

Present: Councillor Judith Skinner (Chairman), Councillor Judy Welbourn (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Peter Bedford, Deborah Evans, Paul Goodale, Neill Hastie and Chelcei Trafford

In attendance: Councillor Paul Skinner, Leader and Portfolio Holder

Officers –  
Assistant Director - Regulation, Assistant Director – Organisation and Corporate Services, Transformation & Governance Manager, Community Safety Manager and Democratic Services Officer

## **78 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were tabled for Cllrs Alison Austin, David Brown, Anton Dani and Aaron Spencer with no substitute members attending.

## **79 MINUTES**

Committee agreed the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

## **80 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

No declarations of interest were recorded

## **81 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No public questions.

## **82 MEMBER LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY - 2021 TO 2024**

Prior to presenting the report the Assistant Director – Organisation and Corporate Services invited the portfolio holder to address the meeting. The portfolio holder advised he would comment at the end of the presentation.

The Assistant Director – Organisation and Corporate Services presented the report advising that in January 2021 the Councillor Development Group had indicated that they would like the authority to work towards the Charter again. A key requirement of establishing the Charter was to have a member learning development strategy in place. The strategy had been based on a previous strategy and it formed part of the evidence base going forward to the LGA in 2022. The strategy had already been tabled through the Councillor Development Group, with a number of members on the committee already having had input into it, but members were asked if there were any further comments to take forward.

Opening the meeting to the committee members all supported the strategy, stating it was a positive document and those who had been in attendance at the Councillor Development meeting, agreed it had been thoroughly debated.

The Chairman asked if it would be possible to record member's attendance at training sessions within their profiles on the website for public information.

The Assistant-Director noted that he would take advice on the possibility of the training being recorded on members' individual profiles on the website

The Portfolio Holder agreed the suggestion stating that training needed to be analysed and recording of the attendance would help all parties and stated that he felt the strategy would greatly assist all members.

**To Do:**

**JG:** To address the request for member training to be recorded on the website and an update on this to be tabled back to the committee at its next meeting.

**CA:** To update committee at the next meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021.

**83 WORK PROGRAMME INCLUDING Q3 PERFORMANCE.**

The Transformation Manager presented the Q3 performance confirming it was up until the end of December 2020 and was similar to the Q2 report with restrictions still in place during the reporting time.

Some areas had performed really well despite the circumstances including planning services and in supporting local businesses albeit in a different way to the norm.

Other areas clearly reflected the impact of the restrictions. Collectable business rates had been severely impacted by the various reliefs awarded to support businesses during lockdown. Car parking income and the markets income had been heavily impacted due to changes in policy and circumstances.

Household waste was within tolerance, however residual waste per household was worse than target due to people working / being at home more.

Concluding the Transformation Manager advised that there had been a positive with the Guildhall which had gone through Quality Assurance and had not only passed, but had increased their score due to a new pre booking system and allowing better accessibility and improved staffing arrangements.

Member comments included appreciation of the provision of the gross and net figures for the business rates, with a request for confirmation in respect of the differential between them relating to what the Government use for their calculations. The Transformation Manager confirmed she would source the information and forward to members after the meeting.

A number of members tabled their recognition and appreciation of the increasing volume of work undertaken by the fly tipping team.

Noting that an update on the member working group for Fly Tipping was on the agenda, a member suggested that a joint scrutiny meeting or task and finish review on completion of the member working group, be held to look at the correlation between fly tipping and HMO's. Officers' from both service areas – housing and waste disposal, to be included along with representation of the Landlords Forum with a view to looking to address the ongoing increasing issues of fly tipping / black bags and furniture items, clearly resulting from over-crowded houses. Options to include looking at changes in licensing of HMO's.

The Assistant Director – Regulation (Lead Officer for the committee) suggested that the idea should be relayed to the member-working group in the first instance.

A member asked if it would be possible to see comparative percentage rates of fly tipping during the period of weekly collection of green bins with a view to looking to reverting to weekly collections. On being advised that it had been many years since such collections took place and that working methods and policies were very different now, as such any comparison would not be comparative, the member re phrased the question and asked if a significant reduction in fly tipping would occur should the collection of green bins revert to weekly. The Lead Officer re stated that the cost implications of such a piece of work and the changes required to policy would require a clear steer from all members and the executive.

One suggestion tabled was that the households with lots of side waste have an additional bin but issues of siting the bin at such premises could provide difficult. A member stated that if used correctly, the provision of the bins now provided gave more capacity for waste than ever before. The blue bins having been successful for many years and the recent addition of the purple bins gave residents even greater management of their waste, if they did so correctly. One ongoing problem with disposal of large boxes etc. was residents failed to break them down prior to putting them in the bin resulting in the bins not being used to their maximum capacity.

A further suggestion referenced the opening hours and existing policy of the Recycling centre, requesting that they be reviewed, with a view to extending the opening hours and to accommodate trailers and vans that were the preferred vehicle of fly tippers. If the people with these vehicles who collect the waste were able to go and drop it at the recycling centre, it would certainly stop many of the fly tips outside of the town, and maybe some within the town.

The Lead Officer for the committee suggested that the idea be relayed to the member-working group in the first instance.

Referencing the working programme for 20/22 the Lead Officer for the committee addressed the next meeting on the 22 June 2021.

Members were advised that a request tabled previously for an update on the provision of toilets (both Council owned and private owned but available for public use) would be on the agenda. Madam Chairman had requested that the Recovery Plan recently taken through Cabinet should come to committee and would be on the June agenda. An update on the member-working group for fly tipping would now be a standing item on all meetings until its conclusion at which point the final report by the group would be tabled back through the parent committee.

**To Do:**

**SR:** To provide information in respect of the differential between the net and gross figures in respect of the business rates.

**KR:** To relay the two suggestions above in respect of Fly Tipping to the lead officer for the member-working group for fly tipping.

**CA:** To confirm who will table the Recovery Plan at the next meeting.

## **84 REGULATING AND SAFEGUARDING BOSTON'S ECONOMY TASK AND FINISH GROUP - UPDATE ON AGREED RECOMMENDATIONS**

Prior to presenting the report the Assistant Director – Regulation invited the portfolio holder to comment.

The portfolio holder declined at that point and advised he would comment at the end of the presentation if needed.

The Assistant Director – Regulation provided members with a brief overview of how the 13 recommendations had evolved following a very comprehensive task and finish group review that had involved a number of partners and agencies. The parent committee initially agreed and approved all the recommendations.

The report thereafter was tabled at Cabinet who agreed and approved recommendations 1 through to 11 with recommendations 12 and 13 scheduled for approval by BTAC.

Addressing the recommendations the Assistant Director – Regulation advised that recommendations 1,2,3,4 and 6 all related to legislative change and they had been forwarded, undercover of a letter from the Leader of the Council to the Home Secretary for consideration and review. The response from the Home Secretary being included within the agenda papers.

Recommendation 5 sought greater input by the 11 responsible consultees to licensing applications and the Leader of the Council had written to each consultee. No response from any consultee had been received.

Recommendation 7 sought greater input into licensing applications by the Parish Councils. The Leader of the Council had written to each Parish Council encouraging them to scrutinise licensing applications within their respective Parish.

Recommendation 8 sought to promote the work of Boston CAP (Community Alcohol Partnership). Inspector Fran Harrod had included a comprehensive response, which set out good work already undertaken by the CAP and the work they were intent on continuing to take forward.

Recommendation 9 related to performance reporting of Anti-Social Behaviour requesting comparative report be produced for Boston against Horncastle and Skegness. The recommendation had already been taken forward and was produced quarterly and available on the website.

Recommendation 10 sought notification on the Council's website of a general police contact link for reporting of non-urgent crime. This had been taken forward and the details were on the website.

Recommendation 11 sought discussion to take place between the Police and Council to agree a way forward in facilitating public meetings. The meetings were now taking place quarterly hosted by the Police and supported by the Council's Community Safety manager.

Recommendations 12 and 13 related to Central Park and scheduled for consideration by BTAC on the 20 May 2021. The decisions of BTAC to be updated at the next scheduled meeting of Environment and Performance committee on the 22 June 2021.

Committee deliberation followed which included:

A number of members voiced disappointment at the response from the Home Secretary with concern that Government had completely ignored the submissions. Members suggested that the Leader of the Council take the matter further with the local Member of Parliament to see if he could gain a more favourable response from the Home Office. The Leader of the Council confirmed he would be taking the matter further.

One key finding from the review, which the Police had fully supported, was the need for licensing of establishments that sold tobacco but not alcohol.

Whilst the Police had the right to enter an establishment with an alcohol licence that sold tobacco, they had no such right with a shop that did not sell alcohol. Locally illicit tobacco sales were a big problem, both as a front to other illegal trading and in significant lost revenue to the exchequer.

Madam Chairman advised she had watched the recent virtual public meeting hosted by the Police and stated she found it to be very informative and well run with live questions asked via the CHAT facility. The Chairman invited the Community Safety Officer, who had attended the meeting, to comment and he advised that whilst it had only been the second meeting, the feedback and input from the public was assisting in the priorities of the Police whilst being informative to the public. Occasionally it was not possible to answer a specific question at a meeting with the reply provided after. However, overall the meetings were working very well.

#### **RECOMMEDATION:**

Committee agreed its' receipt of the update report, noting completion of the Task and Finish Group: Regulating and Safeguarding Boston's Economy, recommendations 1 to 11; and agreed to a further update being brought before this Committee when a response to recommendation 12 and 13 has been determined by Boston Town Area Committee (BTAC).

Committee further agreed a delegation to the Assistant Director – Regulation and the Leader of the Council to take forward the initial response from the Home Secretary, to the Local Member of Parliament.

#### **To Do:**

**CA:** To update committee at its next meeting on the 22 June 2021 on the outcome of the decision made by BTAC in respect of recommendations 12 and 13.

## **85 VERBAL UPDATE MEMBER WORKING GROUP - FLY TIPPING.**

Councillor Judy Welbourn presented the update and advised that the group had held discussions relating to CCTV cameras and mobile observation units with further information required. The group had also discussed the new waste bins and education for households in how to use them. Most homes now had the new bins.

The issue of registered waste carriers fly tipping had also been discussed and the officers were looking further into the problem. The work of the 'wombles' had been debated and commended, with particular praise on how quickly fly tips were cleared following their initial reporting.

On a personal note Cllr Welbourn voiced support of the earlier suggestion for a joint meeting to discuss the HMO's and fly tips.

A further member of the group confirmed that it had considered the closure of the LLC recycling centre, questioning if an option would be to have other sites within the Boston area, for people to take their recycling goods to, or even create another permanent site. Furthermore, the Lead Officer on the group was looking at the ongoing problems with bins parked on pavements causing problems. The group had noted that whilst the Government insisted on fewer collections and more recycling. As a town, Boston had more household waste than it had ever had and it was a big issue.

Referencing the suggestion of a joint meeting, a member confirmed that the housing and waste collection teams did work together in respect of houses with large side waste, which is one of the biggest problems in Boston with much of the household waste being recyclable.

There is no recommendation within the update report. However, the following comments were tabled for consideration of the working group.

1. That the Member Working Group report back to the parent committee at each future meeting until completion of their final report which will come back through the committee.
2. That the group consider the following suggestions made by the parent committee:

That a joint scrutiny meeting be convened, or a task and finish review be undertaken, on completion of the member working group, to look at the correlation between fly tipping and HMO's. Officers' from both service areas – housing and waste disposal, to be included along with representation of the Landlords Forum with a view to looking to address the ongoing increasing issues of fly tipping / black bags and furniture items, clearly resulting from over-crowded houses. Options to include looking at changes in licensing of HMO's. It is within the remit of the working group to engage with housing.

That the opening hours and existing policy of the recycling centre be reviewed. To include a view to extending the opening hours and to accommodate trailers and vans which were the preferred vehicle of fly tippers. If the people with these vehicles who collect the waste were able to go and drop it at the recycling centre, it would certainly stop many of the fly tips outside of the town, and maybe some within the town.

Whilst the Policy for the recycling centre was restrictive, there had been movement at the site brought about by the pressure of BBC Councillors and changes to the policy had taken place. The more pressure the group and Council was able to put on LCC, the more change of change.

The Meeting Closed at 7.35 pm