

BOSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

At the meeting of Boston Borough Council held at the Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston, PE21 8QR, on Monday, 18th September, 2023 at 6.30 pm

Present:

The Mayor (Councillor David Brown), in the Chair
Councillors Anne Dorrian, Alison Austin, Richard Austin BEM, Peter Bedford, Anton Dani, Stephen Woodliffe, Jyothi Arayambath, John Baxter, Dale Broughton, Callum Butler, James Cantwell, Emma Cresswell, Neil Drayton, Sandeep Ghosh, Mike Gilbert, Paul Gleeson, Andy Izzard, Patricia Marson, David Middleton, Chris Mountain, Barrie Pierpoint, Lina Savickiene, David Scoot, Sarah Sharpe, Helen Staples and Suzanne Welberry

Officers –

Assistant Director - Governance and Monitoring Officer, Chief Executive, Assistant Director – Organisation and Corporate Services and Assistant Director – Strategic Growth and Development

121 MINUTES

The Minutes of the last meeting held 10th July 2023 were agreed.

122 APOLOGIES

Apologies of absence were received from Councillors; Stuart Evans, Ralph Pryke and Claire Rylott.

123 COMMUNICATIONS

The Chief Executive confirmed that under delegated powers the following changes have been made to the membership of both the Planning and Overview and Scrutiny - Environment & Performance Committee as follows;

Planning:

1. Councillor Ralph Pryke who was a member of the committee is now an appointed substitute member.
2. Councillor Stephen Woodliffe who was an appointed substitute member is now an appointed member, replacing Councillor Ralph Pryke.
3. Councillor Sarah Sharpe is now an appointed member, replacing Councillor Emma Cresswell
4. Councillor Helen Staples is now an appointed substitute member for the Boston Independent Group.
5. Councillors Stuart Evans and James Cantwell are appointed substitute members for the Conservative Group.

Overview and Scrutiny:

Councillor David Middleton is now an appointed members on the Environment & Performance Committee replacing Councillor Barrie Pierpoint.

124 DEPUTATIONS AND PETITIONS

There were none.

125 QUESTIONS FROM ELECTED MEMBERS

126 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No questions from Members of the Public were received.

127 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest were received.

128 APPOINTMENT OF THE ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER, DEPUTY ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICERS AND RETURNING OFFICER

The Assistant Director for Governance and Monitoring Officer presented a report which sought Council approval to appoint an Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer due to the departure of the previous post holder, along with a delegation to the Electoral Registration Officer to appoint Deputy Electoral Registration Officers as necessary.

It was a statutory requirement for the Council to appoint one of its officers as the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) and Returning Officer (RO). The ERO and RO was typically a single person.

Michelle Sacks was previously appointed to these roles but was leaving the Authority to take up a position with a new authority and therefore a suitable replacement was required to be appointed.

It was proposed that John Leach, the Council's Deputy Chief Executive for Communities, be appointed to the ERO and RO roles. Mr Leach was a shared officer of the Council's Senior Management Team by an agreement made under S.113 Local Government Act 1972 and has previously been a Deputy Returning Officer.

Appointment of Mr Leach, who is a suitably experienced senior officer, as ERO and RO would fulfil the Council's legal requirements and ensure that local democracy continues to be supported and managed effectively. The proposal to delegate appointment of Deputy EROs to the ERO will ensure that registration matters can be dealt with efficiently without unreasonable delay in accordance with recommended best practice.

Members expressed their full support and endorsement to the appointment of John Leach to both the ERO and RO role.

Resolved:

- **That John Leach, Deputy Chief Executive Communities, be appointed as the Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer with immediate effect.**

- **That the Council delegates to the Electoral Registration Officer the power to appoint one or more deputies and to revoke or vary such appointments as necessary.**

129 APPOINTMENT TO BOSTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

The Assistant Director for Governance and Monitoring Officer presented the report which sought to appoint to a vacancy on Boston Grammar School Charitable Foundation.

At the Annual Meeting of the Council on 22nd May 2023 appointments were made to external organisations for the Civic year. Councillor Cresswell, Ghosh and Sharpe were appointed to serve on Boston Grammar School Charitable Foundation for a 4-year term.

The Council had been made aware that there remained a vacancy that was still to be filled. The Boston Grammar School Charitable Foundation had confirmed that this position could be filled by a Councillor or non-Councillor.

Resolved: That Councillor Lina Savickiene be appointed to the Boston Grammar School Charitable Foundation

130 APPOINTMENT TO (POTENTIAL) LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP ON INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD LEVIES

The Leader presented a report which explained that; the Partnership Councils, working with other Councils facing the same issue, had collectively applied to the Local Government Association (LGA) to form a Special Interest Group. This Group would work with Government to seek a new funding mechanism for Internal Drainage Boards. Whilst the Government had supported the Council financially in 23/24 to meet the rising costs of Internal Drainage Boards, it was yet to confirm a longer-term funding solution.

Applying to the Local Government Association to form a Special Interest Group provided the Councils with a means to bring the Councils with this common interest together to raise the matter collectively with Government through an established mechanism and with LGA support.

Members were in full support of forming the Special Interest Group and made reference to the pressure that such Councils were under, where provision had to be made for being charged with Drainage Board Levies were under.

Resolved: That Councillor Sandeep Ghosh, Portfolio Holder for Finance be appointed, as Boston Borough Council's representative on the Local Government Association Internal Drainage Board Special Interest Group (if formed).

131 AMENDMENT OF CAPITAL PROGRAMME - LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND ROUND 2

The Portfolio Holder – Housing and Planning presented a report which asked Council to consider amending the Capital Programme to deliver five new properties under the Local Authority Housing Programme.

The Local Authority Housing Fund was a £750m national programme to support local authorities in providing accommodation to Ukrainian and Afghan families, settled in the UK legally under various government schemes following the conflicts that had occurred in the two countries. The Council was already in contract with government to deliver homes under Round 1 of the Fund.

Round 2 of the Fund was designed to support primarily with providing accommodation for Afghan families. The fund also allowed authorities to access funds to support in providing additional general temporary accommodation for use generally by authorities in meeting local need. Under Round 2 of the fund, Boston Borough Council had been invited by government to consider an offer of £471,950 to support in delivering five properties; four homes for Afghan families, and one property for general temporary accommodation.

On 2nd August Cabinet formally agreed to take part in the Local Authority Housing Round 2 programme.

Participation in the Local Authority Housing Fund scheme required the Council's Capital Programme to be amended to reflect the project. In light of the decision taken through Cabinet for the Council to accept the funds and take part in the scheme, Full Council was recommended to make the necessary amendments to the Capital Programme.

Following questions from Members the Portfolio holder confirmed that older properties were considered for this Fund however new build properties come with an NHB certificate. Older properties would take more time and money to have them up to the standard required by the Fund.

RESOLVED: That the Council's 2023/24 Capital Programme be amended to include the Local Authority Housing Fund Project, as set out in Appendix A to the report.

132 LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

The Leader presented the Local Code of Corporate Governance report which proposed updating the Local Code of Corporate Governance was designed to support the Council in meeting its commitment to achieving good corporate governance. The Code had been updated to reflect the Council's governance arrangements and reflect the core principles as set out in the CIPFA guidance 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'.

The Audit & Governance Committee had considered the updated code at its meeting on 13th July 2023 and recommended it to Full Council for approval.

RESOLVED: That the Local Code of Corporate Governance, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved

133 CO-OPTED INDEPENDENT MEMBERS ON THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Assistant Director for Governance and Monitoring Officer presented the report which sought to secure suitably experienced and knowledgeable Independent Members for appointment to the Audit and Governance Committee.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Good Practice for Audit Committees in Local Government identified that the co-option of independent members was beneficial to an Audit Committee. The guidance highlighted that the injection of an external view would often bring a new approach to committee discussions.

The Councils Constitution currently provided that the membership of the Audit and Governance Committee should include 1 Non-Elected representative with specific skills as defined by a competency framework.

At its meeting on 13th July 2023 the Audit and Governance Committee agreed to recommend to Full Council that the committee's membership be amended to include two Co-opted Independent Members

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Council, in accordance with best practice and the recommendation from the Audit and Governance Committee, the membership be amended to include 2 Co-opted Independent Members**
- 2. That the Audit and Governance Committee be authorised to co-opt Independent Members to the Committee, each appointment to be for a term up to 4 years.**
- 3. That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to amend the Constitution as necessary to give effect to recommendations 1 and 2.**

134 SOUTH & EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE

The Leader presented the report which provided a six monthly update on Partnership Performance. The last update was on 6th March 2023.

Progress of the Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) activity was monitored by the Joint Strategy Board and an update was set out in the report. It was confirmed that of the 226 activities in the ADP for the year, 85% were complete or on plan as we approached the end of Quarter 2.

Significant progress continued to be made by the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the progress of the Annual Delivery Plan 2023/24 be noted.**
- 2. That the Peer Review Action Plan and Business Case delivery programme be noted.**
- 3. That the updates from the Priority Partnerships be noted.**
- 4. That the Partnership Scrutiny Action Plan delivery progress be noted.**

(The meeting ended at 7.36 pm)