

BOSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

At the meeting of the Boston Borough Council held remotely via Zoom, on Monday, 10th August, 2020 at 7.20 pm (starting immediately after an Extraordinary Council Meeting)

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, George Cornah, Anne Dorrian, Viven Edge, Deborah Evans, Paul Goodale, Martin Griggs, Neill Hastie, Jonathan Noble, Frank Pickett, Brian Rush, Chelcei Trafford, Judith Skinner, Paul Skinner, Yvonne Stevens, Peter Watson, Judith Welbourn, Nigel Welton, Colin Woodcock and Stephen Woodliffe

Officers –

Joint Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive (Place) & Monitoring Officer, Deputy Chief Executive (Strategy), Chief Finance Officer and S151 Officer, Democratic Services Manager, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Democratic Services Officer, Principal IT Officer and IT Projects and Development Officer

93 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 10 June, 25 June and 21 July 2020, were taken as read and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

94 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Michael Cooper and Martin Howard.

95 COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications.

96 QUESTIONS FROM ELECTED MEMBERS

The Chief Executive reported there were two questions from Councillor Brian Rush.

Question asked by Councillor Brian Rush pursuant to paragraph 11 of the Rules of Procedure as set out in the Constitution.

“Last Friday one of this Council’s amenities, became the subject of an illegal encampment, when about 25 vans and caravans were allowed to arrive on Woodville Road Playing Field, presumably parking illegally. As the Portfolio Holder for Parks and Open Spaces, would you explain to me:

- (a) why only one enforcement Officer was on call, and;
- (b) what actions were taken to reassure residents in the area that Boston Borough Council was actively involved in resolving the ongoing issues with the travelling community?”

Response by Councillor Paul Skinner

“The Anti-Social Behaviour Team has one officer who covers Boston Borough Council area and one officer who covers East Lindsey District Council area, with a 22.5 hour a week part-time officer who supports both areas Tuesday / Wednesday and Thursday each week.

With regard to the working week ending Friday 31st July (when the travellers arrived) the East Lindsey District Council officer was on annual leave, which meant one officer was covering both district areas. This is our standard officer coverage rota and has been since 2015.

On Friday 31 July notification was received of arrival of encampment at 1.03 p.m. A Section 77 Notice under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 – the power of a local authority to direct unauthorised campers to leave land, was served on the illegal encampment at 3 p.m. The Section 77 Notices were served on each vehicle, 19 on site at that time.

On Monday 3 August a summons to court for orders of removal of persons and their vehicles unlawfully on land, was served on each vehicle and occupant under Section 78 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

On Monday 3 August a court date was granted for Thursday 6 August to hear the case and obtain the order for the direction and removal of the unauthorised encampment. The encampment then moved off the site during the evening of Thursday 6 August.

The Council’s cleansing team undertook a deep clean of the site during the night and it was open again by 8 a.m. on the morning of Friday 7 August.

Officers of the Customer Services and ASB Teams updated all callers who contacted the Council with the steps that had been taken, and would be taken once we had been court to obtain the eviction and removal order. Updates were also posted via the Council’s social media platforms.”

Supplemental question asked by Councillor Rush pursuant to paragraph 11.6 of the Rules of Procedure as set out in the Constitution:-

“No allowances were made for the distress caused by this incursion and the damage caused to equipment. The pirate ship in the play area cost a lot of money had was used as a toilet. You need to talk to officers to make the site safe for the public. It’s not good enough, we need to see better results in the future.”

Response by Councillor Skinner

“I share your distress, and will obviously push for legislation to change. It is abhorrent that so much damage can be caused without fear of recourse. Environmental solutions will be considered to make the site secure, fences may not be the solution. A worked up scheme will be presented to the Boston Town Area Committee.”

Question asked by Councillor Brian Rush pursuant to paragraph 11 of the Rules of Procedure as set out in the Constitution.

“Councillor Skinner you have been a supporting advocate of this Alliance, and so one would expect you to have been the main cheerleader for Boston, its people and the staff of this Council.

So are you yet in a position to tell us, who amongst Boston’s loyal staff, are destined to lose their jobs?”

Response by Councillor Paul Skinner

“I thank Councillor Rush for notice of his question. Full Council is not an appropriate forum to discuss staffing arrangements, as this falls under the responsibility of the Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service.”

Supplemental question asked by Councillor Brian Rush pursuant to paragraph 11.6 of the Rules of Procedure as set out in the Constitution:-

“People are in limbo, not knowing what is happening. It’s time you gave employees confidence in where the Council is going, confidence is key. Workers will start to look for other jobs, you need to take care to keep our best officers.”

Response by Councillor Paul Skinner

“I concur we have fantastic staff. I held five briefing sessions with staff on the Strategic Alliance. We have an excellent Chief Executive and responsibility for staffing rests with him.”

97 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

98 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Alison Austin declared an interest in the report on Pavement Licences. As a Member of Lincolnshire County Council she had taken part in debate on the matter at a meeting of their Full Council.

Councillor Martin Griggs declared an interest in the report on Pavement Licences. As a Member of Lincolnshire County Council he had taken part in debate on the matter at a meeting of their Full Council. However, he was not affected by that decision and would approach debate with an open mind.

Councillor Tom Ashton declared an interest in the report on Pavement Licences on the grounds of being a Member of Lincolnshire County Council, but had not previously expressed a view and would approach debate with an open mind.

Councillor Paul Skinner declared an interest in the report on Pavement Licences on the grounds of being a Member of Lincolnshire County Council, but had not previously expressed a view and would approach debate with an open mind.

Councillor Anne Dorrian declared an interest in the Accelerated Grant through the Towns Fund report on the grounds of being an employee of Haven High Academy, whose scheme for a 3G pitch was included as an intervention project.

Councillor Paul Skinner and Councillor Paul Goodale declared an interest in the Accelerated Grant through the Towns Fund report, on the grounds of being members of the Boston Town Deal Board. The Monitoring Officer confirmed this would not preclude taking part in debate on the item.

Councillor Tom Ashton declared that, with respect to the item on the Severance Arrangements for the Former Chief Executive, he was an Elected Member of East Lindsey District Council and had taken advice from the Monitoring Officer in respect of the agenda item. He confirmed that he was appearing in the meeting as a Boston Borough Councillor and as the Ward Member for Old Leake and Wrangle, he would make a decision on the item as a Boston Borough Councillor and confirmed that Boston Borough Council was entirely on his mind.

99 PAVEMENT LICENCES

Councillor Yvonne Stevens introduced a report by the Head of Regulatory Services on the issuing of pavement licences being delegated to Lincolnshire County Council.

The report stated that the Business and Planning Act 2020 had received Royal Assent on 22 July 2020. The purpose of the Act was to support business recovery including making it easier, cheaper, and quicker for businesses to obtain pavement licences for the use of outdoor space during the summer and at other times.

Sections 1 to 9 of the Act provided district councils in two tier areas the power to issue pavement licences until 30 September 2021. Previously this was only a function of the County Council.

Lincolnshire County Council had offered to discharge the function under the Act on behalf of district councils in Lincolnshire. As licensing was a non-executive function, discharging the Council's function required formal delegation by Council and formal acceptance by Lincolnshire County Council. An extraordinary meeting of Lincolnshire County Council had been held on 3 August 2020 when it was agreed to accept such delegations.

The potential volume of applications in Boston was considered by officers to be low, consequently application fees would be unlikely to cover the Council's costs if it were to discharge the function directly.

During debate concerns were raised regarding the safety of pedestrians, particularly those who were visually impaired or had disabilities, who may have difficulty navigating around street furniture or 'A' boards. It was noted that Lincolnshire County Council already discharged this function and would have criteria and safety measures in place to address these concerns.

It was suggested that Lincolnshire County Council be requested to inform Borough Councillors when any pavement licences were issued for the Borough area, which the Portfolio Holder for Licensing agreed to take forward.

It was moved by Councillor Yvonne Stevens, seconded by Councillor Jonathan Noble and

RESOLVED

1. That Lincolnshire County Council be delegated to discharge all of the Council's functions relating to pavement licences contained in sections 1 to 9 of the Business and Planning Act 2020.

2. That the Head of Service / Assistant Director responsible for Licensing within Boston Borough be authorised to:

Make all decisions under sections 1 to 9 of the Act until the County Council formally accepts the delegation and is able to discharge the functions; and

Agree arrangements with the County Council regarding the administration of the delegation.

100 ACCELERATED GRANT THROUGH THE TOWNS FUND

Councillor Nigel Welton introduced a report by the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) providing an update on the Towns Fund and the allocated accelerated grant funding of £750,000 delivered through the mechanism of the Towns Fund to support the delivery of capital projects in the financial year 2020/21, that met the Towns Fund Intervention Framework and would have the greatest immediate impact to aid economic recovery.

On 30th June 2020 the Prime Minister gave a speech and laid out plans for a 'New Deal' to support Britain's recovery putting jobs, skills and infrastructure investment at the heart of a post Covid-19 economic growth strategy.

On 1st July 2020, the Chief Executive received notification the Boston Borough Council, through the Towns Fund, had been selected to receive £750,000 in accelerated grant funding to support capital projects that would drive jobs growth, create further investment and had the ability to look to build a stronger and more resilient economy for the community. The notification set out how the grant allocation had been calculated, potential project interventions and a requirement to respond by 14th August 2020 to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) with project proposals.

The MHCLG was particularly keen to see, in collaboration with the Town Deal Board, capital projects that responded to immediate challenges and supported the economic recovery including the repurposing of empty commercial buildings, open space

infrastructure, improvements to the town centre and, where an immediate benefit could be achieved, demolition or site remediation.

The Town Deal Board was the vehicle through which the vision and strategy for the town was defined. The Board, through a well-evidenced based Town Investment Plan (TIP) would set out a clear programme of projects, collaborating with partners and other public sector bodies to ensure a holistic approach to deliver sustainable long term economic and productivity growth.

The Boston Town Deal Board were advised of the accelerated grant on 7th July and encouraged to suggest potential interventions which related to the emerging investment plan.

It was highlighted that consideration should be given to those projects that could facilitate and deliver sustained growth and return the maximum economic Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) for all of the community in the shortest amount of time. Any project should be in a position to move quickly as funding was only available for the financial year 2020/21.

Listed within the report were potential project interventions which met the criteria set out by the MHCLG:-

Haven High Academy – 3G Pitch Development Project - £120,000

Haven High Academy was applying to the Football Foundation for funding towards a full size floodlit 3G Football Turf Pitch. The facility would support students and also provide opportunities for the local community groups to access high quality facilities. The new 3G pitch would complement existing facilities and promote the academy as the hub of the local community.

The cost of a full sized pitch was in the region of £750,000 including professional fees and contingency. The academy would be using part of their capital reserves towards the project, and seeking other funding to contribute to the partnership funding required. The contribution requested from the Towns Fund was £120,000.

Boston College Digital, Transport and Logistics Academy - £182,976

Boston College's Digital, Transport and Logistics Academy (DTLA) was proposed to introduce new courses that would provide skills training for Lincolnshire's long established logistics and transportation industry with a focus on digital innovation and technologies for the future. The Academy was due for completion in November 2020.

As part of the work of the Town Deal Board, there was ongoing consultation with the logistics industry and the Port of Boston. The valuable engagement included working with employers to map the current and future provision to meet skills needs, both locally and nationally to ensure that the facilities implemented and course delivered were relevant to the employment opportunities available and enabled industries to continue to grow and develop.

As a result of the engagement, Boston College had identified the essential equipment required to accelerate the support for skills and employment for young people and also

adult learners who may need to retrain as a consequence of the impact of Covid-19 on the employment market.

The acquisition of the equipment and services would enable the full completion of the DTLA which was a GLLEP funded project and destined to support the skills within the key sectors of ports and logistics.

Boston Town Heritage Projects - £277,700

The Boston Townscape Heritage Project would significantly enhance the eastern area of the town's historic market place for the benefit of local businesses, community and visitors to the town.

Boston's rich and unique historic environment, dating from the medieval period to the 2th century, would be explored, celebrated and conserved through a scheme of capital works and innovative activity programme.

Three individual projects had been identified for support from the accelerated grant funding totalling £272,250 and together with an amount for promotional materials and activity in support of the project totalling £5,450.

- 16 Market Place – Had been granted listed building consent and planning permission. It had been out to tender and was currently awaiting a final tender return.
- 17 Market Place – Planning permissions had been granted, the tender process was also complete and the project was currently awaiting a grant offer so works could proceed on site.
- 8 Dolphin Lane – Planning permissions had been granted and it was currently out to tender.
- Publicity and promotion for all of the above to include the Accelerator Fund and the Boston Town Deal within the wider project funding partnership.

Experience Boston: Travel, Trade and Influence - £80,000

The project would build on an increased local, regional, national and international profile of the town and port as a quality historic and cultural visitor destination, bringing wider benefits to local visitor economies and driving increased opportunities for investment.

This would be a significant opportunity to add to current public realm improvements within Boston, helping inform locals and visitors to Boston's rich heritage, and build on the placebrand, wayfinding and design toolkit developed in the successful HLF project 'Boston: Explore and Discover'.

PE21 Feasibility Funding - £50,000

To test and underpin the interventions, recommendations and the viability of the PE21 Masterplan and market demand post Covid-19, a feasibility study was required to be commissioned to fully understand the sustainable and economic potential the PE21 vision could deliver.

The report would consider current and projected future uses and market demands, which would ensure a more robust assessment on uses, values and deliverability to enable a better and clearer policy on approach and opportunity.

The Sanctuary, Restore Church - £200,000

The Sanctuary would be an inclusive community hub that focused on supporting homeless and vulnerable people in the broadest sense, providing a range of services and opportunities to support people into accommodation, training, education and work.

As a project the Sanctuary would seek to provide:

- Self-contained accommodation with support.
- Emergency access accommodation to support the most vulnerable within the community.
- A Community Café offering training and volunteering opportunities as well as a revenue source to support the wider project.
- A Community Supermarket, that like the café, would offer training, skills development and practical opportunities to the community, residents of the accommodation, as well as providing food schemes to help individuals and families in need.
- Multi-agency space where support, training, advice and advocacy could be delivered.
- Adaptive and inclusive spaces that could be used by small social enterprise and clubs.
- The total cost of the project had been assessed at just under £1.5 million (including contingency).

A suitable premise for sale had been identified within the PE21 area and discussions commenced with the agent. Funding of £200,000 was being sought from the Towns Fund towards the purchase cost of £650,000. The remainder of the purchase cost would be funded by social investment from a provider with whom the Church had a strong existing relationship.

The projects selected were seeking to maximise the impact the funding stream could have on the greatest number of residents within the Borough. These included an emphasis on skills and education, the quality of the town centre offer through enhancing the heritage offer, the promotion of Boston as a place to visit, support for the most vulnerable residents and improving the quality of the health of the Borough.

This would only happen if the Council agreed the identified projects aligned to, or had a relationship with, the emerging TIP. Written confirmation was required to be submitted to MHCLG by 14 August 2020, outlining the potential projects, and agreement from the Council's Section 151 Officer that any spend drawn down from the accelerated grant, represented good value for money, could be delivered in the financial year 2020/21 and was in line with the Towns Fund Intervention Framework.

The report had been considered by the Boston Town Area Committee at its meeting on 5 August 2020, and the proposed projects endorsed.

Members welcomed the report, expressed their support for the potential project interventions and for the bid to be submitted to MHCLG by 14 August 2020.

Council thanked the Town Deal Team for all the hard work and enthusiasm that had been put into bringing the proposals together.

It was proposed by Councillor Nigel Welton, seconded by Councillor David Brown and

RESOLVED

- 1. That the sum of £750,000 Accelerated Grant funding to support capital projects that respond to immediate challenges and support the economic recovery of Boston, be noted and included in the 2020/21 Capital Programme.**
- 2. That the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) be authorised to confirm in writing to Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government by 14th August 2020 of the project proposals and that they were in line with the Towns Fund intervention framework as set out in the Towns Fund further guidance.**

(Having declared an interest in the above item, Councillor Anne Dorrian left the meeting during the debate and vote thereon)

101 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was moved by Councillor Paul Skinner, seconded by Councillor Martin Griggs and

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(iv) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 3 and 4 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

102 SEVERANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FORMER CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Monitoring Officer presented a report on severance arrangements for the former Chief Executive.

Council was reminded that at its meeting held on 21 July, it had been agreed to defer consideration of the discretionary element of the settlement package until written

confirmation had been given from Mr. Drury's advisor that the proposed terms would be full and final settlement. The confirmation had since been received.

It was noted that an additional payment was due under the statutory and contractual element for untaken leave.

During debate Members paid tribute to Mr. Drury for his dedicated and loyal service to the Council over many years and wished him well for the future.

It was moved by Councillor Paul Skinner, seconded by Councillor Martin Griggs and

RESOLVED

- 1. That payment of the discretionary element of the severance package as set out in the report be approved.**
- 2. That an additional payment under the statutory and contractual element of the severance package for untaken leave be noted.**

(The meeting ended at 9.20 pm)