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## BRECKLAND COUNCIL

### At a Meeting of the

### CABINET

Held on Tuesday, 5 February 2019 at 9.30 am in  
Norfolk & Dereham Rooms, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham, NR19 1EE

#### 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	Mr A.P. Joel
Mr D. M. Crawford	Mr K. Martin
Mr P.J. Duigan	Mrs S.M. Matthews
Councillor E. Gould	Mr P. S. Wilkinson
Mr T. J. Jermy	

#### In Attendance

Matthew Hogan	- Executive Manager Growth
Christine Marshall	- Executive Director Commercialisation (S151 Officer)
Phil Mileham	- Strategic Planning Manager
Stephen Ottewell	- Director Capita Planning & Building Control
Maxine O'Mahony	- Executive Director of Strategy & Governance (Monitoring Officer)
Rob Walker	- Executive Director Place
Teresa Smith	- Democratic Services Team Leader

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#### **1/19 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **2/19 APOLOGIES**

None.

#### **3/19 URGENT BUSINESS**

(a) Reference from Overview & Scrutiny (31 January)

The Executive Member for Growth informed Members that the Overview and Scrutiny Commission (meeting held 31 January 2019) had asked the report be forwarded to Cabinet.

**Action By**

The proposed amendment had been the subject of detailed discussion whereby two specific points had been raised:

- Should the policy be amended in order to enable the parish local connection requirement to apply to individual properties and associated lettings 'in perpetuity' (as opposed to simply apply on 'first let');
- Whether it would be possible to apply a parish local connection requirement to all sites in all parishes in the district, regardless of whether a neighbourhood plan was in place.

The Executive Member confirmed the amendment would only be for additional land for those Parishes with a Neighbourhood Plan and a proportion of the affordable houses would be allocated for local people within the Parish only.

Councillor Gould asked who would decide how the proportion of affordable houses reserved for local people would be used in this way, and how it would be managed.

The Executive Manager for Growth said the policy was drafted based on evidence provided and a proportion would be ring-fenced for local people under a Section 106 agreement.

The Executive Member for Growth went on to say that the amendment would affect a small part of the overall policy. He was aware there were weaknesses within the current Housing Allocations Policy and had asked Officers to review the full Policy.

Councillor Crawford raised concern that it would only be offered for those Parishes with a Neighbourhood Plan and put those that did not have a plan would be at a disadvantage.

The Deputy Leader was pleased the Portfolio Holder had given the commitment that the Housing Allocation Policy would commence from Spring 2019. He felt the aim of the Neighbourhood Plan was for Parishes to take ownership of their growth. He felt that the proposed amendment was right in that it could encourage other Parishes to create a Neighbourhood Plan. However he felt it should be based on 100% allocation of the affordable housing as well as for perpetuity, and should the property become vacant then it should be offered back to the district housing list as it would be immoral to leave the property vacant.

The Executive Director for Finance and Delivery pointed out to Members that the report did not mention a specific allocation figure.

Councillor Jermy felt it important to get the principle correct at this point in time as it would be harder to change in the future. He felt there should be the safeguard added that if the property became vacant then it would be offered to those with a housing need on the waiting list, rather than the property remaining vacant.

Members were informed that 'perpetuity' in the legal term meant 125 years, and therefore felt different wording was used to apply 'forever'.

Councillor Joel expressed his disappointment that it was only available to those Parishes who had a Neighbourhood Plan, but would like to see that if

**Action By**

there was no-one available within the village to fill the property should be cascaded to the next neighbouring village. It was confirmed that this would not be the case, and if the property would not be filled by someone with a housing need in the Parish, it would be offered to those on the housing register.

The Leader clarified that Members wanted the policy amended to reflect that 100% of the affordable housing (of additional land for those Parishes with a Neighbourhood Plan) be allocated for those within that Parish with a housing need for an indefinite period ('perpetuity'). Should the property become vacant and there was no-one within the parish with a housing need, it would be offered to the District wide Housing register. However, should someone then come to the village with a need they would have the opportunity to be allocated a property when it became vacant again. It was confirmed that it would be only for those additional houses within the parishes with a Neighbourhood Plan.

It was agreed that Housing Officers would review the Housing Policies over the coming year.

It was **RESOLVED** that the proposed amendments to the Council's Housing Allocations Policy (with a view for an amended policy) proceed to public consultation during February 2019 be approved, subject to it clarifying that: 100% allocation of affordable housing for any additional housing within the Neighbourhood Plan be allocated to those with housing need in the Parish for an indefinite period and a full review of the Housing Allocations Policy would commence in Spring 2019.

**4/19 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Crawford declared he was an unpaid trustee of the Charles Burrell Centre, Thetford.

**5/19 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING**

Councillors Borrett, Crawford, Duigan, Gould, Jermy, Joel, Martin, Matthews and Wilkinson.

**6/19 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)**

None.

**7/19 BRECKLAND COMMUNITY FUNDING APPLICATIONS (STANDING ITEM)**

The Executive Member for Place introduced the three reports together which had been put forward by the Norfolk Community Foundation and sought Members comments.

Councillor Duigan commended the report on behalf of Dereham Town Council to Members informing them that it would provide a modern play area to the residents of Toftwood.

Councillor Crawford had worked closely with the Access Community Trust who had been a big asset to Thetford. He had also worked with the Horticulture Industry Scheme over the past year which had been a valuable

Action By

scheme and by contributing to the funding would allow the project to grow.

The Executive Member for Governance added his support to the three applications and the wider benefit it would bring to the wider communities.

Councillor Jermy added that the Access Community Trust had a strong reputation within Suffolk and wanted to develop their project within Breckland. He had heard at a recent Overview and Scrutiny meeting how homelessness had increased in the last 6-months and felt if the project helped a small number it would be money well spent.

(a) Match Funding (large) application - Dereham Town Council

Reasons for Recommendation

The grant application meets the criteria of the scheme and will boost play provision in an area of Breckland that suffers from a shortfall of play opportunities.

Options

- 1) Fully fund the application set out in the report
- 2) Part fund the application set out in the report
- 3) Do nothing

**RESOLVED** that the grant of £20,000 (or 10% of the project costs, whichever is the lower amount) to Dereham Town Council to significantly expand play provision at the Toftwood Play Area in Limassol Road be approved.

(b) Match Funding (large) application - Access Community Trust

Reason for Recommendation

The grant application meets the criteria of the scheme and will enhance a new project that has been successful in gaining lottery funding.

Options

- 1) Fully fund the application as set out in the report
- 2) Part fund the application as set out in the report
- 3) Do nothing.

**RESOLVED** that the grant of £20,000 (or 20% of the project costs, whichever is the lower amount) to Access Community Trust to establish a one-stop support hub based around a community café in Thetford be approved.

(c) Match Funding (large) application - The Horticulture Industry Scheme CIC

Reasons for Recommendation

The grant application meets the criteria of the scheme and will enhance a project that has been successful in gaining European Social Fund support. The grant will assist a second year of project delivery to take place during which time the CIC should be able to progress towards greater sustainability by increasing the income derived from its trading activities. Because the project is demonstrating progress towards sustainability it is judged to be eligible for Breckland Match Funding.

**Action By**

Options

- 1) Fully fund the application set out in the report
- 2) Part fund the application set out in the report
- 3) Do nothing

**RESOLVED** that the grant of £15,953 (or 30% of the project costs, whichever is the lower amount) to The Horticulture Industry Scheme CIC to continue its work with offenders in Thetford.

**8/19 BUDGET, MEDIUM TERM PLAN AND CAPITAL STRATEGY 2019-20**

The Executive Member for Finance and Delivery gave a detailed report of the Council's budget. The highlights included:

- The Government Finance Settlement had been received since the report was issued and does not change the figure included within the report.
- No reliance on the New Homes Bonus and Revenue Support Grant.
- Norfolk Councils had been successful in being awarded one of the 15 retained National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) 75% pilot scheme for 2019-20. This funding would be set aside with 50% into the Growth and Investment fund and 50% into the General Fund to help protect the Council against short term budget pressures as a result of the Fair Funding Review (effective 2020-21).
- Adequate provision had been set aside in case of future Business Rates Appeals which would be unknown.
- Council Tax would be set at £88.83 for a Band D property (a £4.95 per annum increase on 2018-19 levels).
- The request to increase the establishment by 1.0 FTE which was crucial to ensure that the delivery of the growth within the District.

Councillor Joel asked for an update on the Business Rate Relief and if businesses could still apply for that provision. The Executive Director for Commercialisation confirmed it would continue in this financial year using the tapering system.

Councillor Borrett spoke as Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee and given the financial stresses Breckland and Local Government had faced endorsed the budget; and for the Revenue Support Grant to be removed demonstrated that Breckland had managed their finances well.

Reasons for Recommendation

To comply with budgetary and policy framework.

Options

- 1) Recommendations 1 to 10 are approved.
- 2) Amendments are made before recommendations 1 to 10 are approved.

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to Full Council that:**

- 1) The Breckland revenue estimates and parish special expenses for 2019-20 and outlined position through to 2022-23 (as set out in Appendix B and E of the report) be approved.
- 2) The capital estimates and associated funding for 2019-20 and outline position through to 2022-23 (as set out in Appendix H of the report) be

**Action By**

- approved.
- 3) The fees and charges shown at Appendix D and D2, for adoption on 1 April 2019 be approved.
  - 4) The Council Tax is set at £88.83 for a Band D property in 2019-20 (a £4.95 per annum increase on 2018-19 levels).
  - 5) The financial Medium Term Plan and associated staffing full time equivalents at Appendix A be approved.
  - 6) The Capital Strategy at Appendix G be approved.
  - 7) The Business Rates relief for retail business premises contained in the guidelines at Appendix I of the report be approved (this is offset by a Government grant).
  - 8) The additional one off income generated from the 2019-20 75% Business Rates Pilot scheme is set aside, 50% in the growth and investment reserve to fund future feasibilities and funding applications and 50% to the General Fund (as detailed in paragraph 1.10 of the report).
  - 9) To increase the establishment by 1.0 FTE (shared with SHDC at 60% BC and 40% SHDC) to create a post that adds capacity to support the Chief Executive and Directors at a senior level to move forward a number of strategic priorities and helps to identify the key impacts of emerging national and local policy on the organisation(s) from a corporate point of view, enabling effective mitigation as required (as detailed in paragraph 1.9 of the report).
  - 10) That the full time equivalent is increased by 5.0 FTE in ARP as agreed at ARP Joint Committee on 4 December 2018 (as detailed in paragraph 1.9 of the report) where the costs are fully offset by additional income and shared between the other partners.

**9/19 THETFORD ENTERPRISE PARK DELIVERY PLAN**

The Deputy Leader introduced the report explaining that funding of £75,000 had been made available from the Norfolk Business Rates Pool to support the programme of activity to bring about the first development of the Thetford Enterprise Park. It would also be match-funded from Breckland Council's Growth and Investment Fund. It was highlighted that part of the issue had been about the provision of utilities to serve the development site. By investing into the area would show market confidence and allow the site to be driven forward. Thetford was a strategic site and the next phase would be to market test what the future development would look like.

Councillor Jermy was in support of the investment but urged the Council that as well as the infrastructure requirements, he would like to see come forward a marketing and public relations plan. It was a very exciting project but unfortunately the negative press coverage had had an impact on public relations. The Leader also expressed his disappointment with the negative press and said the Council would do all it could collectively to promote the positive impact the TEP would have to the Thetford community and give confidence to those backing the project.

Action By

Councillor Crawford said the delivery plan was a must not only for Thetford, but for Breckland and Norfolk too.

The Executive Member for Governance also added that the timing was perfect in that it would create opportunities for the up and coming generations and increase the opportunity for better employment. Strategically it was an important link with the Norwich-Cambridge Tech corridor that affected the south of the District.

Reason for Recommendation

The Thetford Enterprise Park (TEP) employment site is on a strategic location immediately adjacent to the A11 and at the heart of the Cambridge-Norwich Tech Corridor. With the completion of the TEP access roundabout and the starting of schemes to upgrade water and electricity to northern Thetford, it is now timely to make progress on remaining TEP site constraints to a point where first developments can commence.

Options

- 1) Accept the £75,000 Norfolk Business Rates Pool funding and allocate £75,000 from the Growth and Investment Fund so that the project can proceed.
- 2) Do not accept the £75,000 from the Norfolk Business Rates Pool and do not proceed with the project.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) Cabinet accept £75,000 from the Norfolk Business Rates Pool to support the proposed delivery plan and authorised the Executive Director Commercialisation in consultation with the Executive Member for Corporate Strategy and Investment to approve the terms of the grant and enter into the grant agreement, be approved.
- 2) Match funding of £75,000 from the Growth and Investment Fund in pursuit of the proposed delivery plan, be approved.

**10/19 NORWICH WESTERN LINK ROUTE OPTIONS CONSULTATION**

The Executive Member for Growth said that he, along with many Members, had been lobbied on the consultation from outside the District. Norfolk County Council had carried out a public consultation which established there had been very strong support for creating a new link between the A47 and Broadland Northway (Formerly Northern Distributor Road). Four routes had been suggested and an assessment of these had been carried out with two options having greater preferred choice that would minimise harm to sensitive environmental assets and make a significant contribution to reducing 'rat-running' of traffic through rural villages by being attractive to users.

Councillor Borrett represented the most eastern ward that included Hockering, and also was a member of the Norwich Western Link steering group. He highlighted that the map within the report had been refreshed, and Route D had been updated to show a 2-prong option to join the A47. He urged Members that given the local interest to endorse Option D (with the Easton prong) which would open up employment land in Easton and would also free the congestion currently experienced at the A47-Easton Road

**Action By**

roundabout. He added that the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital had also suggested Option D as it would help to reduce response times to the north of the city. It was felt that Route C would still encourage rat-running within the local villages.

The Strategic Planning Manager added the indicative costs and deliverability between Option C and D were similar, and it was noted that there would be one less river crossing with Option C.

Reasons for Recommendation

Route options C and D were recommended as these routes provide the greatest benefit in transport capacity terms of the options presented when considered against the forecast cost.

It is considered that the high forecast traffic carrying capacity indicates that options C and D will result in the least amount of traffic using other rural routes. The delivery of the scheme is also of key importance to Breckland and it is important that this is highlighted to Norfolk County Council as part of the consultation process.

Options

- 1) Members endorse route options C and D as the preferred routes in its response to the Western Link Consultation.
- 2) Members endorse one of the alternative route options as the basis of the Council's response to the Western Link Consultation.

**RESOLVED** that having considered the options, Members preferred to support Option D (with the Easton prong) only, based on the benefits to transport access from villages in the north-east of the District.

**11/19 ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT**

The Executive Member for Growth asked Members to note the report.

Councillor Duigan encouraged people to read the report although expressed disappointment the report had taken a while to be reported to Committee. Mr Ottewell said the regulations gave flexibility on when the report could be published so would aim for it to be sooner next year.

Reason for Recommendation

The recommendation has been made in order to comply with the requirements of Section 35 of Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012 in regards to the publication of an Authorities Monitoring Report.

Options

The Authorities Monitoring report represents a factual update about the progress and implementation of the Council's planning policies. It is recommended that Members consider the report and agree its publication and inclusion on the Council's website. The alternative option is to not publish the report, however the authority would not be compliant with the regulations as set out within the report.

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the report be noted and Members agreed for the Authorities Monitoring Report to be published on the Council's website.

Action By

**12/19 ANGLIA REVENUES AND BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP**

The Executive Member for Place pointed out to Members the announcement that had been made by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) in October 2018 that the Universal Support funding to assist new Universal Credit customers to make claims would be passed to Citizens Advice and not to Local Authorities from April 2019.

A trial was underway within Thetford to work out the practical arrangements to understand the communications that would need to be given to the public. Universal Credit was not paid quickly therefore it was critical to work out the support given to those that needed it.

The Executive Member for Finance and Delivery raised his concern that officers were fully trained in dealing with the queries, but the Citizens' Advice offices were very often run by volunteers, and were not always open when the public needed support.

The Deputy Leader asked if there should be a further decision made as to whether additional funding should be provided in order for the Local Authority to continue to provide advice alongside Citizens Advice, and therefore residents could have a choice of who to ask for help.

The Leader requested for further information to understand fully the impact of the loss of finance and what the Council could do to mitigate the loss to ensure those that needed advice were able to access it.

The minutes of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership held on the 4 December 2018 were noted.

**13/19 NEXT MEETING**

The arrangements for the next meeting on Tuesday 19 March 2019 at 9.30am in the Norfolk Room, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke, Dereham were noted.

**14/19 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100(A)(4) 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.

**15/19 ALLOCATION OF GROWTH & INVESTMENT FUNDING**

Members were asked to approve the allocation of funding from the Growth & Investment reserve and authorise the Executive Director of Commercialisation in consultation with the Deputy Leader to undertake option 2.1.

**RESOLVED** that Option 2.1 be approved.

The meeting closed at 11.35 am

CHAIRMAN