

BOSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

At the meeting of Boston Borough Council held via Zoom, on Monday, 26th October, 2020 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, Peter Bedford, David Brown, Michael Cooper, George Cornah, Anne Dorrian, Viven Edge, Deborah Evans, Paul Goodale, Martin Griggs, Neill Hastie, Martin Howard MSc. PCGM, Cert Ed, Jonathan Noble, Frank Pickett, Brian Rush, Judith Skinner, Paul Skinner, Aaron Spencer, Yvonne Stevens, Peter Watson, Judith Welbourn, Nigel Welton and Stephen Woodliffe

Officers –

Joint Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive (Place) & Monitoring Officer, Deputy Chief Executive (People), Section 151 Officer and Senior Democratic Services Officer

Guests -

Neil Kempster, Chestnut Homes, Chairman of the Town Deal Board,
Jacqui Bunce, NHS
Claire Foster, Principal of Boston College
Greg Pickup, Heritage Lincolnshire
Matthew Van Lier, Haven High Academy

103 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of the Council, held on 10 August 2020, were taken as read and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

104 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Chelcei Trafford.

105 COMMUNICATIONS

The Chief Executive advised the meeting that Colin Woodcock had resigned from the Council with immediate effect and he wished him all the best for the future on behalf of the Council. This would affect the political proportionality of the Council and officers would look at this the following day.

106 DEPUTATIONS AND PETITIONS

The Chief Executive reported there were no deputations or petitions.

107 QUESTIONS FROM ELECTED MEMBERS

The Chief Executive reported there were no questions from Elected Members.

108 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The Chief Executive reported there was one question from a member of the public.

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

“Question to the Leader of the Council - What are the reasons why Boston Borough Council did not instruct Boston College to also incorporate the Training Pool facility, a well used and valued asset at Geoff Moulder Leisure Centre, into the latest plans for the Mayflower Suite and what are the Borough Council plans to provide a dedicated training pool for our upcoming Bostonian athletes and swimmers in the future?”

Response by Councillor Paul Skinner

“Thank you for your question, Mr Raggo.

“Firstly, there are many uses to the training pool in the Geoff Moulder Leisure Centre. My observation is that we didn’t instruct anybody to do anything at this stage, because we are in the early stages of scheme development and we will need to decide the precise combination through an intuitive process that takes account of cost of maintaining, improving, replacing and/or relocating various facilities.

“There are various projects that the Town Board are in the process of bidding for and Boston Borough Council is the fund holder for this process. The Town Board are the generator of the schemes and these are not fully developed projects yet. They are developed schemes, but the detail is probably not all there at this stage. There were some bits shared with us last week. I can confirm to you that I was probably one of the few Councillors here today that took part in the protest march 10 years ago and also that Positive Futures aided by Boston Canoe Club were actually using the training pool prior to it being heated and prior to it being open to members of the public.”

Supplemental question asked by Councillor Rush pursuant to paragraph 10.8 of the Rules of Procedure as set out in the Constitution:-

“At the cabinet meeting on Wed 9th Sep, the cabinet agreed the following recommendation “that the Deputy Chief Executive (Strategy) be authorised to communicate to the Principal of Boston College that the Council is minded to enter into an agreement to lease the Geoff Moulder Centre in order to facilitate the development of the College’s Mayflower Centre project.” and the Deputy Chief Executive (Strategy) communicated to the cabinet during the meeting that Boston College needed reassurances from Boston Borough Council so they can instruct their architects to develop plans for the Mayflower Suite.

“Also at the Town Board meeting on the 5th October, which both you and Cllr Goodale attended as representatives of Boston Borough Council, the board agreed for the college to develop a proposal to incorporate the leisure pool into the designs for the Mayflower Suite. I, therefore, respectfully disagree with you that the Boston Borough Council have not instructed anyone to do anything at this time.

“I therefore like to ask again why there has been little to no consideration in incorporating the training pool facility (alongside the leisure pool) into any future plans for the Mayflower Suite or PE21 and will the Boston Borough Council tonight make a commitment to support the users of the Training Pool (including the Boston Amateur Swimming Club, Boston Canoe Club, the Sub-Aqua Club, the Sea Cadets and the many other groups) in providing an alternative suitable location to use if the Training Pool facility does not feature in any future plans?”

Response by Councillor Skinner

“Thank you for your supplementary question, Mr Raggo.

“The clue is in the wording actually – “minded to”. Quite frankly, anybody can have plans to do anything with anybody else’s property, but there is little point in doing anything at all unless people are actually minded to even look at it. So, at the moment this is all in very early stages and it is that we are minded to look at it. This is part of a bid process. The bid process is due to be in for 31st of this month.

“This process was started in January. Our colleagues in economic development worked very hard with the Town Committee to actually pull all this together so that it can actually be considered. So at the moment nobody is committed to anything exactly, only the principles to look at it and the principles to receive a grant, and I very much hope that everybody in the town will actually welcome the work that’s gone in.

“You will hear a little bit later on that £25 million of the Government there’s another £13 million that is added to that: this project is £38 million to this town. So, it’s quite easy, do we consider it or do we just park it? I think we consider it and work very hard to look at all the solutions possible.”

109 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Martin Howard declared an interest in the Town Investment Fund as he was an employee of Boston College and, as he did not feel it would be appropriate to be involved in discussion regarding the Geoff Moulder Centre site, he would abstain from the vote.

Councillor Martin Griggs declared that he was also an employee of Boston College, but did not feel that this would prevent him from voting on the Town Investment Fund.

110 REFERRAL FROM CALL-IN - PE21 THE NEXT STEPS

Full Council considered a referral from the Corporate & Community Committee of a Cabinet decision called-in by Scrutiny Members in accordance with the Council’s Constitution.

The Cabinet decision, made on 9th September 2020, was:

3. That the Deputy Chief Executive (Strategy) be authorised to communicate to the Principal of Boston College that the Council is minded to enter into an agreement to lease and a lease for the Geoff Moulder Centre in order to facilitate the development of the College's Mayflower Centre project.

The Chairman of the Corporate & Community Committee addressed Full Council to present the findings from the Committee's consideration of the issue at its meeting on 1 October, referring to the original reasons given for calling in the issue, as follows:

- All Elected Members should have been consulted prior to the decision being made
- All information relating to the project should have been made available
- No presentation had been made to the Corporate and Community Committee
- There were no indication of costs in the 2020/21 Budget and MTFS

The Chairman stated that the Committee had decided to refer the matter to Full Council for debate, as other Members had been unaware that Cabinet would be considering a request for the lease of the Geoff Moulder Centre site. They were concerned that this would lead to the closure and demolition of the swimming pools when there were no definite or specific plans to replace them. It was also felt that the estimated cost quoted for replacement was not convincing. The Committee therefore asked Full Council to reconsider the matter and seek clarification of exactly what had been agreed.

During Full Council's debate, the main concerns raised by some Members were given as follows, in summary:

- The Geoff Moulder Centre should not be leased until a replacement swimming pool had been designed and constructed, as it was a valued asset;
- Members were not being kept up-to-date with developments on a matter that should be a decision of Full Council;
- The lack of consultation with Members and members of the public regarding what was a vital community service;
- The lack of clarity as to whether there was to be a new pool or whether it was planned to incorporate the existing pool within the proposed Mayflower Centre;
- The Council had previously spent a significant amount of money on refurbishing the Geoff Moulder Centre and a decision should have been taken to lease the site before that.

Other Members remarked that nothing had been agreed by Cabinet, but it was important to reassure the public that nothing would happen to the Geoff Moulder Centre before the provision of a replacement pool and a decision by Full Council. This matter related to the Town Investment Plan bid, for which the deadline was imminent, and which would provide exciting and improved facilities for the people of Boston. There was a suggestion that it would be advantageous to incorporate a training pool into plans.

The Deputy Leader stressed that Cabinet had not made a decision on the matter and that it had purely given permission to the Deputy Chief Executive (Strategy) to talk to a partner regarding how to facilitate plans. No decision had been made and when it became time to make a decision, it would be made by Full Council.

On conclusion of debate it was proposed by Councillor Anne Dorrian and seconded by Councillor Alan Bell and

RESOLVED that the called-in issue be referred back to Cabinet for further reconsideration setting out in writing the nature of the concerns of both the Call-In meeting and those of Full Council.

111 TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN

The Deputy Chief Executive (Place) introduced a report detailing the Boston Town Deal Board's Town Investment Plan (TIP) prior to its submission to the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

Each Town Investment Plan included proposals for up to £25 million to invest in regeneration, skills and connectivity to secure transformational levels of economic growth. The deadline for submission of the Town Investment Plan was 30 October 2020.

Following the agreement of Heads of Terms with MHCLG, towns would have up to 12 months to complete comprehensive business cases for selected projects and submit a Summary Document to show that this had been completed in line with the agreed conditions and requirements in the Heads of Terms. Once towns had developed detailed business cases for their agreed projects and submitted all the required documentation as part of the Summary Document, Government would carry out a high-level assessment of the document before releasing funding.

The award of up to £25m from the Towns Fund created a huge opportunity to help shape the future of both the Town and the Borough of Boston. Responding to the requirements of phase one of the prospectus would ensure that the Council was well-placed to deliver phase two and continue to use the platform of the Town Deal to deliver additional investment in Boston by continuing to work with partners and business.

Four partners from the Town Board were then welcomed and invited to make presentations to the meeting: Neil Kempster of Chestnut Homes, Chairman of the Town Board, Jackie Bunce, NHS, Matt Van Lear, Head Teacher of Haven High Academy, Claire Foster, Principal of Boston College and Greg Pickup, Heritage Lincolnshire.

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Nigel Welton, thanked the representatives for their inspirational work and wished them luck with the submission of their remarkable plan.

Councillor Welton then MOVED that

- 1. The Town Investment Plan be noted.**
- 2. To note the Chief Executive will submit to MHCLG the Town Investment Plan, as approved by the Boston Town Deal Board by the 30 October 2020.**

3. To note that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Boston Town Deal Board may make refinements to the Boston Town Deal Investment Plan.

This was seconded by the Leader, Councillor Paul Skinner

Members described the TIP as an important and exciting opportunity and tribute was paid to the Deputy Chief Executive for her central role in bringing all partners together so effectively and quickly, which was a major achievement.

Members were impressed with the cooperation between partners and thanked the representatives present for their passion and care and desire to bring forward the projects. The investment and transformation in the long-term were key drivers and would provide many jobs.

A Member added that the High School and Grammar School should have been involved with the plan. Another expressed dissatisfaction with the plan and would not support it on the grounds of lack of detail, transparency and consultation, particularly in relation to the pool. A final point was made regarding the inaccessibility of the town and the need to upgrade transport infrastructure to make any projects successful.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the refinements referred to in the third part of the proposal would be made by the chairman and vice-chairman of the Town Deal Board, but they would be circulated to all members of the board for agreement.

It was then proposed that the motion be amended so that Town Investment Plan was not only noted but also supported in the Council's resolution and this was agreed by the proposer and seconder.

In summing up, the Leader praised the plan, its aspirations and ambitions for the town and community and urged Members to support the plan to give people hope, as it was a fantastic opportunity.

The Board Members were thanked by all Members for their motivational presentations.

The proposal was then put to the vote and it was:

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The Town Investment Plan be noted and supported.**
- 2. It be noted that the Chief Executive will submit to MHCLG the Town Investment Plan, as approved by the Boston Town Deal Board by the 30 October 2020.**
- 3. It be noted that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Boston Town Deal Board may make refinements to the Boston Town Deal Investment Plan.**

112 REVIEW OF APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES, CHAIRMANSHIPS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

The Deputy Chief Executive (Place) introduced the report which related to appointments for the remainder of the 2020/21 Municipal Year with respect to Membership of Committees, appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman, and appointments to external organisations.

The Deputy Chief Executive pointed out that a small number of positions were oversubscribed. In addition, the resignation of Colin Woodcock that day, as announced by the Chief Executive at the beginning of the meeting, would result in changes to the political proportionality of committee Membership. This would be recalculated and the Chief Executive would use his delegated authority to make any subsequent changes to appointments as soon as was reasonable and practicable. Group Leaders would then be notified.

The Leader, Councillor Paul Skinner, MOVED that

1. The membership of the Committees and arrangements for substitutes as set out in Appendix A be approved. Such appointees to hold office whilst they remain Members of the Council, until the next Annual Meeting of the Council, or until the appointment of their successors;
2. The nominations for appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees set out at Appendix B which are not oversubscribed be approved, with the addition that Councillor George Cornah and Councillor Deborah Evans be appointed as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Corporate and Community Committee. Such appointees to hold office whilst they remain Members of the Council, until the next Annual Meeting of the Council, or until the appointment of their successors;
3. The appointment of Members to serve as the Council's representatives on those external organisations where the Council is the appointing body which are not oversubscribed, as set out in Appendix C be approved, to hold office whilst they remain Members of the Council, until the next Annual Meeting of the Council, or until the appointment of their successors.

This was seconded by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Nigel Welton.

An amendment was then proposed by Councillor Alison Austin and seconded by Councillor Judith Welbourn that the appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen be delegated to the individual Committees to appoint them at their first meetings. Some Members agreed with this proposal on the grounds that it was not appropriate for the majority group to chair committees and the view was also expressed that unaligned Members should be given a role on committees.

However, when this amendment was put to the vote it fell with the Mayor's casting vote.

A second amendment was then proposed by Councillor Paul Goodale that Councillor Dorrian be appointed Chairman of the Environment and Performance Committee, Councillor Stephen Woodliffe be appointed Chairman of Corporate and Community

Committee, and Councillor Peter Bedford be appointed the Chairman of the Planning Committee. This amendment was seconded by Councillor Alan Bell.

There were further comments regarding the rationale behind the political proportionality calculations and the view that unaligned Members should be represented. The view was reiterated that it was not correct for Members of the majority party to chair committees, in particular, Scrutiny and Audit and Governance Committees. In addition, it was asserted that representation on the internal drainage boards should include a Member from the Boston Town Area Committee.

However, when this second amendment was put to the vote it fell.

It was then proposed and seconded and carried by the requisite number of Councillors that the question be now put.

[Councillor Richard Austin and Councillor Viven Edge had lost connection to the meeting at this point.]

The original proposal was then put to the vote and it was –

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The membership of the Committees and arrangements for substitutes as set out in Appendix A be approved. Such appointees to hold office whilst they remain Members of the Council, until the next Annual Meeting of the Council, or until the appointment of their successors;**
- 2. The nominations for appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees set out at Appendix B which are not oversubscribed be approved, with the addition that Councillor George Cornah and Councillor Deborah Evans be appointed as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Corporate and Community Committee. Such appointees to hold office whilst they remain Members of the Council, until the next Annual Meeting of the Council, or until the appointment of their successors;**
- 3. The appointment of Members to serve as the Council's representatives on those external organisations where the Council is the appointing body which are not oversubscribed, as set out in Appendix C be approved, to hold office whilst they remain Members of the Council, until the next Annual Meeting of the Council, or until the appointment of their successors.**

Members discussed how to consider the remaining business, i.e. the appointment of two chairmen and representatives on an internal drainage board, which were oversubscribed. Extension of the meeting was considered, but the consensus of the meeting was that this business be carried forward to the next meeting of Full Council on 23 November 2020.

(The meeting ended at 9.30 pm)