

## Overview & Scrutiny – Budget Task & Finish Group Recommendations and Update on Progress

### Projects Already in Progress

Opportunity Description	Update/Progress
Opportunity for growth in Snetterton to include residential as well as commercial growth. Light Aircraft are able to use this area, therefore suggest prestige residential developments.	Consideration of both commercial and residential growth will be included in the existing Snetterton growth project (lead Executive Manager Growth & Prosperity).
Investigate to see if Crown Estates would offer a vacant pieces of land for sale for self-builds, which could then encourage workforce into the area.	Discussions are already taking place with Crown Estates on various matters & this will be included in discussions (lead Executive Manager Growth & Prosperity).
Could Breckland tie in any land that Breckland own, to build for smaller houses / shared ownership.	The Council has embarked on this with its innovative Breckland Bridge partnership. The partnership takes Council-owned land and seeks to build houses that meet local needs, such as the Mileham project which included 2 and 3 bedroom homes with 4 affordable homes provided under a shared equity scheme. The Council has limited land that is straight forward in planning and development terms but we actively try and exploit land for development where we can. The Breckland Bridge partnership is also providing some strategic asset advice around increasing land values by changing its use. The partnership has obtained full planning for a site in Gressenhall which the Council owns and has recently prepared a planning application for a site the Council owns in Colkirk which could create 22 new homes.
Does the Council actively look at the land it currently owns and the potential it could make for the council, for example speculative planning applications?	Yes, please see information above re: Breckland Bridge partnership. The cost of a preparing and submitting speculative planning applications needs to be considered carefully against the risk of achieving an investment return i.e. whether the site achieved a change of use or not.
Could we look into purchasing the field behind Elizabeth House, for further office development?	A project is currently underway which is investigating the potential opportunity of this piece of land (which includes a ‘ransom strip’). Funding has been released to undertake a feasibility study to determine the potential return before proceeding further. Once this piece of work concludes, the project will either be taken to the next stage (if viable).
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Car Parking – the manifesto was for car parking to remain free,	An action plan has been prepared from the work undertaken by Breckland Bridge

<p>however options could be considered. The options discussed were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To restrict parking so offer free parking for 2 hours, and charge after that</li> <li>2. To liaise with South Norfolk District Council with their enforcement, as they currently operate in Attleborough</li> <li>3. Consider offering land space to a Car Park Company and then lease back</li> <li>4. Consider a Park &amp; Ride arrangement to release the current car parks within the town for further development.</li> </ol>	<p>including short, medium and long term actions. The additional suggestions will be incorporated into this schedule of work.</p>
<p>Review of contracts and service level agreements to reduce costs.</p>	<p>This forms part of the Moving Forward transformation programme with target savings of £180k per year already included in the budget for 2017-18.</p>
<p>Need to revisit the 60:40 split of costings and the justification for this. Was the council actively considering partnerships with other authorities? However had any thought been given to how far the limit would be?</p>	<p>The new management structure and change to 60:40 split was approved by Members at Full Council in May 2015 and was implemented from October 2015. The reasons for the change are included in the report which can be found at the link below (item 20). <a href="http://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=117&amp;MIId=3351&amp;Ver=4">http://democracy.breckland.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=117&amp;MIId=3351&amp;Ver=4</a> New partnership opportunities are being explored currently and each proposal will need to be evaluated on an individual basis, dependent on the facts for that proposal.</p>
<p>What were the opportunities with Breckland Training Services (BTS) and if it was an income stream, could this be made more of an opportunity.</p>	<p>This is a project within the Moving Forward transformation programme. The project is in progress with a business case with options being worked up currently. This work will complete soon and then options will be provided to Members for the future of BTS.</p>
<p>The Council to look at speculative purchases and borrowing to finance these. As long as the return covers the borrowing costs (interest &amp; repayment). Could add affordable housing/shared ownership to schemes which gives return in other ways, not just financial.</p>	<p>These projects will be considered on a case by case basis, however the Council needs to consider a range of options together, rather than individual options piece meal. The Council also needs to consider the risks associated with reliance on external income to cover borrowing costs and will need to find the right balance of risk and reward. This is part of the work underway by the Growth Group and new Executive Director Commercialisation in conjunction with Portfolio Holders.</p>
<p><b>Opportunity Description</b></p>	<p><b>Update/Progress</b></p>
<p>There was £10 headroom in the potential to increase the council tax, before Breckland would no longer be the lowest district for council tax in the country. Therefore there was an option to increase the council tax by £5 and would still remain the lowest in the country.</p>	<p>This has been implemented (approved at Full Council 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017).</p>

### Projects Not Yet Considered

Opportunity Description	Update/Progress
Had there been any consideration given to develop the land and property the Council already owned, such as extending Elizabeth House and offering space to more government departments.	Additional partners/tenants for Elizabeth House are being actively pursued in the context of the existing space available. Should a more significant opportunity arise then a full business case will be developed.
Review the amount which is allocated to Norfolk Community Foundation for grants (currently £300k per year) after the agreement ends in 18-19.	A review is planned to be undertaken (lead Executive Director Place)
To consider looking at increasing the risk appetite of the Treasury Management Policy – this would include investing long term in Gilts which is a liquid market.	This will be further considered, in conjunction with advice from our Treasury Management advisors (lead Executive Director Commercialisation).

### Projects Which Have Already Been Considered and Discounted

Opportunity Description	Update/Progress
Could the Council Chamber be offered as a local magistrate court?	There is a lack of capacity currently to offer this service as the Council Chamber (& other rooms) are primarily utilised by the Council and therefore not available for external use on a regular basis.
Breckland currently own some lights, as well as parish councils and the County Council. Therefore for the ones that Breckland own, look at night time turning off, which will save some money (similar to that of County Council).	The costs of providing public lighting to the 5 market towns are recharged to the relevant towns (either directly or via a special expense), therefore turning lights off would not save Breckland Council any money. If a town wished us to investigate turning them off in order to save that council money, we could investigate this, but it would be at the request of that town.