



Public Document Pack
B O S T O N
B O R O U G H C O U N C I L

Municipal Buildings
Boston
Lincolnshire PE21 8QR
Tel: **01205 314200**
Fax: **01205 364604**

Chief Executive
Phil Drury
MCIAT, ACIOB

LB/COUNCIL/AG

Please ask for: Lorraine Bush, Democratic Services Manager

10 January 2020

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL - 20 JANUARY 2020

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Council on **Monday, 20th January, 2020** in the Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston, PE21 8QR at 6.30 pm

Although it is not a formal part of this Summons or the business of the meeting, the Mayor's Chaplain will lead prayers immediately prior to the meeting.

PHIL DRURY
Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART I - PRELIMINARIES

- A. To sign the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16 December 2019 attached at pages 1 – 16**
- B. To receive apologies for absence.**
- C. To receive communications (if any) from the Mayor and the Chief Executive.**
- D. To receive deputations or petitions (if any) pursuant to Rules 12 and 13 of the Council's Rules of Procedure.**
- E. To answer questions (if any) from elected members pursuant to Rule 11 of the Council's Rules of Procedure.**

- F. To answer questions (if any) from members of the public pursuant to Rule 10 of the Council's Rules of Procedure
- G. To receive declarations by Members of any interests in respect of items on the agenda.

PART II - AGENDA ITEMS

1 CLIMATE CHANGE (Pages 17 - 30)

(A report by the Environment & Performance Committee)

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Paul Skinner

*Questions from Members of the Council and the public must be received by 5 p.m. two clear working days prior to the day of the meeting – the deadline for this meeting is **5 p.m. on 15th January 2020.***

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during the consideration of exempt or confidential items.

Please note this meeting may be subject to being recorded.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of a fire alarm sounding all attendees are asked to leave the building via the nearest emergency exit and make their way to the Fire Assembly Point located in the car park at the rear of the Municipal Buildings

Alternative Versions - Should you wish to have the agenda or report in an alternative format such as larger text, Braille or a specific language, please contact Democratic Services on direct dial (01205) 314227

The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Lorraine Bush, Democratic Services Manager, Municipal Buildings, Boston Telephone 01205 314224 e-mail lorraine.bush@boston.gov.uk

BOSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

At the meeting of Boston Borough Council held in the Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston, PE21 8QR, on Monday, 16th December, 2019 at 6.30 pm

Present:

The Mayor (Councillor Anton Dani), in the Chair
Councillors Tracey Abbott, Tom Ashton, Alison Austin, Richard Austin BEM, Alan Bell, Michael Cooper, George Cornah, Deborah Evans, Paul Goodale, Martin Griggs, Neill Hastie, Howard, Jonathan Noble, Frank Pickett, Brian Rush, Chelcei Sharman, Judith Skinner, Paul Skinner, Aaron Spencer, Yvonne Stevens, Peter Watson, Judith Welbourn, Nigel Welton, Colin Woodcock and Stephen Woodliffe

Officers –

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive (Monitoring Officer), Council Tax and Benefits Manager, Chief Finance Officer and S151 Officer and Democratic Services Manager

34 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 30 September 2019, were taken as read and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

35 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Peter Bedford, David Brown, Anne Dorrian and Viven Edge.

36 COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor welcomed Councillor Martin Howard to his first meeting of the Council following the by-elections held on 12 December 2019.

37 DEPUTATIONS AND PETITIONS

The Chief Executive reported there were no deputations or petitions.

38 QUESTIONS FROM ELECTED MEMBERS

The Chief Executive reported there were no questions from Members.

39 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Chief Executive reported there was a question from Mr. Darron Abbott.

Question asked by Mr. Darron Abbott pursuant to paragraph 10 of the Rules of Procedure as set out in the Constitution.

“As you at present wear the hat for portfolio holder for events, are you aware that the government has moved the May bank holiday next year to Friday 8th May to enable

towns and cities to hold events to commemorate perhaps one of the most significant dates in European history, the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe day?

Are you also aware that due to a lack of manpower and time that Boston Borough Council have decided not to join in with this national day of commemoration to pay tribute to those that have served this Country and are still doing so?"

Response by the Leader of the Council

"Boston Borough Council will be holding its longstanding Chartered May Fair between the 2nd and 9th May, but to commemorate VE Day the Council has put in an application to the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight to mark the occasion.

Whilst the Council's own resources are committed to delivering the annual May Fair, this does not stop communities across the Borough organising their own events, to also mark the occasion."

Supplemental question asked by Mr. Darron Abbot pursuant to paragraph 10.8 of the Rules of Procedure as set out in the Constitution.

"I have to say I am very disappointed as many others are, that Boston Borough Council is not prepared to put on an official event to commemorate the date that could have brought the whole of the town together.

In a recent Cabinet meeting you stated that you would like community groups to take over town events, a proposal was put to you, but you did not have the courtesy to even reply.

Isn't it a good job that the 758,939 British servicemen who died or were wounded in World War II along with the 180,488 who were made prisoners of war were not committed to other projects.

Are you not ashamed of this Council's failure to officially commemorate this date? Could we not at least have a parade for Councillors and Officers to enable them to smile at the camera and use their pictures on their websites and Face Book pages?"

Response by the Leader of the Council

"I refer you to my previous response."

40 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Tom Ashton declared an interest in the report on Appointment to the Standards Sub Committee as he was a fellow Parish Councillor with the proposed appointee, but this had no bearing on being able to make a decision.

41 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Councillor Jonathan Noble introduced the confirmed minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 16 September 2019 highlighting the key matters considered by the Committee.

It was moved by Councillor Jonathan Noble, seconded by Councillor Tom Ashton and

RESOLVED that the confirmed minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 16 September 2019 be received.

42 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2020-21

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced a report by the Council Tax and Benefits Manager on the operation of the Council Tax Support scheme to date and the outcome of the consultation process for the 2020/21 scheme.

The report set out the background to the Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme which had been in operation since 2013/14 under the provisions of the Welfare Reform Act.

It was accepted that the outturn performance of the adopted schemes from 2013/14 onwards were broadly in line with original assumptions. The full service for Universal Credit was rolled out for the Boston area on 12 September 2018, although this was currently only for new claims. The migration of existing claims was not due for completion until 2023.

Whilst the new regulations provided councils with flexibility to set up their own local arrangements, the Government expressed clear intentions in relation to certain aspects of a local scheme, including:-

- For pensioners there should be no change in the level of awards as a result of the reform. This included both existing and new claimants.
- Councils were required to also consider ensuring support for other vulnerable groups.
- Local schemes should support work incentives and in particular avoid disincentives to move into work.

The 2020/21 council tax support scheme was consulted on the following options:-

Option 1

Continuation of the current scheme, as it was, with a 'no change' approach, uprating the amounts used in the calculation of Council Tax Support for working age claimants in line with Department for Work and Pensions uprating for working age social security benefits and non-dependent deductions.

This option would maintain a consistent approach to Boston's CTS scheme since its introduction in 2013/14. It would continue to recognise the additional needs of the vulnerable through the approach to its calculation.

Any further reduction in grant funding or increase in CTS awards would need to be found from other budgets areas or service cuts. Any consultation process would include this as an option with views on how or what services would be affected.

Option 2

Continuation of the 2019/20 scheme, but not apply any up-ratings. This would result in the up-rating adjustments not aligning with those used nationally.

The Council was required to consult with major preceptors and the public in terms of any scheme changes and the responses were made available as part of the decision making process. The consultation exercise with major preceptors and other interested parties had run between September and October 2019.

The consultation focused on whether the Council should continue with its current scheme for 2020/21, and asked respondents if they felt this was a fair scheme. Thirty seven public replies had been received with 71% of those in agreement with the proposal to continue with the current scheme.

The report had been considered by the Corporate and Community Committee on 16 October 2019. The Committee recommended that option one, a continuation of the current scheme, applying upratings, should be referred to Cabinet and Council for final approval. Cabinet endorsed that recommendation at its meeting on 23 October 2019.

Concern was expressed that the scheme only provided for 75% of entitlement for the most vulnerable people in the community. The scheme had been introduced as an austerity measure by central government putting the burden on local government which should have been catered for through income tax.

In summing up the Leader appreciated the concerns, and confirmed that the scheme had provisions to protect those most in need as they could apply for special measures which would be assessed on a case by case basis.

It was moved by Councillor Aaron Spencer, seconded by Councillor Nigel Welton and

RESOLVED

- 1. That Council approve the Council Tax Support Scheme be continued for 2020/21 on the basis of the 2019/20 scheme with no change to the core areas of the scheme of protection for pensioners; cap of 75% entitlement for working age claimants and protection for working age claimants in receipt of a war pension, but that the following changes be made to all those in receipt of Council Tax Support (CTS):-**

- **Social security benefits are uprated in-line with the Department for Work and Pensions up-rating for working age claimants and with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government for pension age claimants;**
- **Working age non-dependant deductions are up-rated using the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government up-rating for pensioners to ensure consistency between the two groups.**

2. That authority for final wording of the scheme be delegated to the Section 151 Officer.

43 APPOINTMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE TO THE STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE

The Monitoring Officer introduced a report seeking consideration of the appointment of a Parish Council representative to the Standards Sub Committee in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the Sub Committee agreed by Council on 21 January 2019.

The report stated that co-opted parish representatives would participate in the consideration of business presented to the sub-committee, but would not have a vote. They would also have a role to play in respect of misconduct complaints against parish councillors, as it was a specific requirement for at least one parish member to be present when code of conduct allegations relating to parish councillors were being considered.

It was moved by Councillor Jonathan Noble, seconded by Councillor Tom Ashton and

RESOLVED that Councillor Julian Crouch of Old Leake Parish Council be appointed as a Parish Councillor representative to the Standards Sub Committee until May 2023.

44 EXECUTIVE / SCRUTINY PROTOCOL

The Leader of the Council introduced a report setting out a proposed Executive / Scrutiny Protocol to clarify the relationship between the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny, help ensure the smooth conduct of Overview and Scrutiny business and encourage effective communication between the two arms of the Council, whilst respecting their distinct rights, roles and responsibilities.

The report stated that in May 2019, the Government published revised Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities, in response to recommendations from a Select Committee Inquiry, to take into account the evolving role of scrutiny.

One of the recommendations contained within the Statutory Guidance was that authorities should consider adopting an 'executive / scrutiny protocol' stating that:

'It is the job of both the executive and scrutiny to work together to reduce the risk of disagreement and authorities should take steps to predict, identify and act on disagreement.

One way in which this can be done is via an 'executive / scrutiny protocol' which can help define the relationship between the two and mitigate any differences of opinion before they manifest themselves in unhelpful and unproductive ways.'

The Council had a well-established culture in which overview and scrutiny was an integral part of decision making, there was not a formal executive / scrutiny protocol in place.

The draft protocol had been considered by both the Corporate and Community Committee and the Environment and Performance Committee and recommended for adoption subject to the wording of paragraph 3.3 being amended to require the relevant Portfolio Holder to attend the next meeting of the relevant scrutiny committee in circumstances where a decision taken was not in accordance with advice provided by scrutiny.

Cabinet considered the draft Protocol at its meeting on 4 December, and proposed further amendments to the wording of paragraph 3.3 for purposes of flexibility in representation and consistency of approach:

The Executive will be required to consider any recommendations or views expressed by the Scrutiny Committees and to take such action it sees fit. The Chairman or Vice-Chairman, or if unavailable, a representative of the relevant scrutiny committee shall attend the Cabinet meeting to present the report and/or recommendations. Where any decision taken by the Executive is not in accordance with advice provided by the Committees, the relevant Cabinet Member, or if unavailable an Executive Member Colleague, shall attend the following meeting of the committee to provide an explanation of the reasons for that decision to the Committee concerned.

It was also proposed that for purposes of clarity, paragraph 6.6 should be amended to specifically invite Cabinet Members, in writing, to attend meetings of the scrutiny committees when reports which fell within their portfolio responsibilities were being considered.

The draft Protocol incorporating the proposed amendments was attached as an appendix to the report.

Debate focused on communication between Cabinet and Scrutiny committees and the need for representation by Portfolio Holders or Chairmen of Scrutiny at each others meeting when items were considered which required Cabinet or Scrutiny input, whilst respecting the distinct roles and responsibilities.

It was moved by Councillor Aaron Spencer, seconded by Councillor Nigel Welton and

RESOLVED that the Executive / Scrutiny Protocol, as set out in Appendix 1, be adopted as an addition to the Council's Constitution.

45 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE AND ACTION PLAN

The Leader of the Council introduced a report on the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge which was undertaken between 10 -12 September 2019.

The report stated that the Local Government Association offered all local authorities the opportunity to participate in a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) every four years as part of its sector-led improvement.

Peer challenges were improvement focussed and tailored to meet individual Councils' needs. They were designed to complement and add value to a Council's own performance and improvement. The process was not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by the people they met, things they saw and material they read.

The CPC was conducted by a team of elected members and senior officers from other local authorities, together with LGA advisors and considered 5 core components:-

- (a) How well we understand our local place and priority: do we understand the local context and use this to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
- (b) Leadership of place: do we provide effective leadership through members and officers and form constructive partnerships with stakeholders?
- (c) Organisational leadership and governance: how effective is this politically and managerially and is this supported by good governance and decision making in response to key challenges, and allows the Council to change and transform in response to these?
- (d) Financial planning and viability: do we have a plan in place, which ensures our long-term viability?
- (e) Capacity to deliver: is our resource aligned with our priorities?

The Peer Challenge Team was also asked to give views on:-

- (a) Economic Development and Town Centre Regeneration.
- (b) Transformation.
- (c) Corporate Plan/Strategy

The peer team prepared for the peer challenge by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the Council and the challenges its faced. The team then spent three days on site during which they:

- Spoke to more than 114 people including a range of Council staff together with Councillors and external partners and stakeholders.
- Gathered information and views from more than 39 meetings, visits to key sites in the area and additional research and reading.
- Collectively spent more than 270 hours to determine their findings - the equivalent of one person spending more than 7 weeks in Boston.

The Feedback Report which provided a summary of the team's findings was received in October and a full copy provided to all Members, staff and each stakeholder and partner organisation who contributed to the CPC in addition to the Chief Executive holding 'all staff' briefings and the Leader hosting a Member briefing. A copy of the Feedback report was appended to the report, in which the CPC commented that ***"Boston Borough Council has accomplished a great deal in challenging financial circumstances and alongside significant population growth. It can be proud of its achievements and should have the confidence to shout loudly about them."***

Included in the report were eleven recommendations in respect of areas for development and improvement, which had been addressed in an emerging action plan set out at appendix 2 of the report.

The anticipated timescale and current progress against each item was recorded and lead officers/members identified. Further work was to be carried out in respect of each recommendation and action, which would include lead members and officers engaging with the LGA and others for advice and support. The action plan would be maintained as a 'live' document to monitor progress and updates reported to Council.

Members welcomed the peer challenge feedback report and action plan and agreed that all members should work together and take responsibility to promote Boston and all the good work the Council delivers to attract people to live, work and visit the Borough.

The Leader summed up thanking Members for the genuine ambition shown to achieve the goals being set, irrespective of party politics. However, critical posts made by members on social media were not helpful or constructive and the peer challenge team had been shocked at the comments some Members had posted relating to their own Council.

It was moved by Councillor Aaron Spencer, seconded by Councillor Nigel Welton and

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Action Plan be agreed**
- 2. That progress reports be submitted to future meetings of the Council**

46 CLIMATE CHANGE

Councillor Judith Skinner, Chairman of the Environment and Performance Committee, provided an interim update on progress made on the Council resolution to consider environmental and other implications associated with climate change and report back with an action plan within the requested timeframe.

The report stated that at the meeting of Full Council on 15 July 2019, two Motions on Notice had been submitted relating to climate change. As a result Members voted on a procedural motion to seek the Environment and Performance Committee's consideration and detailed reporting for referral back to Full Council.

The Environment and Performance Committee (E&P) met on 30 July 2019 and agreed to establish a Working Group to progress activity. The Working Group met informally to consider all aspects and issues referred to in the Motions on Notice and reported findings and recommendations to the Environment and Performance Committee.

The Group had provided a verbal update to E&P Committee on 24 September and a further formal update to its meeting on 5th November. The interim report to Council provided a summary update of the work to date, final draft recommendations would be reported to the 7th January E&P Committee for recommendations to be forwarded for Council on 20th January 2020.

The Working Group was comprised of five elected members including the Portfolio Holder, eight members of staff and one co-opted member of the public, and was Chaired by Councillor Anne Dorrian. Formal terms of reference had been agreed by the Group which were set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

The work of the Group to date included:-

- Reviewed previous and ongoing BBC carbon reduction activity and the Carbon Management Plan.
- Collated all BBC environmental and climate change activity (Air Quality, Homes Energy Conservation Act, Private Sector Enforcement, etc.)
- Taken on the Local Government Association good practice advice for Councillors.
- Reviewed other council approaches and best practice publications.
- Collated a list of external invitees with expertise and insight.
- Agreed an intent to be clear about the differences required for BBC to become carbon net neutral and "leading/championing" others within the Borough geography.
- Begun to explore carbon offsetting potential/opportunities.
- Begun collating a list of "quick-wins" to include in the final action plan recommendations to E&P.
- Attended the "Ashden" Local Authority Climate Change Toolkit launch in October.
- Attended the Western Power event - Transition to a Zero Carbon Economy.
- Considered relevant proposals contained in the Environment Bill published 15 October.
- Drafted a suggested and costed action plan and implementation timetable for consideration at the 7 January E & P Committee meeting.

The Working Group would focus activity to finalise a series of recommendations for Council to consider. Whilst it was premature to provide specific detail, the following areas were likely to form the basis of potential future recommendations:-

- A climate change declaration which is aspirational and deliverable in the soonest possible time range.
- All Council policies and practices to consider environmental impacts.
- Lobby for additional resources and support to deliver the carbon neutral agenda.
- A commitment to show geographical and community leadership.
- Recognise and acknowledge the excellent achievements of the Council since 2008.
- Council buildings and asset audits and action plans.
- Recommendations for the Council's procurement practices.
- Potential for climate champion(s), Citizens Assembly and Climate Expo.

It was noted that Councils were well placed to drive and influence action on climate change through the services they delivered, their regulatory and strategic function and roles as community leaders, major employers, large scale procurers and social landlords.

Action on climate change could deliver many local benefits, including lower energy bills, economic regeneration and creation of local jobs, reductions in fuel poverty and improved air quality. However, making a commitment to declare a Climate Change Emergency was multi-faceted and Members would want to be well sighted on the policy, process, financial and other considerations such as a timetable in making environmental commitments.

Concern was expressed regarding the increased risk of flooding in the area due to a potential increase in sea levels as a result of climate change.

Council thanked the Working Group for their hard work to date which reflected a real change in ways of working that would not be detrimental to core service delivery, rather than picking an arbitrary date for the Council to be carbon neutral.

Members should all take responsibility to lead by example as a Council as a whole and as individuals, and education for the public was a key issue to be addressed.

It was moved by Councillor Judith Skinner, seconded by Councillor Richard Austin and

RESOLVED that the update from the Environment and Performance Committee be received.

47 THE TOWNS FUND

The Leader of the Council introduced a report setting out the requirements for the creation of a Town Board and associated governance arrangements which were required following the success of Boston being allocated up to £25 million under the Towns Fund and the Towns Fund Prospectus published on 1 November 2019.

The report stated that the Towns Fund was a Government initiative intended to broaden the focus from cities as engines of economic growth to the role that towns can play to increase economic growth with a focus on urban regeneration and land use; connectivity through improved transport, broadband quality and digital access; skills and enterprise through increased access to high quality education and training, underpinned by other topic areas such as health, culture and heritage.

Boston had been awarded an allocation of up to £25 million under the Fund to deliver in partnership with the private public and third sectors, a wide range of interventions to deliver outcomes that supported all of the diverse communities to deliver economic growth.

The Towns Fund Prospectus sets out the way that the private and public sectors would work together through a Town Deal Board, the vehicle through which the vision and strategy would be defined. A copy of the Prospectus was attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

The Town Deal Board would not have a formal legal entity but would be expected to adopt a suite of governance documents including a Code of Conduct to follow the principles of Nolan and have regard to potential conflict of interests.

The three key roles of the Town Deal Board had been identified as:-

- Develop and agree an evidence based Town Investment Plan
- Develop a clear programme of interventions
- Coordinate resources and influence stakeholders

The Board would not be a Council committee and would comprise of representation from a range of key strategic stakeholders as prescribed in the Prospectus who would collectively be part of delivering the interventions set out in the Investment Plan.

Representation on the Board must include:-

- Other tiers of local government
- MP
- Local business and investors
- Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership
- Voluntary and community groups

Other representation may include, amongst others, dependent on the themes of the interventions:

- Further education colleges

- Academies and schools
- Wider business community
- Hospitals
- Housing developers and RSLs
- DWP

The Leader of the Council would be a Member of the Town Deal Board and in accordance with the provisions of the Prospectus the Board would appoint a Chairman who it was expected would be from the private sector.

The Town Deal Board would meet on a regular basis and it was likely to have separate project strands that developed a series of proposed interventions during the life of the Fund.

The early work of the Board would entail development and production of 'the vision' and the 'locally owned' Town Investment Plan to put together the business case to apply for interventions. As part of the process the Council would wish to propose its own priorities, projects and interventions in line with the Corporate Plan to be adopted in early 2020 and Members would be encouraged to contribute thoughts, ideas and suggestions into the process such as the PE21 project, climate change and others.

The background to the PE21 Project was set out in the report and it was suggested that it would be eminently suitable as an intervention for referral to the Town Board for consideration as it met criteria set out in the Prospectus such as :-

- Investment in town centres, community spaces and libraries
- Redevelopment of vacant sites for new business and leisure and aligning with other complementary investment, including transport
- Increased mixed use opportunities
- Making best use of surplus land owned by central and local government
- Towns should work with other landowners to unlock potential

The PE21 Project Group would become a sub project group of the overarching Project Board which would monitor delivery of all projects identified as interventions under the Investment Plan.

It was proposed that reporting mechanisms would be captured within the quarterly performance report to Cabinet. Due to the nature and scale of the funds and projects it was considered that pre-scrutiny of those reports by the Corporate and Community Committee would allow cross party members to have sight of projects and progress, and provide comments on the delivery of the projects.

The Government was releasing the sum of £162,019 to the Council in the form of a Section 31 grant to provide resources to support early work to create the Town Deal Board and Town Investment Plan.

The Council was required to complete the Town Deal Readiness Checklist by 19th December 2019 which would set out the preparedness of the locality for the Town Deal. The work that had been undertaken with a wide range of stakeholders in relation to the PE21 concept idea had developed close working relationships with partners which placed the Council in a strong position to move quickly on the Town Deal.

As part of the consultation process in respect of the Town Deal a conference was held on 25th November with key leaders from the private, public, voluntary and charitable sectors. On 5th December a further Town Deal informal meeting was held for those who wished to understand more about the requirements that would be expected of members of the Town Deal Board.

Due to the requirements of 'purdah' during the Parliamentary election period elected Members had not been able to attend those events. On Monday 9th December an all Member briefing was held where the Chief Executive presented the detail of the Towns Fund Prospectus and a variety of questions were posed about the meaning of some elements of the prospectus. The questions and responses were attached at Appendix 3 of the report.

The report concluded that the award of up to £25 million from the Towns Fund created a huge opportunity to help shape the future of both the town and Borough of Boston. Responding to the requirements of phase one of the Prospectus would ensure the Council was well placed to deliver phase two.

Members welcomed the report and the opportunity to receive funding to invest in the area and unlock potential with the support of partner organisations.

It was moved by Councillor Aaron Spencer, seconded by Councillor Nigel Welton and

RESOLVED

- 1. The publication of the Towns Fund Prospectus and the success of Boston being allocated up to £25 million, providing the opportunity for the Borough of Boston to leverage in further funding to deliver investment to enhance its future prospects be welcomed.**
- 2. The capacity funding allocation of £162,019 announced in the prospectus be welcomed and delegate to the Statutory Officers, in consultation with the Leader, the spending of this sum to support the delivery of the requirements set out in the Towns Fund Prospectus to convene the Town Deal Board, prepare the Investment Plan, Programme of Interventions and community engagement.**
- 3. The Statutory Officers be delegated, in consultation with the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, to formalise the Governance Arrangements for the Town Deal Board, of which the Leader will be a member.**
- 4. As part of the early preparations for the Towns Fund Investment Plan and Programme of Interventions, request the Leader proposes "Council priority interventions" to the Town Deal Board for consideration.**
- 5. The Town Investment Plan and Programme of Interventions, which are**

decisions of the Town Deal Board, to be endorsed by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet.

- 6. To receive regular updates through the quarterly performance and monitoring reports to the Cabinet, with pre-scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.**

48 REFERRAL FROM CALL IN - REPLACEMENT DOMESTIC WHEELED BIN CHARGES

The Chief Executive introduced a report relating to a Call In of a Cabinet decision in respect of replacement domestic wheeled bin charges.

The report stated that at its meeting held on the 23 October 2019, Cabinet received a report by the Head of Environmental Operations which included reference to Replacement Domestic Wheeled Bin Charges which had been tabled at the previous meeting of the Environment and Performance Committee on the 24 September 2019.

A recommendation had been referred to Cabinet that all charges for replacement green and blue wheeled bins should be abolished.

After debate Cabinet resolved not to accept the recommendation. That decision was subsequently subject to the Call In Procedure and a meeting of the Environment and Performance Committee was convened to consider the Call in on 14 November 2019 when it was agreed to refer the decision to full Council for debate.

It was moved by Councillor Yvonne Stevens and seconded by Councillor Aaron Spencer that the Cabinet decision be confirmed.

An amendment was moved by Councillor Paul Goodale and seconded by Councillor Michael Cooper that the decision be referred back to Cabinet for further consideration taking into account the comments of Council.

The issue of concern which had resulted in the call in was residents being charged for replacement blue and green bins in all circumstances, other than if damaged by the Council's Refuse Operatives or vehicles. The scrutiny committee Members felt that the only reason for charges being made should be in cases of intentional damage and vandalism.

During debate Members agreed that if a replacement bin was required through no fault of the resident then it should be replaced free of charge.

Having heard debate the substantive motion was withdrawn. The amendment then became the substantive motion.

A procedural motion that that question be now put was moved by Councillor Aaron Spencer and seconded by Councillor Nigel Welton.

On being put to the vote the procedural motion was passed.

The substantive motion was then put to the vote and it was

RESOLVED that the Cabinet decision set out in Minute 31 2019/20 be referred back to the next meeting of the Cabinet for further consideration taking into account the comments of Full Council that charges should only be raised in circumstances where deliberate damage had been caused to the bins.

(The meeting ended at 9.00 pm)

This page is intentionally left blank



REPORT TO: FULL COUNCIL
DATE: 20 JANUARY 2020
SUBJECT: CLIMATE CHANGE
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR PAUL SKINNER
REPORT AUTHOR: ENVIRONMENT & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE
EXEMPT REPORT NO

SUMMARY

To progress the Council resolution to consider environmental and other implications associated with climate change and report back. This report is the final report of the Environment & Performance Committee (E & P) and builds upon the interim update considered at the Council meeting held 16 December 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Boston Borough Council declares an ongoing climate and environment emergency and commits to a pledge to reduce the Council's carbon footprint and become net-zero carbon in advance of the timetable declared by UK Parliament.
2. All Council reports, policies and practices shall incorporate climate change mitigation and environmental impact as key drivers for consideration.
3. UK Government be requested to provide financial support to Councils to achieve/improve upon their carbon reduction commitments.
4. Include the environment, carbon reduction and halting climate change within the Council's emerging corporate strategy.
5. Collate and promote the positive activity and success of the Council's work across all areas of environmental good practice.
6. Request that the Environment & Performance Committee adopt Climate Change within its terms of reference.
7. Develop, cost and propose a series of "quick wins" and activity reporting and monitoring progress to the E & P Committee over the next two years.
8. Explore options for cost effective, accredited and audited options for commercial carbon offsetting schemes.
9. Move to a "Green Energy" source utility supplier as soon as possible.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To progress the Council resolution of the meeting held 15 July 2019.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Council could decide to take no action, but it is advised that a tipping point has been reached where inaction is no longer tenable. Alternatively, the organisation could take more aggressive action and declare that the Authority will be net-zero carbon sooner. However, without significant investment it is not possible to accurately gauge the practicalities, implications and costs of this commitment and consequent service reductions elsewhere.

1.0 REPORT

- 1.1 The Council agenda at the 15 July meeting included two “climate” motions. As a result, members voted on a procedural motion. The effect of the procedural motion is to seek E & P consideration and detailed reporting for referral back to Full Council. This report completes the request contained within the Council resolution.
- 1.2 This report sets out positive, proactive and ambitious goals to contribute to the global efforts to tackle climate change. The ‘climate emergency’ declaration and commitments represent a major milestone which have far-reaching implications across the breadth of service and activities.
- 1.3 The Council will pledge to reduce the organisation’s carbon footprint and to become net-zero carbon. Whilst significant carbon emission reductions will be necessary, carbon offsetting will be a critical element of achieving net-zero carbon.
- 1.4 Net-zero carbon means balancing carbon dioxide emissions with the removal/sequestering of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, to make up for carbon dioxide emissions elsewhere. Reaching net-zero carbon relies on a combination of reducing carbon emissions and carbon offsetting.
- 1.5 This report provides both the climate change international context and the impact of climate change on Council services.
- 1.6 It is recognised that there will be significant challenges to achieve the ambitious net-zero carbon commitment but there are risks of not doing so. This report seeks to confirm challenging aspiration and sets out an approach to develop specific climate change actions and to build a wider community movement for change.

2.0 WORKING GROUP

- 2.1 The E & P Committee at the meeting held on 30 July established a Working Group to progress this activity.

- 2.2 The Group met informally on 6 occasions, reporting progress, its findings and recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Working Group considered all ‘aspects and issues’ referred to in both ‘Motions on Notice’.
- 2.3 The Group provided regular updates to members of the E & P Committee. This report provides the final recommendations of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.4 The Group comprised of five Elected Members including the Portfolio Holder, eight members of staff and two co-opted members of the public.
- 2.5 Formal Terms of Reference were appended to the interim report to Council on 16 December 2019.
- 2.6 The Working Group:-
- ❖ Reviewed previous and ongoing BBC carbon reduction activity and the Carbon Management Plan.
 - ❖ Collated all BBC environmental and climate change activity (Air Quality, Homes Energy Conservation Act, Private Sector Enforcement and others).
 - ❖ Took on the Local Government Association good practice advice for Councillors.
 - ❖ Reviewed other council approaches and best practice publications.
 - ❖ Met with external invitees with expertise and insight.
 - ❖ Agreed an intent to be clear about the differences required for the Council to become carbon net neutral and “leading/championing” others within the Borough geography.
 - ❖ Explored carbon offsetting potential/opportunities.
 - ❖ Collated a list of “quick-wins”.
 - ❖ Attended the “Ashden” Local Authority Climate Change Toolkit launch in October.
 - ❖ Attended the Western Power event - Transition to a Zero Carbon Economy.
 - ❖ Considered relevant proposals contained in the draft Environment Bill published 15 October.

3.0 CLIMATE EMERGENCY

- 3.1 Public understanding and awareness of the causes and effects of climate change has increased significantly over the last few years. In response, in May 2019 the UK parliament was the first in the world to declare a ‘climate and environment emergency’. This followed growing pressure after the Committee on Climate Change’s report on net-zero carbon emissions, weeks of protests about perceived government inaction and political meetings with climate figurehead Greta Thunberg. TV documentaries, particularly David Attenborough’s ‘Blue Planet’ and ‘Planet Earth’ on the BBC and ‘Our Planet’ on Netflix have also helped to highlight climate change and increase public interest.
- 3.2 This report sets out recommendations for a Boston Borough declaration of ‘climate emergency’ and ambition to reduce its carbon footprint to become net-zero carbon neutral.
- 3.3 There is no precise or accepted international definition of a ‘climate-emergency’ but it is generally taken to mean immediate action and developing policy to mitigate climate change beyond current government targets and international agreements.

- 3.4 **Paris Climate Change Agreement** - on the 12 December 2015, parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) reached a landmark agreement to combat climate change and to accelerate and intensify the actions and investments needed for a sustainable low carbon future. The Paris Agreement for the first time brought all nations into a collective agreement on the science and commitment to undertake ambitious efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects, with enhanced support to assist developing countries to do so. It came into force on 4 November 2016 after ratification by 55 countries that account for at least 55% of global emissions. The UK signed it on 18 December 2016. The Paris Agreement's central aim is to keep the global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degree Celsius.
- 3.5 **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report** - The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a United Nations body comprising of thousands of international scientists who provide governments with regular reports on the best available science to support the development of climate policies. Its Special report 'Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius' published in October 2018 was the first in a series of reports in response to the Paris Climate Agreement. It outlined that to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, a rapid and unprecedented decarbonisation of our entire economy and society would be required before 2020. It stated that:
- "Limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to 2 degrees Celsius would reduce challenging impacts on ecosystems, human health and well-being"... "Avoiding overshoot and reliance on future large scale deployment of carbon dioxide removal can only be achieved if global CO2 emissions start to decline well before 2030".*
- 3.6 **Committee on Climate Change Report** - The Government asked its advisory body, the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) to reassess the UK's long-term emissions targets. Their report reviewed the work of the IPCC and others and was published in May 2019. It suggested a national net-zero emissions target by 2050 and stated:
- "A net-zero target for 2050 will deliver on the commitment that the UK made by signing the Paris Agreement. It is achievable with known technologies, alongside improvement in people's lives and within the expected economic cost, which Parliament accepted when it legislated the existing 2050 target for an 80% reduction from 1990. However, this is only possible if clear, stable and well-designed policies to reduce emissions further are introduced across the country without delay. Current policy is insufficient for even the existing targets".*
- 3.7 The report stated that if other countries followed the UK there was a 50/50 chance of staying below the recommended 1.5 degree Celsius temperature rise by 2100, which was considered a dangerous tipping point for changes to the world's climate.
- 3.8 **Government response to CCC Report** - On the 27 June 2019 the UK became the first major economy in the world to pass laws to end its contribution to global warming by 2050. The target will require the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050, compared with the previous target of at least 80% reduction from 1990 levels.

3.9 **Council's responses** - Across the East Midlands local authorities have taken an interest, with a number declaring a climate emergency (including the City of Lincoln and North Kesteven District Council). Lincolnshire County Council has increased its emission reduction target but has stopped short of declaring an emergency. However, the recent LCC Peer Review recommendations include the development and implementation of a Climate Strategy. Nationally over 100 Councils have declared a climate emergency.

4.0 **IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON COUNCIL SERVICES**

4.1 Climate change is expected to increase the frequency of extreme weather events and higher overall temperatures, which will affect the health, wellbeing and safety of residents. This continues to have a direct impact across the range of Council services.

- **Heat waves:** Extended periods of hotter than average temperatures in the summer means that normal hours of operation will need to be revisited. For instance, shift patterns being changed for staff who operate outside to avoid working during the middle of the day when the high surface temperature and the ultraviolet radiation peaks.
- **Flooding:** Increased instances of flooding will mean some areas will not be accessible for all types of service and the wider impact on flooded households and businesses will require significant additional support/services from the Council and other partners.
- **Snow:** Extreme isolated events with the snow and ice being heavier and longer lasting than the last few decades will mean that some services will need to be suspended for safety reasons. This may create a service pressure exacerbated by public welfare concerns.

5.0 **THE BOROUGH COUNCIL'S RESPONSE**

- 5.1 Reducing the organisation's carbon footprint and becoming net-zero carbon is a substantial undertaking which will have profound implications for the Council and its services. It will involve service redesign, procurement changes and the consideration of the environment practices of partners. It will affect all aspects of the Council's operation, fuel/energy use, buildings, supply chain and contractors. The Council will need to commit to embracing relevant technologies and consider the impact on existing strategies and plans.
- 5.2 There will be significant financial implications to deliver net-zero carbon that will need to be properly assessed and understood, although there will also be invest to save investments which will provide longer-term savings. At this stage, there is no way to accurately calculate the full financial costs. For this reason, the Climate Change declaration sets an aspiration to embed environmental consideration and carbon reduction into ALL of the Council's activities from this point.
- 5.3 All reports will consider the environmental aspects at their heart and centre mandating the investment required and carbon reduction co-benefits. The costs of change will inform the decision making process.
- 5.4 Additional budgetary requirements would be assessed as each and every recommended action is progressed.

6.0 CORE RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The Working Group identified 9 recommendations. The Environment and Performance Committee endorsed the recommendations in full and has recommended them to Council for agreement.

6.2 **Recommendation 1 - Boston Borough Council declares an ongoing climate and environment emergency and commits to a pledge to reduce the Council's carbon footprint and become net-zero carbon in advance of the timetable declared by UK Parliament.**

6.2.1 Paragraph 3.8 of this report sets out the intention and national context for declaration and commitment. Whilst the UK was the first country to do so with a 2050 target, 2030 is being adopted by many organisations and councils. However not many have a clear action plan to achieve delivery within 10 years. In agreeing this recommendation, the Council recognises that sea level rises and increasing "extreme events", habitat loss and global warming means that action is required now. Boston Borough Council will lead by example and "champion" others to follow.

6.3 **Recommendation 2 - All Council reports, policies and practices shall incorporate climate change mitigation and environmental impact as key drivers for consideration.**

6.3.1 The Council's standard reporting format mandates clear consideration of implications in areas, which include financial consequence, legislation and statutory obligation as well as equality and diversity. The recommendation supports the commentary in paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 in ensuring that proper environmental considerations are reflected in EVERY recommendation and that the necessary investment is included in the budgetary provision required. The climate implications should also set out the positive health, financial economic and other co-benefits of the Environmental implications.

6.4 **Recommendation 3 - UK Government be requested to provide financial support to Councils to achieve/improve upon their carbon reduction commitments.**

6.4.1 In recent years local Councils across the county have received unprecedented reductions in their available resources. This is set against a background of growing demand and expectation. Councils cannot achieve their ambition alone. Whilst not all activity will require financial investment there is a need to accelerate action of cultural change as well as providing sufficient financial resources to make the necessary change.

6.5 **Recommendation 4 - Include the environment, carbon reduction and halting climate change within the Council's emerging corporate strategy.**

6.5.1 The Council's "current" priorities focus on public service, performance, people and place. At this juncture, the Council is considering the outcomes of the recent Corporate Peer Challenge to adopt a place-shaping approach in the next iteration of the Corporate Plan. The Council will be asked to adopt a new strategy in Spring next year and it is fundamental that the Climate is embedded in such a document to support and deliver upon the requirement of recommendation 2.

- 6.6 Recommendation 5 - Collate and promote the positive activity and success of the Council's work across all areas of environmental good practice.**
- 6.6.1 The Borough Council currently achieves high levels of performance and delivery on the wider "environmental" agenda. An example is the reduction in greenhouse emissions by 48.69% from the 2008 established base. This has been achieved across a plethora of activity under the "carbon management plan" including Solar PV and biomass installation, LED lighting, a reduction in fuel usage and business miles.
- 6.6.2 Other examples of the Council's work include:
- 6.6.3 **The Climate Change Act 2008** - The Act makes it a duty of the Secretary of State to ensure that the net UK carbon account for all six Kyoto greenhouse gases for the year 2050 is at least 80% lower than the 1990 baselines, toward avoiding dangerous climate change.
- 6.6.4 In response, the Council participated in the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management Programme, reducing its carbon emissions by almost 49% (using the Government's broader measure of greenhouse gas emissions).
- 6.6.5 **Boston Transport Strategy 2016-2036** - The Strategy developed by Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) with support from the Borough Council demonstrates a collective vision for improved accessibility and a sustainable transport network to support the growth of Boston.
- 6.6.6 The strategy includes a number of aims structured around four areas:-
- Influencing Travel Behaviour
 - Prioritising Active Modes
 - Promoting Public Transport
 - Mitigating the Residual Impacts of Traffic
- 6.6.7 The strategy delivery is monitored by a board comprising officers and elected members from LCC and BBC.
- 6.6.8 **Air Quality in Boston Borough** - Air pollution is associated with a number of adverse health impacts. It is a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer.
- 6.6.9 Additionally, air pollution affects the most vulnerable in society: children and older people and those with heart and lung conditions. There is also often a strong correlation with equality issues, because areas with poor air quality are also often less affluent areas.
- 6.6.10 As a whole, Boston's air quality issues derive from high usage of vehicles for making short frequent journeys within Boston and peak period congestion. Currently the Council has two designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). These are located at Haven Bridge and at Bargate Bridge. Both AQMAs are declared in relation to high levels of NO₂, largely due to traffic emissions.
- 6.6.11 In-line with Defra's recommendations, BBC is currently in the process of updating the Air Quality Action Plan to be published later in 2020. In comparison to 2014, NO₂ annual mean concentrations have decreased at nine sites over the period reflecting

the continual commitment and progress made to improve local air quality with the aim to revoke the declared AQMAs.

- 6.6.12 **The Energy Efficient (Private Rented Property) Regulations 2015** - The Regulations establish a minimum energy performance standard for domestic privately rented property.
- 6.6.13 Since 1st April 2018 it has been an offence for landlords to grant a tenancy to new or existing tenants if the property has and Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of band F or G.
- 6.6.14 Landlords must not continue letting a relevant domestic property already let if that property has an EPC rating of F or G.
- 6.6.15 The Council must enforce compliance with the requirements in relation to properties in its area.
- 6.6.16 **Home Energy Conservation Act 1995** - The Act requires Councils to submit reports to the Secretary of State demonstrating what energy conservation measures they have adopted to improve the energy efficiency of residential accommodation.
- 6.6.17 Such reports cover measures to improve properties in the owner-occupier, private rented and social rented sectors and provide information on a range of key themes:
- Schemes to promote carbon reduction and/or energy efficiency, the stakeholders involved and influence at a societal and economic level.
 - Engagement with stakeholders (including consumers and businesses) to promote awareness of energy efficiency.
 - Engagement with local businesses involved in the promotion of energy saving products and the societal and economic benefits.
 - Enforcement and awareness promotion of the Private Rental Sector minimum energy efficiency standards.
 - Financial programmes used to promote energy efficiency.
 - Identification of those in fuel poverty and initiatives.
 - Referrals to the 'flexible eligibility' programme of households in fuel poverty or with occupants on low incomes, who are vulnerable to the effects of cold homes, to 'Energy Company Obligation' suppliers for support.
 - Promotion, awareness and update of smart metering.
- 6.6.18 **South East Lincolnshire Local Plan** - The Joint Strategic Planning Committee comprising Boston Borough, South Holland District and Lincolnshire County Councils adopted a new local plan earlier in 2019. Embedded within the local plan are specific policies relating to pollution (Policy 30) and climate change, renewable and low carbon energy (Policy 31).
- 6.6.19 As part of the evidence gathering, consultation and engagement over a number of years, the committee considered a range of information, reports and studies to support the production of the plan.
- 6.6.20 One such document, "South East Lincolnshire's Carbon Challenge' provided helpful and informative data on the extent of carbon emissions across the geography and details of progress, allocations and policy to reduce the carbon footprint.

6.6.21 **The Energy Company Obligation Order 2018** - The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) is an obligation placed upon larger energy companies by the Government to help households reduce their energy bills and associated carbon emissions. Recent changes to ECO have enabled obligated energy companies to achieve up to a quarter of their affordable warmth targets working in conjunction with local authorities through ECO flexible eligibility subject to them publishing a Statement of Intent.

6.6.22 A Statement of Intent has been produced by Greater Lincolnshire Local Authorities who are members of the Greater Lincolnshire Energy Efficiency Network (GLEEN), formerly Home Energy Lincs Partnership. The purpose of it is to extend eligibility for Energy Company Obligation (ECO) funding from people who are in receipt of qualifying means tested and disability benefits to:

1. People who are fuel poor (FP) - living on a low income and in a home with high heating costs; and
2. People who are living on a low income and are vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home.

6.6.23 **EV Charging** - The Council has been successful in securing funding to support additional investment in “public” EV charging points across seven sites throughout the town centre. Infrastructure works are underway with completion in early 2020.

6.6.24 **Tree Planting and current “offsetting” practices** – The Council provides excellent levels of biodiversity and environmental good practice. The Council is accredited in its management of both country parks and delivers a number of tree planting successes across its parks and grounds estates year on year. The Council continues to increase its activity in these areas and wishes to provide and support others to further this agenda.

6.7 **Recommendation 6 - Request that the Environment & Performance Committee adopt Climate Change within its terms of reference.**

6.7.1 To implement carbon reduction into the Council’s everyday/business as usual activity, it is suggested that the committee undertake the Council’s development and monitoring of this agenda AND the recommendations contained in this report.

6.7.2 The committee can oversee and advance the delivery of all the activity and actions required to achieve carbon net-zero.

6.7.3 The Leader of the Council has previously included “Climate Change” within the scope of the Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder. The Portfolio Holder will adopt the role of “Climate Champion” for the Council.

6.7.4 It is envisaged that the Portfolio Holder, with the support and challenge provided by the E & P Committee will achieve the following:-

- Arrange a Citizens Assembly. In doing so local groups, individuals and organisations will develop a series of events and activity to motivate, demonstrate, challenge and support local citizens in achieving the highest levels of environmental good practice.

- Encourage, educate and support every individual and organisation to reduce their impact, play their part and change their behaviours to deliver and promote carbon reduction.
- Incorporate the following draft strategy framework principles into the Council's carbon reduction agenda:-

6.7.5 Climate change is a never-ending, natural process and has been happening since the formation of the atmosphere around the early earth. However, climate change over the last few hundred years has been accelerated by human activity. Rising levels of "Greenhouse gases" are accelerating climate change to a dangerous degree.

Our Climate Change Strategy sets out five objectives for how we will address the causes and consequences of Climate Change by:

- Reducing emissions from our estate and operations.
- Reducing energy consumption and emissions by promoting energy efficiency measures, sustainable construction, renewable energy sources and behaviour change.
- Reducing emissions from transport by promoting sustainable transport, reducing car travel and encouraging behaviour change.
- Reducing consumption of resources, increasing recycling and reducing waste.
- Supporting council services, residents and businesses to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

6.8 Recommendation 7 - Develop, cost and propose a series of "quick wins" and activity reporting and monitoring progress to the E & P Committee over the next two years.

6.8.1 The Working Group in completing its task reviewed a number of best practice recommendations for Councils and others in progressing improvements to their performance.

6.8.2 Whilst the following list is not exhaustive, it provides an indication of the research and tools available:-

- Local Government Association councillors work book on acting on climate change.
- Friends of the Earth - 33 actions local authorities can take on climate change/your climate action plan.
- Ashden sustainable solutions - A toolkit for local authorities.
- Imperial College London, Grantham Institute - co benefits of climate change mitigation.
- Declare a climate emergency - Go zero-carbon.
- Climate emergency declaration.org - A call to declare.

6.8.3 The activity, which will be included in recommendation 7, covers the following key aspects of activity:-

- Conduct a buildings and assets energy and carbon audit and produce a business case action plan of energy reducing activity and programmes across the Council's estate.
- Produce an action plan for the elimination of single use plastics from the Council's operations/activities.
- Promotion of "plastic free" and good practice businesses.

6.9 Recommendation 8 - Explore options for cost effective, accredited and audited options for commercial carbon offsetting schemes.

6.9.1 Achieving net-zero carbon will require dedicated focus to identify options for how this could best be delivered to both radically reduce the Council's carbon footprint and engage in carbon offsetting initiatives. Carbon offsetting schemes enable organisations and individuals to invest in environmental initiatives to balance their own carbon footprint.

6.9.2 These initiatives are designed to reduce further emissions. The Council wishes to prioritise carbon offsetting initiatives to be developed locally. Carbon offsetting projects can involve renewable energy, methane collection/combustion, energy efficiency, reforestation and fuel switching. The Council could seek to work with a network of partners to develop or buy-in to the most appropriate mix of carbon offsetting initiatives delivered in Boston Borough.

6.9.3 There are a number of planting initiatives that could be promoted and pursued to increase hedgerow, specimen and "bulk" tree planting across the Council's estate. BTAC has commenced a number of planting initiatives in recent years and expanding this initiative will allow the Council to build upon BTAC's success.

6.9.4 In addition, the Council could:-

- Support the NFU in lobbying the Environment Agency, Government and others to achieve "Farming's 2040 net-zero goal".
- Promote the existing "environmental offer" to the local population (Bird Reserves, Country Parks, Woodland).
- Facilitate tree and hedge planting to local residents.
- Support the farming community in reporting their success and record in biodiversity, carbon reduction and environmental practices.

6.9.5 The Council's annual emissions are currently in the region of 1790 tonnes. Using the carbon calculator at one of the more trusted carbon offsetting organisations (Such as the World Land Trust) the cost to offset our current carbon output would be around £27,000 per year.

6.10 Recommendation 9 - Move to a "Green Energy" source utility supplier as soon as possible.

6.10.1 Boston Borough Council currently procures its electricity supplies via a group framework supply contract. Traditionally supply contracts have been awarded to the lowest cost supplier. Informal enquiries have determined that current "green energy" supply costs are very competitive and almost identical to traditional fossil fuel originated suppliers.

7.0 OTHER KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 **Growth** - In instances where the Council is undertaking growth and development schemes it will seek to embed sustainability and particularly the commitment to reduce the carbon footprint, at the heart of its required outcomes to deliver a positive impact. This will include encouraging the use of modern, carbon reducing technologies within developments.
- 7.2 **Council Operations** - The main carbon usage is in fuel for the fleet, in particular the waste collection vehicles. There are emerging technical innovations that significantly reduce carbon emissions but these are currently expensive and have severe service limitations. The technology limitations are such that the current replacement fleet procurement is based on diesel fuel vehicles. However, the life replacement period (circa 7 years) means that electric and biofuel options for the waste collection vehicles are likely to have been advanced to allow alternative consideration as part of the next round of fleet replacement. This is not the case for other fleet vehicles such as vans and the pool cars for which there may be opportunities to switch away from diesel and petrol to electric or other lower carbon emission vehicles as they become due for replacement. Such action would also support the council's drive to improve air quality and demonstrate in a potentially highly visible way the council's commitment in terms of both carbon reduction and air quality
- 7.3 **Procurement** - The Council will seek to influence the external service providers and the Council's wider supply chains of goods and services as far as practicable to reduce their carbon footprint. Achieving net-zero carbon through the wider provider and supply chain helps to multiply the beneficial effect of the Council's commitment and efforts.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Councils are well placed to drive and influence action on climate change through the services they deliver, their regulatory and strategic function and their roles as community leaders, major employers and large-scale procurers.
- 8.2 Action on climate change can deliver many local benefits, including lower energy bills, economic regeneration and creation of local jobs, reductions in fuel poverty and improved air quality. Furthermore, increasing resilience to climate change risks can result in avoided costs from flood damage to buildings, enhanced green spaces and improved health.
- 8.3 However, making a commitment to declare a Climate Change Emergency is multi-faceted and members will want to be well sighted on process, financial and other considerations in making environmental commitments, hence the recommended E & P oversight and challenge.
- 8.4 The E & P Committee has fully endorsed the Working Group recommendations and commends this report to Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The report is not recommending specific financial allocation at this point. The ambition set out in this report will need to be incorporated into budgetary plans from both a capital and revenue perspective where relevant.

The prioritisation of initiatives to help the Council achieve a net zero carbon emission target will very likely mean potentially difficult decisions when allocating the finite resources available, especially if funding constraints continue and no new money is forthcoming.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific legal or governance implications at this stage. However, this may change. In October 2019 the last Government published a draft of an Environment Bill which if enacted will place additional responsibilities and duties on Councils.

The UK Climate Change Act of 2008 was the first piece of legislation to legally mandate a nation to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emission - in this case by 80% of 1990 levels by 2050. Many countries have subsequently introduced their own equivalent legislation and in 2015, the Paris Agreement was signed by 197 countries with the aim of limiting “the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels”. The 2018 special report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on the impact of a 1.5 degrees Celsius rise in global temperatures above pre-industrial levels further highlighted the urgency with which GHG emissions must be reduced to avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

In May of 2019, the UK Government declared a non-legally binding Climate Change Emergency declaration.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

The whole report.

COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific community safety implications at this stage but this will be kept under review and used to inform the programme of work as it develops.

EQUALITY AND SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific equality or safeguarding implications at this stage but this will be kept under review and as the programme develops, analysis of impact will be carried out and used to inform individual projects as relevant.

CONSULTATION

No consultation undertaken.

APPENDICES - None

BACKGROUND PAPERS - Reference to background papers is included within the report text.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

7 January 2020

Environment & Performance Committee