

BOSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

NOTICE OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET ON 24 JUNE 2020

DATE OF PUBLICATION: FRIDAY, 26 JUNE 2020

DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: FRIDAY, 3 JULY 2020

NOTES:

A COPY OF THE CABINET AGENDA HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL. IF YOU REQUIRE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION ON ANY ISSUE PLEASE CONTACT, IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER OR OFFICER NAMED IN THE RIGHT HAND COLUMN.

MEETING OF THE CABINET

24 June 2020

Present:

Councillor Paul Skinner, in the Chair

Councillors Nigel Welton, David Brown, Martin Griggs,

Martin Howard MSc. PCGM, Cert Ed, Chelcei Sharman and Yvonne Stevens

Officers –

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive (Monitoring Officer), Chief Finance Officer and S151 Officer, Head of Regulatory Services, Head of Environmental Operations, Head of Place and Space, Associate Head of Service, Senior Democratic Services Officer and Democratic Services Officer

76 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 20 May 2020 and 27 May 2020 were received and signed by the Chairman.

77 APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

78 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

79 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No questions had been received from members of the public.

80 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (STANDING ITEM)*

There were no recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

81 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BOSTON TOWN AREA COMMITTEE (BTAC) (STANDING ITEM)

There were no recommendations from the Boston Town Area Committee.

82 QUARTER 4 REPORT – PERFORMANCE, RISK AND FINANCE

<p>DECISION</p> <p>1. That the quarterly monitoring information for Quarter 4 be noted.</p> <p>2. That the specific finance recommendations in the report be agreed, summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F1: The reserve movements detailed in Table 6 • F2: The updated capital programme detailed in Table 8 • F3: The supplementary estimate in respect of the Levy Account Surplus and Covid-19 Emergency Funding, as set out in Table 11 	<p>Portfolio Holders and Officer</p> <p>Cllrs Skinner, Welton & Howard</p> <p>SR/PJ</p>
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REASON FOR DECISION

Cabinet Members presented the headlines of the quarterly monitoring information on performance, risk and finance for Quarter 4 of 2019/20 (April 2019 to March 2020) in relation to their own portfolios.

With respect to performance, the areas of success and improvement were:

- Planning applications (Cllr Welton)
- Supporting business growth and promoting the Borough (Cllr Welton)
- Switchboard (Cllr Welton)
- Relatively small number of complaints, from which learning points will be taken (Cllr Welton)
- Benefit and Council Tax Support processing times (Cllr Howard)
- Collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates close to target (Cllr Howard)
- Information requests (Cllr Howard)
- Gym memberships (Cllr Brown)
- Event income (Cllr Brown)
- Broadly compliant food businesses (Cllr Stevens)
- Car parking income (Cllr Sharman)
- Housing completions, empty properties and housing standards (Cllr Griggs)

Areas of concern/watching brief were:

- Swim sessions (Cllr Brown)
- Gym membership (Cllr Brown)
- Food inspections (Cllr Stevens)
- Household waste and recycling (Cllr Stevens)
- Fly tip response times (Cllr Stevens)
- Market income (Cllr Sharman), which would be considered during the Transformation Programme

The report also listed other items of note:

- Commercial waste growth in income and number of customers (Cllr Stevens)

Members stressed that the significant impact of the pandemic would be reflected in future quarters' reports.

Councillor Howard presented the quarterly risk information. The strategic risks had been reviewed for Quarter 4 and also to reflect the position as at June 2020, particularly with regard to the impact of Covid-19 and the proposed strategic alliance with East Lindsey DC. A new strategic risk had been identified in respect of the proposed alliance which would be evaluated and scored in Q1 of 2020/21. A summary of strategic risks was set out the report and full details were contained in Appendix B.

Councillor Howard then outlined the financial management information. The key headlines were set out in the report as follows:

- Revenue spending for the year was contained within the budget, with the variances set out in section three of the report.
- Over 80% of the Controlling Migration Fund grant money had been spent at the year end.
- Trading income was slightly below the budget, in part due to CoVid impacts
- Changes to reserves were set out in section 6, relating to capital funding reserve, housing reserve and property funds returns reserve.
- Treasury returns were above the budget, although the capital value of property funds had been affected by both CoVid and Brexit outcome uncertainties
- Spend for the year for the Capital Programme was set out in Table 8, with slippage of £865K into 2020/21 mainly relating to Disabled Facilities Grants and the Multi Use Games Area.
- Supplementary estimates the return of levy surplus monies from the Government, and the receipt of Section 31 grant to support initial losses incurred from CoVid-19.
- In respect of Business rates, a deficit was recorded for the year, and CoVid impacts

on the future rate base would reduce the amount the council retained from business ratepayers

- Council Tax Support (CTS) was in line with the budget, but CoVid will increase the caseload for CTS, and therefore the cost to the council, going forward.

Councillor Howard proposed that the recommendations contained in the report be approved, which were reserve movements; changes to the capital programme – slippage for Disabled Facility Grants and the Multi Use Games Area and supplementary estimates for the return of levy surplus monies and receipt of Covid-19 emergency funding.

OTHER OPTIONS OR ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

None.

RECORD OF ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

RECORD OF ANY DISPENSATION GRANTED

None.

83 COVID 19 - BUDGET IMPACT UPDATE

DECISION 1. That the measures introduced by the Government that have affected the Council's financial position, and the support to businesses and residents, be noted; 2. That the current projected financial 2020/21 position be noted and that future reports be requested as the situation develops; 3. That the on-going lobbying exercises to ensure that the Government recompenses the Council appropriately be noted.	Portfolio Holder and Officer Cllr Howard PJ
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REASON FOR DECISION

Councillor Howard presented a report, providing an update on the measures introduced by

the Government since May 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council's actions and the impact on the Council's finances.

The report stated that the last few months had seen unprecedented changes in the way the Council and the wider economy operated as a consequence of the global pandemic. Cabinet had received a report in May which outlined the situation at that time.

The Council had been helping support the Government response through the payment of Business Grants amounting to over £14m, business rate reliefs had been processed totalling £9m, as well as the additional award of Council Tax Support.

Since May the Government had made further announcements which impacted on the Council in terms of administering grants for businesses and those which directly impacted on the Council's budget and its actions to support the response to the pandemic, namely Discretionary Business Grant Fund and Re-opening of the High Streets.

The most significant pressure facing the Council during 2020/21 would be income losses across a range of discretionary services as well as through its investments. Using current assumptions it was projected that the budget for 2020/21 would be adversely impacted by approximately £1.75m.

Impact on service demands in the short and medium terms were anticipated to include:

- Likely increase in homelessness cases and demands
- Increased demands on the Housing Benefit Team
- Increase in those eligible for the Council Tax Support Scheme
- Probable longer term increases on the Council's pension fund contributions
- A likely increase in contributions required to the bad debt provision

In the longer term, there were concerns around the council tax base and business rate income. Future updates would include commentary on the rate of collection of Council Tax and Business Rates to enable a more accurate assessment of the impact of the pandemic to be made.

The Capital Programme would also be affected, key risks identified for future programmes included:

- Risk to external funding from Government Departments and external partners e.g. Homes England, developers
- Risk to anticipated housing growth
- Risk of increased costs due to time delays and inflationary costs
- Impact upon the economy in the longer term and the housing market affecting the viability of scheme that were currently at feasibility stages.

The Local Government Association (LGA) was continuing to lead national lobbying efforts on behalf of all local councils. Lincolnshire's council colleagues continued to collectively lobby the LGA, the District Council's Network (DCN) and the Society of District Council Treasurers (SDCT) to highlight the likely consequences for local councils if adequate financial support was not forthcoming from the Government. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government had introduced a monthly request for information on the financial impacts on councils, but Government was still considering its response.

Further financial support from Government would ensure that unbudgeted costs and reducing income levels did not have a longer term detrimental impact on the Council resulting in service reductions in subsequent years. Whilst the two tranches of funding had been welcomed, they were insufficient to cover the current year's costs and loss of income.

Update reports would continue to be presented to Members as the situation progressed.

OTHER OPTIONS OR ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Not to provide a report.

RECORD OF ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

RECORD OF ANY DISPENSATION GRANTED

None.

The meeting ended at pm

Signed by the Chief Executive



26 June 2020

These decisions will come into force (and may then be implemented) on the expiry of five clear working days after the date of this notice UNLESS the decisions are subjected to the Call-In procedure or are starred minutes requiring Full Council approval.