

Present: (Councillor Anne Dorrian) in the Chair.
Councillors Dale Broughton, John Baxter, Callum Butler, Sandeep Ghosh and Sarah Sharpe.

Officers –
Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Development) and S151 Officer, Assistant Director - Wellbeing and Community Leadership, Assistant Director - Culture and Leisure, Markets Manager, Insights & Transformation Manager, Communications Manager, Democratic Services Manager and Senior Democratic Services Officer.

139 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Emma Cresswell.

140 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held 21st February 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

141 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

142 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No questions were received.

143 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (STANDING ITEM)*

There were no recommendations.

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

There were no recommendations.

[At the request of the Leader the meeting was adjourned between 6.32 p.m. and 6.58 p.m. for a brief discussion with members of the public that were in attendance.]

145 QUARTER 3 REPORT - PERFORMANCE AND RISK

The Leader presented the report which covered the performance and risk monitoring information for Quarter 3 of 2023/24 as at the end of December 2023.

The Leader advised that the majority of performance indicators were on, or better, than target. There were four areas which had been identified as being off target, albeit with performance improving, these being:

- Average speed of answer – Customer Contact (134 seconds against a target of 120 seconds);
- Time to process Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit change events (14.72 days against a target of 12 days);
- Percentage of all planning decisions that were subject to extensions of time in period (33% against a target of 30%); and
- Percentage of major planning applications validated within 10 / 5 working days vs total received (85.71% against a target of 90%).

Full details of the performance targets were included within Appendix A. A summary of the strategic risks, scores and changes were set out in the report with full details in Appendix B.

Members noted that risk workshops were being held in February and March to enable Senior Officers to review all strategic, operational, partnership and fraud risks for quarter 4 reporting as at the end of March 2024. This would include all suggestions for improvement from the Audit and Governance Committee.

Councillor Callum Butler referred to the performance target in respect of car parking income and advised that he was pleased to see that the new car parking machines were starting to have an impact. He added that the app was very well used which provided an additional option for payment in addition to cash and card. The Leader agreed and thanked Councillor Sandeep Ghosh for choosing those particular machines.

Councillor John Baxter thanked the Leader and Officers for the report and highlighted the many positive figures that were flagged in green. He then referred to the performance targets and queried what they could be benchmarked against. The Leader agreed and advised that she would include more of the positive aspects within her reporting in future meetings.

Members discussed the Offlog measures which were being introduced by the Government. The Insights and Transformation Manager reported that the Offlog measures had been included within the performance management framework for the next year (2024/25). She noted that not all measures had yet been set, but members would receive regular reporting to see how Boston measured against other Councils.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Anne Dorrian and seconded by the Councillor Dale Broughton.

RESOLVED:

That the quarterly performance and risk monitoring information for Q3 of 2023/24 be noted.

[The Insights and Transformation Manager left the meeting at 7.13 p.m., following consideration of the above item.]

146 2023/24 QUARTER 3 FINANCE UPDATE

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report on the current financial position for Quarter 3 in 2023/24.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance reported an amendment to Table 5a in Appendix A within the report, due to a reporting error, which required the removal of the following two rows:

- Multi Use Games Area (Controlling Migration Funding)
- Resurfacing & footpath improvements.

The report provided information on the forecast full year financial performance as at 31 December 2023 and, as detailed in Appendix A within the report, for the following areas:

- The General Fund Revenue Budget,
- The General Fund Reserves Position,
- The Capital Programme for 2023/24, and
- The Treasury Management Performance for the year

The Portfolio Holder for Finance highlighted a number of points in respect of the Revenue Outturn and Capital.

Councillor John Baxter thanked the Portfolio Holder and Officers for the report. He was encouraged that £580,000 of potential savings had been identified at Quarter 3 against a target of £664,000, with further opportunities being explored.

Councillor Baxter referred to the Internal Drainage Board funding and noted the Special Interest Group that had been set up. The Deputy Chief Executive – Corporate Development and Section 151 Officer confirmed that in January 2024 the Government had announced a second tranche of funding in relation to the Internal Drainage Boards. The Leader advised that she would lobby the Minister on the matter of the allocations of that funding which disappointingly had not yet been announced.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Sandeep Ghosh and seconded by Councillor Callum Butler.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the current forecast underspend of £162,000 for 2023/24 and the detail set out within Appendix A be noted; and**
- 2. That the Capital Programme be approved to take into account the changes set out within Appendix A (Table 5a), with the removal of the following two rows as outlined below:**
 - **Multi Use Games Area (Controlling Migration Funding); and**
 - **Resurfacing & footpath improvements.**

[The Markets Manager left the meeting at 7.22 p.m., during consideration of the above item.]

147 REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (RESTRICTING PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY OVER HIGHWAY) ON HATTER LANE, BOSTON

The Leader presented the report on the Review of the Public Spaces Protection Order (restricting public right of way over highway) on Hatter Lane, Boston.

On 27th April 2015, Full Council had agreed to the introduction of a PSPO covering Hatter Lane, Boston for three years in response to anti-social behaviour and environmental issues within the area. Cabinet had previously approved three-year extensions of the PSPO (on 4th April 2018 and 31st March 2021), being satisfied that the criteria of Section 60 of the Act were met. The current PSPO period was due to expire on 27th April 2024.

Members noted the effectiveness of the gating. Councillor John Butler queried whether there were any other locations within Boston where the gating solution could be applied. The Leader advised that she was not aware of any, but would take his comments back to the Community Safety Team. Councillor Sarah Sharpe added that the Street Wardens should also highlight any issues they came across when on duty.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Anne Dorrian and seconded by Councillor Sandeep Ghosh.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That an extension of the PSPO covering Hatter Lane (restricting public right of way over highway) be approved for a further three-year period commencing on 27th April 2024 and ending on 26th April 2027; and**
- 2. That the gated area remain the same as the original order, as introduced on 27th April 2015.**

[The Markets Manager returned to the meeting at 7.28 p.m., during consideration of the above item.]

148 BOSTON MARKET UPDATE AND DEVELOPMENT/ACTION PLAN

The Deputy Leader presented the report which provided an overview on how Boston's regular Wednesday and Saturday markets had been performing, and proposed actions for the further development of the service.

The markets operated through a market policy, which set out the management and responsibilities of both the Council and the Traders. The Policy was attached in Appendix 1 within the report. Appendix 2 within the report detailed a proposed action plan for Boston Market, which had been developed to support economic, efficient and effective service delivery.

The Service was also reviewing its operation and a Development and Action plan had been drafted in order to achieve those outcomes, which focussed on:

- Delivering modern traditional markets that were cost efficient delivering the best value for money;
- Delivering vibrant attractive markets that appeal to visitors and residents alike;
- Attracting new young traders;
- Increasing marketing activity; and
- Working with the Council's Events Team and local partners to add value to markets with entertainment and events.

The Deputy Leader advised that the report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny - Environment & Performance Committee on Tuesday 13th February 2024.

Members discussed the age demographic of the market. Councillor Callum Butler noted that market trading was an ageing profession. Councillor Dale Broughton advised that the teenage market had been set up to encourage young people into the trade, which had proved very popular. He mentioned other initiatives that were being implemented in respect of craft markets and farmers markets.

Councillor John Baxter referred to the comparisons that had been made against other markets in Lincolnshire, within the report, which he believed to be reasonable. He queried whether traders from outside of Lincolnshire were being approached. Councillor Broughton confirmed that stall holders from areas such as Derby, Melton Mowbray, Loughborough and Leicester, etc, had shown interest and added that he wanted to encourage more locals to set up. He advised that the implementation of tourist buses were also being considered.

Councillor Sandeep Ghosh queried the waiting list for the teenage market. Councillor Broughton confirmed that there was a limited number of stalls for the teenage market which was continually being fully utilised.

Members thanked Councillor Broughton and Officers for their report.

The recommendations were moved by Councillor Dale Broughton and seconded by Councillor Sarah Sharpe.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Boston Market update report and its appendices be noted; and**
- 2. That the Action Plan be approved.**

The Meeting ended at 7.41 pm