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BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

CABINET

Held on Tuesday, 16 October 2018 at 9.30 am in
Norfolk & Dereham Rooms, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham

PRESENT

Mr J.W. Nunn (Chairman)	Mr J.P. Cowen
Mr S. H. Chapman-Allen (Vice-Chairman)	Mr M. S. Robinson
Mr S.G. Bambridge	Mr A.C. Stasiak
Mr P.D. Claussen	Mrs A. M. Webb

Also Present

Mr W.P. Borrett	Mrs S.M. Matthews
Mr D. M. Crawford	Mr J. Newton
Mr K. Martin	Mr P. S. Wilkinson

In Attendance

Anna Graves	- Chief Executive
Christine Marshall	- Executive Director Commercialisation (S151 Officer)
Maxine O'Mahony	- Executive Director of Strategy & Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Ross Bangs	- Corporate Improvement & Performance Manager (shared)
Sarah Barsby	- Executive Manager for Information
Jon Berry	- Head of Development Management
Ralph Burton	- Strategic Property Manager (BDC)
Robert Campbell	- Inward Investment Manager
Paul Corney	- Head of ARP
Stephen James	- Communities & Environmental Services Manager
Phil Mileham	- Strategic Planning Manager
Teresa Smith	- Democratic Services Team Leader

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99/18 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 September were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

100/18 APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

101/18 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

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102/18 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

103/18 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

Councillors Borrett, Crawford, Martin, Matthews, Newton and Wilkinson.

104/18 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)

None.

105/18 BRECKLAND COMMUNITY FUNDING APPLICATIONS (STANDING ITEM)

Nothing to report.

106/18 CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY

The Executive Member for People and Information informed members that the Customer Access Strategy had been designed to support the wider aims of the Corporate Plan and priorities, and in particular to 'provide the right services, at the right time and in the right way'. The report had been presented to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Commission where a number of suggested changes had been raised by Members and incorporated into the document.

It was highlighted that within the strategy it suggested Credit cards were not able to be used to pay for the garden waste services; however it was confirmed that residents were able to use this form of payment.

The Deputy Leader thanked the Commission for their input into the Strategy and said Members had an important role to play as digital champions by encouraging residents to use the digital services wherever possible.

Councillor Wilkinson said he had recently experienced problems where residents had had issues with accessing the housing information online and were advised to call the contact centre. The Executive Member for Growth confirmed he would look into the problem in more detail.

Councillor Crawford asked where the training for residents would take place. The Deputy Leader explained that the final details were being considered; however work was under way with Norfolk County Council to work with communities to uplift the digital skills. It was hoped that further information would be available early 2019.

Members were content with the strategy subject to a minor spelling amendment and reference to the credit card.

Reasons for recommendations

The strategy sets out a clear plan for making best use of Council resources to meet the needs of its customers, achieving value for money for the Council and its residents.

Options

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1. Approve the Customer Access Strategy, and that it be implemented from April 2019 to align with the Council's new Corporate Plan.
2. Propose changes to the Customer Access Strategy.
3. Do nothing

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The draft Customer Access Strategy be approved;
- 2) The strategy be implemented from April 2019, to align with the Council's new Corporate Plan.

107/18 ICT & DIGITAL STRATEGY

The Executive Member for People and Information presented the report that looked to improve residents' experience of contacting the council whilst increasing the efficiency of the overall operating arrangements.

The report had been presented to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Commission where a number of suggested changes had been raised by Members and incorporated into the document.

The Executive Member for Place felt there was little information about supporting businesses within the document.

The Chief Executive added that the strategy considered how the workforce would use the strategy to help deliver further savings.

The Deputy Leader went on to say that work was underway to refresh the Corporate plan which would also take into account how the Council were worked with businesses effectively. Business Managers had been introduced and were working closely with businesses to understand what their needs were. He added the strategy would act as a tool for both Officers and Members to deliver the corporate priorities.

Reasons for recommendations

The strategy sets out a clear plan for making best use of Council resources to meet the needs of its customers – residents, businesses, staff and elected Members – while achieving value for money for the Council.

Not only does the strategy aim to improve services, it also anticipates a reduction in costs over the three-year period, through increased productivity, rationalisation and re-procurement of systems and software, automation of service processes, and as more customers seek to access Council services online.

Options

1. That the new ICT and Digital Strategy and Digital Work Programme be approved, subject to Council approving the related funding to pay for the programme's delivery, and be implemented from April 2019 to align with the Council's new Corporate Plan.
2. Propose changes to the ICT and Digital Strategy.
3. Do nothing.

RESOLVED to Recommend FULL COUNCIL:

- 1) The draft ICT and Digital Strategy be approved, and implemented from

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April 2019 to align with the Council's new Corporate Plan.

- 2) That the Digital Work Programme associated with the strategy be approved, subject to Council approving the transfer of funding as detailed in the Pro forma B from Moving Forward (transformation) and Growth and Investment reserves.

108/18 Q1 2018-19 PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORT

The Executive Member for People and Information explained that the report provided data on the Council's performance for the period 1 April to 31 June 2018.

The report suggested a recommendation that the performance measure for the Garden Waste revenue be changed to reflect the number of current subscribers to the Garden waste scheme.

The Deputy Leader added that it was important to note that the Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission had agreed to the performance measures and therefore it was Member driven.

It was **RESOLVED** to agree to the change with the Garden Waste Performance Measure. Members noted the report.

109/18 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

The Executive Member for People and Information explained that the current policy had originally been adopted in 2014. The revised policy updated the Policy in line with changes that had been seen over the last 4-years.

Reasons for recommendations

The current adopted policy was 4-years old and due for a review. Whilst there had not been any fundamental changes to statutory requirements, the new policy was improved for the benefit all those engaging with the Council.

Options

1. To adopt the amended Policy.
2. Do nothing.

RESOLVED that the Equality and Diversity Policy be adopted.

110/18 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

The Executive Member for People and Information explained that the current policy had originally been adopted in 2014. The revised policy updated the Policy in line with changes that had been seen over the last 4-years.

The Chief Executive referred Members to the Performance report that highlighted a 'red' indicator and work was underway to digitalise the process as much as possible.

The Executive Member for Growth asked if there were people that miss-used Freedom of Information. It was explained that there are a lot of general requests that were received from the Press which had been generated and sent out to all Councils. Work was underway to look at how to deal with those

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effectively.

Reasons for recommendations

The current policy had been adopted 4-years ago and was due for a review. Whilst there had not been any fundamental changes to statutory requirements, the new policy had been improved for the benefit of people wishing to contact the Council regarding Freedom of Information.

Options

1. To adopt the amended Policy.
2. Do nothing.

RESOLVED that the Freedom of Information Policy be adopted.

111/18 NORFOLK HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

The Executive Member for Place introduced the Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board, Councillor Bill Borrett, to present the report. He highlighted the Strategic Framework which ultimately aimed to bring partners' existing strategies together to create a single sustainable system. It would allow partners to work together to use resources in the most effective way to prioritise prevention and support the most vulnerable.

The Executive Member for Finance and Delivery urged the Health and Wellbeing Board to lobby MPs to embed Healthcare within the planning process, as Health practices were not currently statutory consultees. However, Breckland currently operated a voluntary practice to notify Health practices of significant growth within the District.

Councillor Crawford emphasised the need to do more for Healthcare as within Thetford there was only one dental practice and with the start of the new housing developments within Thetford he raised concerns that there was currently no plans to increase the dental surgeries within Thetford.

Reasons for Recommendations

By agreeing to the recommendations of the report, Breckland would continue to work in partnership to improve the health and wellbeing of the residents.

Options

1. Agree to the recommendations of the report.
2. Agree to some of the recommendations of the report.
3. Do not agree to the recommendations.

RESOLVED that:

1. The formal sign off of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy be agreed.
2. The current position of the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership be noted.
3. The development of a more formalised approach to Health and Wellbeing within the Council be agreed.

112/18 ENFORCEMENT AGENCY - DELEGATION OF FUNCTION

The Executive Member for Place outlined that the report sought approval of Members for Norwich City Council to have their Enforcement work function

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discharged by Breckland Council.

Reasons for Recommendations

Where it is in the interests of the Breckland Council to agree arrangements for the ARP Enforcement Agency to collect additional debt we will need to agree the arrangements to ensure that the joint working agreement benefits all partners.

Options

1. Breckland Council could decide not to accept delegation of the Enforcement function from Norwich City however if they do so then this would reduce the efficiency of the Enforcement Team.
2. Breckland Council could agree to the delegation of the Enforcement function from Norwich City which would increase the efficiency of the Enforcement team.

RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 9EA of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012 including regulations 4, 5 and 7, subject to approval by Norwich City Council, Breckland Council shall discharge the Enforcement and taking control of goods function (section 12 to the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007) in respect of Council Tax (Section 14 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended)) and Non Domestic Rates (Section 62A of the Local Government Finance Act 1988) for Norwich City Council.

113/18 COUNCIL TAX – LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTY PREMIUMS

The Executive Member for Place presented the report to Members explaining that since April 2013 councils had the discretion to charge up to 50% empty homes premium for properties that had been empty for over 2-years. In offering the new powers the Government were seeking to influence owners to bring empty homes back into use as well as the ability for councils to increase Council Tax income.

Reasons for Recommendations

To bring long term empty properties back into use as soon as possible and to incentivise this by adding penalties through the additional Council tax premium charged.

Options

- 1a) That subject to the relevant legislation coming into force and subject to following any guidelines issued, Cabinet approve an additional 50% Council Tax premium on Long Term Empty properties longer than 2 years, raising the Council Tax to 200%, from 1 April 2019; and
- 1b) That subject to the relevant legislation coming into force and subject to following any guidelines issued, Cabinet approve an additional 100% Council Tax premium on Long Term Empty properties longer than 5 years, raising the Council Tax to 300%, from 1 April 2020; and
- 1c) That subject to the relevant legislation coming into force and subject to following any guidelines issued, Cabinet approve an additional 100% Council Tax premium on Long Term Empty properties longer than 10

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years, raising the Council Tax to 400%, from 1 April 2021; and

- 1d) That subject to recommendations 1-3 being agreed, the Long Term Empty Premium will not apply where a property already subject to a Long Term Empty Premium changes ownership until a further 2 years has passed. At which time the 100% Long Term Empty Premium will apply and this will increase in line with normal progression of the Premium.
- 2) That subject to the relevant legislation coming into force some but not all of the options are approved by Cabinet.
- 3) Do nothing.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) Subject to the relevant legislation coming into force and subject to following any guidelines issued, an additional 50% Council Tax premium on Long Term Empty properties longer than 2 years, raising the Council Tax to 200%, from 1 April 2019 be approved.
- 2) Subject to the relevant legislation coming into force and subject to following any guidelines issued, an additional 100% Council Tax premium on Long Term Empty properties longer than 5 years, raising the Council Tax to 300%, from 1 April 2020 be approved.
- 3) Subject to the relevant legislation coming into force and subject to following any guidelines issued, an additional 100% Council Tax premium on Long Term Empty properties longer than 10 years, raising the Council Tax to 400%, from 1 April 2021 be approved.
- 4) Subject to recommendations 1-3 being agreed, the Long Term Empty Premium would not apply where a property already subject to a Long Term Empty Premium changes ownership until a further 2 years had passed. At which time the 100% Long Term Empty Premium would apply and this would increase in line with normal progression of the Premium be approved.

114/18 SNETTERTON HEATH GROWTH AND DESIGN PLAN

The Deputy Leader explained that the allocation of £150,000 would be used to support the proposed project, allowing Landowners to be involved in the future planning of the Snetterton Heath area.

The Executive Member for Assets added that it would create quality employment opportunities within the Breckland area.

The Executive Member for Finance and Delivery said it was vital for Breckland to work with neighbouring authorities to develop the employment opportunities.

Reasons for Recommendations

Snetterton Heath is Breckland's single largest under developed employment area, with significant development potential. Without further direct actions by the Council, there was a danger that the site would not bring forward enough significant high value sector development, with a corresponding loss of high

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value job opportunities.

Proactive action by the Council could significantly increase the pace of development at Snetterton and influence the quality of developments, especially those which would support high tech sector development and corresponding higher value jobs.

The gathering pace of the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor initiative provide a timely opportunity to push forward development opportunities at Snetterton Heath.

The proposed project supports delivery of the new Local Plan in a significant way.

Options

- 1) Agree the proposed project to support the growth of the Snetterton Heath employment area and authorise the allocation of up to £150k from the Growth and Investment Fund to allow the project to be implemented (Recommended)
- 2) Decide not to pursue a proactive approach to Snetterton Heath and limit the Council's involvement to the provision of additional electricity power (Not Recommended)

It was **RESOLVED**:

- 1) to proceed with the proposed programme of activity in pursuit of supporting the growth of the Snetterton Heath employment area, be approved.
- 2) an allocation of £150k from the Growth and Investment Fund to allow the proposed project to be implemented be agreed.

115/18 ANGLIA REVENUES AND BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP

The minutes of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee held on the 25 September 2018 were noted.

116/18 NEXT MEETING

The arrangements for the next meeting on Tuesday 27 November 2018 at 10.00am at Watton Town Hall, Middle Street, Watton, Thetford IP25 6AG were noted.

There would be an opportunity for the members of the public to ask questions of Cabinet members from 9.30am to 10:00am.

117/18 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.

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118/18 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING - TRANSFER OF SERVICE

Consideration was given to the options as set out in the report.

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to **FULL COUNCIL** that Option 1 be approved.

119/18 BARNHAM BROOM GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB INVESTMENT ASSET

Consideration was given to the options as set out in the report.

RESOLVED that Option 1 be approved.

The meeting closed at 10.50 am

CHAIRMAN