

Ashford Borough Council

Decisions taken by the Cabinet on 30th July 2020

Minute No	Topic	Decision
23	Final Outturn 2019/20	<p>The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which presented the outturn revenue position for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account for the 2019/20 financial year. It also presented the capital outturn for capital works and how these had been financed, the Collection Fund position, reserve transfers and a treasury management update. He also drew attention to the Tabled Paper which included an additional recommendation on Pavement Licensing and the correction of errors to Paragraph 4 of the report following the PDF conversion of the agenda.</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder said that whilst 2019/20 was a typically good year in budgetary terms and reserves had been increased, he did not want to dwell for too long on this report as the financial year ended just as the effects of the coronavirus pandemic began to hit, which had presented well known challenges to the finances of the Council.</p> <p>There was a lengthy debate about the proposed fee for Pavement Licensing, with some Members asking if, for the sake of a few hundred pounds, this could be waived given the current economic circumstances many small businesses in this sector found themselves in. It would be important to support businesses, and a zero fee for a short period of time would send out a good message to the sort of food and drink businesses that the Council wanted to survive and thrive around the Borough. It was explained that the proposed fee was a modest one of £100. The Council was not expecting a high number of new applications, however the fee would probably not even cover the administration and enforcement costs. It was also significantly less than the previous regime administered by KCC and the process would be much easier and more streamlined for businesses going forward. A concern was raised that a zero fee may also lead to a number of more spurious applications, all of which would place additional pressure on the team to administer. The Leader considered it was worth reiterating that</p>

		<p>businesses had already received a lot of support from the Government and the Council, but the Council had to be realistic on what it could offer. On balance the Cabinet agreed to leave the recommendation on Pavement Licensing as it was.</p> <p>In response to a question about the Council's current wider financial position, Members were advised that the forecast loss of income to the Council was somewhere in the region of £6m. At the present time, the Council had received just under £2m in funding from the Government in response to the effects of the pandemic. This had all been detailed in previous reports to the Cabinet and the wider context would be reported in full in the Cabinet's Medium Term Financial Plan report in the Autumn, prior to the Budget Scrutiny process.</p> <p>Resolved:</p> <p>That (i) the financial outturn for 2019/20 be noted.</p> <p>(ii) the Capital Outturn, Collection Fund position and Treasury Management update be noted.</p> <p>(iii) the reserve movement transfers as per Table 5 of the report be approved.</p> <p>Recommended:</p> <p>That (i) delegations be given to the Head of Environment and Land Management to set fees and charges as necessary for external work provided by Aspire.</p> <p>(ii) a fee of £100 be set for Pavement Licensing in accordance with the Business and Planning Act 2020.</p>
--	--	--