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**BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

**At a Meeting of the**

**CABINET**

**Held on Monday, 3 July 2023 at 9.30 am in  
The Breckland Conference Centre, Anglia Room, Elizabeth House, Walpole Loke,  
Dereham, NR19 1EE**

**PRESENT**

Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen (Chairman)	Cllr Helen Crane
Cllr Sarah Suggitt (Vice- Chairman)	Cllr Philip Cowen
Cllr Claire Bowes	Cllr Alison Webb
Cllr Paul Claussen	

**Also Present**

Cllr Roger Atterwill	Cllr Linda Monument
Cllr Gordon Bambridge	Cllr Paul Plummer
Cllr Harry Clarke	Cllr Peter Wilkinson
Cllr Terry Jermy	Cllr Robert Kybird
Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris	

**In Attendance**

Maxine O'Mahony	- Chief Executive & Head of Paid Service
Sarah Barsby	- Assistant Director People and Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Claire Burton	- Organisational Development Performance Manager
Ralph Burton	- Assistant Director Property and Infrastructure
Gill Duffy	- Housing Manager
Zoe Footer	- Commercial Property & Estates Manager
Andrew Holdsworth	- Assistant Director Economy and Growth
Stephen James	- Executive Director
Ben Meen	- ICT & Digital Manager
Riana Rudland	- Assistant Director Contracts & Operations
Sarah Wolstenholme-Smy	- Legal Services Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
Simon Wood	- Director of Planning & Building Control
Teresa Smith	- Democratic Services Team Leader
Nick Kendrick	- Health & Safety Representative
Ben Cooper-Welch	- Contract Monitoring Officer

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**59/23 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 May 2023 were confirmed as a correct

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record and signed by the Chairman.

**60/23 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Ashby and Hewett.

**61/23 URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**62/23 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Cowen declared an interest in Agenda item 15, Breckland Bridge Business Plan as being the Council's Director on the Board and would leave the room during that item.

**63/23 NON-MEMBERS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE MEETING**

The Chairman welcomed all Members present to the meeting, including five students from a local school who were on work experience placements.

**64/23 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)**

The Chairman was proud that Breckland Council had been a finalist in the recent Local Government Chronicle (LGC) awards and felt proud to have won the category for Health and Social Support. It was as a result of the incredible partnership across third party sectors, the NHS and County Council to support those most vulnerable within the communities. He was grateful to all Officers and thanked the partners who had placed trust in the Council and by working together helped to deliver incredible services which were valued by so many.

**65/23 BRECKLAND COMMUNITY FUNDING APPLICATIONS (STANDING ITEM)**

Nothing to report.

**66/23 HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY**

Councillor Claire Bowes, Executive Member for Housing and Homelessness presented the report that asked Members to approve the Housing Assistance Policy.

Councillor Clarke welcomed the report and asked the Executive Member how she envisaged the reporting of the Discretionary grants and asked if there would be additional budget allocated to ensure support reached the vulnerable residents.

The Executive Member said that the vulnerable cases continued to be a priority and had also approached the local MP to help further enhance the service.

Councillor Kybird said he would request that the Norfolk Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the disabled facilities grants on a Norfolk wide basis.

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**Options:**

- 1) That members approve the Housing Assistance Policy.
- 2) That members do not approve the Housing Assistance Policy.

**Reasons for Recommendation:**

To meet the requirement of the Regulatory Reform Order 2002, being clear about how housing grants were prioritised and assessed.

**RESOLVED** that the Housing Assistance Policy be approved.

**67/23 STRATEGIC HOUSING SOLUTIONS**

Councillor Claire Bowes, Executive Member for Housing and Homelessness presented the report that asked Cabinet Members to agree the key steps in progressing the Council's approach to supporting housing solutions for residents.

Councillor Jermy commended the Executive Member for bringing the proposal forward. He said the Council had been too reliant on other providers and as the Authority had seen an increase in demand felt it was important to consider the proposal for long term investment.

Councillor Cowen added that the Council had not been in the housing market for some time and believed it was time to change and move with the times. He also added that one of the hidden benefits of moving into the market would mean it could do more to influence the private sector and lead by example.

Councillor Claussen welcomed the proposal and added that by being a registered provider would be a major step to consider all options available.

**Options:**

- 1) As set out in the report, take the necessary steps to become a Registered Provider, and establish the required strategy and policy documents to provide robust and transparent housing service to residents.
- 2) Do nothing. Not recommended as the Council would be acting against clear advice from the regulator and would not receive the associated benefits of becoming a Registered Provider.

**Reasons for Recommendations:**

Becoming a Registered Provider would allow Breckland to effectively manage the implications of the residential units acquired through the Local Authority Housing Fund. The delegated authority would allow for the necessary application to be submitted, and for the subsequent work to be carried out to establish the new way of working.

The amended Tenancy Strategy, the Tenancy Policy and Local Lettings Plan were required to ensure that Breckland had the necessary documentation in place to enable it in its new role as a Registered Provider and let properties.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1) Breckland District Council becomes a Registered Provider (of Social

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- Housing), and delegates to the Executive Director, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing & Homelessness, application via the Regulator of Social Housing
- 2) the updated Tenancy Strategy as set out in Appendix A of the report be agreed.
  - 3) the Tenancy Policy as set out in Appendix B of the report be agreed.
  - 4) the Local Lettings Plan as set out in Appendix C of the report be agreed.
  - 5) Delegated Authority be given to the Executive Director, in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing & Homelessness, to take the necessary steps to implement the above.

**68/23 CORPORATE HEALTH & SAFETY**

Councillor Helen Crane, Executive Member for Waste, Environmental Health, Licensing and Sustainability proposed the revised Health and Safety Policy and recommended to Members its formal adoption and implementation.

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:

To ensure Breckland was compliant with its statutory duties.

To protect the health and safety and welfare of employees and the health and safety of visitors to Breckland's premises or where services are provided by the Council.

To ensure the policy was up to date and stands up well to external scrutiny/challenge.

**RESOLVED** that the revised Health and Safety Policy contained at Appendix A to the report for implementation be approved.

**69/23 LEISURE CENTRES DE-CARBONISATION**

In the absence of the Executive Member for Health and Communities, Councillor Helen Crane, the Executive Member for Waste, Environmental Health, Licensing and Sustainability presented the report.

Opportunities had been identified which would improve carbon reduction and energy saving measures at the Leisure centres, and provided a recommendation for a preferred technology mix to move into delivery at both PFI sites ensuring optimum decarbonisation and / or energy cost saving.

Councillor Jermy referred to the report and had expected to see a further financial breakdown of the preferred Option 2 recommendation. The Assistant Director for Contracts and Operations explained that there were three options provided but that option two would give the best value for money.

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Councillor Kybird asked why ground source heat pumps had not been considered as an option. It was explained that whilst the technology had been considered, the car-park contained underground gas-piping and therefore ground source heat pumps would not be suitable.

Riana Rudland explained that the consultants had considered all technology available which had been rated in order of the best return in investment in the shorter term. It was suggested that it would cost in the region of £1.4m for the technology of ground source pumps to be installed.

Councillor Atterwill was involved in the original electrical installation of the Leisure Centre in Dereham and asked for sight of the proposed new plans.

Options:

Option 1 - To release funding to the value of **£238,675 (£240,000)** and proceed with delivery of 'Option 1' from report. This would see the following delivered at Thetford & Dereham. Installation of destratification fans (pool hall only), BMS optimisation works, lagging improvements. This option would see an estimated overall cost saving of £77,169 across both sites (Thetford = £20,270, Dereham = £56,899) and a reduction in total annual carbon emissions (TCO2e) from both centres would see an estimated overall annual carbon reduction of 105.06 tonnes across both sites (Thetford = 38.79, Dereham = 66.27) \*

Option 2 - To release funding to the value of **£528,524 (£530,000)** and proceed with delivery of 'Option 2' from report. This would see the following delivered at Thetford & Dereham. Installation of destratification fans (whole centre), BMS optimisation works, lagging improvements, optimisation of heating systems. Thetford would also see replacement of single glazed windows. This option would see an estimated overall cost saving of £116,171 across both sites (Thetford = £51,322, Dereham = £64,849) and a reduction in total annual carbon emissions (TCO2e) from both centres would see an estimated overall annual carbon reduction of 175.55 tonnes across both sites (Thetford = 89.10, Dereham = 86.45) (Recommended)\*

Option 3 - To release funding to the value of **£1,016,215 (£1,020,000)** and proceed with delivery of 'Option 3' from report. This would see the following delivered at Thetford & Dereham. Installation of destratification fans (pool hall only for Thetford, whole centre for Dereham), BMS optimisation works, lagging improvements, building fabric improvements, optimisation of heating systems. This option would see an estimated overall cost saving of £122,178 across both sites (Thetford = £54,127, Dereham = £68,051) and a reduction in total annual carbon emissions (TCO2e) from both centres would see an estimated overall annual carbon reduction of 190.38 tonnes across both sites (Thetford = 97.42, Dereham = 92.96) \*

Option 4 - Do nothing.

*\*All option costings above are inclusive of design / project management fee estimates and contingency*

Reasons for Recommendation:

Option 2 (as outlined in Para 2.2 of the report) offered the largest mitigation in terms of revenue impact for capital investment made and provided a

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significant improvement in terms on annual carbon reduction.

Although option 3 (as outlined in Para 2.3 of the report) would see further annual cost savings and annual carbon reduction, the difference in both areas when compared to option 2 which would be gained from a significant uplift in capital expenditure does not lead to a recommended option.

As part of the PFI contract, a contractual benchmarking exercise is currently taking place which will result in an increase to the payment made to the leisure contractor in April 2024. The initial benchmarking figure, which would fall to the Council, received from leisure operator on **31<sup>st</sup> May 2023** was **£545,651**. As identified in para 3.1 of the report, capital expenditure to fund the installation of these decarbonisation / energy saving technologies can be used as part of this process to mitigate against these costs as the leisure operator will benefit short to medium term from reduced energy consumption and therefore lesser utility costs.

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to FULL COUNCIL:**

- 1) To agree to the release of funds up to **£530,000** from **Growth Reserves** to enable to the delivery of preferred technology mix (Option 2 of this report) to ensure improvements at both PFI sites for carbon reduction and / or energy cost saving.
- 2) to delegate authority to accept the terms and conditions of any future grant funding secured to Executive Member for Health & Communities in consultation with the Assistant Director Contracts and Operations as officers continue to explore all external funding opportunities.
- 3) That delegation be given to the Assistant Director Contracts and Operations and the Council Solicitor in consultation with the Executive Member for Property, Projects and Procurement to carry out negotiations with Parkwood Leisure and associated companies to obtain the best benchmarking outcome for the Council.

**70/23 PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK REVIEW**

Councillor Alison Webb, Executive Member for Customer and Corporate Services explained to Members that the Performance Framework had been refined to incorporate feedback received and simplify the language contained within the document.

Councillor Jermy said that the report had not been presented in a clear format and that some text had been blurred out.

The Chairman explained that as the document was not clear, he felt the Cabinet would not be able to make an informed decision as all information was not present. He suggested that the Officers would see if the report could go to Overview & Scrutiny Commission first and then back to Cabinet for ratification.

The Chairman requested that the item was deferred.

Options:

Option1 - To agree to the adoption of the revised performance framework

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Option 2 - Do nothing.

**Reasons for Recommendation:**

The council requires a framework which describes its current performance management approach. By having this, the council is able to take a more unified approach to performance management.

**RESOLVED** that the adoption of the revised Performance Framework be deferred.

**71/23 ICT INFORMATION SECURITY POLICY**

Councillor Alison Webb, Executive Member for Customer and Corporate Services presented the report that asked for approval to implement the updated IT Information Security Policy and delegated authority be given to update the document in line with changing threats and processes.

**Options**

Option 1 - Approve the implementation of the IT Information Security Policy contained within Appendix 1 of the report and provide delegated authority for future updates to the relevant Assistant Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Option 2 – Approve the implementation of the IT Information Security Policy contained within Appendix 1 of the report but do not provide delegated authority to the relevant Assistant Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for future updates.

Option 3 – Do not approve the implementation of the IT Information Security Policy contained within Appendix 1 of the report.

**Reasons for Recommendation:**

The current policy requires refreshing to align with changes in systems, processes, technologies and threats.

There is a need to enshrine in policy a number of behaviours and processes that are not currently in existing policies (i.e. involvement of IT & Digital in procurement of new systems, behaviours around cyber security etc.)

With threats and technologies constantly evolving, there is a need for delegated authority to allow for frequent interim updates to ensure that the policy remains fit for purpose.

**RESOLVED** that the implementation of the IT Information Security Policy be approved; and delegated authority be granted to the relevant Assistant Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for future updates.

**72/23 CARBON AUDIT 22'23**

Councillor Helen Crane, Executive Member for Waste, Environmental Health, Licensing and Sustainability provided Cabinet with an update on the latest figures of the Council's Carbon Audit.

Councillor Jermy felt it was important to be clear when there had been a reduction, or an item was no longer being recorded. He was pleased to see

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the monitoring but felt that reviewing interventions was key.

Councillor Kybird asked how the target of reaching zero CO2 emissions for the street lighting by 2024 would be achieved. Councillor Crane informed that all streetlights had now been placed under the green energy tariff.

Options:

Do nothing. Note the contents of the report.

Reasons for Recommendation:

The content of the report provided an update on the progress in reducing the Council's organisational carbon footprint.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet acknowledges the content of the report.

**73/23 BRECKLAND BRIDGE BUSINESS PLAN**

Councillor Sam Chapman-Allen presented a statement on behalf of the Executive Member for Property, Projects and Procurement

The statement highlighted three important aspects of the partnership. The first related to how the Council obtained the best return from its property and land assets across the District. This remained priority but it was recognised that the property and land the Council owns could assist local communities with other uses and therefore urged all Members to engage with the consultation phases to help inform the decisions that were made.

The second area of input was around the joint venture and what it produced. Currently the focus was on the availability of assets for residential housing delivery and through being a partner in the joint venture can lead on good design and sustainability throughout the schemes.

Thirdly, Breckland Bridge has recognised the importance of construction and development has on the environment and the environmental policy and as part of the business plan aimed to minimise impact, comply fully with legislation and improve standards and sustainability in every aspect of design through to completion to protect the environment.

Councillor Atterwill had recently attended a Housing Allocations workshop which he urged all Members to attend to understand the challenges. He raised that whilst the Breckland Bridge model brought forward development he asked why more affordable homes were not built as the land would be cheap.

Ralph Burton, the Assistant Director for Property and Infrastructure said that land has been used for social housing recently in Thetford, and where possible the joint venture looks to balance and provide as much affordable housing where it can.

Councillor Atterwill added that the Council had spent £1.3m on temporary accommodation and the challenge was to reduce that bill and by developing on the Council's own land could help to reduce that bill.

The Chairman added that both the Executive Member for Property Projects and Procurement and the Executive Member for housing and Homelessness



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were working closely together to look at the delivery of affordable homes.

Councillor Clarke said that the list of sites for Dereham had expanded but felt there was a shortage of green open spaces and wanted to see better collaboration on how to equate value with better returns for the residents.

The Chairman said the Council looked to dispose of up to 10 sites per annum which was linked to the budget. All ward Members were encouraged to be involved in the consultation process to understand how best to deliver green open spaces and deliver the housing challenges

**Options:**

Option 1: Cabinet recommends to Council to approve the updated Breckland Bridge Ltd business plan for 2023-2028.

Option 2: Cabinet does not recommend to Council to approve the updated Breckland Bridge Ltd business plan for 2023-2028.

**Reason(s) for Recommendation:**

The main reasons for approving the business plan are as follows:

- Overall performance of the partnership is good with three successfully delivered projects, further activity to churn the small sites and wider property development support and advice received from the partnership.
- The next business plan is viable, based on the assumptions upon which it has been modelled and providing the risks are managed and the controls embedded within the legal documentation are adhered to.
- There are added benefits to being in the partnership and the business plan is delivery focused. This does not lose the flexibility of receiving services from the partnership as required and the ability to access additional property development expertise and skills efficiently.
- Subject to the risks identified which continue to be monitored the overall return to the Council is still positive in terms of regeneration and financial outturn.

**RESOLVED that CABINET RECOMMENDS TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the updated Breckland Bridge Ltd business plan for 2023 - 2028.

**74/23 THETFORD 3G**

Councillor Alison Webb, Executive Member for Customer and Corporate Services presented the report in the absence of the Executive Member for Health and Communities.

The report presented findings of a feasibility study for the consideration of making funds available to contribute towards the installation of a third-generation (3G) Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) at Breckland Leisure Centre & Waterworld, Thetford on the provision of a successful planning decision and funding application via the Football Foundation.

Councillor Jermy was pleased to see the report and believed it to be a great example of working in partnership.

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Options:

Option 1:

- 1) That Cabinet recommend full council agree release of funds up to £109,000 from the Inclusive Growth reserve and the Growth and Investment Reserve for the redevelopment of the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) site at Breckland Leisure Centre & Waterworld, Thetford with a third-generation (3G) Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) being installed as its replacement. (recommended)
- 2) That Cabinet recommend to full council to accept all grant funding following football foundation application (c.£487,000) and contribution from the leisure operator (c.£100,000) and set up necessary budgets to spend. (recommended)
- 3) That Cabinet recommend to full council to delegate authority to accept the terms and conditions of the football funding grant to the Executive Member for Leisure in consultation with the Assistant Director Contract and Operations (recommended)
- 4) That delegation is given to the Assistant Director Contracts and Operations in consultation with the Executive Member for Property, Projects and Procurement to carry out negotiations with Parkwood Leisure and associated companies to obtain the best benchmarking outcome for the Council (recommended)

Option 2:

- 1) Do Nothing

Reasons for Recommendations:

The non-technical feasibility report delivered from TRI-Sports showed a potential significant increase in participation that could see an increase from 45% to 80-90% hire rate at the facility resulting in increased participation.

The Football Association training model estimates that there is need for four full sized 3G AGPs within the Breckland District area. Current supply shows there is only one full sized 3G Football Turf Pitch which is based at Dereham Neatherd High School (installed 2014), with a second which is a small sided pitch based at Dereham Northgate High School (installed 2016). This proposal therefore supports an identified need locally.

The existing Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) was laid in 2006 with no evidence of ever being resurfaced. The Neil Allen Associates report from 2017 identified that the average age for a pitch carpet is 6 – 10 years dependent on the level of use. This means that the existing MUGA is at the end of its expected lifecycle and will require resurfacing in the near future.

The total project cost is £695,735. The Local Football Facilities Plan (LFFP) initiative from the Football Foundation (FF) essentially allows this project to be completed and a high spec new facility to be built for (maximum) £109,000 investment from the Council.

Failing to deliver this project at this site will mean the FF will deliver this project elsewhere in the town. Should the project not progress due to Council decision and the facility be delivered elsewhere it would incur significant costs for the remainder of the PFI contract due to loss of revenue. This proposal therefore avoids significant liability costs as a result of a competing facility

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locally.

**RESOLVED that CABINET RECOMMENDS to FULL COUNCIL:**

- 1) To agree release of funds up to £109,000 from the Inclusive Growth reserve and the Growth and Investment Reserve for the redevelopment of the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) site at Breckland Leisure Centre & Waterworld, Thetford with a third-generation (3G) Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) being installed as its replacement.
- 2) To accept all grant funding following football foundation application (c.£487,000) and contribution from the leisure operator (c.£100,000) and set up necessary budgets to spend.
- 3) To delegate authority to accept the terms and conditions of the football funding grant to the Executive Member for Leisure in consultation with the Assistant Director Contract and Operations
- 4) That delegation is given to the Assistant Director Contracts and Operations and the Council Solicitor in consultation with the Executive Member for Property, Project and Procurement to carry out negotiations with Parkwood Leisure and associated companies to obtain the best benchmarking outcome for the Council.

**75/23 REFERENCE FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION (STANDING ITEM)**

Nothing to report.

**76/23 ANGLIA REVENUES AND BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP**

Councillor Cowen mentioned that it was the first meeting of the Joint Committee since the recent local elections and now included new Members. He went on to explain that as a result of the recent economic situation there had seen a slight fall in the collection of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates, which would be closely monitored.

However, the Anglia Revenues Partnership continued to perform well, especially with the recovery of significant sums of money particularly related to single person discount fraud.

Members noted the minutes of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership meeting held on 13 June 2023.

**77/23 NEXT MEETING**

The arrangements for the next meeting on Monday 11 September at 9.30am in the Anglia Room, Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham, NR19 1EE were noted.

The meeting closed at 10.50 am

CHAIRMAN