

BOSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

NOTICE OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET ON 8 DECEMBER 2021

DATE OF PUBLICATION: FRIDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2021

DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: FRIDAY, 17 DECEMBER 2021

NOTES:

MINUTE NUMBERS 40 – 42, BEING STARRED MINUTES, WILL BE REFERRED TO FULL COUNCIL ON 17TH JANUARY 2022.

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

MEETING OF THE CABINET

8 December 2021

Present:

Councillor Paul Skinner, in the Chair

Councillors Tracey Abbott, Richard Austin BEM, Deborah Evans, Jonathan Noble and Nigel Welton

Officers –

Deputy Chief Executive (Growth), Deputy Chief Executive (Programme Delivery & SIRO), Assistant Director - Wellbeing and Community Leadership, Assistant Director - Economic Growth, Assistant Director - Finance (Deputy S151 Officer), Community Safety Manager, Revenues and Benefits Operations Manager, Insights & Transformation Manager, Empowering Healthy Communities Programme Coordinator, Technical Services Team Leader - Enterprise Infrastructure, Senior Democratic Services Officer and Democratic Services Apprentice

32 MINUTES

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 20th October 2021 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

33 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Martin Griggs.

34 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

35 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There was one question from a member of the public, Mr Darron Abbott:

“In 2020 the LGA drew up a suggested Councillor code of conduct. As usual Boston Borough Council seem to be lagging a long way behind in the adoption of this document why is this?”

Answer from the Leader:

“Thank you for your question. The LGA Draft Code was published 23rd December 2020. A number of guidance notes have been published, January, May, July 2021 following a consultation. The process of Scrutiny has begun at Boston Borough Council.

“This Code has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public’s trust in local government.”

Summary of supplementary question from Mr Darron Abbott:

“Is there the will to enforce the code and, after several examples of swearing and unacceptable behaviour since 2020 with no further action taken, could Councillors self-regulate their behaviour?”

Summary of answer from the Leader:

“We all take behaviour seriously. Unfortunately, the current code had no teeth. The new code included the term ‘respect’ and it is hoped its meaning will be understood. The conduct of individual Councillors affected them all and the role of Councillor should be one to aspire to. There should be a code in practice that should stop bad behaviour.”

The Deputy Leader took the opportunity to express thanks to the Assistant Director - Economic Growth and the Communications and Marketing Lead for their tremendous efforts putting together the Boston City Status document for Cabinet at such short notice and this was endorsed.

36 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (STANDING ITEM)*

Recommendations from the Scrutiny Committees were contained within the reports on the agenda.

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

None.

38 LINCOLNSHIRE WOMEN'S CONCORDAT

DECISION To sign up to the Lincolnshire Women's Concordat and commit to the requirements set out within.	Portfolio Holders and Officer PS/PH
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REASON FOR DECISION

The Leader presented a report, which asked Members to agree to sign up to the Lincolnshire Women's Concordat and commit to the requirements set out within it.

Reducing offending was a priority for the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership (SLP), of which the Council was a member. Recent work had contributed to a greater understanding of female offenders, leading to the development of a Lincolnshire Women's Strategy, which outlined what could be done to help prevent entry into the criminal justice system, and improve support for those already in it.

To help achieve this, a Lincolnshire Women's Concordat was introduced. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Lincolnshire had written to all Chief Executive Officers with an invitation to participate in the concordat. The report summarised the key information to inform Members about this work, what it would entail, and ask for support with the recommendation made.

This was a key piece of work to support both national and local strategies to improve outcomes for women and girls at risk of entering, or those who have already entered the criminal justice system. As a member of the SLP, it was recommended that the Council participated in the Lincolnshire Concordat to maximise the outcomes that could be achieved in Lincolnshire.

The report sought to formally consult with Members on a letter from the Lincolnshire PCC, inviting the Council to participate in the Lincolnshire Women's Concordat. This would support delivery of outcomes set out in the national and county women's strategies.

The report explained that working in partnership to deliver services that women and girls needed would help to interrupt pathways that led them into the criminal justice system. As a partner of the SLP and the priority work streams, participation in the Women's Concordat was encouraged to maximise the outcomes for females in Lincolnshire.

Members commended the report and welcomed the concordat, which they fully supported. One commented that it was hoped this would become a blueprint for providing life choices for young people in future.

OTHER OPTIONS OR ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Acknowledge the hard work that has been undertaken by the Reducing Offending Core Priority Group (ROCPG) but decline to sign up to the Women's Concordat.

RECORD OF ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

RECORD OF ANY DISPENSATION GRANTED

None.

39 EMPOWERING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES: COUNCILLOR GRANT SCHEME UPDATE

DECISION	Portfolio Holders and Officer
1. That the application period for the Councillor Grant Scheme and Parish Grant scheme be extended until 31st March 2022.	MG/NH
2. That further details to be brought to Cabinet on a Community Funding Scheme for any future underspend, within this scheme and the wider Empowering Healthy Communities Programme.	

REASON FOR DECISION

The Deputy Chief Executive (Growth) presented a report that provided an update on progress of the Councillor Grant Scheme.

Forming part of the externally funded Empowering Health Communities (Community Champions) Programme, Cabinet agreed on 23rd June 2021 to deliver a Councillor Grants Scheme. This scheme aimed to give support to community groups across the board to support with health, wellbeing, resilience and Covid recovery.

It was agreed a project update would be provided to Cabinet in December 2021 to enable Members to monitor the progress of the scheme and agree any necessary changes to ensure continued success.

A total of £48,000 was allocated to the Councillor grants scheme from the Empowering

Communities Programme. Funding had been allocated on the basis of £1,000 Councillor Grant Scheme awarded to each Ward Member and £1,000 awarded to each Parish Council. The Councillor Grants Scheme was open to applications from eligible groups until 31st January 2022 at which point the current scheme would close and any applications after this date would be rejected.

To date, the Councillor Grant had supported 6 applications with £24,250 still to be allocated, and the Parish Council Grant Scheme had supported 3 applications with £15,000 still to be allocated.

The Councillor Grants Scheme presented a positive opportunity for Ward Members and Parish Councils to invest directly in their communities to respond to applications from local community groups based on need in the local area.

In response to concern about possible loss of funding not claimed, the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth) explained that this was the reason for the second recommendation, in that Cabinet would be kept up-to-date with any underspend and a continuous dialogue would be maintained with Members and parishes. Specific briefings could be held to ensure information was cascaded to Members and parish clerks.

The Assistant Director - Wellbeing and Community Leadership advised Members that the Empowering Healthy Communities Programme Coordinator, who had been managing the scheme, had a wealth of readily available information and both were available to assist Members with the scheme.

During debate, the scheme and the proactive work of the Empowering Healthy Communities Programme Coordinator were commended. The scheme supported worthwhile causes and it was crucial that the funding be spent within the deadline.

OTHER OPTIONS OR ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

None.

RECORD OF ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

RECORD OF ANY DISPENSATION GRANTED

None.

<p>DECISION</p> <p>1. That it be recommended to Council to approve:</p> <p>a) Continuation of the current Council Tax Support scheme, including uprating in line with DWP's annual update of allowances and premiums for 2022/23;</p> <p>b) Introduction of a link to the award of Universal Credit, removing the need for customers to make a separate application for Council Tax Support; and</p> <p>c) The introduction of a provision in the scheme for discretion to disregard national schemes introduced during a financial year in the calculation of Council Tax Support.</p> <p>2. That approval for the 2022/23 final scheme policy be delegated to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, including administrative and minor changes.</p>	<p>Portfolio Holders and Officer</p> <p>JN/SH</p>
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REASON FOR DECISION

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Commercial presented a report, which sought Cabinet's decision on the final proposals for the 2022/23 Local Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme, to be presented to Council for approval on 17 January 2022.

The Council had to make any revision to its scheme, or any replacement, and agree its final scheme no later than 11 March 2022 in respect of the 2022/23 financial year.

Retention of the current scheme would provide continuity for customers in terms of the level of support provided, and it would maintain scheme expenditure at an affordable level. Therefore, continuation of the current Council Tax Support scheme was recommended, including uprating in line with the Department of Work and Pension's annual update of allowances and premiums for 2022/23.

Further recommendations were for the introduction of a link to the award of Universal Credit to remove the need for customers to make a separate application for Council Tax Support and a provision in the scheme for discretion to disregard national schemes introduced during a financial year in the calculation of Council Tax Support.

A final recommendation was that approval for the 2022/23 final CTS scheme policy be delegated to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, including administrative and minor changes.

The Portfolio Holder added that, if the CTS scheme was not uprated in line with the DWP, it would result in hardship due to the increases in inflation and confirmed that those claimants

who were not able to access online services could telephone to obtain assistance with claims.

OTHER OPTIONS OR ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

No change. Continuation of the current scheme into 2022/23, but not updated in line with DWP updating of allowances and premiums.

RECORD OF ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

RECORD OF ANY DISPENSATION GRANTED

None.

***41 QUARTER 4 REPORT - FINANCE**

DECISION	Portfolio Holders and Officer
1. That the 2020/21 outturn position of £1,423,000 underspend, with the recommendation that this is carried forward into 2021-22 in a 'COVID Pressure Smoothing Reserve', be noted.	JN/SK
2. That it be recommended to Council to approve the reserve movement in Table 4, Appendix A.	
3. That it be recommended to Council to approve the updated capital programme position as detailed in Table 6, Appendix A.	

REASON FOR DECISION

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Commercial presented a report, which provided information on the outturn financial position of the Council for 2020/21.

The outturn position as at 31st March was an overall underspend of £1,423,000 and this was detailed further in appendix A, alongside key financial issues, developments and financial recommendations. Information and updates relating to capital budgets, treasury management, insurance, debt collection, business rates and council tax collection were also

provided.

The Final Accounts audit for 2020/21 was still underway and, therefore, the figures in the report were subject to the conclusion of this audit and might change.

Overall, financial performance in Quarter 4 of 2020/21 was in line with targets but had been heavily impacted by Covid-19 restrictions as anticipated.

It was recommended that the underspend be carried forward into 2021-22 in a 'COVID Pressure Smoothing Reserve' and that Full Council be recommended to approve the reserve movements and the updated capital programme position, as detailed in Appendix A.

OTHER OPTIONS OR ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Alternative reporting arrangements.

RECORD OF ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

RECORD OF ANY DISPENSATION GRANTED

None.

***42 QUARTER 2 REPORT - PERFORMANCE, RISK AND FINANCE**

DECISION 1. That the quarterly monitoring information for Q2 2021/22 be noted. 2. That it be recommended to Council to approve the proposed movements in Table 3, Appendix C. 3. That it be recommended to Council to approve the updated capital programme position as detailed in Table 5, Appendix C.	Portfolio Holders and Officer PS/JN SR/PD
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REASON FOR DECISION

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Commercial presented a report, which covered performance, projects, risk and finance monitoring information for the Council for Quarter 2

of 2021/22, as at September 2021.

A joint performance management framework had been agreed across Boston and East Lindsey Councils to support joint delivery of services. This would soon be reviewed in the context of the new, wider, Partnership that included South Holland District Council.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) had been agreed through the service planning process to capture performance against Boston Borough Council's Corporate Strategy and East Lindsey District Council's Strategic Aims. The performance targets were designed to stretch performance within services as opposed to being targets that were easily achievable.

A combined performance report had been presented to the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) and this information had then been split out by Council for reporting to Boston's Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees and to East Lindsey's Executive Board and Overview Committee.

Performance information was set out in Appendix A. In total, there were 20 KPIs; 7 were on or better than target, 10 were worse than target, 3 were not available.

Project updates were detailed in Appendix B.

The next area for review was the risk management framework to provide a consistent approach across the Councils. East Lindsey District Council had a strategic risk register in place. Boston's strategic risk register needed to be updated to reflect the new Corporate Strategy. All operational and project risks needed to be reviewed to reflect the changes in structure and working practices. Work was underway to bring this together for reporting back in Q3.

Overall, performance and projects in Quarter 2 of 2021/22 were in line with targets and remedial action was in place where required.

Finance information was set out in Appendix C, including key financial issues, developments and financial recommendations. Information and updates relating to the revenue and capital budgets, treasury management, insurance, debt collection, business rates and council tax collection were also provided.

The Leader praised staff for their exceptionally hard work covering issues relating to the pandemic as well as their day-to-day duties. This was much appreciated and it was noted that where performance was below target, it was not significantly so. The Council had supported the town centre in terms of parking and it was satisfying to notice it was beginning to recover.

It was pointed out that the report did not contain information on the market stalls, which meant it was not possible to determine performance. Although the stalls seemed to be performing satisfactorily, they could be promoted amongst young people. It was noted that a good deal of work was being carried out in this respect.

Action: MS

Email data on the market stalls to Councillor Abbott.

OTHER OPTIONS OR ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Alternative reporting arrangements.

RECORD OF ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

RECORD OF ANY DISPENSATION GRANTED

None.

43 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CORPORATE STRATEGY

DECISION	Portfolio Holders and Officer
1. That the feedback from Corporate & Community Committee on 4th November 2021 be noted. 2. That it be confirmed that the corporate priorities remain fit for purpose for the year ahead, with a further review in a year's time.	NW/SR

REASON FOR DECISION

The Deputy Leader presented the annual review of the Council's Corporate Strategy.

The Strategy was adopted by Full Council in November 2020. The report out the Strategy's 4 priorities and provided an opportunity for Cabinet to review them to ensure that they were still relevant and fit for purpose. Any proposed changes to the priorities would need to be referred to Full Council to make the final decision.

The Corporate & Community Committee had reviewed the priorities at its meeting on 4th November 2021 to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and had resolved that the Corporate Strategy and its priorities be supported.

Members were pleased that the Strategy and priorities had been thoroughly scrutinised as it was important to ensure they remained fit for purpose.

OTHER OPTIONS OR ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

To not carry out an annual review.

RECORD OF ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST

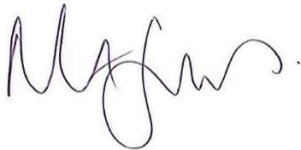
None.

RECORD OF ANY DISPENSATION GRANTED

None.

The Meeting ended at 7.20 pm

Signed by the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth)



FRIDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2021

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