

BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

This matter is a Key Decision within the Council's definition and has not been included in the relevant Forward Plan

Report of the Executive Director for Core Services and the Service Director Finance (S151 Officer)

2019/20 Accelerated Investment Proposals

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report outlines the opportunity to accelerate a number of investment proposals into the current financial year following the Government's recent spending announcements and the consequential impact on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 **The investment proposals identified in Section 4 of this report are approved.**
- 2.2 **Authority is delegated to individual Cabinet Spokespersons, in conjunction with respective Executive Directors, to progress implementation of each proposal identified in Section 4 with immediate effect.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Government announced its provisional spending proposals for 2020/21 on the 4th September 2019. Although this was a one year only commitment and provided no longer term funding certainty, the improved position as compared to the Council's previous planning assumptions affords the opportunity to consider some one-off investment in 20/21. Proposals for 20/21 will be worked up in due course and considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and 20/21 budget setting process.
- 3.2 In addition, the Council's longer term approach to planning its reserves strategy and the financial outlook for the remainder of 2019/20 also provides the opportunity to accelerate some of that investment into the current financial year. This is addressed in section 4 below.

4. 2019/20 Investment Proposals

- 4.1 Against this backdrop, the Council has sought to identify a number of investment proposals which are capable of being implemented in the current financial year.

4.2 In addition, the following design principles have been considered to ensure that any investment made has maximum impact in terms of both corporate priority outcomes and return on investment:

- Supporting wellbeing and managing demand for statutory services;
- Improving the efficiency of the Council / invest to save schemes;
- Initiatives that have a positive environmental impact / achieve our zero carbon objectives;
- Supporting the renaissance of the town centre and principal towns;
- Supporting the growth of the digital sector in Barnsley; and
- Making a visible difference in our communities.

4.3 The above principles will equally inform the development of any proposals for 20/21 investment which will be considered at a later date.

4.4 As a result of this work, the following list of investment proposals have been identified for consideration and potential implementation in the current financial year:

Theme	Proposal	2019/20 Cost
Making a visible difference in communities	A 'blitz' on weeds, graffiti and cleanliness across the borough A dedicated programme of activity to remove weeds and graffiti across the borough together with a focus on general cleanliness.	£245,000
Making a visible difference in communities	Increase in the Ward Alliance budget Increase the current ward alliance budget by £10k per ward.	£210,000
Supporting the renaissance of the town centre and principal towns	Town Centre Wardens Recruit an additional 8 town centre wardens this year (4 permanent and 4 temporary for 3 years).	£33,351
Supporting the renaissance of the town centre and principal towns	Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) Investment in an environmental impact team to undertake environmental works in default on public, private and un-adopted land across the borough.	£25,000
Improving the efficiency of the Council / invest to save schemes	Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) Additional investment to improve the throughput of TRO's.	£30,000
Initiatives that have a positive environmental impact / achieve our zero carbon objectives	Tree Planting To design and commence the Council's Tree Planting programme across the borough.	£40,000
Supporting wellbeing	SEND	£135,000

Theme	Proposal	2019/20 Cost
and managing demand for statutory services	Appointment of additional (temporary) staff to address the current backlog on the annual review of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's).	
	Reserve schemes / contingency	£200,000
	TOTAL	£918,351

5. Proposal and Justification

- 5.1 Following the Government's recent spending announcements and the consequential improved financial position for the Council, it is recommended that the priorities in the table at paragraph 4.4 be approved and implemented as soon as is practically possible in the current financial year.

6. Implications for Local People / Service Users

- 6.1 The investment priorities identified above are the result of direct feedback from local people who have highlighted on social media and in the local press the issues that affect them on a day to day basis. It is hoped this additional investment will go some way towards addressing these issues.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 Consultations have taken place with representatives of the Service Director – Finance (S151 Officer).
- 7.2 This report seeks approval to invest in a number of priorities commencing with immediate effect. The total cost of the proposals submitted for approval is expected to be in the region of £0.9 million in this financial year [2019/20].
- 7.3 This cost will be funded via the use of the projected current year underspend and / or the temporary use of reserves pending the receipt of the additional monies announced in the Government's recent spending review.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct legal implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

9 Employee Implications

- 9.1 A number of the investment priorities proposed will create additional employment opportunities across the Council. Establishment and recruitment to these positions will commence immediately in line with normal HR policy.

10. Communications Implications

- 10.1 If approved, a proactive communication campaign will be designed cognisant of any issues or concerns highlighted directly by residents.

11. Consultations

- 11.1 The proposals in this report are as a direct consequence of feedback received from residents, members, community groups, partners and other key stakeholders within the Borough.

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