

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

COUNCIL

**Held on Thursday, 23 March 2023 at 10.00 am in the
The Breckland Conference Centre, Anglia Room, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke,
Dereham, NR19 1EE**

PRESENT

Cllr Mike Nairn (Chairman)	Cllr Robert Hambidge
Cllr Peter Wilkinson (Vice-Chairman)	Cllr Chris Harvey
Cllr Tristan Ashby	Cllr Paul Hewett
Cllr Roger Atterwill	Cllr Jane James
Cllr Gordon Bambridge	Cllr Terry Jermy
Cllr Timothy Birt	Cllr Tina Kiddell
Cllr Roy Brame	Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris
Cllr Mike Brindle	Cllr Robert Kybird
Cllr Hilary Bushell	Cllr Terry Land
Cllr Marion Chapman-Allen	Cllr Keith Martin
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen	Cllr Linda Monument
Cllr Harry Clarke	Cllr Rhodri Oliver
Cllr Paul Claussen	Cllr Paul Plummer
Cllr Philip Cowen	Cllr Ian Sherwood
Cllr Helen Crane	Cllr Sarah Suggitt
Cllr Vera Dale	Cllr Taila Taylor
Cllr Susan Dowling	Cllr Lynda Turner
Cllr Richard Duffield	Cllr Alison Webb
Cllr Phillip Duigan	Cllr Nigel Wilkin
Cllr Fabian Eagle	

In Attendance

Maxine O'Mahony	- Chief Executive & Head of Paid Service
Rob Walker	- Deputy Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer
Sarah Wolstenholme-Smy	- Legal Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Sarah Barsby	- Assistant Director People and Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Julie Britton	- Democratic Services Officer
Teresa Smith	- Democratic Services Team Leader

20/23 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Askew, Borrett, Bowes, Morton, Nunn, Terry and Wickerson.

21/23 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

22/23 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (AGENDA ITEM 3)

None declared.

Action By

23/23 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 4)

Councillor Nairn addressed his last Full Council meeting in his capacity as Chairman of the Council. At the next meeting he would be handing over his chain of office to a new Chairperson in front of a newly elected Council. He was therefore truly humbled to share with everyone that for the last 12 months it had been an absolute pleasure to work with Members and Officers alike. All had worked hard to represent their residents and had promoted Breckland, highlighting the amazing work of residents, encouraging its fantastic businesses and sharing stories about the unsung heroes who worked in the community every day.

He had thoroughly enjoyed fulfilling his role as Chairman, and he thanked everyone for their support.

One of his last duties would be the honour of celebrating the coronation of King Charles III but he would be forever moved by the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, monarch for the last 70 years. Her steadfast duty and service to the UK and the wider commonwealth countries would be an inspiration to the generations to come.

He had witnessed many changes over the last 12 months, not just locally, but globally. He therefore wanted to thank the work of his Council colleagues who had supported him throughout this period. Their dedication and professional advice would be something he would remember fondly in the years to come and would be forever grateful.

The Chairman then offered his thanks to Teresa Smith and Jo Elks, from the Democratic Services Team whose invaluable management and arrangement of all his events had meant so much.

Since becoming Chairman in 2022, he had been dedicated in promoting the Breckland district, and the tremendous work taking place every day to support residents, especially the most vulnerable. One of his main drivers had been to shine a light on an army of often unsung community heroes. These heroes did not wear capes, but they shared their expertise, empathy, and the most valuable resource in the world, their time. Whilst fulfilling his duties, he had been honoured to meet heroes like this every day and was in awe of their passion and commitment.

He was humbled to be joined by Tim Owen, a founding member of Papyrus, and one of the 3-Dads Walking. Papyrus was dedicated to the prevention of youth suicide, the promotion of positive mental health and emotional wellbeing in young people. Suicide was the biggest killer of people under the age of 35 and sadly numbers of suicides had started to increase in people of secondary school age. The mission of 3-Dads Walking had recently been highlighted in Parliament, with MP's debating whether suicide awareness could be added into the national curriculum that the Chairman fully supported.

Papyrus was one of his nominated charities this year and he therefore urged everyone present at this meeting, to visit the Papyrus website, and to contact Tim, to see what support they could offer.

The Chairman then thanked his wife Sue, who had been his rock throughout his career and an amazing woman whose support, advice and encouragement had been immeasurable, particularly throughout these last 12 months.

His wife Sue, Teresa and Jo were then presented with bouquets of flowers as a

small token of his appreciation. He also thanked Julie Britton and Alison Chubbock, two staff members who had helped with the raffle at his recent civic event, both of whom were also presented with a small token of his appreciation.

The Chairman then invited both Tim Owen from Papyrus and Victoria Johnson from Norfolk and Waveney MIND to receive their cheques from the Chairman's charity fund.

Photos were then taken and following a round of applause from all in attendance, Tim and Victoria were then provided the opportunity to speak and both thanked the Chairman for his tremendous support.

Concluding his final public speech, the Chairman, once again, thanked everyone for their support during these last 12 months.

24/23 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 5)

The Leader thanked the Chairman for his stewardship over the past year and for the incredible work he had carried out particularly for his chosen charities.

As this was the final meeting of Full Council under the current political term, the Leader reflected on some of the things this Council had achieved recently on behalf of the residents and businesses of Breckland.

He was delighted that Breckland Council would shortly have the opportunity to show what a difference this council was making to some of its residents most in need, when the Princess Royal visits Elm House, in Thetford where She would be able to see how this authority's £1.8m investment has enabled an award-winning refurbishment to take place and brought a dis-used community facility back into use for the Breckland community. Elm House was providing a temporary home for up to 35 people who were in need of temporary housing and support.

Whilst on the Elm House site, the Princess Royal would also be able to see the new Move-On Accommodation which had recently been completed. These five new homes formed part of a multi-million-pound investment to tackle homelessness in the district and had been delivered using external grant funding and in partnership with Broadland Housing Group. The former rough sleepers who were now moving into the new homes would be provided with essential support from Breckland Council's partner Access Community Trust, that would help them rebuild their lives.

In a few weeks' time, representatives from the Council would be going to London to make a case to a panel of judges as to why this district council should win a prestigious award for its outstanding Inspiring Communities work.

As finalists in the LGC awards, this authority's £1m programme had already been recognised as exceptional and the judges would be told of how it had operated in ways that no other district council in the country was working. Alongside partners in the NHS and charity sectors, Breckland Council was helping to deliver the very best, holistic care to its residents, helping them with access to mental health support, tackling domestic abuse, reducing isolation and loneliness, and helping individuals overcome financial difficulties.

Over the last term, this Council had invested heavily in communities throughout the Breckland district. A further £41,000 in grant funding had been announced, bringing

Action By

the total released over the lifetime of the Inspiring Communities scheme to more than £300,000. This was on top of the hundreds of thousands this Council had invested in communities through the Market Towns Initiative, which had helped deliver projects such as the Queen Mother's Garden refurbishment in Dereham, that was officially opened recently.

It had overseen the ongoing growth of Breckland and the safeguarding of jobs. Most recently with the completion of the new power substation in Snetterton, which would enable existing businesses to grow and new businesses to come into the area, bringing jobs for local people.

A most comprehensive plan had been produced for the district's future growth in this council's history, through the Future Breckland programme. Working with communities, this Council had developed a blueprint for Breckland and secured the support of its partners, which would ensure Breckland continued to be a district that thrived and create higher-paid jobs for local people.

For future generations, as part of this Council's 2035 commitment to promote sustainability, it was announced that a brand-new strategic partnership with the National Trust had been established. This would see this authority fund the planting of up to 3000 trees at the National Trust's Oxburgh Hall, where a brand-new forest would be created later this year. This joint working was part of the ongoing work to plant more trees in Breckland as well as contributing to the National Trust's overall aim of planting 20 million trees across the country.

This Council had the pleasure of recently welcoming back the LGA Peer Review team to carry out an independent health check on the organisation where Breckland Council passed with flying colours. The report from the Peer Review team noted that 'great progress was being made' and Breckland Council had an 'increased level of organisational maturity' a very firm footing as it moved into the next term of this Council's history.

Additionally, the results of a Breckland resident survey showed that local people had high levels of trust and satisfaction in this Council.

Nationally, around six-in-ten people stated that they had trust in their local council, but in Breckland this level was around 80% - a significantly higher figure than the national trend. Similarly, Breckland residents reported higher-than-average satisfaction with the Council, which was a phenomenal result and highlighted just how valued the work of this Council over the last few months and years had been - and the difference it had made for the people and businesses of Breckland.

Finally, with just a few weeks to go before the local elections, the Leader took the opportunity to sincerely thank all members, of all political backgrounds, for their hard work, contribution to the debates at meetings, their dedication to this Council and to the district and above all to the residents and businesses of Breckland. He also thanked Councillor Martin for his 4 decades of incredible support to this Council, and for those who were standing for another term in May, he wished them all the very best of luck.

25/23 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE UNDER STANDING ORDER NO 6 (AGENDA ITEM 6)

None received.

26/23 QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE UNDER STANDING ORDER NO 7 (AGENDA ITEM 7)

Councillor Jermy, the Leader of the Labour Group, thanked the Chairman and everyone involved for delivering the Chairman's reception which he thoroughly enjoyed. It had been a particular honour for him to welcome all concerned to Thetford - to the Ward that he represented.

He directed his question to the Leader. He had recently met with workers from Serco in Watton who were currently campaigning for improved pay, terms and conditions. During the time that he had been with them they mentioned how pleased they were to have been given the chance to speak to the Leader of North Norfolk Council but had been disappointed, as Breckland residents themselves, that their own Council Leader was not able to do the same. He asked the Leader when he would be taking the time to meet them.

The Leader was pleased that through the industrial action that took place recently, that Breckland Council was able to keep up with all the activities in collecting the bins by the end of that week. He did receive a communication from Serco but unfortunately had been very busy at the time and had other matters to attend to but had met with Serco staff on numerous occasions over the last couple of months and would be happy to do so again. He was aware that the Cabinet member responsible for waste & recycling had visited the staff on his behalf and reminded Members that Serco staff were not employees of this Council and therefore it would be inappropriate for him to intervene, but he would be happy to work with the contract managers and the senior officers at Serco around any concerns or issues they might have.

Cllr Atterwill, the Leader of the Independent Group was aware that Councillor Webb, the Executive Member for Health & Communities had sent all Members a copy of the Health & Wellbeing Partnership Strategy recently which he felt was quite light on detail but listed a number of actions and asked when Members could expect to receive the detailed action plan. One area of concern he had found was in respect of the housing and adaptations to facilitate independent living. The Cabinet Member for Housing had informed the Overview & Scrutiny Commission recently that in 2023/24 without any additional government funding the available funding would be short of somewhere between £887k and £1.9m of what was required. In light of this shortfall, how would the Health & Wellbeing Partnership hope to achieve its strategy and overcome this issue.

Councillor Webb was pleased that Councillor Atterwill had taken the time to read this Strategy as she had always tried to be upfront about what this Council was doing in terms of the Partnership. Achieving such a partnership had been a good step forward but there was still a great deal of work to be done and rolled out. There were issues that needed to be looked at, but all these statistics had been backed up by evidence from different organisations, and if she was re-elected, a quarterly report would be provided to all Members about how the Partnership were doing in terms of the action plan. She was unable to comment on the disabled facilities grant at this point in time, but she was aware that this issue had been raised on many occasions and she would get back to all Members on this matter in due course.

For months, Councillor Birt had been trying to arrange an officer briefing to discuss details in respect of Breckland's 2035 programme without success. He felt that this delay was removing the ability of meaningful scrutiny on this incredibly important Council Policy. He asked the Leader if he and the Cabinet were fully committed to

the 2035 programme or was it being 'watered down'.

The Leader was not aware that Councillor Birt had been trying to arrange meetings with officers but assured him that this Council was absolutely committed to the 2035 programme and explained the wider activity that had been put in place in the towns. A full appraisal and update would be provided in due course.

Councillor Oliver recognised that the Leader was aware that Norfolk County Council had not appropriately consulted district councils thus far on the matter of devolution and indeed had undertaken an inappropriate process in terms of its consultation and also its procedural internal process and asked the Leader if he could update Members on what was happening in respect of the devolution deal and what meetings or other communications he had had with the Leader of Norfolk County Council in terms of trying to rectify the failures that had been made to date.

The Leader advised that the decision on this matter sat solely with Norfolk County Council and was not a decision of Breckland Council as district councils were not classed as statutory consultees, but he had been pleased that at the last Cabinet meeting, a response from Breckland Council in respect of County deals had been made.

Moving forward, he and the Deputy Leader, Councillor Paul Claussen had attended regular Norfolk Public Sector Leaders' Board meetings and Norfolk Leaders meetings in which relevant updates had been provided and the position for Breckland had been clear around the processes and the current governance structure, and the opportunities moving forward. Through the updates provided at this Council in respect of the pro-action protocol, of which Breckland Council were signatories with three other councils in Norfolk, this was still in date, and it would be for this Council to decide if a judicial review was required. He was still in close communications with colleagues across Norfolk and with Members of Parliament to make sure that the best possible outcome for residents and businesses was gained and to ensure that the best structure was put in place to deliver upon the Government's ambition for devolution but more importantly the levelling up agenda. The Leader then thanked all Members for their support.

As the end of the four-year term was getting closer, Councillor Turner asked Councillor Webb if she could provide Members with a few examples of where the grants from the Inspiring Communities fund had made a difference to those communities.

Councillor Webb stated that one of the grants provided was for a Horticultural Industry scheme and was for homeless and ex-offenders to complete 15 garden transformations on behalf of vulnerable residents, encouraging people to help others. The grant had also supported these people to gain additional training for possible future careers. Also, at the end of this month there was going to be a room opened at Etling Grange in Dereham to bring people from the independent sheltered bungalows on the site and from the care home itself together to prevent isolation.

Councillor Kybird stated that Brandon Station located in Weeting was currently undergoing some engineering works and that these in turn involved listed building status and approval of these potential works by Breckland Council and asked Councillor Suggitt, the Executive Member for Strategic & Operational Planning for an update.

Members were informed that Greater Anglia had contacted Breckland Council as

Action By

they had discovered some structural issues to the roof of the building that needed to be partly demolished. A site visit had taken place and since then the report that had been submitted had been pushed back and consent had been refused. Whilst on site they had been accompanied by conservation architects who also viewed the building and had the same view and advised that the issues were not as detrimental as Greater Anglia had suggested. A solution was now being worked on and it was hoped that when the next submission was received that it would be something that could be supported, and consent could be granted.

Councillor Wilkinson said that it had been an honour to be asked to be Vice-Chairman of the Council for 2022/23 representing not only Breckland but most of Norfolk, Suffolk as well as many other counties. He then asked Councillor Bambridge, the Executive Member for Housing & Homelessness a question about the grant funding awarded to the handy man service that supported the NHS discharge patients to their own homes and asked if this programme had started.

Members were informed that the scheme had recently started and understood that within a couple of hours of it going live enquiries started to be received from the public. Members were reminded that a grant had been received in the region of £80k and Breckland Council had allocated a further £50k. This scheme was limited to offering small grants for simple adaptations such as installing grab rails, doing shopping and turning the heating on if there was no-one else available to get people out of hospital, to free up beds and back into their own homes. He felt that this was an excellent scheme and was pleased with the response thus far.

Councillor Kiddell asked Councillor Webb where this Council was in respect of the Mindful Towns and accreditations.

Councillor Webb explained how villages and towns in Breckland could gain accreditation as a 'Mindful Town or Village'. She was pleased to report that every town in Breckland had achieved this status and courses had been completed. Swanton Morley and Necton had also now gained this accreditation.

Councillor Plummer had noticed in the press that new 'moving-on' houses had been opened in Thetford and asked Councillor Bambridge if such housing would be made available elsewhere in the district.

Councillor Bambridge said that he was very supportive of 'moving on' housing as there were many homeless people not just in this district but all over the UK and provided them with temporary accommodation before moving on. There were other sites in the pipeline, but he was always looking for other opportunities and asked Members if there was land available in their Wards that was suitable for such accommodation to let him know.

Councillor Dale was aware that the Daisy Programme had lost a full-time staff member and asked Councillor Webb if there was any way that Breckland Council could help bridge that gap.

Members were informed that the Daisy Programme had a number of posts funded by different sources and pointed out that this Council's funding supported the core services to residents. Discussions were being had with the Norfolk Integrated Abuse Service and she would report back to Members on this matter at some point in the future.

Councillor Land directed his concern to Councillor Bambridge. He was concerned to hear at the recent Overview & Scrutiny Commission meeting that demand for the

disabled facilities grant was increasing.

Councillor Bambridge said, as he had explained at the O&SC meeting, this was funding provided by Central Government and Breckland Council just administered it. There were very strict rules as to how this funding could be used and penalties if not spent correctly. Additional funding was a concern but on the other hand this was a good news story as Breckland Council was one of the few councils that was spending all the money that had been provided and therefore was writing to Government through the MP's and to the Levelling up Minister to try and obtain additional funding due to this Council's efficiency in getting through more applications than anyone else. If this Council put in money itself it would have to stop some other service and assured Members that if re-elected he would be writing again.

Councillor Clarke thanked Councillor Webb for the refurbishment of the Queen Mother's Garden in Dereham. He asked about the Yaxham Road closures as he was aware that Councillor Webb had been making representations to Norfolk County Council to inform timely and proper communications about such closures.

Councillor Webb advised that any matter in respect of highways was Norfolk County Council, and they did listen to residents' concerns and Dereham Town Council were also on the case in terms of road closures.

At this point the 30-minute time limit for questions without notice had ended.

Councillor Brindle was very disappointed that he had not been given the opportunity to speak.

Rob Walker, the Deputy Chief Executive read aloud the relevant Standing Order under Standing Order 7.1.

Councillor Jermy raised a Point of Order and proposed a Motion to suspend the Standing Order to allow the time period to be extended.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that if a proposal to suspend Standing Orders without notice, could only be done with at least 50% of the Members present voting in favour of the suspension.

Cllr Atterwill seconded the proposal.

A vote was then taken and the proposal to suspend this Standing Order was lost by a majority vote. Councillor Jermy and Councillor Clarke asked for their vote to be recorded.

27/23 MINUTES (FOR INFORMATION ONLY) (AGENDA ITEM 8)

(a) **Planning Committee: 14 February 2023**

The confirmed Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 14 February 2023 were noted.

(b) **General Purposes Committee: 9 February 2023**

The confirmed Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on 9 February 2023 were noted.

28/23 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023/24 (AGENDA ITEM 9)

Councillor Jane James, the Executive Member for Customer & Corporate Services introduced the report.

Sarah Barsby, the Assistant Director for People & Governance stated that under Section 38 of the Localism Act, a pay policy statement was required to be produced annually and must be approved by 31 March each year and published on the Council's website soon after the decision had been made.

This had been a requirement since 2012/13 and a Pay Policy Statement for a financial year must set out the authority's policies for the financial year relating to:

- the remuneration of chief officers
- the remuneration of the lowest paid employees
- the relationship between chief officers' remuneration and that of other officers

Included in the Statement was the latest Gender Pay Gap figure based on the snapshot date of 31 March 2022 and the Mean Gender Pay Gap figure was 16%, a slight improvement from the previous year of 16.6%.

Councillor Birt referred to page 68 of the agenda pack in respect of the Returning Officer receiving an additional fee but had noticed that there was no indication of the magnitude of the payment involved.

The Assistant Director for People & Governance said that she did not have that information to hand but would be happy to share this with Councillor Birt after the meeting.

Councillor James then proposed and quoted the recommendation that could be found on page 59 of the agenda pack, which was seconded by Councillor Marion Chapman-Allen.

Following a unanimous vote, it was:

RESOLVED that the Pay Policy Statement 2023/24 be approved.

29/23 DELIVERY OF PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL SERVICES (AGENDA ITEM 10)

Sarah Suggitt, the Executive Member for Strategic & Operational Planning presented the report that was in respect of the Planning & Building Control service that had been contracted out to Capita for the past 14 years.

The current 15-year Capita contract would end in June 2024. Within the contract, the Council had a unilateral right to extend the agreement by a further 5 years, but to do so confirmation must be provided 12 months in advance.

Given the scale of importance that this opportunity provided, an exercise had been carried out to fully understand the options available.

The options identified were to extend the contract, to retender, to share the service or to bring it back in-house.

Various difficulties were highlighted with these options including procurement rules,

Action By

other local authorities' appetite to share the service, the contract being quite inflexible, and the market changes for outsourcing such products had changed significantly.

The recommendation was therefore to bring the service back in-house. This would mean a natural end to the contract. The contract was taken out for 15 years and this was the aim of the Council.

The TUPE process would commence to transfer all Capita staff back to Breckland Council. There would be no re-design initially, but this would provide an option for Breckland to have a defined future fit model for the future.

As would be expected for any long-term relationship, the past 14 years had shown many ups and downs but Councillor Suggitt was keen to point out that this Council had a strong relationship with Capita.

Nationally, Capita had provided support and resilience to this Council which it would be forever grateful. Locally, this Council had an exceptional Planning & Building Control Team, they had a great reputation, respect amongst their peers, had demonstrated great performance, and had an enviable position in terms of recruitment, retention and development. This was a huge credit to the management team, that despite factors such as Nutrient Neutrality, the Government White Papers and the update of the Local Plan, this Council still had a team that showed such great credentials and a service that this Council should be proud of.

Despite all the technicalities, the biggest impact would be on the staff, and all were reassured that support would be available to guide everyone through the process.

Annual savings of around £200k would be made, and this Council would also receive all future income from major planning applications.

This was an important first step in where this Council sees this service going.

The recommendations were read aloud and proposed accordingly and were seconded by Councillor Kiddle-Morris.

Councillor Clarke said that as a long standing Member of the Planning Committee he was pleased that this service was coming back in-house and paid tribute to all the staff in the planning department and looked forward to an even better service in the future.

Councillor Atterwill raised a question in regard to the future fit part of the process and in relation to the third recommendation and asked if Members could be given assurance that if, for example something different was planned for building control, would such a matter be brought back to this Council for a decision. He was pleased; however, that this service was being brought back in-house and paid tribute to Simon Wood the Director of Planning & Building Control who had been very approachable and a stabilising force in the department and he hoped that this would continue.

Members were informed that conversations would continue, and she hoped that all Members would take part in the decisions in future.

Councillor Birt also supported the recommendations due to the budget savings and would prefer the budget to remain the same to enable a much better service to be provided in future.

Councillor Bambridge pointed out that he was a Member of this Council when the contract was signed and stated that during these 14 years he had little to complain about but felt that this was the right time to bring it back in-house as the team did provide an excellent service.

A vote was taken which was unanimous, and it was:

RESOLVED that:

1. upon expiry of the initial contract with Capita for Planning & Building Control Services in June 2024, that these services be returned to the Council;
2. the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic and Operational Planning, be given delegated authority to take the necessary action to formalise the end of contractual arrangements with Capita for the Planning & Building Control Services; and
3. the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic and Operational Planning, be given delegated authority to take any necessary actions for the return of the Planning and Building Control Service to the Council and associated changes in budget and establishment.

30/23 NORFOLK INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK (NIF) (AGENDA ITEM 11)

Councillor Paul Claussen, the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Economic Development and Growth presented the report.

Breckland Council had been working with the Wayland Partnership for several years to develop a proposal for a multi-use centre on Watton High Street. This would house a number of facilities, including business support, office space and training, focused on the growing digital and creative media sectors; whilst also containing a range of commercial and leisure facilities. This proposed mixed-used facility, had been referred to as the Wayland Digital & Creative Media Centre (DCMC).

If approved this would be a step closer of realising the vision and as a major piece of regeneration this would establish a new anchor point at the western end of the High Street catalysing investment and boosting footfall. This would be the only centre of its kind in the region and would be a national first.

A project of this ambition was not straight forward and required significant investment but had already attracted some substantial private interest. He was delighted to announce that Breckland Council had been successful in securing £125k of funding from Norfolk County Council via its Norfolk Investment Framework, and this would deliver the first stages of the project.

This funding would be put towards a yearlong pilot project within the existing Wayland House building delivering training to this particular sector. The funding would also be used to fund technical expertise to deliver a full business case enabling the project to be best placed to secure future capital funding.

The recommendations were proposed and seconded.

Councillor Kiddell thanked Breckland Council for bringing this project forward as it would be great for Watton, and she was pleased to represent the town as this would put Watton on the map if approved.

Councillor Eagle felt that this was a fantastic project and the site was so convenient as it was passed one of the main schools in Watton and would provide an opportunity for people to widen their horizons and apply for better jobs. He then expanded on the gaming and development sector in the UK. He then paid credit to Dr David Dent from the Wayland Partnership and the Wayland Chamber of Commerce as this had initially been his idea and no-one should be discouraged from bringing their ideas forward for the district.

Councillor James, the Executive Member for Customer and Corporate Services stated that Thetford had played host to an international gaming event 3 times over the last 18 months that was excellent for the local economy, and she anticipated that if the recommendations were approved the same would happen for Watton.

Following a vote which was unanimous, it was:

RESOLVED that:

1. the Council accepts the funding awarded to Breckland from the Norfolk Investment Framework (NIF) to deliver work that will bring forward the Wayland Digital & Creative Media Centre (DCMC) project; and.
2. delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director for Economy & Growth (in consultation with the Executive Member for Economic Development & Growth) to enter into the Grant Funding Agreement and oversee the Wayland DCMC project.

31/23 NOMINATIONS FOR COMMITTEE AND OTHER SEATS (AGENDA ITEM 12)

None.

32/23 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION (IF ANY) (AGENDA ITEM 13)

None.

33/23 ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT (AGENDA ITEM 14)

None.

34/23 EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC (AGENDA ITEM 15)

The exclusion of press and public was not required.

35/23 GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE: 9 FEBRUARY 2023 - RESTRICTED (AGENDA ITEM 16)

These Minutes were not discussed.

Chairman's closing remarks

The Chairman thanked all Members for their support over the last year, he had thoroughly enjoyed his time as Chairman of Breckland Council.

The meeting closed at 11.20 am

CHAIRMAN