

BOSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

NOTICE OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET ON 27 JANUARY 2021

DATE OF PUBLICATION: FRIDAY, 29 JANUARY 2021

DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: FRIDAY, 5 JANUARY 2021

NOTES:

MINUTE NUMBER 134, BEING A STARRED MINUTE, WILL BE REFERRED TO FULL COUNCIL ON 15 FEBRUARY 2021.

MINUTE NUMBER 131 IS EXEMPT FROM THE CALL-IN PROCEDURE ON THE GROUNDS OF URGENCY.

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

27 January 2021

Present:

Councillor Paul Skinner, in the Chair
Councillors Tracey Abbott, Richard Austin BEM, Martin Griggs, Jonathan Noble, Yvonne Stevens and Nigel Welton

Officers –

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive (Place) & Monitoring Officer, Assistant Director - Regulation, Assistant Director - Operations, Assistant Director - Support Services & Partnership, Assistant Director - Housing & Wellbeing, Operations Manager, Accountancy Manager - Revenue and Systems, Democratic Services Officer and Democratic Services Apprentice

124 MINUTES

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 2nd December 2020 were received and to be signed by the Chairman.

125 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

126 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations were made.

127 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

128 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (STANDING ITEM)*

Recommendations were contained within the reports on the agenda.

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

There were none for this meeting.

130 DRAFT BUDGET SETTING REPORT AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2021-22 – 2025-26 FOR CONSULTATION

DECISION That the following be recommended for Public Consultation: 1. The Draft Budget and Medium-Term projections; and 2. A Council Tax increase of £4.95 (2.57%)	Portfolio Holders and Officer JN AS/TS
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REASON FOR DECISION

The Portfolio Holder introduced a report, which presented a proposed draft budget, Medium-Term projections and a council tax increase of £4.95 (2.57%) for Cabinet's approval to send out for public consultation.

The draft summary set out the Council's revenue position for the 2021/22 Budget and the 5-year Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2025/26. It showed a predicted surplus for 2021/22 of £98,000, followed by the need to make savings of approximately £700,000 in future years in order to maintain a balanced budget position without drawing down on reserves. This was a healthy financial position in view of the current challenges currently being experienced throughout local government.

The budget assumed an increase in council tax of £4.95 (2.57%) for 2021/22 and 2% per annum thereafter, which was in line with current known referendum limits of £5 or 2%, whichever was the greater.

For future years, it was expected that the predicted deficit could be partially offset by further Strategic Alliance savings, PSPS transformation savings and other service reviews that would be undertaken during the following year.

It also noted that the Council was expected to have around £13m in reserves at the end of 2021/22.

As in 2020/21, in 2021/22 the Council would be part of a business rates pool across Lincolnshire, enabling it to retain additional resources. The Government had announced plans to freeze the business rates multiplier for 2021/22 as part of its support package for businesses. Both the 'Fundamental Review of Business Rates' and 'Fairer Funding Review' had been delayed.

In conclusion, the Portfolio Holder considered the overall financial position of the authority to be generally healthy in view of the current economic pressures and as compared to several other authorities across the country. Whilst savings were likely to be required moving forward, depending on future government funding announcements, these were achievable with careful financial management.

During debate, Members' comments included concern at the proposal to increase council tax again, particularly now that the Council was looking to be more commercial, and queries about the impact of the strategic alliance on the budget setting process and the effect of the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) levy.

The Portfolio Holder pointed out that, in the previous year, council tax had not been raised to the maximum possible and stressed that the Council had to be prudent and increase council tax in order to achieve a balanced budget.

The Portfolio Holder explained that the Council appeared to be in a more positive position than expected in relation to the strategic alliance, as it had cost a little less so far. They were looking to make continuous savings through the alliance, though the exact figures were not available yet. The impact of the IDB levy was significant, as was the County Council's portion of the council tax bill and this needed to be made clear to residents.

The Deputy Leader commended the hard work of the economic development team to improve Boston's economy for the future and said they would bring forward plans to put before Members as soon as possible. The Deputy Leader also agreed that, as the Council was the collection agent, it appeared to be the Council that increased council tax whereas, in reality, the Council's portion of the total bill was small.

The Section 151 Officer confirmed that, for a band D property, the Lincolnshire Police's portion of the council tax bill was £15, the County Council's was £25 and the Council's was £5.

The Section 151 Officer also pointed out that savings of £400,000 were built in to the strategic alliance budget the following year and, if agreed, the PSPS proposal would generate further savings and, hopefully, bridge the Council's future budgetary gap.

OTHER OPTIONS OR ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

No other options were considered as part of this report although Cabinet could decide to re-invest or re-direct the 2021/22 projected surplus of £98k into one off priority services, rather than contribute this amount to reserves. Members may also choose to vary the Council Tax increase (each 1% represents around £39k in income).

RECORD OF ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

RECORD OF ANY DISPENSATION GRANTED

None.

131 TWIN STREAM RECYCLING COLLECTION

DECISION	Portfolio Holders and Officer
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To approve the proposal for the introduction of a twin stream recycling collection, expanding the current trial of a separate kerbside collection of paper and card collections to the remaining households within Boston Borough;2. To approve the changes to the current waste collection service in relation to the collection of side waste and commercial waste, required to roll out the twin stream recycling service;3. To approve the waste enforcement policy framework; and4. To note the Council's TEEP assessment.	YS VB / MF

REASON FOR DECISION

The Portfolio Holder introduced a report, which asked Cabinet to approve recommendations to extend the current trial area for the separate kerbside collection of paper and card to the remaining properties within the Borough.

There were just over 3,000 properties currently taking part in the trial to collect paper and card from the kerbside separately from the mixed recycling, which was presented in the blue recycling bin.

The Council stepped forward in 2019 to trial this new 'twin stream' recycling collection service, which had demonstrated that the collections could achieve improvements in both

the quality of the recycling collected and an increase in materials captured for recycling, without the additional cost of introducing new collection rounds. Positive feedback on using the service had been received from residents in the trial area.

The Council would be the first in Lincolnshire to extend the service to all properties, which was the culmination of collaborative working with partners in the Lincolnshire Waste Partnership, to meet the objectives of the Lincolnshire Waste Management Strategy.

This improved twin stream recycling collection service would also meet the requirements of the forthcoming national legislation contained in the Environment Bill 2020, and the Council's commitment to reduce its carbon footprint.

In conclusion, the Portfolio Holder added that the proposal also supported the Council's third priority in the Corporate Strategy, agreed in November 2020, for Environmental Awareness and Accountability. Through this priority area, the Council resolved to work with partners to encourage the community to produce less waste and recycle more.

Members thanked the Portfolio Holder and staff for the significant amount of work they had undertaken and expressed satisfaction that Boston was again taking the lead. The trial had been successful and they believed that it would continue to be when rolled out fully. There was also satisfaction that feedback from residents who took part in the trial was very positive.

In response to further comments, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that they were looking at measures to increase education with respect to what should be put in the blue bin in order to avoid contamination and improve recycling rates. They would aim this at not only the public, but also staff and Members.

With respect to residents living in flats and properties with limited outside space, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that officers were working on this and voiced confidence that that the outcome would be satisfactory to all. The Portfolio Holder added her own thanks to the Assistant Director - Operations and her team for their hard work.

The date of the rollout would be approximately in the middle of April, subject to the impact of the current lockdown, other workloads and the fact that the refuse collectors were out of action due to the virus.

OTHER OPTIONS OR ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Do nothing - The current method of collecting paper and card in the same bin as the other materials collected for recycling does not provide clean paper fibre and therefore impacts on the value of the product, both environmentally and financially, irrespective of any measures to improve the quality of the waste presented and reductions in contamination.

The current service, which has a high percentage of contaminated recycling, will not enable the Council to meet the Government targets as set out in the Resources and Waste Strategy 2018, and the Environment Bill 2020. It will also not enable the Council to access anticipated funding to be made available nationally which is likely to be dependent on the quality of recycling produced by residents. Paper and card presented separately at the kerbside could

be collected by an additional collection round, but there would be a greater cost both financially and environmentally.

RECORD OF ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

RECORD OF ANY DISPENSATION GRANTED

None.

132 EMPOWERING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES – COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS FUND

DECISION	Portfolio Holders and Officer
1. To note the Chief Executive agreed to receive £494,800 Community Champions Funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with MHCLG; and	MG MH
2. To delegate to the Assistant Director for Housing Wellbeing, spend of this funding in line with the associated community champions grant agreement; in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities and Portfolio Holder for Finance	

REASON FOR DECISION

The Portfolio Holder introduced a report, regarding the receipt of Community Champions Funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), which was to be allocated for the benefit of communities in Boston, to enhance, accelerate and target the Council's efforts to improve health and wellbeing across the borough of Boston.

The Council had been one of fifty local authorities across the country invited to apply for funding through the MHCLG's Community Champions Programme. This funding was available to help local areas to diversify, enhance and accelerate community engagement opportunities to best support communities identified as being disproportionately at risk from Covid-19.

The programme sought to enable local areas to accelerate, enhance and target community engagement opportunities in order to:

- Increase trust and confidence in public health messaging;
- Improve engagement and take up of messaging and initiatives;

- Develop and build community insight and relationships; and
- Develop a vital feedback mechanism to understand what worked, what did not and what could be done differently at a local and national level

Following an application via an expression of interest, the Council had been allocated a grant of £494,800. The funding would need to be committed by 31 March 2021. Delivery of activities could extend beyond 31 March 2021, with the expectation of all funded activities to have begun a reasonable level of implementation by 30 June 2021.

Due to the speed of the decision making process surrounding this award, MHCLG required formal consent from the Council to accept this offer and the Chief Executive was required to use urgency provisions contained within the Constitution.

The Portfolio Holder was delighted that the full amount of funding had been secured and this was due to the quick work of the team in submitting a good quality application within an extremely short turnaround. He thanked the staff and the Council's partners for their work.

A Members' briefing would be held in February on the Community Champions Funding regarding the purpose of the money allocated to Members.

Other Members echoed the Portfolio Holder's appreciation and remarked on the continued success of officers in identifying opportunities to secure funding. This reflected the resources and resilience enabled by the Strategic Alliance with respect to capacity, expertise and the ability to fully liaise with partners and utilise diverse skills.

OTHER OPTIONS OR ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

None – this funding will enable us to enhance, accelerate and target our efforts to improve health and wellbeing across Boston Borough.

RECORD OF ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

RECORD OF ANY DISPENSATION GRANTED

None.

133 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

DECISION

That under Section 100 (A) (iv) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 of Schedule 12A of the Order

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134 PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERSHIP SERVICES (PSPS) PROPOSAL

An exempt minute of this item has been lodged by the Council.

The Meeting ended at 7.55 pm

Signed by the Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

FRIDAY, 29 JANUARY 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 exempt from the Call-In procedure, or are starred minutes requiring Full Council approval.