



Public Agenda Pack
BOSTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Joint Chief Executive
Robert Barlow

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12 February 2021

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

NOTICE OF MEETING OF THE CABINET

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Cabinet on
Wednesday, 24th February 2021 at 6.30 pm

This will be a meeting held in line with The Local Authorities & Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority & Police & Crime Panel Meetings) England & Wales Regulations 2020.

This meeting will be held virtually via Zoom and streamed live
via: www.mybostonuk.com/youtube

ROBERT BARLOW
Joint Chief Executive

Membership:

Leader of the Council – Councillor Paul Skinner

Deputy Leader – Councillor Nigel Welton

Councillors Tracey Abbott, Richard Austin BEM, Martin Griggs, Jonathan Noble and Yvonne Stevens

A G E N D A

PART I - PRELIMINARIES

A. MINUTES

To sign the minutes of the last meeting, held on 27th January 2021. (The confidential minutes of the exempt part of that meeting are attached as appropriate.)

B. APOLOGIES

To receive apologies for absence.

C. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

To receive declarations in respect of any item on the agenda.

D. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

To answer any written questions received from members of the public no later than 5 p.m. two clear working days prior to the meeting – for this meeting the deadline is 5 p.m. on Friday 5th March 2021.

PART II – AGENDA ITEMS

1. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (STANDING ITEM)*
2. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE BOSTON TOWN AREA COMMITTEE (BTAC) (STANDING ITEM)
3. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT UPDATE

(A report by Sarah Baker, Climate Change & Environment Manager)

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Paul Skinner, Leader

4. DRAFT BUDGET SETTING REPORT AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2021/22 - 2025/26

(A report by Adrian Sibley, Section 151 Officer)

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Jonathan Noble, Finance and Commercial

*In accordance with the Constitution, recommendations of Overview and Scrutiny Committees referred to Cabinet (if any) shall be included at this point in the agenda (*unless they have been considered in the context of the Cabinet deliberations on a substantive item on the agenda*) within six weeks of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee completing its report / recommendations.

Call-In – In accordance with the Constitution, any decision taken by the Cabinet concerning an item on this agenda can be ‘called in’ within 5 working days of the decision notice being published. It is expected that the decision notice will be published on 26th February 2021. Subject to this publication, the deadline for calling in a decision is 5 p.m. on Friday 5th March 2021.

Notes:

The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Lorraine Bush, Democratic Services Manager, Municipal Buildings, Boston Tel. no: 01205 314224 e-mail lorraine.bush@boston.gov.uk

Alternative Versions - *Should you wish to have the agenda or report in an alternative format such as larger text, Braille or a specific language, please contact Democratic Services on direct dial (01205) 314227*

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 FEBRUARY 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	Portfolio Holders and Officer
<p>That the following be recommended for Public Consultation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Draft Budget and Medium-Term projections; and2. A Council Tax increase of £4.95 (2.57%)	JN AS/TS

<u>REASON FOR DECISION</u>
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

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
<p>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</p> <p>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</p>	MG MH

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

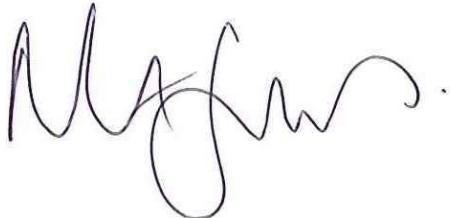
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134 PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERSHIP SERVICES (PSPS) PROPOSAL

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.



REPORT TO:	CABINET
DATE:	24 FEBRUARY 2021
SUBJECT:	CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT UPDATE
KEY DECISION:	N/A
PORFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Paul Skinner
REPORT AUTHOR:	Climate Change and Environment Manager
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All
EXEMPT REPORT?	No

SUMMARY

To update Cabinet on progress of the nine recommendations agreed by Full Council in January 2020 and to brief on next steps. An Environment Policy has been shared for consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet recognises the progress already achieved in delivering the nine recommendations approved by Full Council in January 2020 and supports the next steps as outlined in this paper.

Cabinet approves adoption of the Environment Policy.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To update on, and progress, work on the climate change agenda.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The Council could decide to take no further action however this would go against the intentions of the climate change and environment emergency declared in January 2020 and make it almost impossible for the Council to meet the target it has set to reduce its carbon emissions in advance of timetable set out by the UK Parliament.

REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Climate Change Working Group, established by the Environment and Performance Committee, met between July and December 2019 and was comprised of five elected members including the Portfolio Holder, eight members of staff and one co-opted member of the public. The group submitted its nine recommendations to Full Council in January 2020.
- 1.2 Unfortunately, progress against the recommendations agreed at Full Council have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the necessary resources to take forward the work had until recently not been identified. The Strategic Alliance with East Lindsey District Council (ELDC) gives a renewed opportunity to pick this work up and to share knowledge and experience to help both authorities take action on the climate change agenda.
- 1.3 This report provides an update on progress to date against the nine recommendations and the next steps that need to be taken.

2.0 PROGRESS

- 2.1 Progress under each recommendation is outlined fully in Appendix A.
- 2.2 In summary, some areas have been taken forward but there has been limited resourcing available to action all of the recommendations in a strategic manner. East Lindsey District Council (ELDC) appointed a Climate Change and Environment Manager in April 2020 and as part of the Strategic Alliance, that position is now supporting the work for this Council.
- 2.3 The new corporate strategy 2020-24 includes a priority around environmental awareness and accountability and includes several commitments including to develop a Carbon Reduction Plan and ensure that every service and policy delivers on the climate change commitments of the Council.
- 2.4 The Council is in the process of commissioning the Carbon Trust to produce a new Carbon Reduction Plan which will also provide an updated baseline of the current carbon footprint. Work will begin on this in early 2021. The Carbon Trust have recently completed a similar exercise for ELDC and it is hoped there will be opportunities to align both plans and identify savings through joint projects.
- 2.5 As part of the process of developing the Carbon Reduction Plan it is likely the Council will need to further refine its current emissions target to include a specific date. This will enable a carbon reduction pathway for the authority to be produced.
- 2.6 In declaring a climate change and environment emergency, the Council recognised the profound implications this has for the Council and its services and the nine recommendations demonstrate a clear intention to embed a culture of environmental consideration and carbon reduction across all areas of the Council.
- 2.7 To ensure this happens, an Environment Policy has been developed which will set the framework under which relevant plans and strategies sit e.g. the Carbon Reduction Plan. This will provide the mandate for climate change and environment action and ensure that every service area is working to an agreed set of objectives which are consistent with the new corporate priority. A draft has been considered by the Environment and Performance

Committee and Corporate and Community Committee and a final version is appended to the report. Cabinet are now asked to approve its adoption.

3.0 NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 The Council's ability to influence the climate change and environment agenda reaches far beyond its own direct operations, however it needs to ensure it has a handle on its own activities before reaching out to the wider Borough.
- 3.2 It is also important that all Council staff have an awareness of the far reaching implications of climate change, the multiple benefits that taking action can achieve and an understanding of where changes can be made. A Carbon Literacy training programme is being developed and should be rolled out to all staff and members in 2021.
- 3.3 The next step will be to produce a Climate Change Strategy for the Strategic Alliance as a whole which sets the context for Boston and East Lindsey. Both Councils are responsible for only a small proportion of the emissions generated in their area but they have an important community leadership responsibility in helping to take forward action.
- 3.4 The Climate Change Strategy will identify key sectors and stakeholders with which to engage and set out an action plan for ensuring Boston and East Lindsey as a whole work collaboratively to reduce emissions and enhance the natural environment for residents, businesses and visitors.
- 3.5 Linked to this will be the establishment of a Climate Change Assembly for Boston in mid-2021 which will bring the key stakeholders together. One of the first roles of that Assembly will be to comment on and finalise the Climate Change Strategy.

4.0 RESOURCES

- 4.1 As already recognised, the climate change and environment emergency declaration will have a profound impact for the Council, but less so in the long term than seeking to do nothing.
- 4.2 The Carbon Reduction Plan will require significant financial resourcing however the anticipated costs of this are yet to be determined. A further report will be brought in due course. Funding for this work is likely to be split between two key areas. The first is through grant funding and we have already seen the first of these opportunities available to local authorities for carbon reduction in the form of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund announced by BEIS in October 2020. This fund has already been used to obtain funding for a carbon reduction feasibility study of the Municipal Buildings and St John's Depot and a follow-up bid is expected to be made later in 2021 for identified works. The second is anticipated to be an 'invest to save' fund established by the Council, or the Strategic Alliance as a whole, funded either through reserves or through an external loan such as those through Salix finance which provides interest-free Government funding to the public sector, specifically to tackle the carbon reduction agenda.
- 4.3 The wider climate change and environment remit will also require resourcing however across the Strategic Alliance we need to recognise the service areas this touches on most strongly and which are already contributing towards the agenda in some form and look at how we can maximise those resources.

- 4.4 A climate change and environment team will be established across the Strategic Alliance by April 2021. Three roles are to be recruited to that team shortly: a Climate Change and Environment Officer to support the carbon reduction agenda and environmental projects, a Sustainable Development Officer to focus on ensuring our planning functions support the climate change agenda and a Sustainable Housing Officer to deliver energy efficiency improvements to properties primarily through Government Green Homes Grants funding. The first two roles will be permanent. The latter will be a two-year secondment.
- 4.5 There will be further opportunities for employees to support the work through championing it within their service areas. A joint climate change and environment ‘task force’ will be formed with staff and member representation to help monitor progress on the agenda and ensure it remains a priority for all service areas.

CONCLUSION

This report sets out a number of next steps for taking forward the climate change and environment work programme at Boston Borough Council in line with the nine recommendations agreed in January 2020. Cabinet is asked to agree the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1 – Cabinet recognises the progress already achieved in delivering the nine recommendations approved by Full Council in January 2020 and supports the next steps as outlined in this paper.

Recommendation 2 – Cabinet approves adoption of the Environment Policy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

While this report does not in itself have any direct financial implications, delivery of the climate change and environment work programme will need resourcing. As this becomes clearer individual business cases will be developed for the various work areas and specific projects with reports being brought before members for approval where the financial thresholds in the Constitution determine we should do so. The Carbon Reduction Plan is due to cost £18,175+VAT.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications stemming directly from this report however it will help to reduce the risk of this Council not meeting its current legal duties in relation to the natural environment and climate change by demonstrating a commitment to tackling the challenges faced.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

This report is intended to have a positive impact on the climate change and environment agenda by clearly outlining the steps that need to be taken in order to tackle the climate change emergency declared by this Council and meet the targets that have been identified.

EQUALITY AND SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS

None

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

CONSULTATION

Consultation has taken place with Leader of the Council as Portfolio Holder for the environment. This report has also been considered by the Environment and Performance Committee and Corporate and Community Committee.

APPENDICES

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -

APPENDIX A	<i>Progress to date by recommendation</i>
APPENDIX B	<i>Environment Policy</i>

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below: -

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
<i>Corporate Strategy 2020-2024</i>	www.mybostonuk.com

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

Name of body	Date
Environment & Performance Committee	05.01.2021
Corporate & Community Committee	18.01.2021

REPORT APPROVAL

Report author:	Sarah Baker, 07917 337857 sarah.baker@e-lindsey.gov.uk
Signed off by:	Christian Allen christian.allen@boston.gov.uk
Approved for publication:	Councillor Paul Skinner

APPENDIX A: Progress to date by recommendation

RESOLVED that

1. Boston Borough Council declares an ongoing climate and environment emergency and commits to a pledge to reduce the Council's carbon footprint and become net-zero carbon in advance of the timetable declared by UK Parliament.

Since declaring the climate and environment emergency and resolving to become net-zero carbon in advance of the timetable declared by UK Parliament, the Covid-19 pandemic has overshadowed 2020 and slowed the pace of any further progress in this area. A current baseline needs to be established with which to benchmark any future carbon reduction activities against. It is proposed that the Carbon Trust be engaged to produce a carbon reduction plan for Boston Borough Council. This work has recently been completed in East Lindsey. This will provide an opportunity to align aspirations and identify areas where joint feasibility studies and potential projects can be actioned which will help reduce the financial outlay for both organisations. As part of the carbon reduction plan development process, Boston Borough Council should look to identify a specific target date in relation to its carbon emissions aspirations as this will be required in order to produce a carbon reduction pathway. One option may be to consider aligning this with ELDC which has committed to become net-zero by 2040 with a 45% reduction in emissions against the 2019 baseline by 2027 but the Carbon Trust will advise on this as part of their work.

2. All Council reports, policies and practices shall incorporate climate change mitigation and environmental impact as key drivers for consideration.

All council reports are now required to consider any climate change implications. As part of work to align reports across the Strategic Alliance, guidance has been developed to provide a clearer process to assist officers in assessing impact against the climate change and environment agenda in a consistent and effective manner.

3. UK Government be requested to provide financial support to Councils to achieve/improve upon their carbon reduction commitments.

The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has just announced a £1bn public sector decarbonisation fund which is part of a package of measures to support the country's journey to net zero by 2050. Other schemes announced include the Green Homes Grant for improving the EPC rating of domestic properties and further funding streams are anticipated to be coming forward shortly including via the Midlands Energy Hub. There are existing networks such as the Greater Lincolnshire Energy Efficiency Network which have links into Government ministers and are able to raise some of the issues and concerns about access to funding. Government is committed to a green recovery post-Covid.

4. Include the environment, carbon reduction and halting climate change within the Council's emerging corporate strategy.

The new corporate strategy 2020-24 includes a priority around environmental awareness and accountability with a commitment to:

- 1. Develop a Carbon Reduction Plan**
- 2. Ensure that every service and policy deliver on the Climate Change commitments of the Council**
- 3. Proactively educate and enforce against environmental crime, such as fly tipping and littering**
- 4. Work with Partners to encourage the Borough to produce less waste and recycle more**
- 5. Be climate aware and spearhead the change in thinking about the impact our actions have, not only on the local environment here in Boston but also on the entire planet**

Development of an overarching Environment Policy for Boston Borough Council will help to embed this corporate priority by providing a framework for action across the authority and help to ensure the environment is given equal consideration alongside social and economic factors as one of the three pillars of sustainability.

5. Collate and promote the positive activity and success of the Council's work across all areas of environmental good practice.

A Communications Plan should be drawn up for the climate change and environment agenda across the Strategic Alliance to ensure that these good news stories are communicated both externally to our residents and wider stakeholders but also to ensure members and staff are fully aware of all the work being undertaken.

6. The Environment & Performance Committee be requested to adopt Climate Change within its terms of reference.

Climate Change has been added to the terms of reference of the committee. The constitution needs to be formally updated to reflect this and this action is in progress.

Under the detail of this recommendation a citizen's climate assembly is mentioned and is something that should be taken forward in 2021. A similar forum is being planned for East Lindsey. It is however important before we start to engage in this process that we have our own house in order and it would be prudent to have the Carbon Reduction Plan and Environment Policy in place. A Climate Change Strategy for the Strategic Alliance also needs to be developed to provide more detail about the issues for the Borough of Boston and East Lindsey District and this should be drafted prior to establishing the climate change assembly/forum to enable stakeholders, including those relevant at a county and regional level, to feed in to that document and help set the wider agenda.

7. Develop, cost and propose a series of “quick wins” and activity reporting and monitoring progress to the E & P Committee over the next two years.

‘Quick wins’ are fine but need to be part of a strategic, measured approach to addressing climate change action across the authority. On their own, ‘quick wins’ will provide a good headline but will not ensure that a culture change is embedded across all service areas. A series of steps as outlined need to be taken to set the mandate for climate change and wider environmental action. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted on the opportunity to bring forward many ‘quick wins’ but there has been some positive progress made. Plans are in motion to look at tree planting opportunities in 2021, hopefully with support from the Boston Town Area Committee, and a successful grant application has funded the services of ENGIE to undertake a feasibility study of carbon reduction opportunities at the Municipal Buildings and St John’s Depot. Covid-19 itself has also brought new ways of working, including the ability to video conference, reducing the need for commuting to and from meetings.

8. Explore options for cost effective, accredited and audited options for commercial carbon offsetting schemes.

An initial decision for the Council is to clarify its approach to offsetting. The Council has agreed to be net zero in advance of the UK Government. Under the Carbon Trust’s definition of net zero, the active removal and storage of residual emissions of Greenhouse Gases (GHG) from the atmosphere is undertaken in a process known as GHG removal. This is done through certified methods such as habitat creation and management and direct capture of CO₂ from the air through the use of technology which is not yet widely available. Commercial offsetting schemes which allow carbon credits to be purchased to offset emissions are not permitted under a net zero target.

9. Move to a “Green Energy” source utility supplier as soon as possible.

Boston Borough Council’s current energy contract renews in October 2021. The procurement process will give the option in Spring 2021 for us to move to a Green tariff when the current contract ends and a decision on whether or not to do this will be needed.



Picture by John Smith, Boston

Environment Policy

February 2021



Boston Borough Council has declared an ongoing climate and environment emergency which recognises the need for urgent action and commits to ensuring environmental consideration and carbon reduction is embedded across all activities.

The environment is one of the three pillars of sustainability and should be equally balanced alongside economic and social considerations to achieve positive change across the Borough.

The Council recognises the impact of its own operations and is committed to using its powers and influence to minimise and address this while supporting others to do the same.

This Environment Policy provides a framework from which more detailed strategic documents and project plans will be developed. It sets out four key themes that provide the context for the Council as it works to deliver the new corporate priority around environmental awareness and accountability.

Theme one:

Protecting and recovering our natural environment

Theme two:

Mitigating and adapting to climate change

Theme three:

Enhancing our built environment

Theme four:

Ensuring a sustainable approach to waste and resource management

Theme one: Protecting and recovering our natural environment

- ❖ Work collaboratively to ensure the Borough's natural capital is recognised, better managed and more connected
- ❖ Ensure development proposals maximise opportunities to retain, protect and enhance biodiversity
- ❖ Maintain and enhance the quality of Council-managed landholdings to maximise biodiversity potential
- ❖ Recognise and develop the role that the Borough's green spaces have in connecting people to nature and supporting the health and wellbeing of residents

Theme two: Mitigating and adapting to climate change

- ❖ Implement actions to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council's own estate and operations in line with adopted targets
- ❖ Work collaboratively to support the wider Borough in taking action to address the climate and environment emergency
- ❖ Promote and encourage the development and use of renewable energy solutions
- ❖ Work with local businesses to support the development of a low carbon economy
- ❖ Build increased resilience of our communities by supporting them to adapt to a changing climate

Under each theme, several priorities have been identified.

Theme three: Enhancing our built environment

- ❖ Implement sustainable design and management practices in all Council-led developments
- ❖ Ensure planning policy sets strong ambition for low carbon, energy efficient new housing development schemes and retrofits of existing stock which are fit for the future
- ❖ Provide advice and support to residents to eliminate fuel poverty and pursue energy efficient, affordable heating options
- ❖ Develop an approach that ensures net gain delivers for both biodiversity and our residents

The four key themes outlined in this Environment Policy will be considered across Council operations, ensuring recognition that a healthy natural environment provides the foundations for strong economic and social prosperity.

Under each theme, any statutory obligations will be identified alongside appropriate additional targets and actions under the development of relevant strategies and plans where necessary.

Theme four: Ensuring a sustainable approach to waste and resource management

- ❖ Ensure procurement decisions consider the environmental impacts of goods and services working closely with suppliers/contractors
- ❖ Minimise avoidable single-use plastic usage across Council operations
- ❖ Maximise opportunities to support residents, business and visitors to reduce, reuse and recycle their waste and take a tough stance against environmental crime
- ❖ Demonstrate a commitment to responsible water management across Council operations
- ❖ Promote sustainable travel behaviours amongst local authority employees





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