penalised.

Reasons for Recommendations

To comply with budgetary and policy framework

Options

- 1) That recommendations 1 to 6 are approved.
- 2) That amendments are made before recommendations 1 to 6 above are approved.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to FULL COUNCIL:

- 1) That the Breckland revenue estimates and parish special expenses for 2020-21 and outlined position through to 2023-24 (as set out in Appendix B and E in the report) be approved.
- 2) That the capital estimates and associated funding for 2019-20 and 2020-21 and outline position through to 2023-24 (as set out in Appendix H in the report) be approved.
- 3) The fees and charges shown at Appendix D and D2 in the report, for adoption on 1 April 2020 be approved.

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- 4) The Council Tax be set at £93.78 for a Band D property in 2020-21 (a £4.95 per annum increase on 2019-20 levels)
- 5) The financial Medium Term Plan and associated staffing full time equivalents at Appendix A within the report be approved.
- 6) The Capital Strategy at Appendix G in the report be approved.

22/20 INCLUSIVE GROWTH RESERVE COMMITMENTS

The Chairman introduced the report asking Members to commit to funding of £2,025,000 from the Inclusive Growth Reserve on a three-year programme of community projects and initiatives. He went on to highlight the opportunity to work with Norfolk Constabulary to help fund the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology provision within Breckland to act as a deterrent to make Norfolk as safe as possible, and a tool for the Norfolk Police to use.

He went onto add how he would like to help tackle vulnerability within Breckland and that would be the focus of his tenure. He felt there were real challenges which the Council had the opportunity to help influence through a list of projects and programmes listed within the report. The Council had seen great success already through a variety of initiatives such as the Silver Social, and the Capital investment would allow Officers and Members to begin conversations with key stakeholders.

Councillor Atterwill asked what the driver had been for both Swaffham and Thetford to already receive investment. The Executive Director of Place said that Swaffham had been as a result of match-funding the High-Street Heritage Action Zone project, and Thetford was as part of providing identity and a Unique Selling Point for Thetford that communities could use. Market towns within Breckland were encouraged that if they had suggestions they could be put forward as part of the Market Town Initiative.

Councillor Jermy stressed the importance of ensuring that any investments were for projects that were sustainable opportunities for investment and would focus on delivery. The Chairman agreed and added that whilst some projects were to support initial set up it was hoped that the stakeholders would see the benefits and continue to support in the future.

Whilst Councillor Birt fully recognised the value of ANPR he felt there should be a clear reason why the Council were supporting the police budget as the perception could be seen that Breckland monies was financing a police project; especially when Breckland residents pay into the police budget through their Council Tax. In addition, he added that whilst he supported the projects listed, he felt the perception of where 'Dragon's Den' was listed asked if the Council were taking a share of local businesses.

The Chairman answered that with regard to the 'Dragon's Den' initiative it would not be repeated as it had not been as successful as it was hoped. With regards to the financial support to ANPR the financing of the project would come from the New Homes Bonus, not Council Tax and was an opportunity to work with the Police to ensure residents of Breckland remained as safe as possible.

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Councillor Atterwill was in support and added that with the County Lines creeping into the District anything that could be done to aid the Police should be supported.

The Executive Member for Health and Housing, asked that the document be updated to reflect that the Dog Waste bins were emptied by Serco.

Reasons for Recommendations

The proposals included within the report would see over £2 million invested in Breckland over the next three years. The money would be spent on supporting the vibrancy of the market towns and their heritage; funding local good causes and recognising the important work that they do; keeping Breckland a safe place to live and work; marketing the opportunities that are present within areas for residents; visitors and businesses alike; supporting the most vulnerable and helping residents to take care of themselves and protect themselves from harm.

Options

- 1) To do nothing.
- 2) To agree to fund some of the activity listed within the report.
- 3) To note the spend to date on funds from the Inclusive Growth Reserve, and moving forward to allocate:
 - a) £60,000 to Norfolk Constabulary to fund Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology;
 - b) £100,000 to match-fund the High Street Heritage Action Zone project (Swaffham);
 - c) £75,000 to develop a place brand for the Greater Thetford area;

To recommend to COUNCIL that:

- d) £1.04 million is allocated to an aspirational three-year programme of projects and initiatives that will help tackle vulnerability in Breckland, and,
- e) £250,000 per annum is allocated to the Market Town Initiative.

RESOLVED that Cabinet :

- 1) note the spend to date on funds from the Inclusive Growth Reserve;
- 2) £60,000 from the Inclusive Growth Reserve to Norfolk Constabulary to fund Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology within Breckland be awarded;
- 3) £100,000 from the Inclusive Growth Reserve to match-fund the High Street Heritage Action Zone Project (Swaffham) be allocated;
- 4) 75,000 from the Inclusive Growth Reserve to develop a place brand for the Greater Thetford area be allocated;

RECOMMEND to FULL COUNCIL that:

- 5) £1.04million from the Inclusive Growth Reserve be allocated to an aspirational three-year programme of projects and initiatives that will help tackle vulnerability in Breckland.
- 6) £250,000 per annum from the Inclusive Growth Reserve be allocated to the Market Town Initiative up to and including the financial year 2022/23.

Action By

23/20 BRECKLAND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY (STANDING ITEM)

The Executive Member for Customer Engagement reminded Members that in September 2019 Members had declared a Climate Emergency and had made a commitment to address climate change. After engagement with a number of key stakeholders the Strategy would consider:

- What can Breckland do ourselves;
- What can we influence the communities to do;
- How can we educate communities and work with partners.

As the Council had been approached by a number of people and organisations the following timetable had been drafted:

- An all Member facilitated session would be held in February. In addition, it would be highlighted at the Town and Parish Forum event.
- A consultation would be held with key stakeholders and the public during March.
- A draft strategy would be presented to Overview and Scrutiny Commission at the end of April and a view to the strategy being presented at the Annual General Meeting in May 2020.

Councillor Birt said the importance of assessing and collating data of where the Council was at was crucial and asked what the timescale would be to complete the in-house assessment. The Executive Member confirmed that Officers were already working to collate the data and it would be available by the time the open consultation would commence. He added it was an important topic that was high on the agenda for all Councils, and as a result would be a standing item on the Cabinet agenda.

24/20 NEXT MEETING

The arrangements for the next meeting of Cabinet on Monday 16 March at 10:00am, in Watton Town Hall, Middle Street, Watton, IP25 6AG were noted.

There would be an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions of Cabinet Members from 9.30 to 10.00am.

The meeting closed at 10.55 am

CHAIRMAN