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26 January 2021

TO MEMBERS OF THE BOSTON TOWN AREA COMMITTEE (BTAC)

NOTICE OF MEETING OF THE BOSTON TOWN AREA COMMITTEE (BTAC)

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Boston Town Area Committee (BTAC) on
Wednesday, 3rd February, 2021 at 6.30 pm

This will be a meeting held in line with The Local Authorities & Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority & Police & Crime Panel Meetings) England & Wales) Regulations 2020.

This meeting will be held virtually via Zoom and streamed live
via: www.mybostonuk.com/youtube

ROB BARLOW
Joint Chief Executive

Membership:

Chairman: Councillor Paul Goodale
Vice Chairman: Councillor Stephen Woodliffe
Councillors Alison Austin, Alan Bell, Anton Dani, Anne Dorrian,
Viven Edge, Deborah Evans, Martin Griggs, Neill Hastie,
Martin Howard MSc. PCGM, Cert Ed, Brian Rush and
Yvonne Stevens

A G E N D A

PART I - PRELIMINARIES

A APOLOGIES

To receive apologies for absence.

B MINUTES (Pages 1 - 12)

To sign and confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 26th November and 16th December 2020.

C UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

To report progress on outstanding actions from the minutes of the last meeting, for information only.

D DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

To receive declarations of interests in respect of any item on the agenda.

E PUBLIC QUESTIONS

To answer any written questions received from members of the public no later than 5 p.m. two clear working days prior to the meeting – for this meeting the deadline is 5 p.m. on Friday, 29th January 2021.

PART II - AGENDA ITEMS

1 TASK & FINISH GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS - REGULATING AND SAFEGUARDING THE ECONOMY (Pages 13 - 14)

(Recommendations from the Environment and Performance Committee's Task & Finish Group presented by Christian Allen, Assistant Director – Regulation)

2 PROPOSED BTAC BUDGET 2021/22 AND FORECAST TO 2025/26 (Pages 15 - 32)

(A report presented by Adrian Sibley, Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer)

3 WORK PROGRAMME - STANDING ITEM (Pages 33 - 34)

(The Committee's work programme for the current year for discussion and/or updating.)

Notes:

The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Janette Collier, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Municipal Buildings, Boston, 01205 314227 email: janette.collier@boston.gov.uk

Council Members who are not able to attend the meeting should notify Janette Collier, Senior Democratic Services Officer as soon as possible.

Alternative Versions

Should you wish to have the agenda or report in an alternative format such as larger text, Braille or a specific language, please contact Democratic Services on direct dial (01205) 314226

BOSTON TOWN AREA COMMITTEE (BTAC)

26 November 2020

Present: Councillor Paul Goodale (Chairman), Councillors Alison Austin, Alan Bell, Anton Dani, Anne Dorrian, Deborah Evans, Martin Griggs, Neill Hastie, Martin Howard MSc. PCGM, Cert Ed, Brian Rush, Yvonne Stevens and Stephen Woodliffe

Officers –

Assistant Director - Regulation, Assistant Director - Support Services & Partnership and Senior Democratic Services Officer

Guests:

Representing Lincolnshire Police:

Chief Superintendent Chris Davison, Area Commander for East Lincolnshire
Chief Inspector James Trafford, Boston and South Holland
Chief Constable Bill Skelly

Marc Jones, Lincolnshire Police and Crime Commissioner
Matt Warman, MP for Boston & Skegness

79 APOLOGIES

There were apologies for absence from Councillor Viven Edge.

80 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th September 2020 were agreed as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman.

81 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

82 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

83 POLICE RESPONSE TO ILLEGAL ENCAMPMENTS

On 24 September 2020, the Committee received a report relating to an illegal encampment that took place on the open space on Woodville Road, Boston during July/August 2020. The report set out the timeline of dealings with the illegal encampment, including the actions of Council officers, the reports made to the police and the police response.

During that meeting, Members heard that the actions of the local police team during the incursion had been faultless. However, they were not satisfied with the regional response of Lincolnshire Police and it was agreed to hold a special meeting and invite representatives from Lincolnshire Police, the Police & Crime Commissioner and the MP for Boston & Skegness in order for Members to put their concerns to them.

The Chairman explained that at the meeting in September, the Committee took the decision to fence off the Woodville Road open space and look at the security of BTAC's other sites to try and prevent further illegal encampments. However, this was not enough.

In particular, there was concern about the decision by the Police on 4 August not to revisit the site at Woodville Road despite a Council officer being threatened with physical violence. The reason given by the police was that they did not have adequate resources to deal with a large-scale disorder, which they believed was likely to happen. This raised the questions: were extra resources available in the county; if so, could they have been deployed; if not, was assistance available from neighbouring police authorities and were there enough resources in Boston today if this incident was repeated.

The Chairman then invited the guests to share their views on the way forward to policing illegal encampments in the future and reassuring the people and local businesses of the town.

The Chief Superintendent expressed appreciation of the recognition of the actions of local police officers and then gave a summary of the police response to the incident. This began at 12:54 on 31 July when the initial non-urgent call was received. At 13:17 the force control room assigned a Boston police constable to deal with the incident; however, that officer was committed to a high-risk incident elsewhere. The neighbourhood police were made aware of the incident and they made repeated visits to the site. However, Inspector Waters, knowing of the threat of physical violence and that tension was high, decided officers should not re-attend the site because, if the situation escalated, which he deemed probable, the police would not have sufficient resources to deal with it.

The Chief Superintendent considered that the use of the court process by Council officers had been the right course of action. There had been criminality, but no indictable offences and confrontation had not been necessary. The police had to consider a threat and use the "least possible force" in response to it. It was considered that, had the incident escalated, the police would have needed 160 police officers to deal with it, putting them at risk of having to self-isolate. COVID-19 restrictions meant they had to limit unnecessary contact to avoid the necessity of self-isolation because it would reduce available resources.

When considering whether anything could have been done differently, the Chief Superintendent suggested that a multi-agency decision-making group was the right approach. This would involve each agency using their decision-making powers together, which would avoid misunderstandings and ensure there were sufficient resources. The protocol to do this existed; however, in 2018 the Council had decided not to sign up to it, though officers were trying to introduce it now, and he recommended that the Council considered signing up to it.

The Chief Superintendent added that forces from other counties were asked to help in the event of incidents such as riots, and that the police would also revisit the *Shop Theft Policy* with respect to attending incidents to identify possible offenders.

Chief Constable Bill Skelly then addressed the meeting and urged the Council to sign up to the protocol to join with them to deal with illegal encampments in partnership. Chief Constable Skelly fully supported the operational decisions made by his officers in response to the illegal encampment at Woodville Road; such situations were difficult and complex. Police forces did try to help each other and, if considered necessary, they would have called on colleagues, but they had to consider whether it was justifiable and on this occasion, it was not.

In response to questions concerning recruitment of police officers, the Chief Superintendent explained that it was not known how many officers would be recruited to Boston. They had received an extra nine officers since lockdown, some of whom were in training, and specific recruitment for Boston and the east of the county was ongoing.

Chief Constable Skelly stressed that it was crucial for Boston to have more officers and that he was working hard on this in conjunction with the Police and Crime Commissioner, but it was challenging. Last year, the Government's uplift was 20,000 police officers; however, it took time to train new officers and deploy them. From now on, these officers would start to become available and the force would increase during the next three years. Pressure was being maintained to ensure they would have over 170 additional police officers, which would make the force more flexible and provide more comprehensive cover. He hoped that they had managed to reassure Councillors that they always gave the best possible service, and had learned from the situation.

In response to other questions, the Chief Superintendent confirmed that travellers were subject to the same laws as everyone. Travellers did commit trespass in settling on an open space; however, this was a civil matter and had to be dealt with through the courts, as the Council's legal advisor had confirmed. A response to illegal encampments had to be proportionate and balanced, and a protocol was needed.

Members asked for more information about the protocol. The Chief Superintendent explained that it was drawn up in 2018 following an illegal encampment in the county, but he did not know why some authorities had signed up to it and some had not. The Council's officers were working actively in order to refresh the protocol and he thanked them for that.

The Assistant Director Regulation explained that his understanding was that the protocol had been put to the Council in 2018 when it was applying to the High Court for an injunction. The protocol had been judged to be incompatible with the injunction and, therefore, could not be signed. However, circumstances had changed: the injunction had been rescinded, as it was no longer valid, and they were reconsidering the protocol and would take Councillors' views on board.

Discussion then moved on to the number of police specials. The police representatives explained that the number varied because the specials were volunteers and not always available, and because police officers were recruited from them. Recruiting was continuous, but numbers did fluctuate with 200-250 usually active to some degree and 100-160 of these formed the core of the specials.

The force had been assured they would receive an uplift of 170 additional police officers, being the Government's grant share to the area, with 4 ring-fenced to deal with Serious

and Organised Crime. The baseline fluctuated and was approximately 1,070-80, with the aspiration being 1,250.

[Councillor Evans arrived at 7:15 pm.]

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) then addressed the meeting and referred to a proposal he had put to all Lincolnshire local authorities asking them to support the recruitment of specials. They needed to increase the number, particularly as police officers were recruited from them. He urged the Council to help market and advertise the recruitment. There was also a need to continue to recruit other additional staff, such as analysts, and introduce improvements, all with a view to freeing up the time of front line officers. They also needed to help shape future legislation to increase support for the community and keep people safe. The PCC concluded by saying there was a significant level of good practice in Lincolnshire and positive progress was being made.

A Member raised the question of safeguarding children and asked what actions were taken by agencies with respect to travellers and adherence to the Children's Act. He felt that agencies were not getting to the heart of the problem and that there was a wider issue with respect to education and safety. He added that there was a disproportionate number of young male travellers in prison.

In response, the police representatives explained they shared these concerns and considered this a very important matter to raise. The main issues related to differences in culture and beliefs, and the peripatetic nature of travellers. In general, the police recorded safeguarding matters and shared concerns with Children Services, Adult Services and Mental Health Services. They had a local procedure based on national guidance and issues were raised by way of a Police Protection Notice (PPN) or, if emergency action was needed and a child was at risk of significant harm, a Police Protection Order (PPO).

The protocol included welfare needs assessments of people on the site. The police would always accompany officers to carry this out. The illegal encampment of July/August would have been an opportunity to explore whether there were safeguarding concerns – by a senior officer in the police, local authority and health services – and any future opportunity should be taken.

The MP for Boston and Skegness then addressed the meeting and referred to the difficulties in helping travellers. Successive measures had been tried and none had really dealt with the problems. When travellers arrived, residents needed and wanted them to move on as soon as possible, giving rise to opposing pressures. In particular, it was very difficult to ensure that traveller children attended school whilst respecting the itinerant nature of travellers.

A Member pointed out that travellers were together a good deal throughout the day and not leaving children at home unattended. However, another was concerned to ensure that the protocol included alerting EMTEC at the County Council with respect to children and asked that this be followed up to require liaison with the team and health services when there was an illegal encampment.

It was remarked that a suitable place should be found for travellers to camp so that there was no criminal damage and data regarding the success of any prosecutions should be

made available. There was reference to the different life chances and goals of travellers and their confidence in carrying out criminal acts knowing that no one could stop them. Residents had been in total fear of the encampment on Woodville Road. People needed to know they were safe and that incidents would be dealt with immediately.

The Chief Superintendent pointed out another consideration, that local criminals could take advantage of the presence of travellers knowing they would get the blame for crimes. There were several crimes purported to be carried out by travellers, but the police had to establish facts and deal with evidence. The main problem was identifying perpetrators. Each crime was recorded and subject to the same procedure. If a person had been identified previously elsewhere it was flagged up by the national police computer system.

Members were concerned to improve the response to the illegal encampments. They recognised the impact and effect they had on local residents.

[Councillor Hastie left the meeting at 7:50 pm]

The Assistant Director Regulation reported that amendments to the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, the principal legislation used, were awaited. The Home Secretary had consulted upon amendments to the legislation earlier in the year that would enable the police and councils to deal more effectively with illegal encampments. Unfortunately, the proposed changes had not moved forward due to the pandemic.

A status position on transit sites available in the area would be obtained. Provision of a transit site was a planning decision. One proposed change to the legislation would enable use of transit sites outside borders, which was not permitted currently. The Leader had written to the Home Secretary regarding the current position of the legislative amendments and a reply was awaited. As the Council could not demonstrate that transit sites were available, the Council's injunction had been rescinded in line with case law. Until this was resolved and the Act amended little progress could be made. The MP confirmed that the amendments would not proceed within the current Parliamentary session.

Referring to the South East Lincolnshire Joint Local Plan, a Member pointed out that its policy relating to traveller sites had been thought to be deemed acceptable for those travelling through Boston, but it was to be updated.

In response to questions, the Assistant Director Regulation reported that an officer decision had been taken in 2018 not to proceed with the protocol because of the position at that time. Officers would now bring this back and Members would be involved in the decisions as a matter of course.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked their guests for attending and for their input. They would be very welcome to attend again at a future meeting. Officers would report back to the Committee on the joint protocol as soon as possible.

The Meeting ended at 8.30 pm

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Present: (Chairman), (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Alison Austin, Alan Bell, Anton Dani, Anne Dorrian, Deborah Evans, Paul Goodale, Martin Griggs, Neill Hastie, Brian Rush, Yvonne Stevens and Stephen Woodliffe

Officers –

Assistant Director - Support Services & Partnership, Operations Manager and Local Communities Development Officer & BTAC Grant Administrator

84 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Paul Goodale was appointed Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2020/21.

Present: Councillors Alison Austin, Alan Bell, Anton Dani, Anne Dorrian, Deborah Evans, Paul Goodale, Neill Hastie, Brian Rush and Stephen Woodliffe

Officers: Assistant Director - Support Services & Partnerships, Operations Manager, Local Communities Development Officer & BTAC Grant Administrator and Democratic Services Officer

85 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor Stephen Woodliffe was appointed Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2020/21.

86 APOLOGIES

There were apologies for absence from Councillor Viven Edge and Yvonne Stevens.

87 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th October 2020 were agreed as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman.

88 UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Committee Members confirmed they had received an update from the Assistant Director - Regulation regarding illegal encampments.

89 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Stephen Woodliffe declared an interest in the Small Grant Application, as an ordinary member of Blackfriars Arts Centre and refrained from taking part and the debate on this item (Minute 92 refers).

90 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

91 BTAC 2020/21 FINANCIAL POSITION UPDATE AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2020

The Committee noted a report by the Accountancy Manager - Revenue and Systems, which provided an update of BTAC's financial position as at the end of October 2020 with the projected outturn (full-year spend) for the 2020/21 year, and the projected BTAC reserve at the year-end 31 March 2021.

The Chairman expressed satisfaction with the Committee's expenditure, representing a large part of the budget, which it had used to carry out significant work.

92 BTAC SMALL GRANT SCHEME

The Committee considered a report by the Local Communities Development Officer & BTAC Grant Administrator, which concerned an application made to the Small Grants Working Group.

The application was from Blackfriars Theatre Academy for an amount of £1,000 to organise and perform a socially distanced pantomime in January 2021. Funds would contribute towards the script and performance rights; costumes; sheet music and backing tracks, and set hire (3 back cloths). The project was time dependent and was to be delivered before the review of Round 1 applications, which was not due until February 2021.

In accordance with BTAC's Small Grants Scheme, the Committee's Small Grants Working Group had agreed the application was eligible for consideration and had decided to award the full amount, as shown in Table 2, which had been circulated to Members separately.

Councillor Stephen Woodliffe explained that, as a Member of the Working Group, he had abstained from the vote of the Working Group due to a potential conflict of interest, as he was an ordinary member of Blackfriars Arts Centre.

The funding would be allocated from the remaining 2019/20 grants budget of £1,694.33 with the balance being brought forward to the grants budget for 2020/21 or put back into BTAC's reserves.

Members supported the application, with views expressed in favour of helping businesses and organisations in the town to recover from the impact of the pandemic. The theatre was commended for its efforts to provide much needed entertainment for young people in the current circumstances.

Concerns were expressed about Covid-19 in terms of people attending a performance in a small theatre, though it was acknowledged that the centre would take the necessary precautions for the safety of the cast and audience. In response, it was explained that the pantomime was going to be filmed in various locations and transmitted to the homes of those who purchased tickets, an idea commended by Members.

Councillor Woodliffe abstained from the vote.

RESOLVED: That the decision of the Small Grants Working Group to award £1,000 to Blackfriars Theatre Academy towards the cost of organising and performing a socially distanced pantomime in January 2021 in relation to the costs of the script and performance rights; costumes; sheet music and backing tracks, and set hire (3 back cloths) be endorsed.

93 BTAC ASSETS - PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

[Councillor Dorrian joined the meeting at 6.55 pm. Councillor Alison Austin left the meeting at 7 pm.]

The Operations Manager presented an annual update on improvements made to BTAC's open spaces.

Members had attended a tour of BTAC open spaces and play facilities on 21 August 2019. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, no tour was undertaken in the current year; however, the improvements previously identified, had continued to be delivered and the details were set out in the report.

Following the illegal encampment at Woodville Road in August 2020, the Committee met in September and Members requested details of how other vulnerable public open spaces could be protected from any future illegal encampment. An assessment had since been carried out on all BTAC open spaces to identify those that had a vulnerability to illegal encampments. These were identified at Garfit's Lane, Burgess Pit, Shelton's Field and Broadfield Lane, as shown in Appendix A, and the report set out a costed solution to improve security. The Committee was asked to approve a total of £14,947 funding for these improvements.

The report also provided information with respect to the 'wish list' for the remainder of 2020/21 and plans for the coming year 2021/22.

BTAC had supported the practice of considering environmental impacts in recent years through planting projects across its open spaces and support for groups such as Boston in Bloom. Further community orchards across the BTAC open spaces would continue to support the town in its endeavours to capture and reduce its carbon footprint. Members were asked to consider reallocating the £3,000 saved from the Woodville Road security-fencing project to enable an external grant application to Trees for Cities for match funding for the establishment of new community orchards.

The Open Space Consultation 2020 had been limited due to COVID-19 restrictions, but had provided valuable information to help make informed decisions on future development opportunities within open spaces. Details were set out at Appendix B. Members were asked to consider the approval of funding for one improvement in 2020/21, which was for £16,000 for the delivery of new outdoor gym equipment in Central Park, and to refer the future 'wish list' improvements to the BTAC Working Group for Open Spaces to cost up options for a future report.

There was a view that security fencing should have been provided long before now, particularly to ensure children were safe from traffic, and there was concern as to

whether the fencing was fit for purpose, as it had been installed in soil with only 300mm concrete bases.

The Operations Manager explained that pedestrian guardrail fencing had been used, the same type was installed at Pelican crossings. It acted as a deterrent and afforded reasonable prevention of illegal encampments. A procurement exercise had been undertaken, with those participating offering the same specification, and a recommended installer had carried out the work. The fencing would be routinely inspected and its condition would be monitored so that any damage would be quickly repaired.

There was a call to install the proposed CCTV camera at Woodville Road immediately, as it was felt to be imperative to deter illegal encampments, and it was proposed that this be added to the recommendation set out in the report. It was noted that the camera would require planning permission.

There was a call for assistance for Fenside from the Ward Members, particularly the lack of provision for children in the ward. Lobbying of the Lincolnshire Housing Partnership (LHP), in whose ownership some of the areas lay, had proved fruitless. Other Members and the Chairman agreed, though it was noted that the Woodfield Road play area was used by children from Fenside and three other wards. It was explained that consideration was being given to a play area in Fenside, but it was subject negotiations with a developer. Information would be forwarded to the Members and then all Committee Members could meet informally to discuss questions that could be put to LHP regarding its plans for the improvement of open spaces in Fenside at a future meeting.

The Chairman of the Open Spaces Working Group noted that BTAC could have proposed that security fencing be installed at play areas in the past. The lack of provision in Fenside was recognised, but the work carried out in BTAC's open spaces in general was commended. There was particular appreciation of the work of the Play & Physical Activity Officer who had worked tirelessly on consultation and implementation of schemes. The Chairman asked that officers relayed the Committee's thanks to that officer and all members of the team working on BTAC's open spaces.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The update be noted.**
- 2. That the following funding be approved:**
 - **£14,947 for open spaces security fencing improvements;**
 - **£16,000 for new outdoor gym equipment for Central Park;**
 - **£3,000 savings re-allocation from the savings from the installation of the security fencing at Woodville Road open space to create a Community Orchard; and**
 - **£4,935 for the installation of a public realm CCTV camera at Woodville Road open space.**

3. That the future 'wish list' improvements be referred to the BTAC Working Group for Open Spaces to cost up options and present a future report to BTAC.

94 DRAFT BTAC ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

The Committee considered the draft BTAC Annual Report for 2019/20 before its submission to Full Council for approval and publication.

The Assistant Director - Support Services & Partnerships commented that BTAC had had a very successful year and could be proud of its achievements, which included match funding of almost £300,000 for events and new facilities in Central Park.

The Chairman congratulated Members and officers for these achievements and commended them for their hard work.

RESOLVED: That BTAC's Annual Report for 2019/20 be recommended to Full Council for approval and subsequent publication.

95 WORK PROGRAMME - STANDING ITEM

The Committee considered the work programme and it was agreed:

- Members would hold informal discussions with respect to meeting with the Lincolnshire Housing Partnership (LHP) on its plans for improvements in Fenside possibly at the Committee's meeting in March.
- To consider the Guildhall as a more appropriate venue for a committee for the town centre once Covid-19 restrictions were lifted.
- To consider a future agenda item on the market, to look at its structure and ideas for revitalising it in liaison with the Portfolio Holder.
- To consider supporting Haven High Academy in its efforts to make Marion Road a school street, permitting only vehicles belonging to residents, staff and emergency services to use the road during dropping off and picking up times, in order to encourage highway safety and social distancing. Representatives from the school could be invited to address the Committee. It was noted that the school had contacted the relevant County Councillor without response. This was a national initiative and it would be the first in the borough.
- To consider an update on fly-tipping, including use of the tip. It was noted that sickness absence due to the pandemic had impacted on performance.

The Chairman thanked Members and officers for their work throughout the year and wished them all a safe and happy Christmas.

The Meeting ended at 8.20 pm

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Recommendations developed by the Task and Finish Group established under the auspices of the Environment and Performance Committee to conduct a review into: REGULATING AND SAFEGUARDING BOSTON'S ECONOMY – to be reported directly to the Boston Town Area Committee

12. That the Council consider locking the Central Park gates overnight to address on-going issues of ASB within the park.

That if required a trial period of four months be agreed to allow monitoring of incidents during that time to either support or not, the closing of the gates permanently overnight.

That agreement is reached as to who will fund the cost of who will close the gates and that a request be made to the BTAC committee for such funding for the trial period, or if agreed on a permanent basis.

13. That BTAC be requested to consider the funding of a service for Central Park to address ongoing ASB in the park.

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BOSTON TOWN AREA COMMITTEE (BTAC)

3 FEBRUARY 2021

Proposed BTAC budget 2021/22 and forecast to 2025/26

Report of BTAC Chairman, Paul Goodale

(Author: Accountancy Manager – Revenue and Systems)

BOSTON TOWN AREA COMMITTEE (BTAC) – 2021/22 BUDGET, AND FORECAST TO 2025/26

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Members of the Committee will be well aware of the context in which this and recent budgets have been set, being a time of continuous change and significant financial challenge for councils. These include ongoing reductions in grant support from the government, the impact of welfare reform, changes to the mechanism upon which central government support is allocated, and the proposed future moves for further localisation of the business rates regime.

Boston Town Area Committee (BTAC) plays an important role in helping make the lives of its residents a little easier.

BTAC's support includes Footway Lighting, Central Park and open spaces maintenance, Public Conveniences and the Community Toilet Scheme; all key areas where the reduction in funding as a result of national policy would otherwise have seen the loss or severe reduction of some or all of these important services.

Over recent years, BTAC has played a key role in helping keep our town clean and welcoming for residents, businesses and visitors, and introduced initiatives to maintain and provide services that people value highly. Without the Committee's support the Borough Council would have had to make decisions that would have proved very difficult. Therefore, I believe that each Committee member should be proud of the way that the whole Committee has worked together to deliver its achievements.

Going forward, BTAC will play its part in deciding how and what future services are delivered in the town given the likely resources available to it and the Borough, and this budget will enable the new BTAC Committee to consider its priorities for the coming years.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Proposed BTAC precept requirement 2021/22 £731,479 (2020/21 £702,696)
- The Council Tax base for 2021/22 is 9,505.9 Band D equivalent properties (2020/21 9,306.0)
- Proposed Council Tax in 2021/22 is £76.95 at Band D (2020/21 £75.51), an increase of 1.91%
- Cost per week in 2021/22 will be £1.48 at Band D (2020/21 £1.45) – the majority of households will pay less than this
- Projected level of reserves at 31 March 2021 estimated at £120,000

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Boston Town Area Committee (BTAC) is asked to make a recommendation to Cabinet and Council on the precept and Band D Council Tax levy for properties in the BTAC area for the 2021/22 financial year. This report details the current position and the proposed levy for the Council to approve for 2021/22. The following timetable is in place:
- 3 February 2021 – proposed BTAC budget to BTAC (this meeting);
 - 24 February 2021 – final budgets to Cabinet and recommendation to Council;
 - 1 March 2021 – full Council to approve budgets, and agree Band D Council Tax
- 1.2 Members are reminded of the context in which this budget has been set. It is at a time of continuing change and significant financial challenge for local government. These include the ongoing reductions in grant support from the government, the impact of Welfare reform, changes to the mechanism upon which central government support is allocated, and the proposed future moves to full localisation of the business rates regime.
- 1.3 BTAC members have in recent years increased the Council Tax and precept to help make the town a better place, and initiatives have been progressed to fund public conveniences, central park spend, footway lights and open spaces, events and town centre operatives. The proposed budget includes an inflationary increase this year, which includes an unallocated sum to enable members to support further measures to improve the town.

- 1.4 The level of Council Tax is a key factor for the Committee when considering its future aspirations.
- 1.5 Following the budget workshop delivered earlier in February, to illustrate the effects of changes to the assumptions on Council Tax, Table 1 below shows Council Tax projections and implications for the Committee's resources if :-
- (a) **The proposed increase of 1.91% in 2020/21, then 2% p.a.**
 - (b) No increase in 2020/21, then 2% p.a.
 - (c) An increase of 0.5% in 2020/21, then 2% p.a.
 - (d) An increase of 1.0% in 2020/21, then 2% p.a.

(these illustrations of various increases have been based on feedback from members on the preferred scale of future BTAC operations and council tax levels going forward)

Table 1 – Resource projections

Changes in Council Tax assumptions	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£	£	£	£	£
<u>1.91% increase (then 2% p.a.)</u>					
BTAC Band D charge	76.95	78.48	80.01	81.63	83.25
Amount unallocated for new initiatives	71,879	88,126	99,807	110,966	122,791
<u>0% increase (then 2% p.a.)</u>					
BTAC Band D charge	75.51	77.04	78.57	80.10	81.72
Amount unallocated for new initiatives	58,191	74,301	85,843	95,981	107,656
<u>0.5% increase (then 2% p.a.)</u>					
BTAC Band D charge	75.87	77.40	78.93	80.46	82.08
Amount unallocated for new initiatives	61,613	77,757	89,334	99,507	111,217
<u>1.0% increase (then 2% p.a.)</u>					
BTAC Band D charge	76.23	77.76	79.29	80.91	82.53
Amount unallocated for new initiatives	65,035	81,214	92,825	103,914	115,669

- 1.6 The impact on Council Tax payers of the proposed 1.91% increase would be that BTAC's Band D annual charge would go up by £1.53, or 3 pence per week. Almost 70% of BTAC households are in bands A and B, meaning that their weekly increase, before taking Council Tax Support into account, would be approximately 2 pence in each case.

2. ASSUMPTIONS

- 2.1 The estimates cover the period 2021/22 to 2025/26. Over this timescale it is important we make realistic assumptions as to how costs may rise or fall.
- 2.2 There is an assumption that revenue budgets will be used to deliver services during the year for which they are approved, and that any additional resources will be allocated and spent in the year they become available.
- 2.3 We have prepared the estimates on the understanding that appropriate service budgets were produced for 2020/21, revised for specific adjustments due to operational changes and decisions made since the budget was set, where necessary. Other than these adjustments, no major variances are expected, and the draft budget has been prepared to reflect the prevailing financial circumstances. General inflation and rental income are assumed to have a 0% increase per year, the expectation being that savings will consume any net cost increases in these areas. There is one exception to this approach, being utilities/fuel prices, where an average of 5% p.a. has been used to reflect the price risk for these areas; and included within the grounds maintenance charges and support service recharges there is an increase of 2% per annum increase due to staffing cost increases.
- 2.4 The BTAC Medium Term Financial Strategy assumptions within the appendix to this report are based on future year council tax increases of 2% p.a., and **Appendix 1** shows that this would deliver a balanced budget in 2025/26 having allowed for spending on the increased resources available to the Committee to be allocated. Decisions will be needed annually to determine the appropriate level of reserves to be maintained.

3. 2020/21 OUTTURN

- 3.1 An assessment of the projected 2020/21 outturn will inform the reliance we can place on the baseline we use for setting the 2021/22 estimates. Officers believe the outturn for 2020/21 will be as reported to the Committee in the regular Finance update reports, and will leave unallocated reserves at 31 March 2021 of £120,000 (being the S151 Officer's minimum requirement assessment of £70,000 plus £50,000).

4. TAX BASE

4.1 The tax base assumptions are shown in Table 2 below (equivalent number of Band D properties).

Table 2 – Tax Base

2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
9,306.00	9,505.9	9,601.0	9,697.0	9,793.9	9,891.9

4.2 The tax base has risen by 2.15% from 2020/21 to 2021/22. For future years, an increase of 1% p.a. has been forecast. The tax base includes a non-collection adjustment (of 1%; in other words an assumption of 99% collection over time) to take account of non-payment of Council Tax. Officers believe that these assumptions remain prudent, and they will be influenced by factors such as planning policy and the strength of the local economy. The impact of the Council Tax Support Scheme has influenced collection rates slightly since its introduction, although it is still a little early to assess the longer term impact on collection given the ongoing wider welfare reform changes.

5. 2021/22 ESTIMATES

- 5.1 The following table shows the estimates by type of expenditure/income split over the CIPFA standard classification. Details of the overall position are shown at **Appendix 1**.

Table 3 – Estimates by expenditure/income

		2020/21 £	2021/22 £	Variance £	Variance %
1	Employees	260,090	239,290	20,800	8.0%
2	Premises	169,980	155,350	14,630	8.6%
3	Supplies and Services	203,280	207,520	(4,240)	(2.1%)
4	Transport	9,230	9,430	(200)	(2.2%)
5	Support Services	73,330	83,040	(9,710)	(13.2%)
6	Other projects and initiatives	23,256	71,879	(48,623)	(309.1%)
	Total Expenditure	739,166	766,509	(27,343)	(3.7%)
5	Fees and Charges	(36,470)	(35,030)	(1,440)	(3.9%)
	Total Income	(36,470)	(35,030)	(1,440)	(3.9%)
	Budget Requirement	702,696	731,479	(28,783)	(4.1%)

- 5.2 The changes to employees are mainly due to the reduction in Events. Premises costs are due to reduced planned repair costs relating to the Public Conveniences. The Support Services increase includes a reallocation of Assistant Director recharges, which partially off-sets savings in Employee costs.
- 5.3 The other projects and initiatives line recognises BTAC members' request to have additional funds to enable them to support more projects and initiatives to help make the town a better place.

6. RESERVES

- 6.1 The following table shows the projected movement on the BTAC reserve, and the assumptions made with regards to the expected outturn position at paragraph 3.1.

Table 4 - Summary of the proposed movement on the BTAC reserve

£	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
B/fwd	125,000	120,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000
In	-	-	-	-	-	-
Out	(5,000)	(50,000)	-	-	-	-
C/fwd	120,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000

- 6.2 The 2021/22 reserve position assumes all projects to be funded from reserves will be spent by 31 March 2022, and that the unallocated 2021/22 sum is spent in the year, and leaves a projected closing balance of £70,000. Current spend projections for the next five years show the reserves remaining the same, using the assumption that BTAC will spend any additional funds on projects and initiatives within the year that they are raised.
- 6.3 Last year the recommended minimum level of reserves to be held (assessed by the Chief Finance Officer as Section 151 Officer) was £70,000. It is recommended that £70,000 remains the minimum amount to be held for the 2021/22 year. This will be reviewed annually as part of the budget setting process.

7. BUDGET REQUIREMENT

7.1 The proposed budget requirement for 2021/22, and demand on Council Tax, is illustrated below.

Table 5 – Budget Requirement

	BTAC 2020/21	BTAC 2021/22
a. Budget Requirement	£702,696	£731,479
b. Adjusted Tax base	9,306.0	9,505.9
c. Band D Equivalent (a-b)/c	£75.51	£76.95

7.2 The proposed BTAC budget requirement for the 2021/22 year is £731,479. **Appendix 1** shows the projected expenditure for that year.

8. FORWARD ESTIMATES

- 8.1 Outline estimates through to 2025/26 are shown at **Appendix 1**. In compiling these figures we have followed the assumptions set out in Section 2 of this report and made specific adjustments to service budgets as and where Service Managers have advised of changes over the medium term. These forward estimates include a 2% increase in BTAC's Council Tax charge per annum in all future years. These assumptions are for planning purposes only, and will inevitably change.

Table 6 – Forward Estimates

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Budget requirement	753,486	775,857	799,476	823,501
BTAC Precept Demand	753,486	775,857	799,476	823,501
Tax base	9,601.0	9,697.0	9,793.9	9,891.9
Band D Council Tax	£78.48	£80.01	£81.63	£83.25
Percentage Increase	1.99%	1.95%	2.02%	1.98%

9. BUDGET SENSITIVITIES

9.1 The forward estimates (Table 6) include various assumptions regarding the risk of price increases that BTAC faces. Some of the main ones are as follows:

- (a) Grounds maintenance increases by 5%;
- (b) Employee costs increase by 5%;
- (c) Utilities increase by 5%.

Table 7 – Effect of sensitivities on the BTAC budget

	2021/22 £	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £
Grounds maintenance @ 5%	9,380	9,570	9,760	9,960	10,160
Employee Costs @ 5%	11,970	11,850	11,970	12,190	12,420
Utilities increase @ 5%	1,360	1,400	1,450	1,490	1,530

10. CONSULTATION

10.1 Public consultation will take place as part of the overall Council budget consultation process.

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

11.1 To comply with the budgetary and policy framework.

11.2 To recommend to Cabinet, and then to Council, the amount of the BTAC precept and Council Tax levy to be adopted for 2021/22.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 That BTAC recommends to Cabinet and Council the level of its Special Expense precept for 2021/22 at £731,479, and the Council Tax charge of £76.95 at Band D.

Appendices:

1 Budget, and projected, position for the years 2021/22 – 2025/26

BOSTON TOWN AREA COMMITTEE - DRAFT BUDGETS 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25 & 2025/26

	Draft Estimate 2021/22	Draft Estimate 2022/23	Draft Estimate 2023/24	Draft Estimate 2024/25	Draft Estimate 2025/26
	£	£	£	£	£
Open spaces and play areas					
Employee Costs	10,410	10,500	10,620	10,800	11,010
Premises					
Repairs and maintenance costs	14,850	15,150	15,450	15,760	16,070
Electricity	940	970	1,000	1,030	1,060
Business Rates	2,590	2,640	2,690	2,740	2,800
Water	2,160	2,220	2,220	2,220	2,220
Premises insurance	360	380	390	400	410
Play areas fencing	510	510	510	510	510
Grounds maintenance recharge	73,260	74,730	76,220	77,740	79,300
	94,670	96,600	98,480	100,400	102,370
Supplies and Services					
CCTV Camera Maintenance	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Maintenance of new play equipment	5,320	5,320	5,320	5,320	5,320
New play equipment	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
	8,820	8,820	8,820	8,820	8,820
Support Services					
Property Services	1,260	1,290	1,330	1,370	1,400
Personnel & Payroll	800	810	830	850	860
Income					
Miscellaneous income	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)
Less rent income	(50)	(50)	(50)	(50)	(50)
	(1,050)	(1,050)	(1,050)	(1,050)	(1,050)
TOTAL OPEN SPACES AND PLAY AREAS	114,910	116,970	119,030	121,190	123,410
Allotments					
Supplies and Services					
Development budget	250	250	250	250	250
Support Services					
Management and administration - Regeneration Section	2,040	2,080	2,120	2,160	2,220
	2,290	2,330	2,370	2,410	2,470
Income					
Less rent income	(1,770)	(1,770)	(1,770)	(1,770)	(1,770)
TOTAL ALLOTMENTS	520	560	600	640	700
Central Park					
Premises					
Repairs & Maintenance	8,600	8,770	8,940	9,120	9,300
Electricity	3,260	3,360	3,460	3,560	3,670
Water	300	310	320	330	330
Premises Insurance	780	810	820	840	860
	12,940	13,250	13,540	13,850	14,160
Supplies and Services					
Birds	650	650	650	650	650
	650	650	650	650	650
Third Party Payments					
Trade Waste contract	2,350	2,400	2,450	2,500	2,550
Grounds contract	111,700	113,930	116,210	118,530	120,900
	114,050	116,330	118,660	121,030	123,450
Support Services					
Insurance	390	410	420	430	440
Credit control	380	390	400	410	420
Finance	1,010	1,030	1,060	1,080	1,100
Property services	2,770	2,830	2,890	2,750	2,800
	4,550	4,660	4,770	4,670	4,760
Income					
Rents - kiosk	(2,150)	(2,150)	(2,150)	(2,150)	(2,150)
	(2,150)	(2,150)	(2,150)	(2,150)	(2,150)
TOTAL CENTRAL PARK	130,040	132,740	135,470	138,050	140,870
Public Conveniences					
Employee Costs	84,160	85,350	86,640	88,300	90,000
Premises					

BOSTON TOWN AREA COMMITTEE - DRAFT BUDGETS 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25 & 2025/26

	Draft Estimate 2021/22	Draft Estimate 2022/23	Draft Estimate 2023/24	Draft Estimate 2024/25	Draft Estimate 2025/26
	£	£	£	£	£
Repairs & maintenance	11,300	11,530	11,760	12,000	12,240
Electricity	2,260	2,330	2,400	2,480	2,560
Business Rates	8,770	8,950	9,120	9,300	9,500
Water Rates	18,350	18,900	19,470	20,050	20,650
Premises Insurance	990	1,040	1,060	1,080	1,100
Depot / Office Accommodation	220	220	220	220	220
	41,890	42,970	44,030	45,130	46,270
Transport					
Vehicles	4,380	4,510	4,650	4,740	4,840
	4,380	4,510	4,650	4,740	4,840
Supplies & Services					
Clothing	750	750	750	750	750
Materials	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Mobile Phones	530	540	560	570	590
Cash Collection and Counting	500	500	500	500	500
	7,780	7,790	7,810	7,820	7,840
Third Party Payments					
Grounds maintenance	2,630	2,730	2,780	2,840	2,900
	2,630	2,730	2,780	2,840	2,900
Support Services					
Central Training & Recruitment	130	140	140	150	150
Employee insurance	-	-	-	-	-
Computer Recharge	30	40	40	50	50
Credit Control	20	30	30	40	40
Legal services	40	50	50	60	60
Finance	5,440	5,550	5,660	5,780	5,890
Personnel & Training	4,860	4,960	5,060	5,160	5,260
Performance & Improvement	4,290	4,380	4,470	4,560	4,650
Property services	6,940	7,080	7,220	7,370	7,510
	21,750	22,230	22,670	23,170	23,610
Income					
Sale of keys	(60)	(60)	(60)	(60)	(60)
Fees and Charges	(14,000)	(14,000)	(14,000)	(14,000)	(14,000)
	(14,060)	(14,060)	(14,060)	(14,060)	(14,060)
TOTAL PUBLIC CONVENIENCES	148,530	151,520	154,520	157,940	161,400
Events					
Employee Costs	67,550	63,160	63,610	64,610	65,900
Transport					
Car allowances	140	150	140	150	150
Supplies & Services					
Advertising	8,300	8,400	8,500	8,600	8,600
Postages	710	710	710	710	710
Mobile Phones	340	350	360	370	380
Event Costs	41,500	41,500	41,500	41,500	41,500
Festival Lighting Contract	-	-	-	-	-
	50,850	50,960	51,070	51,180	51,190
Support Services					
Street cleaning	140	150	150	160	160
Employee insurance	-	-	-	-	-
Computer Recharge	20	30	30	40	40
Credit Control	1,560	1,590	1,620	1,650	1,680
Graphics Unit	1,550	1,580	1,610	1,640	1,670
Photocopiers	240	250	250	260	260
Telephones	180	180	190	190	190
Finance	1,430	1,460	1,490	1,520	1,550
Personnel & Training	1,880	1,920	1,960	2,000	2,040
Transformation	1,560	1,590	1,620	1,650	1,680
	8,560	8,750	8,920	9,110	9,270
Income					
Fish Hill Income	-	-	-	-	-
Hire of Space for events and events income	(16,000)	(16,000)	(16,000)	(16,000)	(16,000)
	(16,000)	(16,000)	(16,000)	(16,000)	(16,000)
TOTAL EVENTS	111,100	107,020	107,740	109,050	110,510
Town Centre Maintenance					
Employee Costs	77,170	77,860	78,560	79,990	81,450

BOSTON TOWN AREA COMMITTEE - DRAFT BUDGETS 2021/22, 2022/23, 2023/24, 2024/25 & 2025/26

	Draft Estimate 2021/22	Draft Estimate 2022/23	Draft Estimate 2023/24	Draft Estimate 2024/25	Draft Estimate 2025/26
	£	£	£	£	£
Transport					
Vehicles	4,910	5,060	5,210	5,370	5,470
	4,910	5,060	5,210	5,370	5,470
Supplies & Services					
Equipment Purchases	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Materials	4,100	4,100	4,100	4,100	4,100
Clothing	700	710	750	770	770
Mobile Phones	350	360	370	380	390
	7,650	7,670	7,720	7,750	7,760
Premises					
Business Rates	2,100	2,150	2,190	2,230	2,280
Rental Fees	3,750	3,750	3,750	3,750	3,750
	5,850	5,900	5,940	5,980	6,030
Support Services					
Central Training and Recruitment	210	210	220	220	220
Accountancy	1,430	1,460	1,490	1,520	1,550
Personnel	1,870	1,910	1,950	1,990	2,030
	3,510	3,580	3,660	3,730	3,800
TOTAL TOWN CENTRE MAINTENANCE	99,090	100,070	101,090	102,820	104,510
Administration					
Supplies and Services					
BTAC Grants Programme	10,140	10,140	10,140	10,140	10,140
London Road running costs	-	-	-	-	-
Equipment Maintenance	1,000	1,030	1,060	1,090	1,110
Footway lighting - electricity & maintenance	3,700	3,770	3,850	3,930	4,000
	-	-	-	-	-
	14,840	14,940	15,050	15,160	15,250
Support Services					
Finance	4,690	4,780	4,880	4,980	5,080
Street Cleansing	21,860	22,520	23,200	23,890	23,890
Community Development	2,080	2,140	2,200	2,270	2,320
Assistant Director Recharges	7,200	7,270	7,340	7,490	7,640
Democratic Services	4,740	4,830	4,930	5,030	5,130
	40,570	41,540	42,550	43,660	44,060
TOTAL ADMINISTRATION	55,410	56,480	57,600	58,820	59,310
NEW INITIATIVES	71,879	88,126	99,807	110,966	122,791
NET EXPENDITURE	731,479	753,486	775,857	799,476	823,501
Less income from BTAC Council Tax Levy	(731,479)	(753,486)	(775,857)	(799,476)	(823,501)
(Surplus) / deficit for the year	0	0	0	0	0
BTAC Reserve					
Balance brought forward as at 1 April	120,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000
Balance carried forward as at 31 March	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000
Council Tax Calculation					
Adjusted Tax base	9505.9	9601.0	9697.0	9793.9	9891.9
Band D	76.95	78.48	80.01	81.63	83.25
% Increase	1.91%	1.99%	1.95%	2.02%	1.98%

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BOSTON TOWN AREA COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

MEETING	AGENDA ITEM	LEAD OFFICER / MEMBER / GUEST
7 OCTOBER 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting Up A Town Council 	Chairman Representatives from the National and Local Association of Local Councils (NALC & LALC)
26 NOVEMBER 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police Response to Illegal Encampments 	Chairman Representatives from Lincolnshire Police / Police and Crime Commissioner / MP
16 DECEMBER 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Position • BTAC Small Grants Scheme • Play Area Improvements ‘Wish List’, including an update on Central Park and Buoys Projects • Draft Annual BTAC Report 	AD - Support Services & Partnerships BTAC Grant Administrator Operations Manager Chairman
3 FEBRUARY 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed BTAC budget 2021/22 and forecast to 2025/26 • Task & Finish Group Recommendations 	Section 151 Officer AD - Regulation
24 MARCH 2021		
19 MAY 2021		

Potential items:

- Fenside Ward – Improvements/liason with Lincolnshire Housing Partnership (LHP)
- Boston Market – Structure and Future
- Haven High Academy’s application to make Marion Road a street school
- Fly-tipping

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