

Present: Councillor Sue Ransome (Chairman), Councillor Ben Evans (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Alison Austin, Anton Dani, Paul Gleeson, Martin Griggs, Yvonne Stevens, Nigel Welton and Stephen Woodliffe

Officers –

Head of Place and Space, Local Communities Development Officer & BTAC Grant Administrator and Play and Physical Activity Officer, Democratic Services Manager

78 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 January 2019 were received and signed by the Chairman.

79 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Viven Edge and Stephen Raven.

80 UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Head of Place and Space reported that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire had been invited to attend the meeting of BTAC on 21 April 2019, as requested by the Committee.

81 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Welton declared an interest in the report on the BTAC Grant Scheme as an application had been submitted by his employers

82 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no questions from members of the public.

83 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME

There were no members of the public who wished to address the committee.

84 FINANCIAL REPORT - STANDING ITEM

The Committee received a report by the Accountancy Manager – Revenue and Systems, providing an update on the BTAC financial position and projected outturn (full year spend) for the financial year 2018/19, and the projected reserves at the year end.

The report stated that the current budget projection for the end of the year was an underspend of £76,552, primarily due to expenditure yet to be allocated and underspends on events, Central Park, open spaces and play areas and public conveniences. Full details of the Committee's financial position was set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

Reserves held by BTAC at 1 April 2018 were £286,667, comprising of £55,000 as the minimum amount to be held to allow for contingencies and £231,667 for projects listed in the appendix. The closing balance of reserves for 2018/19 was projected to be £214,185.

Members questioned why the committed budgets for open spaces (Central Park MUGA), play area CCTV and equipment purchase had not been utilised.

The Head of Place and Space explained that, in respect of the Central Park MUGA project, the procurement process was being undertaken and a report with full details and timescales would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

Information on the play area CCTV and equipment purchase would be sought from relevant officers and forwarded to the committee.

RESOLVED that the financial position for 2018/19 be noted and that full details of the budget underspends relating to open spaces, play area CCTV and equipment purchase be submitted to the next meeting of the committee.

85 BTAC GRANT SCHEME

The Local Communities Development Officer presented a report setting out applications received for Round 3 of the BTAC small grants scheme, two of which were large grants, but all were considered to be eligible for consideration under the scheme.

Details of the grant applications were set out in the report:-

Lincolnshire Housing Partnership – Memory Lane Project

A request for £930 towards three community events to be held at Mayfields during 2019, targeting residents of the Staniland ward.

Parish of Boston – Passion for People Project

A request for a contribution of up to £20,000 to the overall development programme at St. Botolph's Church.

Shakesperts

A contribution of £2,500 towards the cost of engaging schools and Boston residents in preparatory craft workshops for the Shakespeare Festival to be held in Central Park on 6th April 2019.

The Small Grants Working Group had met to consider the applications and supported the three requests, but recommended BTAC to determine the amount to be awarded to the Parish of Boston, noting that the Council had previously awarded £50,000 towards the project.

There remained a balance of £5,600 in the BTAC Small Grants budget. If the Lincolnshire Housing Partnership application was approved the balance would be £4,670 which would be carried forward to 2019/20, following the decision to postpone the fourth round of applications for 2018/19.

There was a projected underspend of £77,146 within the Committee's current year budget, which could be utilised to fund the grant applications from the Parish of Boston and Shakesperts. However, there were other calls on BTAC resources and any grant awards would reduce the remaining amount available.

In view of the amount of funding being requested and for transparency and good governance purposes, it was proposed that the grant application from St Botolph's Church be deferred to allow time for a substantive report to be prepared, providing clarification on the proposed expenditure and benefits to residents of the BTAC area, to enable the Committee to make an informed decision.

It was suggested that the funding for the Shakesperts project should be allocated from the underspend/surplus income in the BTAC events budget, as it related to an event being held in Central Park in April 2019. Any unallocated funding in the grants budget would then be carried forward to the next financial year to support other applications.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the application by Lincolnshire Housing Partnership for a Memory Lane Project be granted in the sum of £930.**
- 2. That the application from the Parish of Boston for the 'Passion for People' project be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee to allow time for a substantive report to be prepared, providing clarification on the proposed expenditure and benefits to the residents of the BTAC area.**
- 3. That the application from Shakesperts be granted in the sum of £2,500 and funded from the BTAC events budget underspend.**

(Having declared an interest Councillor Welton took no part in the discussion or vote on the application from Lincolnshire Housing Partnership)

86 BTAC PLAY AREA IMPROVEMENTS OUTDOOR GYM, TRIM TRAILS AND PLAY AREA SIGNS

The Head of Place and Space presented a report on potential play area improvements relating to outdoor gym equipment, trim trails and play area signage.

Following the 2018 tour of open spaces and play facilities the BTAC Sub Group for Open Spaces had developed plans for improvements to the play and physical activity facilities in the BTAC area. A public consultation exercise was undertaken at the St. John's Park and Burgess Pit which identified a requirement for outdoor gym equipment and trim trails on both sites. The feedback from the consultation exercise was attached at Appendix A of the report.

The sub group had agreed a new design for play area signage which would be installed in all the BTAC play area sites. A copy of the proposed design was attached at Appendix B of the report. It was noted there was a grammatical error on the proposed design which would be corrected.

Quotations for the supply of equipment were received from a number of different suppliers and the details were set out in the report. It was recommended that the developments proposed by the Open Spaces Sub Group be agreed at a cost of £20,000 for each site, and £850 for signage, funded from the BTAC reserves for open space improvements which had been carried forward from previous years. Maintenance and inspection costs would be included in future budget provision.

It was noted that the recommendation contained within the report required amending, as the proposed expenditure exceeded the £10,000 limit it would be subject to Cabinet approval.

During debate concerns were raised regarding insufficient information on the costings for each piece of equipment and details of the consultation process undertaken. Cabinet would require a comprehensive report before agreeing to the expenditure.

The Chairman thanked Officers and Members of the Open Spaces Sub Group for their work on the project which, if approved by Cabinet, would be of great benefit to the residents of BTAC.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the play developments recommended by the BTAC sub group be agreed, subject to Cabinet approval.**
- 2. That the report to Cabinet be extended to include comprehensive information on the individual schemes as discussed by the Open Spaces Sub Group and previous reports to BTAC.**

87 BTAC PLAY AREA IMPROVEMENTS WISH LIST

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Place and Space setting out plans for the improvement of play facilities in the BTAC area.

The report contained a 'wish list' of equipment for each site which had been developed following the tour of BTAC open spaces and play facilities, and been the subject of a public consultation exercise and discussion with the BTAC Sub Group for Open Spaces.

The total cost for all items was £127,727, which would reduce to £108,727 if the funding from Boston Big Local was confirmed. Future years budgets would include costs associated with maintenance and inspection works.

It was noted that Members had expressed a wish to continue extending wildlife and orchard planting schemes in the larger recreation areas, subject to appropriate management of the boundaries with domestic properties, which would require additional ongoing revenue support and therefore need to be considered in the future.

It was proposed to refer the suggested improvements to the BTAC Open Spaces Sub Group for further investigation and costings, with a report being submitted to a future BTAC meeting for consideration.

BTAC held unallocated reserves of approximately £70,000 which could be utilised to support the suggested improvements to the play areas. However, Members were reminded there would be other potential areas of spend for the Committee, therefore consideration should be given to the amount appropriate to allocate towards further play area improvements.

Any procurement would be subject to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and expenditure of over £10,000 would be subject to Cabinet approval.

It was noted that in some BTAC wards there was significant residential development on-going and no play area provision. A question was raised if it would be possible for the Council to purchase land for this purpose. Comment was made that this could be achieved through developer contributions linked to planning approvals.

Concern was raised relating to the length of time it had taken for the piece of work to be completed following the tour of BTAC sites in July 2018 and the decision to develop plans for improvements.

It was proposed that £40,000 be allocated from the 2018/19 BTAC budget underspend to support open space improvements, and that the Open Spaces Sub Group be requested to submit detailed proposals to a future meeting of the Committee.

Following the tour of the BTAC sites in July 2018, overall Members were pleased with the progress of improvements carried out on BTAC open spaces, which had made a significant contribution to improving the quality of the spaces provided in the town and that plans for further development would encourage greater more positive use of public open spaces.

RESOLVED

- 1. That £40,000 from the 2018/19 BTAC budget underspend be allocated to support open space improvements.**
- 2. That the Open Spaces Sub Group be tasked with preparing detailed proposals for the expenditure and reporting back to the Committee as soon as practicable.**

88 WORK PROGRAMME - STANDING ITEM

The Committee considered the Work Programme for the remaining meetings of the municipal year and received an update on the work of the BTAC Operatives.

The Committee commended the BTAC Operatives on their hard work in maintaining the town to a high standard.

It was noted that the meeting on 21 April would be a single item agenda for a briefing from the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire, as requested by the Committee.

The BTAC Annual Report would be submitted to the first meeting of BTAC following the elections.

Boston Town Area Committee (BTAC)
30 January 2019

A request was made for the BTAC meeting scheduled for 27 March to be held on 20 March 2019, prior to the purdah period for the May elections coming into force, to allow the Committee to consider the play area improvements 'wish list' report.

The Head of Place and Space confirmed that he would take advice from relevant officers on the procurement process to ascertain if this would be feasible. The Open Spaces Sub Group would need to meet in advance of BTAC to put forward recommendations to the Committee.

RESOLVED that the meeting of BTAC scheduled for 27 March 2019, be re-arranged for Wednesday 20 March 2019.

The Meeting ended at 8.10 pm