

BOROUGH OF BARROW-IN-FURNESS

A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL of this Borough was held at the at 5.30 pm. on Tuesday, 28th July, 2020.

PRESENT:- Councillor Hamilton (Mayor in the Chair) and Councillors Assouad, Barlow, Biggins, Brook, Burns, Callister (except for Urgent Item), Cassidy, D. Edwards, H. Edwards, Gawne, Hall, Husband, Johnston (Minute Nos 22-30 only), McEwan, McLeavy, Maddox, Morgan, Nott, Pemberton (except for Urgent Item), Preston, Roberts, Robson, Ronson, Seward, Shirley, C. Thomson, M. A. Thomson and Wall.

Officers Present:- Sam Plum (Chief Executive), Susan Roberts (Director of Resources), Steph Cordon (Director of People and Place), Debbie Storr (Head of Legal and Governance & Monitoring Officer), Helen Houston (Development Services Manager - Policy, Regeneration and Information), Jon Huck (Democratic Services Manager) and Sharron Rushton (Democratic Services Officer).

Also Present:- Michael Barry (Cumbria County Council), Lauren Newby (Hatch Regeneris) and David Haughian (Cumbria County Council).

22 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Blezard, Burley, McClure, Mooney, Pidduck and Worthington.

23 The Local Government Act, 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 and Access to Information (Variation) Order 2006 - Urgent Item

RESOLVED:- That by reason of the special circumstances outlined below the Chairman is of the opinion that the following item of business not specified on the agenda should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency in accordance with Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Reason</u>
COVID-19 Financial Management (Minute No. 40)	The nature of the report required an urgent decision that could not wait until a future meeting.

24 The Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and Access to Information (Variation) Order 2006

Discussion arising hereon it was

RESOLVED:- That under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public and press 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 (Minute No. 40) of Part One of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

25 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Burns declared an interest in Agenda Item 7 – Barrow-in-Furness Town Investment Plan Submission (Minute No. 29) as she was a Trustee of Women’s Community Matters.

Councillor Robson declared an interest in Agenda Item 7 – Barrow-in-Furness Town Investment Plan Submission (Minute No. 29) as he was married to the Senior Officer at Women’s Community Matters.

Councillor M. A. Thomson declared an interest in Agenda Item 7 – Barrow-in-Furness Town Investment Plan Submission (Minute No. 29) as she was Chair of Trustees at Women’s Community Matters.

26 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16th June, 2020 were taken as read and confirmed, subject to Councillor Shirley’s question to the Vice-Chair of Planning being added to the Minutes:

“In relation to the Housing Development at Lots Road which was presented to Planning Committee in March 2020, he had been contacted by a number of residents who had been disappointed that only a summary of their observations had been reproduced and presented to the Committee for consideration. He requested full details be published”. Councillor M A Thomson had clarified the matter.

27 Public Participation

No questions, representations, deputations or petitions had been received in respect of the meeting.

28 Announcements

There were no announcements from the Chairman, Leader or Head of Paid Service.

29 Barrow-in-Furness Town Investment Plan submission

There had been a presentation on the Barrow in Furness Town Investment Plan by Michael Barry and Lauren Newby to update Members on the Barrow Town Deal.

In September 2019 it had been confirmed that Barrow-in-Furness was among the 101 towns that would be invited to put forward Town Deal proposals valued at up to £25m to deliver economic growth in the town.

The case for the investment would need to be articulated through an evidenced Town Investment Plan. Development of the plan must be overseen by a Town Deal Board with Barrow Borough Council acting as accountable body for funding received. The Government required that the Town Deal Board comprised a mix of the public and private sector, the third sector and MP. The role of the Town Deal Board had been discussed at the November 2019 meeting of the Executive Committee.

The development of the Town Deal would come forward in two phases with the first phase focused on the submission of the Town Investment Plan containing a set of project proposals and then the agreement of heads of terms. There would be a

requirement to develop Full Business Cases through which delivery funding would be confirmed.

The Town Investment Plan had been considered at the meeting of the Town Deal Board on 24th July 2020 and the report sought confirmation that as accountable body Barrow Borough Council agree that the Town Investment Plan can be submitted to Government.

Developing the Town Investment Plan

The Town Deal Board had promoted an ambitious approach to preparation of the Town Investment Plan, at the first meeting of the Town Deal Board it had been agreed to create a:

- Plan Development Group, responsible for overseeing plan development
- Communications and Engagement Group, responsible for preparing and implementing communications activity

They also had agreed that external consultancy support should be procured.

Supported by those structures, early in the process the Board had been able to confirm a vision for the town:

To build on our economic strengths, rich industrial heritage, natural beauty and sense of community to develop a town that is economically dynamic and diverse, sitting at the forefront of innovation and green growth, viewed as a great place to live, study, work and visit and home to a healthy population that can deliver a prosperous, inclusive and fair future

That in turn supported the creation of aligned objectives for the Town Investment Plan:

- *To put residents at the centre of public service delivery;*
- *To build on our strengths to help Barrow become a centre of excellence and innovation for advanced manufacturing and clean growth;*
- *To create a resilient local economy through greater diversification, enhanced competitiveness and providing a wider range of quality employment opportunities;*
- *To grow the working age population by creating an attractive and vibrant place to live, work and visit;*
- *To equip people with the skills and confidence to achieve their potential to take full advantage of opportunities;*
- *To strengthen progression pathways through a dynamic and integrated approach to school, further and higher education;*
- *To reduce deprivation and improve the physical and mental health and well-being of our community;*
- *To be a digitally connected and physically accessible town supporting walking, cycling and public transport;*
- *To deliver a more diverse and attractive housing offer while ensuring the continued renewal of our existing stock; and*
- *To achieve a vibrant town centre, leisure and service offer supporting the role of Barrow as a regional centre while enhancing our rich built and cultural heritage.*

Supported by engagement activity and a technical appraisal process these were the basis for defining a short list of projects for which funding would be sought through the Town Investment Plan.

Project	Funding Sought
Barrow Learning Quarter - Creation of new university campus and skills hub for Barrow	£13.4m
Community Wellbeing Hubs and Earnse Bay Outdoor Centre - Establishment of a network of community resilience hubs and a new outdoor skills and recreation facility on Walney.	£4.5m
Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure - A transformative programme of walking and cycling infrastructure improvements within Barrow.	£4.5m
Housing Renewal Programme - A new housing market renewal programme focused on key areas of need.	£4m
Business & Enterprise Support - Developing a supportive business environment for Barrow to boost Barrow's enterprise overall,	£1m
Place Development – Culture and Tourism - A programme of activity to promote the town together with a programme of events and activities	£1m
Marina Village - The site would deliver high-quality housing alongside leisure, retail and cultural development.	£1m

A profile of each of these schemes had been provided within the Town Investment Plan and were intended to really drive positive change within Barrow, enhancing access to opportunity while also supporting economic growth and the perception of Barrow as the place to live work to visit.

These proposals also sought to lever, synergise and complement other funding streams and projects like the Future High Street Fund, private sector investment programmes; the All Electric Bus proposal, Low Carbon Barrow ERDF and Growth Fund applications and Marina Village.

For each of the Town Deal projects it was considered essential for them to be robustly developed and supported by clear evidence around the benefits they can achieve in deliverability and match funding. To achieve this each project had a Strategic Outline Business Case prepared.

Accelerated Towns Fund

Within the Government response to COVID-19 Barrow had been provisionally allocated an additional £750,000 of funding to be spent in 2020/21. That funding would be used for a number of complementary investments including acquisition of key sites to support the development of Marina Village, revitalise and repurpose key spaces in the town to support Place Development and aligned initiatives such as Future High Streets, and enhance Barrow's outdoor activity offer aligned to Place Development and Community Wellbeing Hubs and Earnse Bay Outdoor Centre. These investments would support Covid-19 recovery and provide a platform for Towns Deal investment

Next Steps and Moving Forward

The submission of the Town Investment Plan, whilst a significant milestone, did not signify the end of the process.

The immediate focus would turn to addressing due diligence surrounding the deal whilst pushing for early agreement of the heads of terms. The July submission placed Barrow in the first wave of submissions and from here it was hoped that funding and projects could be realised as early as possible. That was important, especially as the town continued to recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

The heads of terms would be the mechanism through which the Government would signify which projects it would wish to see further developed and it was intended that the Executive Committee would be required to consider these.

Following heads of terms, it would be necessary to prepare and submit Full Business Cases for each of the short listed projects. To ensure effective ownership and use of resources, to date different organisation had led the development of projects, with Barrow Borough Council leading on Housing Market Renewal, Place Development, Marina Village and Business Support. Likewise the University of Cumbria would lead development of the Barrow Learning Quarter and Cumbria County Council on Community Resilience Hubs and Earnse Bay and Cycling and Walking Infrastructure.

To resource the next stage of development it was intended to retain that approach which the organisation leading specific projects would resource front funding development activity to be reimbursed once the schemes were contracted and Town Deal Funding could be accessed. It was recommended that £100,000 of the Council's financial reserves be allocated to enable critical progress to be maintained. That funding would be eligible for repayment once project funding was in place.

Mindful that in acting as accountable body, Barrow Borough Council must be able to manage an effective process. Within the deal £500,000 had been sought to support the accountable body role while working effectively with partners.

Engagement

The #BrilliantBarrow campaign had been a primary platform to engage community and business voices in the development of the Town Investment Plan.

In supporting communication and engagement work the Town Deal Board had agreed to the formation of a Communications and Engagement Group. That Task and Finish Group had been established to support the work of the Town Deal Board, responsible for preparing and implementing communications activity. The Group had developed a Town Deal Stakeholder Engagement Plan which was implemented in three stages. Covid-19 had changed the engagement planning dramatically as traditional forms of engagement were inappropriate due to lockdown and social distancing measures, with a shift to a more targeted and predominantly digital approach:

1. Phase 1 Engagement: awareness raising activity through social media which had encouraged initial views to be shared through the #MyTowns government portal. A total of 140 unique posts had been provided. That had been complemented by social media analysis on activity related to Barrow and by c.25 one-to-one consultations with strategic and delivery partners.

2. Phase 2 Engagement: launch of the #BrilliantBarrow campaign and website encouraging the community to 'have your say'. To date, over 230 individual posts have been shared.
3. Phase 3 Engagement: development of project stakeholder engagement plans and implementation through a mixed method approach including surveys and focus group activity. In total, 592 responses to the seven surveys had been secured to date, in addition to qualitative feedback shared via meeting notes and correspondence.

The consultation feedback had supported the iterative development of the Town Investment Plan and associated Strategic Outline Business Cases for each shortlisted project. The feedback had been overwhelmingly positive, supportive, constructive and informative to guide the process of strategy development.

A Stakeholder Engagement Plan to accompany the launch of Barrow's finalised Town Investment Plan had been developed which articulated the commitment to ongoing dialogue and would ensure implementation of the Plan was responsive to stakeholder needs.

It should be noted that although the guidance was clear that up to £25m of funding may be sought, it also stated that for exceptional proposals that could be exceeded. The current ask for the Town Deal was £29.4m with a further £500,000 requested for programme support.

Questions from Members were raised around how the schemes would be prioritised should the full amount of funding not be received and when the Members would be informed how the £750,000 acquired from Government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic would be accounted for.

In response it was stated that all schemes aligned with Government priorities and had been considered good value and the bid should be successful in order to deliver all schemes, albeit with conditions attached. The Towns Deal Board would make recommendations regarding the £750,000 acquired from Government and further discussions would follow

It was moved by Councillor Brook and seconded by Councillor Roberts, and it was unanimously,

RESOLVED:-

1. To approve the submission of the Barrow-in-Furness Town Investment Plan to MHCLG;
2. Subject to the agreement of heads of terms the Council provide up to £100,000 to support the development of full business cases required to access delivery funding, that funding would be reimbursed with the receipt of funding to deliver individual projects;
3. To agree that Barrow Borough Council takes the role of accountable body for Barrow-in-Furness Town Investment Plan; and
4. To note that £162,019 of grant funding had been fully committed on consultancy services, business case development and community engagement, and had been supplemented by the Major Projects Reserve to the value of £12,660.

30 Barrow Future High Street Fund Business Case Submission

There had been a presentation on the Barrow Future High Street Fund Business Case Submission by Helen Houston and David Haughian.

In 2019, Government had sought expressions of interest from Local Authorities who could benefit from funding to support the transformation of their high streets. Barrow Borough Council had submitted an expression of interest, and had been identified as one of 100 towns who had been invited to bid for up to £25 million from Future High Street Funding (FHSF). Government had sought Business Cases from each of the successful towns, with the deadline for submission by 31st July 2020.

The Objectives of Barrow FHSF

The vision for Barrow Town Centre was to harness Barrow's urban, historic character and waterfront to create a vibrant centre for work, shopping, study, living, leisure and accessing services. Supporting our residents, businesses and visitors from the local area, South Cumbria and beyond.

The primary strategic objectives of the Barrow FHSF were as follows:

- Create a destination town centre that attracts people back into the town centre; more people using and visiting more often, and staying for longer.
- Boost civic pride and create a strong visual identity to the Town Centre
- Create a high quality, attractive and impressive market space that serves local businesses and attracts visitors
- Re-establish the Town Hall as a cultural and civic focal point for Barrow, opening its doors to the public and maximising its assets.
- Create an “Instagramable” attraction for Barrow – providing more reasons to visit and making it easier for people to stay.
- Creating safe and harder working spaces that encourage a diverse range of people to use their town centre and which better connects people to existing destinations and transport links.

The current estimated cost of the preferred option in the Business Case was in the region of £25m (including risk allowances). The cost estimate would be refined within the final business case submitted to MHCLG on 31st July 2020.

The recommended route to package up the Barrow FHSF project had been identified following consideration of a number of procurement options. The assessment of procurement options considered the suitability of each option in the context of the delivery of a major project by Barrow Borough Council.

The Project funding contributions included in the Business Case to date was broken down as follows:

Funding Stream	Funding contribution
Future High Street Fund (MHCLG)	Up to £25m
Barrow Borough Council	£1m

It was proposed that Barrow Borough Council provide up to £1m of co-funding to invest in the Future High Street Fund project. Barrow Borough Council could expect to receive a return on the investment through new income generation opportunities and reductions in existing subsidies.

The report asked that delegated authority be given to the Director of People and Place, to submit a Business Case based on the proposal outlined in the report, to agree the arrangements for the Council to be responsible for delivery of the Project, the provision of co-funding.

Councillor H Edwards questioned if private sector funding would have an effect on the bid as the report did not identify funders?

Councillor Hall questioned if there was something missing from the bid as he had concerns regarding the position Barrow was ranked in the National Audit Report?

Councillor Shirley questioned if the Council would continue to work in partnership to upgrade other areas of the town centre and ensure rural areas across the Borough felt the benefits of the fund?

It was confirmed that the private sector had been fully engaged and involved throughout the whole proposal. The National Audit Report was detailing how towns had been selected in the first instance and not how they currently ranked. Partnership working would continue with the private sector to make the Borough a place people wanted to visit, however, this fund was specifically for Barrow Future High Street.

It was moved by Councillor Brook and seconded by Councillor Roberts, and it was unanimously,

RESOLVED:-

1. That delegated authority be given to the Director of People and Place, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Director of Resources and Leader of the Council, to submit a Business Case for the Barrow Future High Street project based on the proposal outlined in the report;
2. If the bid is successful that the Council provide up to £1m of co-funding to invest in the Barrow Future High Street Fund Project, with the funding to be repaid from new income generation activities or reductions in existing subsidies;
3. If the bid is successful that the Council agrees the inclusion of up to £25m of project funding in the Capital Programme from 2020/2021;
4. If the bid is successful that Barrow Borough Council would act as the Accountable body for the funding;
5. To note that the £150,000 of grant funding to reach this stage of the business case had been fully committed on consultancy services and had been supplemented by the Major Projects Reserve £4,330; and
6. To authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Resources, Leader and Chair of Executive Committee, to enter into a Grant Funding Agreement with MHCLG.

31 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025

The Homelessness Act 2002 placed a duty on local authorities to carry out a review of all forms of homelessness in their district area and to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on the results of the review.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy sets out the Council's position with regard to preventing homelessness, securing sufficient accommodation for people who were or may become homeless and securing support for people who were homeless. The report sought incorporation of the Strategy into the Council's Policy Framework.

It was moved by Councillor Brook and seconded by Councillor Roberts, and it was

RESOLVED:- To approve the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025 for inclusion in the Council's Policy Framework.

32 Business and Planning Act 2020

The Business and Planning Act 2020 ("the Act") had been implemented on 22nd July, 2020 and had introduced a streamlined process which allowed a licence holder, such as restaurants, cafes and bars, to place removable furniture such as tables and chairs on the paved highway adjacent to their premises. The measures supported businesses to operate safely whilst maintaining social distancing measures and facilitate much needed income generation cheaply and quickly.

District authorities were responsible for receiving and processing licence applications and may charge an application fee for doing so. A licence could be granted for up to a year but not beyond 30th September 2021. The functions needed to be appropriately delegated to allow applications to be made, determined and enforced effectively and efficiently.

Councillors D Edwards asked if the fee could either be free or reduced to a nominal charge to help struggling businesses? Councillor H Edwards asked why funds allocated from the Government response to Covid-19 could not be used to help businesses. Councillor Hall questioned why the decision for setting the fees and charges was with Officers and not with Members?

Responses confirmed that the Council had taken some of the burden of the fee as the total amount was above £100. The Covid-19 allocation was to address crises and not to be used freely and Officers had the delegation to set fees and charges and the fee had been set under that delegation.

It was moved by Councillor Brook and seconded by Councillor Callister, and it was,

RESOLVED:-

1. To delegate authority to the Licensing Regulatory Committee responsibility for all matters in relation to pavement licences, not otherwise delegated to Officers, under the Planning and Business Act 2020;
2. To establish an internal review process where a licence had been refused or revoked or granted subject to conditions with which the applicant disagrees,

giving the applicant the chance to make written and /or oral representations to a Sub-Committee of the Licensing Regulatory Committee; and

3. To delegate authority to the Public Protection Manager to determine applications for pavement licences; to include setting the duration of the licence and attach such conditions as they consider reasonably necessary and to take any necessary action in relation to the enforcement and revocation of the licence.

33 Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2019/20

Councillor McLeavy stated that the report provided Members with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Annual report.

It was moved by Councillor McLeavy and seconded by Councillor Cassidy, and it was

RESOLVED:- That the Annual Report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be accepted.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

34 Planning

Questions to the Chair:

- a) Referring to Minute No. 7 of the Planning Committee held on 23rd June, 2020 (Land to rear of 12/14 Nelson Street, Dalton in Furness), Councillor Shirley questioned if the recent application could be amended to extend off street parking and mitigate against further traffic congestion?
- b) Referring to Minute No. 15 of the Planning Committee held on 14th July, 2020 (Proposed Housing Site, Crompton Drive, Dalton in Furness), Councillor Shirley questioned if figures on what the Council believed was affordable housing in the Borough could be included within the Council Plan?

Responses from the Chair:

- a) The planning application had been agreed, however, the Chair agreed to discuss with the Planning Department and report back to Councillor Shirley.
- b) When schemes were submitted by developers they included plans for affordable housing. The Chair agreed to discuss further with the Planning Department and report back to Councillor Shirley.

It was moved by Councillor M. A. Thomson, and

RESOLVED:- That the reports of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 23rd June and 14th July, 2020 be received.

35 Licensing Regulatory

Questions to the Chair:

- a) Referring to Minute No. 5 of the Licensing Regulatory Committee held on 23rd July, 2020 (Business and Planning Act 2020 - Pavement Licences), Councillor Shirley questioned if the Council would continue to work with Barrow Bid and

businesses to ensure clarity was provided regarding what was meant by temporary furniture?

Responses from the Chair:

- a) The Council would continue to work with local businesses to offer the best possible support. The furniture was temporary and would be required to be moved off the pavement when not trading.

It was moved by Councillor Callister, and

RESOLVED:- (i) To note that the meeting to be held on 25th June, 2020 had been cancelled; and

(ii) That the report of the meeting of the Licensing Regulatory Committee held on 23rd July, 2020 be received.

36 Licensing

The Mayor advised that the meetings of the Licensing Committee scheduled to take place on 25th June and 23rd July, 2020 had been cancelled.

37 Executive

Councillor Brook advised that there were no recommendations referred to Council from the meeting held on 8th July.

It was moved by Councillor Brook and seconded by Councillor Roberts, and

RESOLVED:- That the reports of the meetings of the Executive Committee held on 8th July and the addendum of the Executive Committee meeting held on 27th July, 2020 be received and that each of the recommendations contained therein had been dealt with under Agenda Item Nos. 7, 8, 9 and 10 as outlined in Minute Nos. 29, 30, 31 and 32 above.

38 Overview and Scrutiny

It was moved by Councillor McLeavy, and

RESOLVED:- That the report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 9th July, 2020 be received and that the recommendation contained therein had been dealt with under Agenda Item No. 11 as outlined in Minute No. 33 above.

39 Questions to the Leader of the Council

There had been no questions submitted to the Leader of the Council under notice as required by Standing Order 10.2 and 10.4.

Local Government Act 1972 – Excluded Item

It was moved by Councillor Brook and seconded by Councillor Burns to move into Part Two, and

RESOLVED:- That the item to be taken in Part Two of the Agenda be dealt with following the exclusion of the press and the public.

The meeting adjourned at 7.43 pm.

The meeting reconvened at 7.50 pm. following the exclusion of the press and the public.

40 COVID-19 Financial Management

The Director of Resources reported that Life Leisure had asked to re-open the Centre; other providers in the Borough and nationally had re-opened their facilities.

In summary the report provided an update of the Park Leisure Centre management fee for the recovery period.

A motion was put forward by Councillor H Edwards and seconded by Councillor Hall that the matter be referred back to a Special Executive Committee for reconsideration.

A vote was taken, 5 for, 19 against and 2 abstained and the motion was therefore declared lost.

A substantive motion was put forward by Councillor Brook and seconded by Councillor M A Thomson to agree the recommendations.

A vote was taken, 19 for, 4 against and 3 abstained and it was

RESOLVED:-

1. To affirm support for the Park Leisure Centre and re-opening;
2. To agree that the Director of Resources negotiate and agree an August management fee whilst the examination of the proposal was concluded; and
3. To reaffirm that the Director of Resources and the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Executive Committee negotiate and agree a recovery management fee as detailed within the report.

The meeting closed at 8.18 pm.