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BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

CABINET

Held on Monday, 4 January 2021 at 9.30 am

Virtual meeting via Zoom

THIS MEETING IS IN LINE WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY AND POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020

PRESENT

Mr S. H. Chapman-Allen
(Chairman)
Mr P.D. Claussen (Vice-
Chairman)
Mr S.G. Bambridge
Mr J.P. Cowen
Mr P.J. Hewett

Mr M. S. Robinson
Mr I. Sherwood
Mrs S. E. Suggitt
Mrs A. M. Webb

Also Present

Mr R. Atterwill
Mr T. Birt
Mr W.P. Borrett
Miss H. Bushell
Councillor M. Chapman-Allen
Mr H. E. J. Clarke
Mrs H Crane
Mr P.J. Duigan

Mr K.S. Gilbert
Mr T. J. Jermy
Cllr T. Kiddell
Mr M. Kiddle-Morris
Mr R.G. Kybird
Mr P. Morton
Mr J.W. Nunn
Mr D. Wickerson

In Attendance

Ralph Burton
Alison Chubbock

Fiona Culshaw
Michael Horn
Nick Kendrick
Greg Pearson
Sarah Shipley
Mark Stinson

Rob Walker
Julie Britton
Teresa Smith

- Strategic Property Manager (BDC)
- Chief Accountant (Deputy Section 151 Officer) (BDC)
- Land Management Officer
- Solicitor to the Council
- Health & Safety Representative
- Senior Policy Advisor
- Shared Public Protection Manager
- Executive Manager Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
- Executive Director Place
- Democratic Services Officer
- Democratic Services Team Leader

Action By

1/21 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2020, were confirmed as a correct record.

Action By

2/21 APOLOGIES

None.

3/21 URGENT BUSINESS

Nothing to report.

4/21 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

5/21 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

The Chairman welcomed all Members present to the meeting.

6/21 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)

The Chairman thanked Officers, Volunteers and Emergency Services and other bodies who supported residents through adverse conditions throughout the Christmas period.

7/21 BRECKLAND COMMUNITY FUNDING APPLICATIONS (STANDING ITEM)

The Executive Member for Community, Leisure & Culture was pleased to inform Members that prior to Christmas, Breckland Council had supported several applications through the Community Match Funding Scheme through delegated decision.

8/21 DRAFT BUDGET, MEDIUM TERM PLAN AND CAPITAL STRATEGY 2021-22

The Executive Member for Finance and Growth presented the report that asked Members to consider the draft capital and revenue budget estimates, the draft medium term financial plan and the draft capital strategy.

He thanked the Finance team for the report and was pleased to put forward a balanced budget for 2021-22 which not only protected frontline services from cuts but would see a number of services enhanced; for example, improved waste service, the recruitment of new officers focused on fly tipping, business support, COVID-compliance and support and animal welfare, and honouring commitments to the climate change and vulnerability programmes.

The pandemic had created uncertainty in terms of levels of government funding, fees and charges income and investment returns that could be expected. However, believed it could be achieved without using the core reserves if the annual council tax was increased by £4.95 for a band D property, though most people in the District would see a smaller rise as around 75% of houses were bands A-C.

The draft budget would also be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny for consideration. In addition, it was available on the website for residents to view and provide feedback through to 21 January 2021. The final budget would be presented to Cabinet and Full Council in February 2021.

Action By

Members thanked the Executive Member and the Finance team for providing a comprehensive report and good results under the circumstances.

Councillor Jermy asked for an update on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme as whilst there would be a financial increase for Breckland, the percentage increase for residents could be considerable and providing support for those on low incomes was crucial. The Chief Accountant confirmed there would not be a proposed change to the Breckland Local Council Tax Support Scheme that offered 91.5% support. The Government had recently introduced new funding to assist with Local Council Tax Support, the majority of which would go to County Council.

Councillor Birt said the increase of £4.95 to the Council Tax (Band D) was the same level as last year and that by applying the maximum gave the impression that the Council was under resourced. He highlighted that the report referenced new targets that were to be identified and whilst a significant amount of money had been allocated to those projects felt there was more detail available than had been presented in the report. He also noted that funding had not been allocated for the climate emergency capital projects and asked how the Council would prepare the Capital budgets in the future to fight climate change.

The Executive Member for Finance and Growth said that the specific figures identified had been shared as it was known what they were likely to be. It was not unusual to have a funding gap which was at £652k and efficiencies would need to be found over the coming year. Looking ahead to future years, alternative ways of working would need to be considered which in turn would result in efficiencies and reduce cost. The Climate Change agenda had been considered as part of the overall plan going forward and funding would be available through the capital budgets going forward.

Options

That the draft capital and revenue budget estimates, the draft medium term financial plan and the draft capital strategy are reviewed.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

To comply with budgetary and policy framework and allow consultation with Members.

RESOLVED that the draft capital and revenue budget estimates, the draft medium term financial plan and the draft capital strategy be reviewed, in preparation for the final budget setting in February 2021.

9/21 BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL OWNED LAND ALONG CROXTON ROAD, THETFORD

The Executive Member for Contracts and Assets presented the report which asked Members to consider the transfer of Breckland District Council owned land at Croxtan Road, Thetford to Norfolk County Council at nil value for the purpose of creating a public cycleway.

Action By

Councillor Robinson fully supported the recommendation as it would provide the much-needed cycle pathway for Thetford Academy and would support the Thetford Sustainable Urban Extension.

Options

- 1) Agree to transfer Breckland District Council owned Land along Croxton Road, Thetford to Norfolk County Council at nil value.

- 2) Refuse to transfer the Breckland District Council land along Croxton Road, Thetford to Norfolk County Council at nil value and ask for the full value of the land which based on District Valuers general land valuation would be £1562.

Reasons for Recommendation

In considering the options members considered whether the reasons outlined had enough weight in this case to agree the nil valuation and considered the legal advice outlined within the report (paragraph 5.1.1).

RESOLVED that:

1. the transfer of Breckland District Council owned land along Croxton Road, Thetford be transferred to Norfolk County Council at nil value for the purpose of creating a public cycleway.

2. Authority to finalise the terms and conditions of the transfer and to complete the same be delegated to Strategic Property Manager and Executive Member for Contracts & Assets.

10/21 CORPORATE HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY 2020

The Executive Member for Public Protection presented the report to Members that considered a revised Health and Safety Policy. It was a legal document that required review every 3-years. Following the consultation process amendments had been made and the layout had been altered to make it easier to read.

Members were informed that it was an internal document for Officers only.

The Chairman suggested that the title of the policy be updated to show 2021.

Options

1. Agree the adoption of the revised Health and Safety Policy.

2. Agree the adoption of the revised Health and Safety Policy with amendments.

3. Do nothing.

Reasons for Recommendation

Action By

1. To ensure Breckland was compliant with its statutory duties.
2. To protect the health and safety and welfare of employees and the health and safety of visitors to Breckland's premises or where services were provided by the Council.

RESOLVED that the Corporate Health and Safety Policy 2020 (2021) be adopted.

11/21 UPDATE ON BRECKLAND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY (STANDING ITEM)

The Executive Member for Customer Engagement & Member Champion for Breckland Sustainable Strategy said that 2021 would be the year the Council would adopt the sustainability strategy and the year climate action would be taken. He invited Council colleagues to take the opportunity to identify their own carbon footprint and how it could be reduced.

Councillor Webb asked when the Environment & Climate Change Officer would start and what information could be shared on the current public engagement survey. Councillor Sherwood informed Members that the new Officer commenced their position on 4 January 2021. The survey for residents was available online and over 150 responses had been received to date.

Councillor Birt asked if Members could have sight of the Carbon Audit report that had been received. He also felt that the carbon off-setting should not be an option for the Council. Councillor Sherwood confirmed the report would be shared with Members by the 15 January, pending discussions with the Strategic Policy Advisor. He went on to say that whilst carbon off-setting was not the best way forward it was an option that may need to be considered in some circumstances. He also outlined that it was important for the Council to set an achievable target for being carbon neutral and that this would come forward as part of the strategy.

Councillor Wickerson asked if there would be a specific budget set aside for the climate change agenda. Members heard that there would be a defined budget to implement the sustainability policy going forward.

Councillor Atterwill said that businesses and households were struggling due to the pandemic and wondered if it would make it difficult to engage and encourage them to change their habits and asked how it could be mitigated. Councillor Sherwood felt that public and businesses identified through the pandemic the importance of the environment, nature and wildlife and felt there was a genuine desire to make that change. He said that there were many grants available for those looking to change energy sources and would like to support residents on how to make those changes which could ultimately help them financially.

12/21 ANGLIA REVENUES AND BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP

The minutes of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership Joint Committee held on 8 December were noted.

Action By

13/21 NEXT MEETING

The arrangements for the next meeting on 1 February 2021 at 9.30am were noted.

14/21 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.

15/21 BARNHAM BROOM GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB INVESTMENT ASSET

Members discussed the report that considered the future long-term interest of the Barnham Broom Golf & Country Club.

RESOLVED that Option 3 of the report be approved subject to the satisfactory completion of the necessary due diligence which shall be delegated to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Executive Member for Contracts & Assets. However, if there is no material progress to the completion of Option 3 within an appropriate timescale, authority is delegated to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Executive Member for Contracts & Assets to undertake Option 2.

The meeting closed at 11.40 am

CHAIRMAN