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BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

CABINET

Held on Monday, 9 January 2023 at 10.00am in
The Breckland Conference Centre, Anglia Room, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke,
Dereham, NR19 1EE

PRESENT

Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen
(Chairman)
Cllr Paul Claussen (Vice-
Chairman)
Cllr Gordon Bambridge
Cllr Philip Cowen
Cllr Helen Crane

Cllr Paul Hewett
Cllr Jane James
Cllr Sarah Suggitt
Cllr Alison Webb

Also Present

Cllr Bill Borrett
Cllr Terry Jermy
Cllr Terry Land
Cllr Keith Martin

Cllr Philip Morton
Cllr Paul Plummer
Cllr Peter Wilkinson

In Attendance

Sarah Barsby

Alison Chubbock
Andrew D'Arcy
Andrew Holdsworth
Maxine O'Mahony
Sarah Wolstenholme-Smy

Simon Wood
Julie Britton
Teresa Smith

- Assistant Director People and Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
- Section 151 Officer & Assistant Director Finance
- Planning Policy Manager
- Assistant Director Economy and Growth
- Chief Executive & Head of Paid Service
- Legal Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
- Director of Planning & Building Control
- Democratic Services Officer
- Democratic Services Team Leader

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1/23 MINUTES

The minutes together with the restricted minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2/23 APOLOGIES

None.

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3/23 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

4/23 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillors Hewett and Cowen declared an indirect interest in agenda item 8 Local Plan: Full update and Options and would therefore not take part in the discussion.

5/23 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING

The Chairman welcomed all non-members to the meeting.

6/23 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)

None.

7/23 BRECKLAND COMMUNITY FUNDING APPLICATIONS (STANDING ITEM)

Councillor Alison Webb, Executive Member for Health and Communities was pleased to report that there would be two grant schemes available to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III.

The first scheme would see grants available of up to £500 for charities and organisations wishing to hire venues, decoration or entertainment for celebrations. In addition, parish and town councils would be eligible to apply for match funding of up to £200 for item such as flag poles. The scheme would be open from now.

In addition, Breckland Council would provide to each of the Market Towns a large LED screen for the Town Councils to live stream the Coronation.

8/23 LOCAL PLAN: FULL UPDATE & OPTIONS

Councillor Sarah Suggitt, Executive Member for Strategic and Operational Planning reminded Members that Breckland Council were undertaking a full update of the Local Plan. In preparation for this, the Council must consult with local residents to seek their views on the proposed content of the plan. In addition, local and regional partners such as neighbouring local authorities and government agencies would also be engaged within the process.

Councillor Crane asked if sustainability and climate change would be at the forefront of the Local Plan. Members heard that work was currently being undertaken on the design guide and an information pack on how to take part in the consultation would be released in due course.

Councillor Borrett thanked Officers for the briefing that had been given to Parish Councils at the end of 2022 which had been well attended and helped increase understanding. He went on to suggest a minor amendment to Question 13, which the Executive Member agreed would be taken as a minor amendment subject to approval of the recommendations.

The Chairman asked how the consultation would be publicised. It was confirmed that information would be sent to all Parish Councils as well as to

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other local bodies who had expressed interest. Information would be shared through the social media channels as well as the common place website. Information would be available online and would be accessible in different formats if required.

Options:

- 1) To approve the recommendations
- 2) To not approve the recommendations

Reasons for Recommendation

The Preparation of a Local Plan is a statutory requirement and must follow a statutory procedure, including public consultation. The approval of the Issues and Options Report for consultation represents the first opportunity for community engagement in the process and ensure that the Council is preparing the Plan in accordance with Regulations and as such will significantly reduce the risk of failure at Examination.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the Breckland Local Plan Issues and Options documents for public consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, for a period of 8 weeks, as set out in Appendix A to the Report be endorsed.
- 2) delegated authority be granted to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Planning to make any necessary typographical or other minor changes to the Report prior to its publication for consultation.

9/23 DRAFT BUDGET, MEDIUM TERM PLAN AND CAPITAL STRATEGY 2023-24

Councillor Philip Cowen, Executive Member for Finance, Revenue and Benefits 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 was pleased to announce that as a result detailed within the report the Council could propose a balanced budget, not only for the year ahead but also for the following year which he was extremely proud of.

There was a proposed increase to the Band D Council Tax level to rise to £108.63, but within Breckland 76% of homes were within Bands A-C and thus would pay less than £1.86 per week for statutory services and importantly the discretionary services that the Council provided.

Councillor Jermy said if the budget was approved it would see the Band D increase to over £100 per year for the first time. The proposed increase would also put further strain on the cost-of-living crisis but was pleased to see that the Council Tax Hardship fund would still be available. He had noted that budget had been set aside for the hardship fund and asked if there would be any flexibility should the fund be spent. Councillor Jermy went on to ask what the risk would be if the significant income listed within the Capital Strategy was not received.

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Councillor Cowen assured Members that the Anglia Revenues Partnership were very focussed on the scale of the issues and the challenges being faced. He was also aware that whilst the proposed Council Tax increase would add extra financial pressures to the residents some would be entitled to Council Tax relief. He also added that the budget would include the rental income instead if the income was not received.

The Chairman added that the Council Tax hardship fund had been increased by an additional £20k which would be added to the £50k currently left within the budget for this financial year.

Councillor Jermy asked if that amount remained in the budget for this financial year and further asked if there should be a review to the process.

Councillor Morton asked for further detail on the Evolve Programme, particularly with the Housing model and solar energy opportunities. Members heard that other Housing Models used across the country were being investigated as well as looking at ways to utilise resources for best and effective ways that linked to the sustainability agenda.

Councillor Borrett said that all residents of Breckland had benefitted from the lowest Council Tax in Breckland due to sound decisions made by the Council in the past. Council Tax was a delicate balance and felt that the budget did balance the needs of the vulnerable within Breckland.

Councillor Land had seen the recent press release regarding the fact that voters will now require ID to vote at the polling stations and asked had the Council budgeted appropriately to allow for those changes.

The Chairman assured Members that everything was in place to promote this change and Officers would link with national media campaigns to articles within the Breckland Magazine.

Options:

- 1) That the draft capital and revenue budget estimates, the draft medium term financial plan and the draft capital strategy are reviewed.
- 2) Do nothing.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

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

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 2023.

10/23 NEXT MEETING

The arrangements for the next meeting on Monday 6 February at Watton Town Council, Middle Street, Watton, IP25 6AG were noted.

There would be an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions of Cabinet from 9.30am and the main meeting would follow at 10.00am.

11/23 EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC

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This item was not required.

12/23 RESTRICTED MINUTE - 21 NOVEMBER 2022

The restricted minutes from the meeting held on Monday 21 November were agreed as a correct record (under minute reference 1/23).

The meeting closed at 10.50 am

CHAIRMAN