

## **Breckland Council narrative**

### **Your Place**

Breckland's vision is to ensure the district remains a place where people and business can thrive. The delivery of quality, cost-effective services - such as regular bin collections, housing support and tackling anti-social behaviour - is at the heart of what we do, but we also seek new opportunities to enhance the district and help local people fulfil their full potential.

Fundamental to this is ensuring the safety of our residents, particularly those who are most vulnerable. We do this by working with our partners to tackle issues such as County Lines drug trafficking and supporting people experiencing domestic abuse.

We strive to ensure each of our five market towns and their surrounding areas are great places in which to live, work, and invest. We want people to choose to live and work in Breckland and to attract visitors to the district, as this keeps our communities vibrant and because increasing footfall will support businesses and local people's jobs.

We recognise we're not the only organisation wanting to make this happen, so to make sure we are working in a planned, joined-up way we've commissioned a series of town development plans to gain a greater understanding of what improvements we can make together.

This will help us build on the significant investment in community-based initiatives already under way, including £6m over four years from our inclusive growth reserve and around £0.5m through our Market Towns Initiative to enhance our towns and safeguard our high streets. We've put in place innovative projects such as a community lottery to help support financially and promote local good causes.

Protecting our environment is an important issue for our residents and they want us to take action around climate change, therefore we are developing a long-term sustainability policy and programme of activity to address this issue.

### **Your Health**

Supporting the health and wellbeing of our residents is a key priority for the council. In addition to funding swimming, gym and sports facilities across the district, we also organise or pay for a number of initiatives for people of all ages, including our summer holiday activity programme for youngsters and our award-winning Silver Social arts programme for older people who may otherwise be at risk of social isolation.

We work with our partners to agree and deliver an overarching approach to preventing mental and physical ill-health, protecting vulnerable people from harm and the provision of wellbeing services for the county. On a day-to-day basis we also keep people safe through business licensing, food safety checks and monitoring the environment.

### **Your Opportunities**

We have a clear and considered strategy for the district's growth - both in terms of housing and jobs - having adopted our Local Plan in December 2019, which we will use as a blueprint for growth until 2036.

We are investing in the district ourselves, as well as working with a range of partners to attract new businesses to the area and supporting existing businesses to grow. This will help them succeed in the

future and create new jobs within Breckland. For example, we are working with others to improve power supply at Snetterton Heath, as well as promoting the site to new businesses through our involvement in the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor partnership.

We are also working with businesses and education services to ensure training is available locally to help close identified skills gaps and support people into new or higher-paid employment.

### **Your Council**

We are able to balance the books and protect our services in part because we were among the first councils to buy offices, warehouses and other assets and then rent them out. We now receive as much money in commercial property rent as we get from local council tax, which means we can keep our share of district council tax among the lowest in the country.

As an evolving council, we anticipate and adapt to the changing needs of local people and the challenges we face. By providing access to more of our services online – such as new online application forms and payment options – people can choose to interact with us quickly, easily and at a time that suits them. It also means our staff can focus on residents with the greatest needs.

Through our Worksmart 20:20 programme, we have set out a vision for the council and its staff to work in a more modern and efficient way. By changing our building, technology and working practices we will not only be more efficient, we will also improve our customers' experience of accessing services and support.