
BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

CABINET

**Held on Tuesday, 13 May 2014 at 9.30 am in
Anglia Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr M. A. Wassell (Chairman)	Mr M.A. Kiddle-Morris
Mrs L.S. Turner (Vice-Chairman)	Mr I. Sherwood
Mrs E. M. Jolly	Mr W.H.C. Smith

Also Present

Mr T R Carter	Mr M. S. Robinson
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mr T. J. Jermy
Mrs S.M. Matthews	Mr S.G. Bambridge
Mr M J Nairn	

In Attendance

Vicky Thomson	- Assistant Director - Democratic Services
Julie Britton	- Senior Committee Officer
Mark Finch	- Assistant Director of Finance
Anna Graves	- Chief Executive

Action By

41/14 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 April 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

42/14 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

An apology for absence was received from Elizabeth Gould.

43/14 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (AGENDA ITEM 4)

None declared.

44/14 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 5)

Shirley Matthews, Gordon Bambridge, Trevor Carter, Phillip Duigan, Terry Jermy, Mike Nairn, Mark Robinson.

45/14 BRECKLAND COMMUNITY FUNDING APPLICATIONS (STANDING ITEM) (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The Vice-Chairman reported that £13,000 in grant funding had been awarded for various applications since the last meeting ranging from £154

Action By

to £500, one of which was for a bench to be situated in a children's play area in Great Dunham.

On behalf of the Parish Council, the Executive Member for Assets & Strategic Development, who was also the Ward Member for Great Dunham, thanked Breckland Council for the match funding contribution towards the purchase of the bench.

46/14 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE QUARTER 4 2013-14 (AGENDA ITEM 8)

Quarterly monitoring reports had been completed throughout the year forecasting the expected year out-turn against the budgets. The report provided information on the actual full year financial performance for Revenue, Capital and Treasury.

The Executive Member for Finance & Democratic Services highlighted the good revenue position that Breckland Council had maintained throughout the year.

The Assistant Director of Finance provided Members with a detailed overview of the appendices attached to the report. Referring to the funding section under Table 1, he explained that the backdated business rates appeals figures were being finalised for the government business rates return, and it was expected that the levy payment in 2013-14 would reduce. This would create an additional levy payment in a future year. It was therefore suggested that the recommendation be amended to allow the change in the business rates levy to be transferred to the Council Tax and Business rate Reserve once the figure had been finalised.

Table 4 on page 47 of the agenda was important to note as it requested virements decisions for approval. The Executive Member for Assets & Strategic Development asked if the £92k relating to council tax benefit was at risk. The Assistant Director of Finance advised that this was income resulting from the recovery of overpaid council tax benefits. When the Government introduced the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme last year they had not provided for this income which previously had formed part of the benefit subsidy. It was being recommended that the £92k relating to this income be placed in the Council Tax and Business Rates Reserve as a precaution against regulations being introduced to cover this oversight in the original drafting of regulations. It was also being recommended that the remaining balance (currently reported at £191k) be placed in the Organisational Development Reserve. Potentially, this balance could change as a result of final accounts working papers being completed and the audit of the financial statements being concluded.

The Executive Member for Corporate Services & Quality Assurance felt that Breckland Council was in a very enviable financial position compared to many other authorities. He felt that the report highlighted the effectiveness of budget control whilst continuing to provide value for money to the residents of Breckland. The Council was now in a position to provide a balanced budget and he welcomed the additional £191k to the Organisational Development Reserve as it would help to reduce the financial gap in future years. The Executive Member for Corporate Services & Quality Assurance then thanked the Portfolio Holder

Action By

responsible for Finance and the Officers for all their hard work throughout the year.

Councillor Bambridge also felt that, despite the media in the local press, Breckland Council had accomplished greater efficiencies than first forecast and he congratulated the Cabinet on what had been achieved.

The Chairman said that there was still quite a severe financial mountain to climb in future and reminded Members that finances must be kept under control. In response, Councillor Bambridge stated that he had ultimate trust in the Cabinet.

Councillor Nairn also felt that the Officers and the Cabinet should be congratulated and commended as the steep mountain that the Chairman mentioned would now, in his opinion, be a lot less steep.

Options

1. To note the report and appendix, approve the virements detailed in Table 4 of Section 1 of the appendix and recommend to Full Council that the remaining below budget spend be contributed to the Organisational Development Reserve.
2. To note the report, but not approve the virements or recommendation to Full Council, leaving the balance in the General Fund.

Reasons

To provide timely information to Members on the overall finances of the Council and to make the best use of resources available, anticipating future years expenditure.

RESOLVED that:

1. the report and appendix be noted; and
2. the virements detailed in Table 4 of Section 1 of the appendix be approved.

MF/AC

RECOMMEND to Full Council that the remaining below budget spend be contributed to the Organisational Development Reserve and that any variance resulting from the final business rates return be contributed to the Council Tax and Business Rates Reserve.

47/14 CAPITAL OUT-TURN 2013-14 (AGENDA ITEM 9)

The Executive Member for Finance & Democratic Services presented the report that set out the out-turn position of Breckland's Capital programme for 2013-14 that showed the actual out-turn on Capital schemes for the year along with the resources used to fund each scheme.

The Assistant Director of Finance advised that a key level of detail had been highlighted in the appendices. Appendix A showed the carry over request from 2013-14 to 2014-15 and Appendix B highlighted the funding

Action By

levels for the Capital Programme.

Referring to page 16 of the Agenda in relation to the Anchor Hotel in Thetford, the Opposition Leader said that he remembered the report that went to Cabinet for approval to demolish the hotel and he also remembered that a certain amount of money had been put aside to tidy up the development. According to the report, there was still an under spend and he wondered why this work had not been carried out as the site was still very much an eyesore.

The Executive Member for Assets & Strategic Development pointed out that the works was currently being tendered for; however, the archaeological dig that was being undertaken would impede the process. The Opposition Leader hoped that the works would be completed by the summer in time for the tourists. He also mentioned the Right to Buy income on page 8 of the agenda and felt that there should be some investment put back into social housing as every time a house was sold the housing stock was depleted. The Chairman did not disagree with the aforementioned comment and stated that although the Council was keen to see further affordable housing provided it was ultimately the responsibility of developers and the Housing Associations.

Options

1. To recommend to Full Council that:
 - a) the final Capital budget, out-turn and funding for 2013-14 as detailed in Appendix B of the report be approved; and
 - b) the revised Capital budget and associated funding for the 2014-15 Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix A of the report be approved.
2. To make changes to Appendix A and Appendix B of the report before recommending to Full Council that:
 - a) the final Capital budget, out-turn and funding for 2013-14 as detailed in Appendix B of the report be approved; and
 - b) the revised Capital budget and associated funding for the 2014-15 Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix A of the report be approved.

Reasons

The recommendation would ensure the Capital Programme for 2014-15 was amended along with the necessary funding.

RECOMMEND to Full Council that:

1. the final Capital budget, out-turn and funding for 2013-14 as detailed in Appendix B of the report be approved; and
2. the revised Capital budget and associated funding for the 2014-15 Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix A of the report be

MF/AC

approved.

48/14 TRANSFER OF ADDITIONAL PLAY AREAS - DEREHAM (AGENDA ITEM 10)

The Executive Member for Assets & Strategic Development presented the report that requested approval to transfer four areas of land owned by Breckland Council comprising of open space and one children's play area along with a commuted sum to Dereham Town Council for the on-going maintenance of these areas.

These parcels of land formed part of a residential development and had been highlighted on the plan on page 23 of the agenda.

Councillor Duigan reminded Members of the risks of future appeals and provided the Cabinet with the history of the sites in question.

Options

1. To authorise the transfer of the areas of open space/play area at South Green, Dereham along with the commuted maintenance sum received from the developer for these areas.
2. Do nothing.

Reasons

Authorising the transfer of these areas would be in accordance with the Council's policy not to take on liability of open spaces and wherever possible to transfer to areas out to the relevant Town Councils.

To do nothing would be contrary to the decision made by Council Members that the play areas and open spaces be transferred to the Town Councils.

RESOLVED that the open spaces/play area be transferred to Dereham Town Council along with the associated commuted maintenance sum of £13,888.61.

SB

49/14 IMPROVEMENT WORKS TO LAND ON BARNHAM CROSS ESTATE IN THETFORD - AREA 15 (AGENDA ITEM 11)

The Executive Member for Assets & Strategic Development presented the report.

Members were reminded that in January 2014, Cabinet agreed to transfer the land known as Area 15 to Flagship Housing Group at nil cost. This land at the time had been valued at £3k by the District Valuer. Flagship had since put forward a revised plan that increased the size of Area 15. This increase was felt to be more practical in terms of maintenance responsibilities for both Breckland Council and Flagship Housing Group. A clear boundary would now remain if Members were mindful to approve the recommendation.

The Opposition Leader supported the recommendation as this

programme of works had been on-going since 2006 and was taking a considerable amount of time for those improvements to materialise. He felt that Flagship should get on with the works in question sooner rather than later.

The Executive Member for Assets & Strategic Development pointed out that Moving Thetford Forward had approved up to £5k to cover the legal costs.

Options

1. To transfer the revised larger area to Flagship Housing Group at nil consideration, subject to any valuation and legal fees incurred by Breckland Council being met.
2. Not to transfer the revised area and to transfer that previously agreed

Reasons

The revised area would be more practical post transfer in terms of maintenance and responsibility for Breckland Council and Flagship Housing Group's Asset Teams.

To transfer the initial area would, post transfer, cause problems in terms of maintenance and responsibility for the Asset Teams of both Breckland Council and Flagship Housing Group.

RESOLVED that the amended area of land situated on the Barnham Cross Estate, Thetford, named as Area 15, be transferred to Flagship Housing Group at nil consideration, subject to all Breckland Council's legal and District Valuer's fees being met in respect of these matters.

Action By

SB

50/14 REFERENCE FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION (IF ANY) (AGENDA ITEM 12)

None.

51/14 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PANEL (FOR INFORMATION) (AGENDA ITEM 13)

The Chairman of the Member Development Panel looked forward to the resolution of the Constitution Review.

The Minutes of the Member Development Panel meeting held on 3 April 2014 were otherwise noted.

52/14 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 14)

The arrangements for the next meeting on Tuesday, 1 July 2014 at 9.30am in the Anglia Room were noted.

All to Note

The meeting closed at 10.00 am

CHAIRMAN