

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Thursday, 9th July, 2020

PRESENT

COUNCILLOR:

Councillor Mustafa Desai
 Councillor Julie Gunn
 Councillor Mohammed Khan OBE
 Councillor Quesir Mahmood
 Councillor Vicky McGurk
 Councillor Phil Riley
 Councillor Jim Smith
 Councillor Damian Talbot

PORTFOLIO:

Adult Services and Prevention
 Children, Young People and Education
 Leader of the Council
 Digital and Customer Services
 Finance and Governance
 Growth and Development
 Environmental Services
 Public Health and Wellbeing

EXECUTIVE MEMBER:

Councillor John Slater

NON-PORTFOLIO:

Leader of the Conservative Group

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Khalid Omar
 Muhammad Bapu

Deputy Youth MP
 Deputy Youth MP

	Item	Action
1	<p><u>Welcome and Apologies</u></p> <p>The Chair read the opening statement explaining that this was a virtual meeting.</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Zara Hayat, the Youth MP.</p>	
2	<p><u>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</u></p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 11th June 2020 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of Councillor John Slater voting against the recommendations in Minute No.8.4 – Masterplan - Bank Hey.</p>	Agreed
3	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>There were no Declarations of Interest submitted.</p>	
4	<p><u>Equality Implications</u></p> <p>The Chair asked Members to confirm that they had considered and understood any Equality Impact Assessments associated with reports on the agenda ahead of making any decisions.</p>	Confirmed
5	<p><u>Public Forum</u></p> <p>In accordance with Part 4 of the Executive Board Procedure Rules for questions/statements by members of the public, the following questions/statements have been received, details of which are set out below. As this was a Virtual Meeting the question was read out by the Director of HR, Legal and Governance.</p>	

	Item	Action						
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Name of Person asking the Question</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Subject Area</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Response by</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Jon Baldwin</td> <td>Overspend on Newfield ASD.</td> <td>Councillor Vicky McGurk, Executive Member for Finance and Governance.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Councillor Vicky McGurk provided a response to the question, which it was agreed would be e-mailed to Mr Baldwin.</p>	Name of Person asking the Question	Subject Area	Response by	Jon Baldwin	Overspend on Newfield ASD.	Councillor Vicky McGurk, Executive Member for Finance and Governance.	
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Jon Baldwin	Overspend on Newfield ASD.	Councillor Vicky McGurk, Executive Member for Finance and Governance.						
6	<p><u>Questions by Non-Executive Members</u></p> <p>No Questions had been submitted by Non-Executive Members.</p>							
7	<p><u>Youth MPs Update</u></p> <p>The Youth MPS updated the Executive Board on recent activities and events including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the past months, the Youth Forum had been working to produce positive resources for young people across the Borough. As the lockdown restrictions ease the Forum were planning to try to be more involved by assisting in cleaning up the local community by spending a couple hours' litter picking. • Muhammad would be part of the judging panel for the great Big Pan Challenge that took place last month. In the coming months the mental health comic that he been working on would be completed and distributed. Muhammad had also recently become Witton Park's Head boy and was looking forward to continuing work as Head boy and Deputy Youth MP. • Khalid had been talking to teenagers through social media and calls and giving the advice on mental health and governmental guidelines and where there could access more help. He had also been discussing with multiple charities that helped young women and men throughout the UK how awareness could be raised in the Borough on social issues like forced and arranged marriages, and would be working locally with the Police on this in the coming months. <p>Muhammad asked the following question, which he had submitted in advance: What steps are being taken to ensure young people's mental wellbeing is supported coming out of lockdown?</p> <p>The Leader, Councillor Mohammed Khan, and Executive Member</p>							

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8	<p>for Children, Young People and Education, Julie Gunn outlined the support and help available, which included Kooth, an online counselling and support service for young people, and during the pandemic the Council had been working closely with ELCAS regarding the mental health trailblazer to support young people in secondary school and to make sure that key transitions and support young people were available. The CCG were also being asked to assure the Children’s Safeguarding Assurance Partnership about mental health support after the lockdown.</p> <p><u>Executive Member Reports</u></p>	
8.1	<p><u>Report of Ofsted Focussed Visit</u></p> <p>A report was submitted, which set out the findings of the recent inspection by Ofsted as part of the Inspection of Local Authorities Children’s Services (ILACS) framework. The short inspection was led by Inspector – Paula Thompson Jones, who was supported by Inspector – Kathryn Grindrod.</p> <p>The Focused Visit was announced three working days before the fieldwork of the inspection took place. The Lead Inspector required a broad range of information to be shared within one working day of the notification, and also asked for a range of audit activity to be submitted within two working days of the notification. The theme of the inspection was– Children in our Care – with a specific focus on children who had recently become looked after.</p> <p>The report advised of the positive findings, whilst it was also reported that there were two key areas for improvement – where children are at risk of neglect, and social workers caseloads were too high, particularly for those in their first year of practice. The report set out the actions that would be taken to address the key areas of improvement.</p> <p>RESOLVED -</p> <p>That the Executive Board note the contents of this report and to agree to the actions taken by the Service to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of children and families who require a social work service.</p> <p><u>Environmental Services Update</u></p> <p>Councillor Jim Smith verbally reported that the delivery of new Blue Bins was progressing well, and the service was looking forward to them coming into use in August.</p> <p><u>Public Health and Wellbeing Update</u></p> <p>Councillor Damian Talbot verbally reported that the Borough’s pools and gyms would be re-opening on 25th July, and Museum and libraries re-openings were underway.</p>	<p>Approved</p>

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8.2	<p><u>Healthy Weight Declaration - 3 Years On</u></p> <p>Members were reminded that the Council became the first in the country to sign a joint Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight in 2017. The Declaration, which required senior level commitment, encapsulated a vision to promote healthy weight and to improve the health and wellbeing of those who live, work and go to school in Blackburn with Darwen.</p> <p>Overseen by the Eat Well Move More Shape Up strategic steering group, there had been significant progress against a number of the local commitments. Whilst progress had been slower against the generic commitments in the Declaration there were a number of upcoming opportunities to embed healthy weight as a priority including the development of the Local Plan and the Department for Transport's emergency funding to promote walking and cycling.</p> <p>In 2019, Blackburn with Darwen Public Health commissioned Food Active to carry out an independent evaluation of the Healthy Weight Declaration. The subsequent report highlighted the need for continued momentum, system wide working where healthy weight was seen as everyone's business and working with communities and Elected Members to drive the Declaration forwards using clear and consistent messages. There was also a further recommendation to review and refresh the local commitments beyond 2020. In light of the recent evidence of the impact of obesity and diabetes on COVID-19 outcomes this was an opportune time to revisit and revise the local commitments in the Declaration to highlight the importance of a healthy weight for health and wellbeing, encouraging and supporting a resilient food system and active travel for all.</p> <p>RESOLVED - That the Executive Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes the content of the report. • Notes to progress made to date and the key issues impacting on effective implementation of the commitments within the Declaration. • Notes the content of and recommendations in the Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight Evaluation. • Supports the review and refresh of the current Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight. <p><u>Digital and Customer Services Update</u></p> <p>Councillor Quesir Mahmood verbally reported on the important work being undertaken by the Department in supporting businesses in the current Covid-19 pandemic, in terms of grant applications and also other recent work included developing online booking systems for Household Waste Recycling Centres.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Agreed</p> <p>Noted</p>

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8.3	<p><u>Statement of Community Involvement</u></p> <p>The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) set the policy for how Blackburn with Darwen Council's Planning Service would involve local residents, businesses and other key organisations and stakeholders in the plan making process and the determination of planning applications in the Borough. The Local Authority was legally bound to adhere to commitments set out in its SCI. The recent impacts of COVID-19 and restrictions imposed on business, social integration and travel meant that a review of the SCI was now necessary.</p> <p>SCI's had to be kept under review at least every five years. Blackburn with Darwen last adopted its SCI in May 2018. The impact of COVID-19 in terms of restrictions imposed by lockdown and social distancing measures had necessitated an earlier review than would otherwise be necessary. By approving the attached revised SCI the Council could ensure that consultations in the future remain in accordance with the adopted SCI and therefore legally sound.</p> <p>RESOLVED -</p> <p>That the Executive Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approves the revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which sets the policy for how the Council consults with members of the public and stakeholders in its Planning Service. The revised SCI covers any temporary arrangements that may be necessary during COVID-19 restrictions. 	Approved
8.4	<p><u>Covid-19 Finance Report</u></p> <p>The Executive Board received a report outlining the financial implications for the Council arising from the impact of COVID-19, based on the forecast prepared, and assumptions made, in the third Financial Management Return submitted to MHCLG on 19th June 2020, i.e:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional expenditure incurred by the Council in providing a response to the crisis across the Borough and • loss of income arising due to the cessation/reduction in the Council's various income generating activities, and the impact on Council Tax and Business Rates as a consequence of the economic downturn <p>The Council had a statutory requirement to set a balanced budget each year and to review its adequacy of reserves. The report set out the potential impacts on the delivery of a balanced budget for 2020/21 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).</p> <p>The 2020/21 Budget and MTFS 2020-2023 approved by Finance</p>	

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	<p>Council in February 2020 set a balanced budget for the year based on the assumptions in place at the time. Since that time, the COVID-19 pandemic had created a significant shock to the economy and resulted in significant unplanned expenditure and income losses as set out in the report.</p> <p>The financial forecast identified a significant risk to the financial viability and sustainability of the Council. The forecast budget gap of £19.5 million for 20/21 (based on the third Financial Management return to MHCLG) would require the Council to utilise not only all of its Unallocated Reserve, but also the Earmarked Reserves held for Discretionary purposes, before the end of the 2020/21 financial year (assuming these could be re-designated to address the immediate financial challenge posed); this would still leave a budget gap of £4.0 million.</p> <p>Officers would continue to monitor and estimate the costs and savings associated with this over the coming months, in the meantime arrangements would be made to scrutinise all existing expenditure plans and Executive Members and their Directors would work to develop potential savings options for consideration.</p> <p>In moving the report, Cllr McGurk advised of financial packages from the Government that had been recently announced, the detail of which was not yet clear, and also referred to an error in the Lancashire Telegraph re portfolio underspends, with all but one were underspent, not overspent as reported.</p> <p>Members debated the report and the recent F.O.I request relating to the Blackburn Bus Station overspend, and the reasons for the overspend were outlined.</p> <p>RESOLVED - The Executive Board is asked note the financial implications arising from the COVID-19 pandemic outlined in the report and as included in the third Financial Management Return submitted to MHCLG.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>9.1</p>	<p><u>Capital Outturn Report – Quarter 4- 2019/2020</u></p> <p>Cllr McGurk, in moving the report, referred to the Newfield ASD overspend discussed earlier in the meeting under Public Questions, and also referred to in the report, and the overspend reported relating to the Darwen 3 Day Market scheme. Members debated the expenditure on the Darwen 3 Day Market Scheme.</p> <p>The report set out the overall financial position of the Council in respect of the capital programme as at 31st March 2020, highlighting key issues and explaining variations at the year end with regard to scheme under/overspends and slippage since the last report to the Executive Board in February 2020.</p>	

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	<p>RESOLVED - The Executive Board is asked;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to approve the revised capital programme as per Appendix 1, • to approve the variations to the programme shown in Appendix 2 	<p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p>
9.2	<p><u>Disposal of Chapels Park South</u></p> <p>A report was submitted, which sought approval to sell 4.7 acres of commercial development land at Chapels Park South, Darwen (“the Site”), as illustrated on the plan attached at Annex A, to Barnfield Blackburn Ltd.</p> <p>Approval was also sought to increase the Council’s level of investment in Barnfield Blackburn Ltd and to authorise the appointed Council officers to complete the purchase of the site.</p> <p>RESOLVED - That the Executive Board:</p> <p>2.1 Notes the site at Chapels Park South is heavily constrained with significant abnormalities limiting development.</p> <p>2.2 Notes that Barnfield Construction Ltd submitted the highest tender offer for the site following a competitive procurement exercise conducted by Council officers.</p> <p>2.3 Approves the alternative proposal submitted by Barnfield Construction Ltd for a subsidiary joint venture company, Barnfield Blackburn Ltd, to acquire the Site in lieu of Barnfield Construction Ltd.</p> <p>2.4 Notes the success Barnfield Blackburn Ltd has had with securing external funding for the challenging site at the former Lower Darwen Paper Mill. It is expected Barnfield Blackburn Ltd will be in a position to apply for future infrastructure funding as part of any Lancashire economic recovery plan to accelerate delivery.</p> <p>2.5 Authorises the Director of HR, Legal and Governance to complete the necessary legal formalities in disposing of the Site.</p> <p>2.6 Approves the increase in investment in Barnfield Blackburn Ltd of which the Council is a shareholder and authorise the appointed Council officers to complete the necessary legal formalities to purchase the Site.</p> <p>AT THIS STAGE OF THE PROCEEDINGS THE PRESS AND PUBLIC WERE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p>
11.1	<p><u>Disposal of Chapels Park South</u></p> <p>Further to the report submitted at Agenda Item 9.1, an additional</p>	

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	<p>report was submitted, containing commercially sensitive information.</p> <p>RESOLVED - That the Executive Board:</p> <p>2.1 Notes the site at Chapels Park South is heavily constrained with significant abnormalities limiting development.</p> <p>2.2 Notes that Barnfield Construction Ltd submitted the highest tender offer for the site following a competitive procurement exercise conducted by Council officers.</p> <p>2.3 Approves the alternative proposal submitted by Barnfield Construction Ltd for a subsidiary joint venture company, Barnfield Blackburn Ltd, to acquire the Site in lieu of Barnfield Construction Ltd.</p> <p>2.4 Notes the success Barnfield Blackburn Ltd has had with securing external funding for the challenging site at the former Lower Darwen Paper Mill. It is expected Barnfield Blackburn Ltd will be in a position to apply for future infrastructure funding as part of any Lancashire economic recovery plan to accelerate delivery.</p> <p>2.5 Authorises the Director of HR, Legal and Governance to complete the necessary legal formalities in disposing of the Site.</p> <p>2.6 Approves the increase in investment in Barnfield Blackburn Ltd of which the Council is a shareholder and authorise the appointed Council officers to complete the necessary legal formalities to purchase the Site.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Signed at a meeting of the Board on Thursday, 13 August 2020</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(being the ensuing meeting on the Board)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Chair of the meeting at which the Minutes were confirmed</p>	<p></p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Approved</p> <p>Approved</p>