



GREAT YARMOUTH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Policy and Resources Committee

Minutes

Tuesday, 13 July 2021 at 18:00

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence reported at the meeting.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2021 were confirmed.

Councillor Wainwright commented that he had asked for clarification on minute number 5, Annual Performance Report, in regard to PR15, Corporate Property Portfolio Arrears and EN04, Fly Tipping and that he was unaware that this information would not be available to Members until the next performance report in September. The Chief Executive Officer reported that this information would be emailed to Members after the meeting.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Wells declared a personal interest in item numbers 6 & 12 as he was a member of the Town Deal Board and a trustee of GYPT.

Councillor Williamson declared a personal interest in items 6,9 & 12 as he was Chairman of the GYPT.

Councillor Hanton declared an interest in item 7, as he was Chairman of Great

Yarmouth CCTV Ltd.

The Chairman, Councillor Smith, & Councillor Wainwright declared a personal interest in item 9 as they were members of the Great Yarmouth Town Deal Board.

However, in accordance with the council's Constitution, were allowed to both speak and vote on the items.

4 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received and considered the Forward Plan.

Chairman's Announcements

(i) The Chairman introduced Sarah Gibb to the Committee who would act as the Council's Deputy Monitoring Officer.

(ii) The Chairman reported that the Council had been successful in securing £9,977,100 funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to undertake the refurbishment of the historic Grade-II listed Victorian Wintergardens on Great Yarmouth's Golden Mile which was fantastic news for the Borough and he thanked the Chief Executive Officer and all the officers concerned for their hard work to secure the grant funding. The grant award would be topped up with £5m taken from the recent Town Deal grant. The Chairman reported that a report would be taken to the next Full Council meeting.

Councillor Plant and Councillor Wainwright passed on their thanks and congratulations to Officers for their hard work and commitment to the project. Councillor Flaxman- Taylor also passed on her thanks to former Councillors and employees who had worked on the project.

(iii) The Chairman announced that Great Yarmouth Borough Council and East Suffolk Council would be submitting a joint bid to become the next UK City of Culture in 2025, the deadline being Monday, 19 July 2021 with the decision due to be announced in May. Applications would be whittled down to a shortlist of six in September. If successful, 2025 would see a packed programme of events celebrating the arts, culture and history across the towns and surrounding districts in Norfolk and Suffolk.

5 POSITIONING THE BOROUGH AS A VISITOR DESTINATION

The Committee received and considered the report from the Head of Marketing and Communications.

The Head of Marketing & Communications reported that this report sets out proposals to position the Borough as an all-year round destination for visitors in the 21st century reflecting on the changing pattern of how visitors access resort information over the last three years.

The Head of Marketing & Communications reported that the Council worked closely with the Town Centre Partnership (TCP) and Greater Yarmouth Tourism and Business Improvement Area (GYTABIA) to promote and market the resorts in the Borough as part of an all-year-round place to visit as 'destinations' with their own unique identities under the new Visit Great Yarmouth brand.

The Head of Marketing & Communications reported that the landscape of tourist information was evolving, with digital trends emerging more heavily since the start of COVID-19. Closure of the Maritime House building and redeploying establishment costs would ensure Great Yarmouth's digital presence was maximised. The current TIC offering came at a substantial cost to the Council, and a decrease in revenue had resulted in an increased deficit in recent years. Through working smarter and utilising a blend of staff resources, including COVID Marshals as Ambassadors, existing establishment costs could be redeployed to ensure digital presence was maximised, enabling existing marketing staff to concentrate on further commercial/revenue streams. There was a need to maintain a level of phone and email coverage, which could be managed through existing resources including weekend cover during the season.

The Head of Marketing & Communications reported that Maritime House offered the opportunity for a new revenue stream through being re-purposed for commercial use. The options set-out in this report provided a realistic proposition to develop the Council's strategic support to the tourism sector and aligned with the operational delivery of tourism destination marketing undertaken by GYTABIA.

Councillor Wainwright commented that he was pleased to see that the Covid Marshalls were continuing to be utilised and, in his opinion, they would be required for the foreseeable future. Councillor Wainwright sought clarification as to whether the Tourist Information Centre would be re-located to the previous Greenwoods site which had now been acquired by the Council as part of the Town Deal. The Chief Executive Officer advised that it was hoped that the former Greenwoods site would become a Heritage Centre and provide a different offer to the Tourist Information Centre and work was progressing on this matter.

The Head of Communications and Marketing reported that a shared hub facility on Great Yarmouth seafront was being investigated with officers working with the CCG and Police on this matter. Councillor A Wright commented that he welcomed the proposed hub would could act as a call-in centre for tourists. The Chairman confirmed that he and the Chief Executive Officer have had discussions with the CCG and Police and that GYTABIA would be advised of the proposal.

Councillor Hammond asked whether it would be possible for signposts to be placed in the entrance gateways to the Borough which encompassed "Visit Great Yarmouth" with an email address, to advise visitors ideas of where to visit. The Chief Executive Officer reported that this matter would be looked into as it might only entail a QR code sited within the Council's car parks.

Councillor P Carpenter asked if the pop-up information points would be sited throughout the Borough including Gorleston, Hemsby & Scratby.

Councillor Plant asked if an App could be introduced which covered the whole of the Borough to show visitors what was on offer. The Head of Marketing and Communications advised that this matter was being looked into.

Councillor Flaxman-Taylor asked for clarification in regard to the ambassador roles being undertaken by the Covid Marshals and whether this would delay the roll out of the ambassador programme, if the Marshals were still dealing with Covid issues. The Head of Marketing and Communications advised that Marshals already undertook part of the planned ambassador role as part of their day-to-day work and conversations were taking place to discuss their capacity moving forward.

Councillor A Wright requested the inclusion of the shared information hub on Great Yarmouth seafront be included in the recommendations to ensure that visitors to the Borough continued to have a point of contact at Great Yarmouth Seafront.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee:-

- a) Note the content of this report and the proposed new operating model for the provision of visitor/tourism information,
- b) Support the principles contained in this report to move to online and telephony visitor information services supplemented by COVID Marshals in the interim whilst in a pandemic, and longer term via a blend of seasonal 'Hosts', Heritage Guides and Street Wardens,
- c) Confirm the continued closure of the Tourist Information Centre and request the Head of Property Services brings forward an options appraisal to re-purpose the building in a manner that will support the local leisure or hospitality sectors; and
- d) Endorse that a shared information hub be provided at Great Yarmouth seafront.

6 GYPT ANNUAL REVIEW

The Committee received and considered the report from the Head of Inward Investment.

The Head of Inward Investment reported that this report provided an overview of the outcomes of the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust Annual Review and provided highlights of key areas of interest.

A presentation of the Annual Review (annexed to this report) was given by Darren Barker, as Project Director of the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust, and Members would have the opportunity to ask questions or seek clarification.

The Chairman thanked Darren for the presentation which gave an excellent overview of the collaborative work between the Council and GYPT.

Councillor Wainwright thanked Darren for the excellent report and for all the hard work and commitment he gave to GYPT and the Borough.

Councillor Williamson reported that two further members of staff had been employed by GYPT from funding received from the Architectural Heritage Fund. Councillor Williamson reported that the full GYPT was available and for interested Councillors to contact Darren for a copy.

Councillor Wells highlighted the quality of residential homes which had been built to a very high standard by GYPT at King Street, Great Yarmouth.

Councillor Myers reported that he was always impressed with the standard of work of GYPT and hoped their work would form part of the City of Culture 2025 bid.

Councillor A Wright reiterated the need for schools to keep the history of Great Yarmouth alive and for the town to be recognised as a centre for heritage and culture.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee note the contents of the report and receive the Annual Review of the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust.

7 2020/21 TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report from the Finance Director.

The Finance Manager reported that this report presented the treasury management activity for the 2020/21 financial year and included:

1. The overall treasury position for 2020/21
2. The borrowing requirement and debt for 2020/21; and
3. The borrowing outturn for 2020/21

The Finance Manager reported that the treasury management strategy for 2020/21 was approved at by Full Council in February 2020 and this report provided the final treasury activity for the 20/21 financial year and performance against the indicators set within the treasury management strategy.

As at 31 March 2021, the Authority had net borrowing of £100m, arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. This was made up of firstly £134m of loans, which was an increase of £15m from 31 March 2020, largely due to capital spend. Secondly, investments stood at £34m at the end of 2021 up from £22m from the previous financial year due to the timing of cash received.

In line with expectations, significantly lower income was generated from cash and short-dated money market investments, including money market funds in 2020/21, as rates on cash investments are close to zero percent. The report also included the performance compared to the indicators set within the Treasury Management Strategy, set out in section 7 for which two of the limits were exceeded in the year.

The investment limit was exceeded within the first month of 2020/21 for the Barclays FIBCA account where the maximum limit of £1.5m was breached as £2.6m was invested, and for the Money Market Fund which had a maximum limit of £12m which was breached at one point when £19m was invested.

In both cases, this was due to the unexpected higher retained cash balances due to the timing of receipt of grant monies ahead of paying out, as a result of COVID. When the strategy was set, such balances could not have been anticipated. The balances were put in these funds to generate a better return on the investments in line with our strategic goals of security, liquidity and return. This was because whilst the Debt Management Office investments level was unlimited, the interest rates were so poor during the year, that at times, they were at a negative interest rate. Therefore the decision was taken to breach the limits and hold these funds in the Money Market Fund & the FIBCA account to generate a better return on the investments in line with our strategic goals of security, liquidity and return.

Furthermore, the impact of a 1% rise in interest rates limit was also breached, as the limit was set based on a lower investment balance and higher loan balances based on the anticipated levels when the Treasury Management Strategy was written. The Councils investment balances have increased by 25% and loan balances have decreased by 33% again due to Government funding received to assist with the pressures relating to the pandemic.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee recommend to Full Council the Treasury Management Outturn Report and Indicators for 2020/21.

8 GENERAL FUND OUTTURN 2020-21

The Committee received and considered the report from the Finance Director.

The Finance Director reported that this report showed the general fund year end budget monitoring position for the 2020/21 financial year.

The Finance Director reported that the outturn position, as reported, would be used to produce the draft statutory accounts that would be subject to external audit later in the year.

In respect of the revenue outturn position, there was a reported surplus of £497,250 which the report was recommending be allocated to the Treasury Management Reserve, Insurance Reserve and Special Projects Reserve, as outlined at section 4.4 of the report.

The Finance Director reported that the outturn on the capital programme, together with its financing and an updated programme for 2021/22 which reflected the carry forward of capital projects not completed in 2020/21, plus the additions to the capital programme of the Beach Huts, Wellesley Recreation Ground, Crematorium Roof and Marina Centre, as detailed at section 5 of the report. Appendix E had been amended and was included as a separate attachment, reflecting the total programme for 2021/22.

The Finance Director reported that the outturn position reflected the impact of Covid19 on the revenue position for the year. Government funding of £3.5m had been received in the year for the emergency support and new burdens, mainly in relation to the administration of the many grant schemes, and also the sales, fees and charges funding which had covered 75% of the reduced income, compared to the budget. Reduced income not covered by the fees and charges scheme had been mitigated by the general tranche funding.

The Finance Director reported that the detail within the report and appendices provided commentary on the more significant variances compared to the budget. Most significant variances included an addition to the bad debt provision in the year which had been reviewed to reflect the impact of the last 12 months and debt recovery, reduced income from demand led services for example, car parking income and also more favourable variances from reduced interest payable and additional turnover in the year. The outturn position allowed for the roll forward of some unspent service budgets which had been earmarked for ongoing commitments in 2021/22.

Councillor Wainwright congratulated the Finance Director and her team for all their sterling work carried out processing the Covid grants whilst undertaking business as usual. The Chairman echoed Councillor Wainwright's sentiments.

RESOLVED:-

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee agree and recommend to Full Council:-

- (i) The outturn position for the general fund for 2020/21 as included in the report and appendices;
- (ii) The transfers to and from reserves as detailed within the report and Appendix A along with an updated reserves statement (Appendix C);
- (iii) Transfer the surplus to the earmarked reserves as detailed within the report;
- (iv) The financing of the 2020/21 capital programme as detailed within the report and appendices; and
- (v) The updated capital programme for 2021/22 as included in the report (section 5) and Appendix E.

9 TOWN DEAL HEADS OF TERMS, PRIORITISATION EXERCISE AND MONITORING & EVALUATION UPDATE

The Committee received and considered the report from the Chief Executive Officer.

The Chief Executive Officer reported that at the Town Deal Board meeting held on the 16 March 2021, the Heads of Terms, (HoT), for a Town Deal of up to £20.1 million to deliver ten Immediate Investment Priorities as set out in the Town Investment Plan was agreed. The Heads of Terms offered for a Town Deal of up to £20,100,000 against an original ask of £24,780,390.

This report confirmed the Board prioritised interventions that were made in line with the value of the funding award and provides an update regarding the subsequent

monitoring & evaluation, (M&E), that had taken place. This report will also document the marketing & evaluation schedule associated with the Town Deal Heads of Terms.

RESOLVED:-

That the Committee recommend to Full Council:-

- (i) To acknowledge MHCLG receipt of the said agreed interventions,
- (ii) Note that the subsequent Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) submission for addressing key conditions by 24 May 2021 have been addressed, including financial information,
- (iii) To acknowledge that preparatory work on the delivery of Stage 2 Business case is underway; and
- (iv) Note the Monitoring & Evaluation reporting schedule for the Town Deal as per agreed Heads of Terms.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman reported that there was no other business being of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration at the meeting.

11 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED:-

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12(A) of the said Act.

12 CONFIDENTIAL - BUILDING PURCHASE - 37-39 MARKET PLACE, GREAT YARMOUTH

(Confidential Minute on this Item)

The meeting ended at: 20:00

PRESENT:-

Councillor Smith (in the Chair); Councillors P Carpenter, Flaxman-Taylor, Grant, P Hammond, Hanton, Myers, Plant, Smith, Wainwright, B Walker, Wells, Williamson & A Wright.

Ms S Oxtoby (Chief Executive Officer), Ms K Sly (Finance Director), Mrs C Dyble (Head of Media & Communications), Mrs P Boyce (Strategic Director), Mrs M Burdett (Head of Inward Investment), Mrs K Blakemore (Strategic Director), Ms C Whatling (Monitoring Officer), Ms S Gibbs (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Mr D Barker (Heritage & Design Manager), Ms L Snow (Finance Manager), Mrs J Beck (Head of Property & Asset Management), Mrs S Wintle (Corporate Services Manager) & Mrs C Webb (Executive Services Officer).